

“Until I Have Won”

Vestiges of Coverture and the Invisibility of Women in the Twentieth Century:

A Biography of Jeannette Ridlon Piccard

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This dissertation titled
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Vestiges of Coverture and the Invisibility of Women in the Twentieth Century:
A Biography of Jeannette Ridlon Piccard

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ABSTRACT

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For women, the passage of secular and ecclesiastical laws to ban overt forms of discrimination and open corporate and cultural opportunities is a necessary step toward the full inclusion in society. However, even as American women’s legal standing improved throughout the 20th century, they encountered subtle forms of discrimination: vestiges of 19th century coverture. Jeannette Ridlon Piccard’s life (1895-1981) uniquely illustrates the struggles during the 20th century for women in the spheres of citizenship, science and religion, particularly the Anglican tradition. Piccard was not “protected” by her husband’s citizenship; she was not “protected” from the rigors of science; nor was she “protected” from the rigors of religion. Rather the vestiges of coverture protected men’s domains from her inclusion. Piccard did not accept the exclusionary practices, challenging and overcoming barriers to women in space exploration and women as Episcopal priests. Sources employed include manuscript collections; interviews with family members; letters and memoirs; religious and science periodicals; congressional documents and court cases.

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INTRODUCTION

On a cold January day in Chicago, Illinois, a mother gave birth at home to her seventh and eighth babies. The identical twins, daughters of a renowned orthopedic surgeon and his Victorian wife, were named Jeannette and Beatrice, and on that day they became members of the large and moderately prosperous John Ridlon family. What could not be known on that day in 1895 was both the ordinary and extraordinary life Janey, as she was known to her family and friends, would live.

Although tragedy struck early with the death of her twin sister, Jeannette was raised in a female world of love and ritual. She thoroughly enjoyed gossiping and shopping with her mother Emily in downtown Chicago, and attending theatrical performances and musical concerts as often as possible. After her family's move to nearby Evanston, Jeannette attended an all-girls' high-school where she excelled at sports, attended dances and developed crushes on several of her female teachers. Jeannette was never an outstanding academic scholar; however, graduation from Miss Haire's school qualified girls for admittance into any college, save one. Jeannette had not contemplated furthering her education because her mother and older sisters assumed she would be a debutante and marry a wealthy man; however, when her friends at school discussed their plans for college, Jeannette's world expanded. With her father's support and a tenacious spirit that served her well throughout her life, Jeannette took upon the personal challenge of scoring high enough on the entrance exams to attend the one college her high school graduation did not assure, Bryn Mawr, one of the "Seven Sisters" of women's colleges.

Barely passing the rigorous exams, Jeannette embraced her four years at Bryn Mawr. With the support of the college president, M. Carey Thomas, Jeannette gained personal confidence and validation for her dreams and ambitions, including becoming an Episcopal priest. Rather than ridicule, Thomas encouraged Jeannette to study hard and hold fast to her inner desires.

In June 1918, unable to fulfill her mother's requirement of a year in Europe after graduation, Jeannette returned home and enrolled at the University of Chicago to pursue a master's degree in Chemistry. There she met and fell in love with a visiting professor, Jean Felix Piccard, a Swiss. When they became husband and wife the following June, Jeannette was stripped of her native citizenship. Without the legal protection of independent citizenship, Jeannette was one of countless American women who, between the years 1908 and 1922, lost their American citizenship with the simple act of marrying a foreigner. Jeannette spent the first seven years of married life in Switzerland during which time she gave birth to her three sons. Again surrounded by loving women, Jeannette learned the necessary skills for being a good wife and mother from Jean's relatives; however, the post-war years were difficult in Europe, and both Jeannette and Jean longed to return to America.

Like so many women during the 1930s, Jeannette struggled with difficult economic conditions, including the loss of a husband's steady employment. But unlike any other woman, Jeannette had the opportunity, and as she would always tell people, the necessity, to become a licensed air balloon pilot. Jeannette's brother-in-law Auguste Piccard was the first man to pilot a balloon-suspended enclosed gondola, known as an aerostat, to the

lower reaches of the stratosphere and return safely to Earth. With the availability of the new gondola technology, the 1930s became a time of nations flexing their industrial muscle, competing for both stratosphere altitude records and meaningful scientific data, most notably the understanding of cosmic rays. After the fiasco of the 1933 Chicago World's Fair stratospheric attempt, American stratosphere flights became the purview of the United States military, particularly the Army Air Corp and the Navy. Having secured the used balloon and gondola after its Chicago flight, Jeannette and Jean vowed to make a scientific flight themselves. In spite of opposition from corporations, including the Goodyear-Zeppelin Company, the lack of institutional funding, and the nascent militarization of space exploration, Jeannette successfully piloted their October 1934 flight to the stratosphere, thus becoming the first woman in space. After their 1934 flight, Jeannette and Jean were able to capitalize on the publicity and became popular speakers across the country. In addition, Jean accepted a faculty position in the aeronautical engineering department at the University of Minnesota, which he held until his retirement.

During World War Two, Jeannette tried desperately to garner a position in one of the new "women's units" attached to the United States military, but she was denied the opportunity because her youngest son, although seventeen-years-old, was still considered a minor. She was an outspoken critic of colleges' Reserved Officers Training programs (ROTC) being for men students only, advocating that future women leaders could be nurtured and trained with the same opportunities the ROTC offered to the country's men. Jeannette also interviewed for positions through the Civil Service Administration and

looked for employment in the private sector. Although she never secured permanent wartime employment, Jeannette was a blue-star mother three times over, with all her sons eventually serving in the armed forces. In 1942, at the age of forty-seven, Jeannette achieved a personal goal by earning her doctorate in education from the University of Minnesota. But again, she had great difficulty in securing a position in her field.

After the war and for the next two decades, Jeannette lived a fairly typical white, middle-class life in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her sons married shortly after the war, and soon Jeannette became a grandmother multiple times. She and Jean were active in their local Episcopal church and attended many of the Twin Cities' cultural programs. Due to its nepotism policy, Jeannette never enjoyed employment at the university, but she went to Jean's laboratory and classes, and most students understood them to be an academic and research team. During the summer months, husband and wife went to scientific conferences, continued their nation-wide speaking engagements, and enjoyed their cabin on a little island in northern Minnesota.

After Jean's death in 1963, it might have been understandable for the sixty-eight-year-old widow to live out her days quietly in Minneapolis. But for the next eighteen years, Jeannette was anything but quiet. She was approached by National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) officials to become part of their educational program, with her stratospheric endeavors of the 1930s forming a natural connection to the 1960s flights of the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo programs. She toured the country speaking to youth groups, high schools and colleges, and science teacher workshops about the importance of manned-space exploration. Hired to promote the value of space exploration to the

civilian public, and thoroughly enjoying her connections with the space agency, Jeannette waited until after her ties with NASA ended in 1969 to criticize the sexist culture of the organization. However, beginning in 1970, she never let an opportunity pass to criticize the lack of women in the ranks of NASA's astronauts.

Jeannette's outspoken feminist comments were encouraged by the social and cultural milieu of the 1960s and 1970s, but her feminist consciousness was not formed by it. Since she was eleven-years-old, Jeannette wanted to be an Episcopal priest; however, throughout her life it had been impossible because seminaries were closed to women and the Episcopal Church canon law was interpreted as forbidding it. But her personal feeling of discrimination never receded. During the 1930s and their stratospheric work, Jeannette had to argue and press, and sometimes be downright rude and obnoxious to, corporate executives and military personnel in order to secure what was contractually promised. Jeannette was a female civilian operating in an increasingly male military sphere. But in spite of the discrimination encountered, she prevailed and gained personal strength and validation. This is reflected in a 1938 letter to her younger brother Hugh. "You and I," Jeannette wrote, "have both suffered for years by the impression handed down to us by our parents and older brothers and sisters...that we are distinctly on the lower side [of intelligence]. It's a damn lie. I've only found it out recently about myself. We are both of us, both you and I, unusually talented and gifted people."¹ With the success of the stratospheric flight, Jeannette gained confidence in her own abilities.

¹ Letter dated September 21, 1938, Folder 3, Box I: 20, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hugh O.T. Ridlon, 1931-1966, The Piccard Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereinafter referred to as Piccard Family Papers).

It was, however, during the 1960s and 1970s that Jeannette started to meet other like-minded individuals, and her dreams and aspirations for the priesthood were ignited once again. She became acquainted with Father Denzil Carty, the black Episcopal priest from a small parish in neighboring St. Paul. Carty became a source of encouragement, and his involvement in civil rights issues in the Twin Cities and at the University of Minnesota opened Jeannette's eyes. She became aware, not only of the greater discrimination around her, but also the similar discrimination that women and blacks encountered in their lives. Eventually, Jeannette transferred her membership from a white, middle-class parish in Minneapolis to Carty's parish, and joined him in his work.

Jeannette started to meet other women who felt called to the priesthood. She realized she was not alone in her desire, and her spiritual calling, rather than being belittled and dismissed, was supported and nurtured by this loving group. Jeannette had a significant role in the challenge to change centuries' old Episcopal canon law. Tired of waiting for the change to come through the church's legislative bodies, Jeannette participated in the radical act of women's ordination. On a hot July day in 1974, Jeannette and ten other white women, the so-called Philadelphia Eleven, and three retired white bishops, made history at the Church of the Advocate, a predominately black parish in the heart of Philadelphia. The irregular ordination service for these women was witnessed by thousands, but the group's actions on that day resulted in the Episcopal Church entering into a period of ecclesiastical schism. Jeannette became a lightning rod in the debate about ordaining women to the priesthood; she was considered a revolutionary leader by some in the church, and the incarnate of the Devil himself by others. However, the canon

laws did change and beginning in 1977, the last barrier to women's full participation in the Episcopal Church was overcome. When Jeannette died in 1981, she had been formally recognized as a priest for only four years, but she had held onto her dream for over seventy.

Who is Jeannette Ridlon Piccard and why should we be interested in her life?

Jeannette is the only woman to lose her American citizenship by marriage, to reach the lower levels of space with the stratospheric flight, and to become an ordained Episcopal priest. Therefore Jeannette's life offers a rare and unique glimpse into three areas of discrimination for women in the 20th century, and the struggles to overcome social and gender barriers. Historian Rosemary Skinner Keller wrote, "Biography is *one* notable lens for telling the story and stories of history." [Emphasis in original.]² Adding weight to the importance and significance of utilizing biography as an historical tool, noted historian Barbara Tuchman wrote, "As a prism of history...biography is useful because it encompasses the universal in the particular. It is a focus that allows both the writer to narrow his field to manageable dimensions and the reader to more easily comprehend the subject...One does not try for the whole but for what is truthfully *representative*." [Emphasis in original.]³

Historian Linda Kerber makes a compelling argument against the claim that "coverture protected women" by "shield[ing]" them "from certain public burdens." The

² Rosemary Skinner Keller, "'When the Subject is Female': The Impact of Gender on Revisioning American Religious History," in Religious Diversity and American Religious History: Studies in Traditions and Cultures eds. Walter H. Conser, Jr. and Sumner B. Twiss (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1997), p. 107.

³ Barbara W. Tuchman, "Biography as a Prism," in Biography as High Adventure: Life-Writers Speak on their Art ed. Stephen B. Oates (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1986,) p. 94.

doctrine of coverture treated a woman as “covered” by her husband in civic identity and the “assumption” was that married women “owed their primary obligation to their husbands.” Kerber argues that coverture did not protect women but rather was “camouflage” for “practices that made them more vulnerable to other forms of public and private power.”⁴ From the early days of the American Revolution women’s weaknesses were emphasized in juxtaposition to republican maleness. In the areas of citizenship and science one hears the rhetoric of female unreliability, emotionalism, and unpredictability when arguing against women’s inclusion. In the area of religion the arguments against women are similar to the ones mentioned above but also included theological ones such as the “maleness of God” and the male apostolic lineage of priests. An examination of Jeannette Ridlon Piccard’s life allows for arguing Kerber’s “coverture as camouflage” point one step further: Women were not “protected” from the rigors of science and religion; rather the vestiges of coverture protected men’s domains from the inclusion. An analysis of citizenship, science and religion (particularly the Anglican tradition) will illustrate the vestiges of coverture and the public and/or private power that often still made women invisible in 20th century American society.

By the early 20th century, with passage of various married women’s property laws, passage of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment enfranchising women, and other reforms, many of the legal barriers to women’s participation in civil society were being dismantled. However, social custom and gender ideology, that is, the appropriate role(s) for women in society, lagged behind the changes in the law. Remaining persistent was the

⁴ Linda K. Kerber, No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), pp. xxiii-xxiv.

popular notion that a woman derived her identity in American society primarily through her potential roles of wife and mother, regardless of her marital status. The laws were changed, but women were still encumbered by the vestiges of coverture, and therefore for the majority of the 20th century, often referred to as America's century, women remained largely outside positions of influence.

Three areas of influence where women remained a significant minority were in federal-level politics, science and religion. Existing scholarship addresses issues of citizenship and American women's roles in both 20th century science and religion; however, there is a lack of integration or synthesis of the three arenas. Jeannette Ridlon Piccard is a case study that puts real flesh on the bones of exclusionary practices of the nation's immigration laws, the militarization of space, and ecclesiastical canon law. By examining Jeannette's life and experiences, we can analyze how women's limited or non-existent participation affected policies and achievements in these areas, and the changes that resulted when women won a larger role in these endeavors late in the century.

In several ways Jeannette followed the path of many 20th century American white women with marriage, motherhood and the pursuit of higher education. However, she also walked the isolated path of a few, including reaching the stratosphere and fulfilling her spiritual call to the priesthood. Historian Keller reminds us that biography is a useful lens for "telling the story and stories of history," but I would argue that Jeannette's life is more kaleidoscope than single lens. Jeannette's eighty-one years of life began during the first wave of feminism and ended one year before the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was defeated. An ardent supporter of the ERA, Jeannette wrote, "My generation would

say [there was no discrimination] because discrimination was so normal no one thought of it as that. When I was a child, people used to say to me, ‘Why do you want to be a boy?’ and I answered ‘I don’t. I just want to be able to do the things that boys can do.’”⁵

Fortunately, Jeannette was a prolific writer. Often separated from Jean and other family members, she made great use of the typewriter and kept copies of all correspondence, whether it was letters to a family member, a business corporation or an Episcopal bishop. Based on the volume of material at the Library of Congress, it appears that she disposed of few letters, documents, and even scraps of papers; however, it was not necessarily because she was a pack rat. Jeannette was a stickler for details and often referred to previous letters when making a point. But Jeannette also had a sense of self-importance. Certainly she suffered from bouts of self-doubt, but more often than not, Jeannette believed in the importance of her actions, and those of family members. She tried multiple times to publish her father’s memoirs, and after Jean’s death in 1963 she contacted both Random House Publishing and the Macmillan Company in hopes of finding support for a biography-autobiography. In response to the gentle rejection letter from the latter, Jeannette wrote, “You softened the blow as much as possible. An autobiography-biography of Jean and Jeannette Piccard...will have more interest in 1990-2000, a hundred years after our childhood, than it will today.”⁶

I experienced the same lamentable problem with researching and writing Jeannette’s life story that historian Barbara Tuchman once discussed. “One must stop before one has

⁵ “My generation would say,” Folder 1, Box II: 77, Subject: Notes and drafts, 1974-1977, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶ Letter dated October 6, 1963, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeanette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

finished,” she wrote, “otherwise, one will never stop and never finish.”⁷ As a “prism of history,” Jeannette’s “particular” life allows for a “general” examination of the vestiges of coverture in the lives of 20th century American women. With respect to Jeannette, my goal was to be fair, even if she might think I did not get it right.

⁷ Barbara W. Tuchman, The Guns of August (New York: Ballantine Books, 1962), p. xi.

CHAPTER ONE: A FATHER CANNOT BE FEMALE

“Is it not a sign of the times?” E.A. Bradley to Rt. Rev. Henry B. Whipple, 1881⁸

“So long as we assign to woman an inferior position in the scale of being, emphasize the fables of her creation as an afterthought, the guilty factor in the fall of man, cursed of God in her maternity, a marplot in the life of a Solomon or a Samson, unfit to stand in the ‘Holy of Holies,’ in the cathedrals, to take a seat as a delegate in a Synod, General Assembly, or Conference, to be ordained to preach the gospel or administer the sacraments—the Church and the Bible make woman the football for all the gibes and jeers of the multitude...” Elizabeth Cady Stanton⁹

Jeannette Ridlon Piccard was not the first or only woman moved by the Spirit to utilize her gifts in service to the Episcopal Church, the church she loved all her life. Writing from Indianapolis, Indiana, in spring 1881, Rev. E. A. Bradley described the “case” of a woman who had “zeal” and a “sectarian training.” Although the woman had a “recent acquaintance” with the church, Bradley wrote that she was “now well up in the faith.” The problem for Bradley, and the reason for his writing to the Rt. Rev. Henry Benjamin Whipple, the bishop of Minnesota, was that this woman was “ask[ing] for Holy Orders, or the most the Church can give her to authorize her to do missionary work for Ch[rist] [and] His ch[urch].” Bradley’s own bishop in Indiana was disabled, so he was seeking Whipple’s advice and his rationale for both “sending out” women workers and the “grounds” for these actions. Bradley asked, “Is it not a sign of the times?” We do not know what Whipple’s “grounds” were for sending out women workers, but we do know

⁸ P823, Box 16, May 1882 folder, Henry B. Whipple Papers, 1833-1934, Manuscript Collection, Minnesota Historical Society (hereinafter referred to as The Whipple Papers).

⁹ Christian Golder, History of the Deaconess Movement in the Christian Church (Cincinnati, OH: Jennings and Pye, 1908), pp. 527-528.

that the anonymous woman in Bradley's letter was not alone in her desire to serve Christ and His church.¹⁰

Josephine Lapham's entrance into ministry work in 1868 earned her a handwritten congratulatory letter from women's rights leader Susan B. Anthony. In the letter Anthony discussed the importance of women participating in all aspects of national life, and she certainly believed that Lapham's ministerial work was a step in the right direction. Never one to miss a promotional opportunity, Anthony offered to send Lapham copies of her publication "The Revolution" and encouraged Lapham to submit articles about her experiences in the ministry for possible future publication.¹¹

Josephine Lapham and Bradley's "anonymous" woman are examples of women who were challenging the restrictive roles of mid-19th century America. They were serious about fulfilling the Christian injunctions to feed the hungry and take care of the poor, but oftentimes these types of ministries were outside the realm of "proper behavior" for "proper" women.

The middle decades of the 19th century can be characterized by the interconnectedness between religious zeal, sparked by the Second Great Awakening, and the era's popular social reform movements, including temperance, women's rights, peace, and abolition. Religious leaders believed that "religious principles should be broadened so as to include 'all useful social theories' lest Christianity be left behind in the onward march of

¹⁰ The Whipple Papers.

¹¹ Susan B. Anthony Letter, June 22, 1868, Reserve 55, Minnesota Historical Society Manuscripts Collection. Lapham's denominational choice is not discussed in this correspondence.

society.”¹² During the late 1870s, Henry C. Potter, rector of New York’s Grace Episcopal Church and a proponent of the Social Gospel, preached on the “perils of wealth, indifference to social need, the duties of citizenship, children in the slums...and the tenement problems...,” believing that the “church should face these problems squarely if it hoped to retain its hold on thoughtful people.”¹³

Many in the Protestant Episcopal Church, concerned with societal issues and problems, were also examining the role of women in the church. In 1869, during the annual Board of Missions meeting, the members passed the following resolution: “*Resolved*, That a committee be named to report on the important organized work of women in the Church.”¹⁴ This committee reported in 1870 and “requested that the Church recognize” and “promote” the work of its female members in the church. The all-male member Board of Mission’s report was influential in driving conversations and dialogues in the larger church, and as a result, the men of the church encouraged the formalization of “women’s work.”¹⁵ Two avenues available to single women desiring to pursue church service were sisterhoods and deaconess houses.

The expansion of sisterhoods was not without controversy in the Episcopal Church in the United States. Many American Episcopalians perceived “ordered communities of women” as too Catholic for a Protestant denomination.¹⁶ And unlike the English

¹² Charles Howard Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865-1915 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 32.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁴ Golder, History of the Deaconess Movement in the Christian Church, p. 449.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 450.

¹⁶ Historically, the Episcopal Church in the United States struggles but seeks to maintain a delicate balance between its Catholic and Protestant heritages. A concise work in denominational history is: David Hein and Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., The Episcopalians, Denominations in America, Number 11, ed. Henry Warner Bowden (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004).

sisterhoods, “the primary impetus for forming the orders seems to have come from the women themselves,” rather than priests, with “their principal motivation” being “social service rather than religious reform.”¹⁷ Since the “clergy saw the deaconess as a religious extension of the ideal of true womanhood...,” historian Mary Sudman Donovan posits that the development of sisterhoods created “occupational opportunities” or appropriate public spaces for single women during the 1870s and 1880s,¹⁸ developing in ways similar to secular opportunities available to single women. The sisters performed charitable work, as well as teaching and ministering to the socially disenfranchised, presaging the work accomplished in settlement houses.

If many Episcopal bishops, priests, and laymen were hesitant to embrace the “popish” idea of sisterhood, deaconess orders provided a more acceptable and professionalized alternative for single Protestant Episcopal women, and were more wholeheartedly embraced by the Episcopate leadership. At the dawning of the 20th century, the deaconess movement provided an acceptable means of utilizing women’s time, talent and energies in the spiritual and missionary work of the church. Explaining the “phenomenal growth” of the deaconess movement, a contemporary writer stated that the “mission” of the church was to “Christianize the people and nations of the earth, the races and tribes of the globe...Is it to be wondered at that we have finally rubbed the sleep out of our eyes and entertained the thought of placing the hitherto fallow-lying strength of woman in the service of the kingdom of God in the most comprehensive and liberal manner?”¹⁹

¹⁷ Mary Sudman Donovan, A Different Call: Women’s Ministries in the Episcopal Church 1850-1920 (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1986), p. 31.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 50, 90.

¹⁹ Golder, History of the Deaconess Movement in the Christian Church, p. 483.

Paralleling similar developments occurring within the scientific, medical, and legal fields, Episcopal leaders believed deaconess training would provide a level of professionalism and legitimacy to women's ministries, and would better equip women for their spiritual work.²⁰

As envisioned by the churchmen, the office of deaconess reflected 19th century beliefs concerning an appropriate and proper woman's role. A woman could become a deaconess, provided she had the right spirit and the proper training,²¹ but her "highest calling" was marriage. Just as one cannot serve God and mammon, neither could a woman "serve *both* God and her husband." A woman was required to "vacate the appointment of deaconess" upon marriage. However, this was not the case for her male counterpart: a deacon's marital status was irrelevant to his ability to perform his ecclesiastical and social duties.²² Marital status was just one difference for male and female diaconal candidates.

This vestige of coverture was also supported by the difference in pronouncements of the bishop during the diaconal services of male and female candidates. Laying his hands on the man's head, the bishop *ordained* him and gave him "authority" to perform his liturgical and educational duties. In the case of a deaconess, however, the bishop "*set apart*" the candidate, and while "shaking her hand" said, "For the service of our Lord we receive thee." [Italics in the original.] As Donovan argues, "the deacon was given

²⁰ Ibid., p. 461. The professionalism of academic fields is documented in Robert H. Wiebe's, The Search for Order 1877-1920 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967). An analysis of the professionalization of science and its impact on women scientists is provided in Margaret W. Rossiter, Women Scientists in America: Volume One: Struggles and Strategies to 1940 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

²¹ Golder, History of the Deaconess Movement in the Christian Church, p. 461.

²² Donovan, A Different Call, p. 90.

authority; the deaconess was accepted for service.”²³ Kathryn Piccard, Jeannette’s granddaughter and herself an Episcopal priest and scholar of the deaconess movement, states that the “word deacon is derived from words meaning service...”²⁴ Since deacon and its feminine version, deaconess, both mean service, the emphasis on a deacon’s authority and deaconess’s service must be grounded in cultural or social biases.

Called to the Priesthood

Six years after the passage of the deaconess canon, Jeannette Ridlon Piccard and her sister, Beatrice, were born on January 5, 1895, to John Ridlon (1852-1936) and Emily Caroline Robinson Ridlon (1859-1942). Ridlon and Robinson had married sixteen years earlier in the Parish of Trinity Church in Newport, Rhode Island. If Robinson wanted to better her social and financial position, her choice in a marriage partner was a wise one: Ridlon would become a renowned and successful orthopedic surgeon holding positions with numerous Chicago hospitals between 1892 and 1912, and serving as a captain in the Army Medical Corps during the Great War.²⁵ But Dr. Ridlon had a strong personality, and could sometimes be difficult. According to his grandson John, “Ridlon had to be the master of the situation: he was a little proud, a little arrogant. He was a creative man in his own right: tools that he invented for the orthopedic profession are still in use; for example, the Ridlon wrench is used to set bones.” Ridlon also had a sense of self importance, believing “that no sons of great men amount to anything.” According to his

²³ Ibid., pp. 89-90.

²⁴ The Rev. Kathryn Piccard, transcript of interview with author, September 15, 2006, Athens, Ohio. Transcript in author’s possession.

²⁵ The author thanks Richard Piccard for John Ridlon’s obituary information located at <http://library.cpmc.columbia.edu/hsl/archives/archdbs.html>. Ridlon/Robinson marriage certificate, Folder 4, Box I: 87, Subject: Ridlon Family Miscellany, 1806-1922, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

grandson, however, this belief did not apply to the Ridlon daughters, and Jeannette “was able to be herself” and pursue her goals. Jeannette inherited “from her father the idea she could be successful” and that “established doctrine is not always the last word.”²⁶

Dr. and Mrs. Ridlon started a family shortly after their marriage, and nine babies would eventually arrive in the household. Daughter Hester (d.1967) was born in 1880, followed by Constance (1881-1882) who died before reaching eighteen months. The first Ridlon son, John Robert (d.196?), was born in 1883, with Margaret (1887-1973), Noel (1891-1953), Louisa (1892-1900), Jeannette (1895-1981), Beatrice (1895-1898), and Hugh (1897-1969) completing the family.²⁷

The birth of the twins occurred under the watchful eye of the family patriarch, but he relinquished the actual obstetric duties to the family doctor. Although the babies were baptized Jeannette and Beatrice, family members called them Jane and Betty.²⁸

The large Ridlon family experienced tragedy during summer 1898 when Jeannette and Beatrice were just three years old, but the memory was still vivid for Jeannette years later. Their sister Margaret had received a working miniature cast-iron stove for her eleventh birthday and had used it outdoors the previous day to bake potatoes for the neighborhood children. After their nap, Jeannette and Beatrice saw the stove outside and decided to bake potatoes for themselves. They “acquired a box of matches somewhere,” and went downstairs. Jeannette recalled a neighbor visiting with her mother and sister

²⁶ John Piccard, telephone conversation with author, September 29, 2006.

²⁷ The author thanks Kathryn Piccard for the genealogy information based on a 12-30-82 chart of Robert Dean Jensvold; the Ridlon genealogy book; the parish register Vol. III, p. 151, of St. Columba’s Episcopal Church, Middletown, Rhode Island; Kathryn’s memory of a conversation with her father, John Piccard, around 1982; and the New York Times obituary of John Ridlon.

²⁸ Pp. B-1-B-3, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies: undated, Piccard Family Papers.

Hester on the porch: “We kissed Mother and made a proper shy curtsy to the neighbor lady without anyone noticing the box of matches clutched in Betty’s hand. Then we went around the house to the stove...Betty struck the match.”²⁹ Jeannette wrote that taking the lead was characteristic of her sister: “[Betty] was the leader between us two. This will amuse many of those who know me and consider me too aggressive. Betty always ran a half step ahead. She was a fraction of an inch taller. She weighed a half a pound more at birth. I only weighed 7 ¼ lbs. I was the ‘shy twin’ and that is why I am alive today. Betty struck the match.”³⁰

Betty’s “starched white cotton dress” caught fire at her chest, and the flames rapidly grew larger. Hester came quickly to the twins and attempted to put out the flames, but for the rest of her life Jeannette would recall Betty’s “intense” cries and screams. Betty was placed in a separate bedroom, but there was little the Ridlon family could do. The burns were too severe for the three-year-old to overcome, and Betty died three days after the accident. Jeannette remembered “being awakened one night and being carried into a dark room to kiss her good-bye. They hold me over the side of a crib, but I cannot see her, nor feel her. It is as if she were not there, had already gone.”³¹

Although Betty was gone physically, she remained a presence for Jeannette: “only years later I became aware of her presence always with me...I had never been lonely [because] Betty had always been with me. Of course I couldn’t see her, or hear her voice, but I always felt her near me until my Mother died. For years it seemed as though she were a child, my own age. The difference now is that she has not grown old as I have

²⁹ Ibid., pp. B-5 – B-6.

³⁰ Ibid., p. B-6.

³¹ Ibid., pp. B-5 – B-8.

grown old. After mother died there were a number of years when I felt she was with Mother, helping her to adjust to life eternal.”³²

Jeannette’s sister Louisa was two years older than the twins, and their mother often dressed the three youngest daughters alike. Emily Ridlon continued this practice after Betty’s death and it “helped” Jeannette deal with her loss.³³ While still mourning the death of Betty, tragedy struck the Ridlon family again when Louisa succumbed to appendicitis in September 1900. Only five years old, Jeannette had to say good-bye to another of her beloved sisters. Louisa’s funeral was held in the parlor of the Ridlon home because “the bigoted priest of the Episcopal Church in Evanston, St. Mark’s, had refused to allow the ceremony in the [c]hurch because the body was to be cremated.” In a critical tone Jeannette wrote, “The evil that we do for conscience sake! Thinking rules and regulations, Constitution and Canons, the Laws of Moses, are more important tha[n] loving and caring! It takes a great person to accept the freedom Jesus taught and that poor priest was after all little in Spirit as well as name, The Rev. Arthur Wild Little. Father always called him little Wild Arthur.”³⁴

Despite, or perhaps because of, the loss of three young daughters, the Ridlon family was not religious “in the formal sense,” but Jeannette’s parents, “especially” her father, were “deeply religious in a basic way...” From her father Jeannette “learned...the importance of truth, honesty with oneself even more than to others, caring for and doing for others, and accepting and fulfilling responsibility.”³⁵ Jeannette’s father had no

³² Ibid. p. B-8.

³³ Ibid., p. B-9.

³⁴ Ibid., p. B-11.

³⁵ Ibid., p. B-23.

specific religious affiliation; however, her mother Emily “had always been brought up in the Episcopal Church...,” because Emily’s mother was English. Jeannette’s parents married “according to the Rites of the Protestant Episcopal Church,” reflecting the Anglican influence in the family. Referring to her mother, Jeannette said that “her church affiliation was never a matter of choice. Consequently mine wasn’t either.”³⁶

Jeannette’s attendance at Sunday school was haphazard at best, neither encouraged nor discouraged by her parents, but by the time she was eleven years old she knew the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles’ Creed. When joining her confirmation class in 1906 she “pa[id] no attention to the fact that all the other children were all older.” Jeannette’s confirmation was “on the second Sunday after Easter” in 1907. Boys and girls were separated, boys receiving their confirmation first. Jeannette recalled an “uneven” number of girls in her class. Typically the bishop placed one hand on the head of each confirmand, but “when he came to me, both hands stayed on my head the entire time. His voice was vibrant and beautiful. ‘That she may continue Thine forever and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more until she come into Thine everlasting kingdom. Amen.’” For Jeannette the confirmation service was very moving and inspiring. She remembered, “I wanted to be confirmed [and] I wanted to receive the Communion...I also knew I wanted to be a priest.”³⁷

At this young age, on two separate occasions, Jeannette verbalized her desire to be a priest rather than the acceptable calling of deaconess. One evening Emily Ridlon came

³⁶ Ibid., pp. B-25-B-26. Marriage certificate, Folder 4, Box I: 87, Subject: Ridlon Family Miscellany, 1806-1922, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

³⁷ Pp. B-27, B-31-B32, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard, Autobiographies: undated, Piccard Family Papers.

into her daughter's "darkened" room and asked, "Darling, what do you want to be when you grow-up?" Jeannette remembered that she "didn't realize that the question was a rhetorical opener, that she expected me to be a little shy and finally admit that I wanted to be married and have eleven children just like she did..." or that, as she later surmised, her mother wanted to talk about the "birds and the bees." Jeannette responded to the inquiry with, "Oh, Mother, I want to be a priest." Of her mother's reaction Jeannette wrote, "Poor darling, she burst into tears and ran out of the room."³⁸ Jeannette commented years later, "It [was] the only time I ever saw my Victorian mother run."³⁹ John Piccard helps contextualize this Victorian reaction: "My grandmother, Emily, was brought up to be a lady. My mother thinks she spent her lifetime living down the fact that she was only an innkeeper's daughter...My mother was definitely brought up to be a lady. When she went to prep school and finishing school, before going to Bryn Mawr, she was [on her way] to school once and I don't think she was late for school. She probably got in the door before the bell rang, but it was close. She came up the walk, she was already taking her gloves off, and the headmistress met her inside the door and gave her bloody hell and a proper chewing out. A lady does not take her clothes off outside. This was part of my mother's upbringing."⁴⁰

About this same time, Jeannette shared with a "young, pudgy" priest in the parish her goal and calling to be a priest. "'Impossible,' he said, 'women can't be priests.' Why not? 'Well for one thing teaching is a part of the work of a priest and St. Paul forbade women

³⁸ Ibid., pp. B-27-B28;

³⁹ Letter dated August 16, 1971, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁰ John A. Piccard, transcript of interview with author, October 14, 2006 in Athens, Ohio. Transcript in author's possession.

to teach. Oh, yes, you can teach children and other women but you can't teach men!" To Jeannette, "the contempt in his voice made 'women' sound like something lower than a slug or an insect, lower than anything else in all creation. The word 'men' glowed in a golden light."⁴¹ Reflecting as an elderly woman on over seven decades of ecclesiastical instruction, Jeannette remembered: "I was always taught, especially in Church, that I was inferior to men and yet somehow, though I accepted it, I never really believed it. Consequently, I kept on going to Church. I kept on reading the Bible. I kept on telling people I wanted to be a priest."⁴²

Jeannette haphazardly kept a diary throughout much of her life, but early entries provide a window into the "female world of love and ritual" experienced both at home and at school.⁴³ Her adolescent crushes toward several teachers are described in a May 1909 entry: "This is my program of the graduation exercises at the school of oratory [Senior Recital School of Oratory Northwestern University]. The invitation was all the more acceptable as it came from Miss Miller. She took me to it. My crush on Miss Miller is worse than the one on Miss Maxwell and it started first."⁴⁴

By 1910, the number of Ridlons living at home decreased, what with the older siblings off to jobs or college, so Jeannette moved with her parents and youngest brother Hugh to

⁴¹ P. B-29, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies undated, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴² P. B-31, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies undated, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴³ For a discussion of the term and concept "female world of love and ritual," see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," in Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron DeHart, eds. Women's America: Refocusing the Past, Sixth Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 168-183.

⁴⁴ Extant diaries date from 1906 to 1976. Entry dated May 21, 1909, Folder 5, Box II: 84 Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Diaries and Meditations, Piccard Family Papers.

the near north side of Chicago.⁴⁵ During that summer, Jeannette and her family spent time at Emily Ridlon's family home in Newport, Rhode Island, where Jeannette experienced the Newport social scene, including the National Lawn Tennis Championships, the Newport Horse Show, and any dance that a fifteen-year-old girl could attend. Jeannette loved to dance.⁴⁶ At the end of summer, Jeannette returned with her family to Chicago, but instead of attending public school, Jeannette enrolled at the nearby University School for Girls, located on Lake Shore Drive. The school was referred to by the students as "Miss Haire's School" after the head administrator and Jeannette walked to the school, taking time to enjoy the scenery: "School began again today. I walked in the morning to school. Had Spring fever in the afternoon and sort of monkeyed around."⁴⁷ Perhaps she was experiencing "senioritis."

Jeannette's diaries provide a glimpse both into her life at "Miss Haire's" and her relationship with her mother. Some entries are quite short: "November 1910: I pledged Pi Delta Pi sorority." Yet other entries are rich in detail: "Thursday, December 5, 1912: I played basketball. Guarding Gretchen Sandmeya the first half and she only made one basket. The second half I guarded Jessie Hobson who made three baskets. In the evening

⁴⁵ P. 2, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeanette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁶ Folder 5, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Diaries and Meditations, Piccard Family Papers. John A. Piccard, transcript of interview with author, October 14, 2006. Transcript in author's possession.

⁴⁷ P.2, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers. Entry dated Tuesday, April 16, 1912, Folder 5, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Diaries and Meditations, Piccard Family Papers.

much to my delight I went with Mother to see Ruffo in Pagliacci. The more I hear his voice the more I wonder at it. It's marvelous."⁴⁸

Jeannette flourished at Miss Haire's School, but she had not considered going to college. This changed during her junior year when some of her classmates stated they were going to Bryn Mawr College after graduation and planted the idea in Jeannette's mind. A diploma from the University School for Girls could get Jeannette into any college in the country except Bryn Mawr, which had special entrance examination requirements.⁴⁹

Whether it was because she was the youngest girl in the family, or perhaps because she was a particularly attractive young woman, Jeannette's mother and siblings were against her going to college. Their goal for Jeannette was to be a debutante and marry well, but Jeannette did not share her family's sentiments. Jeannette lacked self-confidence regarding any physical beauty, so although it might have been appropriate from a social perspective, Jeannette did not see herself as a debutante. Unfortunately, her family was not encouraging in the "beauty department." According to Jeannette's granddaughter, Jeannette was "apparently a very good looking young girl," but her siblings, "not wanting her to get a swelled head, didn't tell her, so she thought she was unattractive."⁵⁰ There was much discussion in the Ridlon household about Jeannette's future, but when her father questioned her directly about whether she planned to attend

⁴⁸ Folder 5, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Diaries and Meditations, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁹ P.2, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁰ Kathryn Piccard, transcript of interview with author, September 15, 2006. Transcript in author's possession.

college, Jeannette answered firmly, “Yes, sir, I do.”⁵¹ So with an inner drive and determination that would surface throughout her life, Jeannette, not liking “the idea that there was some place that I could not go if I wanted to,” decided to “take the [Bryn Mawr] exams just so no one could say I couldn’t go there.”⁵²

It was one thing to want to go to Bryn Mawr, but Jeannette found that it was altogether another thing to get accepted to the college. Jeannette took the exams during her junior year but passed only English grammar. She failed algebra, geometry, physical geography, and Latin prose. Jeannette’s confidence was challenged: “It really shook me. I just had to take those exams again and pass them, and then, of course, I’d have to go. Going anywhere else would have meant defeat.”⁵³

It would take Jeannette two more years to accumulate the necessary points for entrance to Bryn Mawr College. Graduating from Miss Haire’s school with eight points, Jeannette attended the Shipley School for Girls, in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, for one year. For Jeannette attending Shipley was like a fifth year of high school, but Shipley specialized in preparation for Bryn Mawr College. Finally, in 1914, Jeannette was conditionally admitted, although still lacking English Literature and French Grammar, to Bryn Mawr College as a member of the Class of 1918.⁵⁴

Support at Bryn Mawr College

⁵¹ P. B-36, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies: undated, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵² P. 2, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers and p. B-34, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies undated, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵³ PP. B-34-B-35, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies: undated, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁴ P. B-36a, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies: undated, Piccard Family Papers and p. 2, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

Jeannette, along with 101 other young women, began her collegiate studies at Bryn Mawr College in fall 1914. A standard practice of the president, M. Carey Thomas, was to meet individually with incoming freshmen to discuss their personal goals and direct their choice of curriculum.⁵⁵ Jeannette remembered vividly this first meeting with Thomas. Sitting behind her desk, the president, wearing a mortar board and the female academic dress of a “stiffly starched white skirt and blouse covered by a doctor’s gown,” “welcomed” Jeannette into her office. Jeannette recalled that at Bryn Mawr the students and professors, especially the women, were encouraged to wear academic dress to class because “it established status.” For the students, there was also a practical reason. According to Jeannette, students wore the gowns “sometimes especially on rainy days” because they “made excellent rain coats.”⁵⁶

But before Jeannette could discover the benefits of an academic robe in inclement weather, there was the matter at hand: she had to make it through her freshman interview with the president of Bryn Mawr College. Although Jeannette was nervous at their meeting, Thomas made “no great effort” to put her “at ease.” M. Carey Thomas was extremely forthright, asking Jeannette, “What do you want to do with your life?” Jeannette reacted in embarrassment to the question, remembering her mother’s reaction to her response to this same inquiry. “Looking away and down at my hands...everywhere except at [Thomas],” Jeannette stated, “[S]omething impossible.” The word

⁵⁵ P. B-39, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies: undated, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁶ Pp. B-39-B-40, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies: undated, Piccard Family Papers.

“impossible” must have intrigued Thomas because “her whole attitude changed. She sat forward, eyes shining...”⁵⁷

According to historian and Thomas biographer Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, Thomas “constructed an understanding of women, their problems and possibilities, unique in her era. Unlike many of her contemporaries, Thomas did not accept the central conception of separate male and female spheres. She saw one universe of thought, expression, and action. In her work for women, she sought to open doors for them that led to the center stage of intellect and power.”⁵⁸ So, rather than running out of the room when Jeannette declared she wanted to be a priest in the Episcopal Church, Thomas “sat back in her chair” and stated very matter-of-factly, “Oh, my dear, by the time you graduate that may be entirely possible.” Horowitz argues that Thomas “support[ed]...women’s full participation in higher education, the need to blend electives with the traditional college course, and the right of women to receive the culture and science that they shared with men.” Therefore, Thomas encouraged Jeannette to major in philosophy and psychology and suggested that the first two years be committed to the required studies in English, Latin, and science. In her final two years, Jeannette could “devote” her “energies to whatever seem[ed] most important.” With the supportive words “I shall follow your career with interest” ringing in her ears, Jeannette left the president’s office and entered into the academic and social world of Bryn Mawr College.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. B-40.

⁵⁸ Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, The Power and Passion of M. Carey Thomas (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), p. 402.

⁵⁹ P. B-41, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies undated, Piccard Family Papers and p. 3, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers. Horowitz, The Power and Passion of M. Carey Thomas, p. 385.

Although nervous during her initial interview, Jeannette had “great admiration and affection” for Thomas and remembered her as “an amazing woman.” Jeannette “always” enjoyed quoting Thomas’s statement about Bryn Mawr graduates: “It is not true that college graduates do not marry. Statistics prove that 50% of the Bryn Mawr College graduates are married and 75% have children.” Jeannette’s fondness for Thomas was sincere but remembrance of her favorite quote was a bit off. Horowitz writes that Thomas enjoyed “amusing” audiences with “slips of the tongue and malapropisms,” with one of her “favorites” being that “in X years 17 percent of you will be married, and 25 percent of you will be mothers.” Though the percentages are different in these two versions of Thomas’s statement, both reflect the idea that Bryn Mawr women were to be on society’s cutting edge.⁶⁰

To describe Jeannette as an exceptional student would be erroneous. She possessed more sheer determination than academic prowess. Jeannette failed a number of courses during her freshman year, including an English class that she failed twice in consecutive semesters. Failure in a class automatically led to a required conference with the professor. About one such meeting Jeannette recalled that the professor “shuffled” the papers on his desk and said, “Your final examination wasn’t too bad. It might have passed but you had a daily average of 10. What was the matter?” With freshman wisdom, Jeannette responded, “You never called on me when I was prepared.” Realizing the

⁶⁰ Pp. B-37-B41, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies undated, Piccard Family Papers. Horowitz, The Power and Passion of M. Carey Thomas, p. 385.

professor's "disgust," she added, "I'll admit I wasn't prepared very often but you never did call on me when I was."⁶¹

In addition to her academic work, Jeannette was involved in the religious life of Bryn Mawr College, serving two years as chairman of the Religious Meetings Committee.⁶² This was an opportunity for Jeannette to have more individual contact with President Thomas because all potential Sunday night preachers had to have Thomas's approval prior to their visit. It was a challenge to arrange for a different preacher each week, but Jeannette was up to the task: Thomas taught her how to "present a case, to think on my feet, and refute objections. I never failed to get her approval but once." That one time was when the committee wanted to break with tradition and have a "special series" of talks rather than a different preacher each Sunday. However, they did not trust Jeannette to present their case on her own, so the entire committee traipsed into Thomas's office. Thomas rejected the idea with what Jeannette remembered as an "unimportant reason," and when she began to respond in polite protest, the other girls shushed her by saying, "Miss Thomas has said no and she means no." Jeannette and Miss Thomas exchanged "disgusted looks. A good project was doomed and neither of us could do anything about it."⁶³

One of the guest preachers at Bryn Mawr during Jeannette's freshman year was Father F.C. Powell, who served at the Mission House, Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE),

⁶¹ Pp. B-41-B-42, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies undated, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶² Letter dated April 17, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications, 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶³ P. B-39, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies undated, Piccard Family Papers.

on Bowdoin Street in Boston. Father Powell fulfilled the roles of spiritual advisor and trusted confidante, with Jeannette often seeking his advice. Upon her return from Europe in the mid-1920s, Jeannette again sought out Father Powell, and the two exchanged correspondence during a challenging period of her life from 1927 through 1934. In his letters to Jeannette, Powell always typed “Affectionately yours,” and added in handwritten script, “God bless you my dear child!”⁶⁴

Jeannette’s ultimate goal was to finish her four years of college and receive her bachelor’s degree, believing that “whatever I might do in life, this seemed...to be a basic requirement.” Nevertheless, her strong calling to the priesthood remained.⁶⁵ During the Bryn Mawr years she composed an English essay regarding women in the priesthood, tentatively considered joining a convent, and sought spiritual advice from her new friend and confidante, Father Powell.

In 1915, Thomas’s decision to hire a young, Harvard-educated man to “assess” the English department enveloped the faculty in controversy for many years. After an extensive study, Howard J. Savage’s report, which was “harshly critical of existing methods,” was presented to Thomas. Starting with the 1915 fall term, Savage, now English department head, began implementing the proposed reorganization.⁶⁶

During winter 1916, under Savage’s supervision, Jeannette wrote her second-year composition, entitled “Should Women Be Admitted to the Priesthood of the Anglican

⁶⁴ Folders 1-9, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁵ P. 7, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁶ See Horowitz, *The Power and Passion of M. Carey Thomas*, pp. 410-411.

Church?”⁶⁷ Writing from personal conviction, and referencing a 1913 report to the Episcopal Church’s General Convention that concluded more priests were needed than were presently serving, Jeannette systematically refuted the arguments put forth by opponents of Episcopalian women being ordained to the priesthood. The report of the Committee on the State of the Church stated: ““While we gain communicants at the rate of over two per cent per annum, we gain less than one per cent in clergy. The ratio is not sufficient. More ministers are needed. Promising fields lie vacant. Men for missionary work are harder to get than money.” From this Jeannette posited that “Common sense would urge that women be accepted to fill the places which men for lack of numbers cannot occupy.”⁶⁸

Jeannette argued that women were morally capable, mentally able, and physically fit for such ordination. Perhaps influenced by the decade’s women suffragists and the agitation for equal voting rights, and the words of support from President Thomas, Jeannette’s essay provides us with a glimpse of her nascent feminist beliefs. In response to the argument that “...it is as foolish for a woman to want to be a priest as for a man to want to be a mother,” Jeannette wrote, “They apparently do not see that the question of whether it is foolish for anyone to want to do thus and so has no connection whatever with whether she has the right or should be permitted to do thus and so.”⁶⁹

During the summer between her sophomore and junior years, Jeannette went on her first three-day retreat at the Community of St. Mary the Virgin, located in Peekskill, New

⁶⁷ Essay entitled “Should Women Be Admitted to the Priesthood of the Anglican Church?” Folder 1, Box II: 85, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Manuscripts and Typescripts, 1913-1925, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

York. Resigned to the fact that the priesthood was closed to women, Jeannette was “tempted by the thought of becoming a nun.” About eight months later, in spring 1917, Jeannette asked Father Powell for his advice about joining a convent. His response demonstrated he could not envision Jeannette living the life of a monastic, and certainly not the idea of her becoming a priest. Powell told Jeannette, “No...the life of a religious is not for you. Some day you will marry and perhaps you will have sons who may become priests.”⁷⁰

Father Powell remained consistent in his thoughts regarding Jeannette, the priesthood, and women’s roles in the church. In 1927 correspondence to his “dear child” he said: “...Long ago I spoke to you and I told you that you might have sons who might become priests of the Living God. He has given you sons. Whether they will be priests or not—taking as we say, Holy Orders—I do not know. But I do know that in answer to your prayers, they may each one be true servants of God and accomplish great things in the world, binding up the broken-hearted, strengthening the feeble knees. Any view, it seems to me, of a suffering and redeeming Saviour, Who takes away sin, is incomplete without that of Christ as a Restorer—the Restorer of all that the world withers. I can hardly imagine any more glorious vocation for a woman then [sic] to have been the mother of Charles Lindbergh, and I have little doubt he would be the first to acknowledge that everything that has come to him in the world has been due under God, to his mother.”⁷¹

⁷⁰ P. 7, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷¹ Letter dated June 16, 1927, Folder 1, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

Jeannette reflected years later that “I had had three sons but none of them has become a priest. That vocation was not theirs. It has remained mine.”⁷²

Jeannette’s 1916 essay and Father Powell’s advice, both in 1917 and 1927, reflected societal and ecclesiastical tensions in early 20th century America. Many women were agitating for a formal, political voice within secular society, and at the same time, some women were agitating for a formal, political voice within the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The path would be difficult in the former, and almost perilous in the latter. Although American women were successful in securing their right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, such was not the case for Episcopal women who desired a formal voice within their own denomination.

Conflation of Secular “New Woman” and Sacred Spaces

In 1919, during the triennial meeting of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, many delegates believed it would be a watershed event for the structure and governance of the denomination. Commenting on the upcoming October convention in Detroit, the Right Rev. Arthur S. Lloyd, president of the Board of Missions, stated, “This Convention will probably be a turning point in the history of the American Church.”⁷³ Another participant, the Rev. Mr. Shipler, wrote, “Probably no convention ever held in the Episcopal Church has felt the pressure of world problems so hard upon its heels....”⁷⁴ Shipler may have been referring to Russia’s Bolshevik revolution and its aftermath; the

⁷² P. 7, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷³ Arthur S. Lloyd, editorial written for *The Spirit of Missions*, Vol. LXXXIV, No. 10 (October, 1919), p. 637, quoted in C. Rankin Barnes, “The General Convention of 1919,” *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, Vol. 21, June 1952, p. 224.

⁷⁴ Rev. Mr. Shipler, *The Churchman*, Vol. CXX, No. 14 (October 25, 1919), p. 20, quoted in Barnes, “The General Convention of 1919,” p. 248.

Versailles Peace Treaty and its shaping of the new world order; the debate over the League of Nations; and President Woodrow Wilson's poor health. Regardless of world issues and problems, the delegates meeting in Detroit were upbeat and confident. The Episcopal Church was riding a tide of positive growth: during the previous forty years, the number of parishes had doubled and membership had tripled.⁷⁵ In addition, Episcopalians were confident that theirs was a "bridge church," one that "embodied the best aspects of Catholicism and Protestantism, tradition and modernity, diversity and unity—qualities that other Christians might soon have the wisdom to recognize."⁷⁶

The First World War had precluded major church decisions during the 1916 general convention, so delegates' expectations were high that a number of key issues, including modernization of the church structure, funding of church missions, and the content of Christian education, would be addressed and voted on during the Detroit meeting.⁷⁷ There were two issues on the agenda of particular concern to women's positions in the national church: the first would allow women full voting privileges in church assemblies and the ability to serve as elected deputies to conventions; the second would give women the right to hold seats on the Board of Missions, the major governing body of the Episcopal Church. However, as historian Mary Donovan argues, the issue of "women's position in the Church had a low priority for most deputies."⁷⁸

Since 1871, the Women's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church was the primary supporter for the Board of Missions. Meeting in

⁷⁵ See *The Episcopal Church Annual 2006*, p. 20.

⁷⁶ Barnes, "The General Convention of 1919," p. 112.

⁷⁷ Donovan, *A Different Call*, p. 160.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Baltimore, Maryland, the 1871 General Convention “approved a vaguely worded statement allowing ‘the formation of such Christian organizations as may consist with the government and rules of the Church.’” With that “lukewarm endorsement,” Mary Abbot Emery was hired by the Board of Missions and “assigned the task of organizing a voluntary association of churchwomen.” Thus founded, the Women’s Auxiliary “establish[ed] a woman’s sphere within the masculine hierarchy of the Episcopal Church.” The auxiliary provided both the financial support and the means of collecting and distributing supplies to overseas missionaries, including educational materials, and by 1900, the women were “not *auxiliary* but *essential* to the Board of Missions.”⁷⁹

Therefore, an affirmative vote to give women seats on the policy-making Board of Missions would be both recognition of the importance of the women’s work and an acknowledgement of the equality of women within the Episcopal Church. But this change in church structure was a two-edged sword. The auxiliary allowed women to carve out a space within the male-dominated hierarchy of the church but with no formal power. Giving women formal voices of power, via voting privileges, would make the Women’s Auxiliary superfluous, and therefore there was a risk of losing that woman-dominated and controlled space.

At their 1919 Triennial Meeting, the women in the auxiliary recognized the “momentous decision” facing them: “aware of the weighty responsibilities” given to members of the Board of Missions, “they wondered if women were ready for those responsibilities.” After much debate, the women voted “overwhelmingly” to elect women to the Board of Missions and put forth the names of eight women to hold board positions,

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 66-67, 86.

“conditional on the General Convention’s approval.” The elected women responded in a manner commensurate with their station in life. “...Properly dressed in their church-going suits and hats,” the women “posed for a photographer, proud to be taking this new step in the Church’s history.”⁸⁰ But the potential for power is considerably different from actual power.

While the auxiliary women were debating the pros and cons of women on the Board of Missions, the male bishops and deputies were debating changing the overall structure of governance of the church, including putting forth the framework for election of the presiding bishop by the House of Bishops, rather than it being based on seniority of consecration.⁸¹ The approved reorganization resulted in the elimination of the Board of Missions, and the women voted by the auxiliary to serve on the board would never take their seats. Instead, the Episcopal Church would be governed by a newly adopted canon stating, “The Presiding Bishop and Council, as hereinafter constituted, shall administer and carry on the Missionary, Educational and Social Work of the Church, of which work the Presiding Bishop shall be the executive head.”⁸² In case Episcopal women had any doubt about their place in this new form of church governance, “the canons specifically provided that only men could be elected to the council.” As historian Donovan argues, since only men could be priests and bishops, it seems redundant for the canon to specifically to exclude women, but perhaps the fear was that “laymen” could be interpreted as including women. Although two women were appointed to the Missions and Church Extensions board, they were only “token members—two women on a board

⁸⁰ Donovan, *A Different Call*, pp. 161-162.

⁸¹ See Barnes, “The General Convention of 1919,” p. 249.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 240.

with a total membership of twenty...⁸³ The importance of this new structure was emphasized in an editorial published in the Anglo-Catholic oriented periodical The Living Church⁸⁴ and is worth quoting in full: “The proposal is quite radical but there is much to be said for it. It gives to the national Church a body capable of representing the whole Church between General Conventions, and it assumes the practical work of the Church on behalf of the Church itself, all branches being properly coordinated, instead of relegating it to separate and independent boards.”⁸⁵

It is difficult to agree with the editorial’s composer that the new governing structure was capable of representing the entire million-plus member church when women were excluded from its structure,⁸⁶ but also intriguing is that as the United States Congress was granting American women full suffrage,⁸⁷ the Episcopal Church was slamming the door on women’s political participation in church matters. If not moved by social pressure, neither was the American component of the Anglican Communion influenced by the Mother Church in England extending voting rights to women⁸⁸ or changes in church governance experienced by other American denominations.⁸⁹

At the 1916 General Convention in St. Louis, Missouri, Robert H. Gardiner had proposed a measure “granting women the right to serve as deputies,” which was “judged

⁸³ Donovan, A Different Call, p. 162.

⁸⁴ See Manross, A History of the American Episcopal Church, p. 323.

⁸⁵ The Living Church, Vol. LXI, No. 11 (July 12, 1919), p. 371, quoted in Barnes, “The General Convention of 1919,” p. 239.

⁸⁶ See The Episcopal Church Annual 2006, p. 20.

⁸⁷ The 19th Amendment was passed by congress in June 1919. It was ratified in August 1920.

⁸⁸ See Donovan, A Different Call, p. 164.

⁸⁹ See Jean Miller Schmidt, Grace Sufficient: A History of Women in American Methodism, 1760-1939 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), pp. 224-227.

inexpedient,” and tabled by the committee on constitutional amendments.⁹⁰ Gardiner, a long-time supporter of women’s issues, was undeterred by the committee’s actions. He began to organize a “stronger showing of public support”⁹¹ for the proposal’s presentment at the Detroit convention, and hopefully a hearing on the convention floor leading to a positive vote by both the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. Gardiner organized a petition drive that garnered over 1,000 signatures of priests and laypeople. His sister’s Community of St. Mary supported this work, and Gardiner received enthusiastic support from the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross (S.C.H.C.). The Companions, a group of women from a diversity of backgrounds and professions including academic, medical, and social work, began a letter writing campaign, in addition to signing the petitions.⁹²

With three years of hard work behind him, Gardiner presented to the deputies in Detroit his resolution to change diocesan representation to general conventions. His goal was not to change the clergy formula, but to delete the term “Laymen,” from the existing canon. The new canon would read such that a diocese could be represented by “not more than four communicants of this church.”⁹³ Since women were considered communicants in the church, passage of Gardiner’s resolution would pave the way for women to be deputies, with voting privileges, at general conventions.⁹⁴ Gardiner’s rationale for including women cut both ways: acknowledging the growing work of deaconesses,

⁹⁰ Donovan, *A Different Call*, p. 163.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 148-154.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 163.

⁹⁴ Tables of statistics for communicants give one total, not separate totals for men and women. See *The Episcopal Church Annual 2006*, pp. 20-21.

sisterhoods, and missionaries, and applauding their “efficiency...and influence upon social and industrial questions...,” he argued, “If they were part of the legislative body of the Church, they would be guided and, if necessary, restrained by the opinion of the whole Church.” Donovan argues that Gardiner was walking a fine line in his presentation to the convention, perhaps playing to both sides of the argument. If women “are allowed to do most of the work of the Church...Why should they not share with lay men the direction of that work?”⁹⁵

Gardiner’s arguments were not convincing and the resolution was soundly defeated in both the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops.⁹⁶ This defeat, coupled with the exclusion of women from the newly established National Council, effectively eliminated women from any significant political power within the Episcopal Church. To be fair, women were not totally excluded from the ruminations of the all-male gathering of bishops and convention deputies. The central committee of deaconesses was charged with “modernizing” the order and “making it more appealing to ‘the large number of intelligent and progressive women who are seeking or might be led to seek community service,’” and to look into changing the pension fund rules so that deaconesses might be eligible.⁹⁷ In addition, a committee was established by the bishops and deputies “to study the whole matter of Women’s Work in the Church...”⁹⁸ There were no women appointed to serve on the committee.

⁹⁵ Donovan, *A Different Call*, p. 163.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 164.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 165.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 164.

Reflecting on the administrative changes that had been enacted at Detroit, the Rev. Dr. George P. Atwater, chairman of the Ohio delegation, commented, “We have become a national Church in organization, and, what is better, in spirit and determination...A national consciousness has dawned...National thinking, national action, and national cooperation will result in glorious national achievement.”⁹⁹ In 1919, the Episcopal Church of the United States had an opportunity to include women in this “glorious national achievement.” In 1916, 21-year-old Jeannette had advocated for much more than women sitting on a National Council. She boldly challenged her church to open the episcopacy, the actual center of church power, to women through ordination into the priesthood, and by extension, the bishopric. Jeannette and other Episcopal women would be disappointed by their church. As Donovan argues, the “consequences” of the reconfiguration of the church structure and changes in the church constitution, “defined two forms of membership...Both men and women as communicants were expected to work and pray and give...” to the church, but “only men served as political representatives.” Any amendment to change this constitutionally based “segregated system” required the majority action of two consecutive General Conventions. This would be exceedingly difficult as long as men were the only representatives and women had no voice.¹⁰⁰ By 1920, Episcopal women had the right to vote for the president of the United States, but it would take generations of agitation and social upheaval before the structure of the denomination was changed and women’s political voices were heard in the pulpits and at the conventions of their beloved Episcopal Church.

⁹⁹ Barnes, “The General Convention of 1919,” pp. 240-241.

¹⁰⁰ Donovan, *A Different Call*, p. 164.

CHAPTER TWO: THE CAPRICIOUSNESS OF CITIZENSHIP

"I do not stand...for any...kind of hyphenated American...I do not believe in German-Americans or Irish-Americans...[and m]ost emphatically I myself am not an Englishman once removed! I am straight United States!" Theodore Roosevelt¹⁰¹

"I have 'always favored allowing women to vote...[but]I do not attach the importance to it that you do...I think that, under the present laws, [a woman] can get all the rights she will take; while she is in many cases oppressed, the trouble is in her own attitude, which laws can not alter.'" Theodore Roosevelt to Susan B. Anthony, 1898¹⁰²

"As to the voting we did just the same thing as you. I voted for [Franklin D.] Roosevelt [sic] and Jeannette for [Herbert] Hoover [sic]. She says he is so good looking. I hope the Republican [Party] is definitively gone to the dogs, but it may come back anyhow. Anyhow, why did we ever grant the right of vote to married women if they use it only for voting the opposite ticket? In a modern state a woman should have the right of vote only if she is ready to stand by her husband. But, for heaven's sake, don't tell it [to] them." Jean Piccard to his father-in-law John Ridlon, 1932.¹⁰³

Jeannette thoroughly enjoyed her time at Bryn Mawr College, but the family agreement was that she could attend college provided she toured Europe for a year after graduation. Mrs. Ridlon never liked the idea of Jeannette going to college, and was bound and determined that Jeannette would be a society girl and marry properly: after all, she was the daughter of a prominent orthopedic surgeon. But Jeannette's had been a wartime class. She remembered, "Many of us began knitting socks, sweaters, [and] rifle mittens for our boyfriends...Khaki wool was everywhere."¹⁰⁴ Due to the conflict overseas, Jeannette was unable to fulfill her mother's requirement of spending a year in Europe.

¹⁰¹ Theodore Roosevelt, The Writings of Theodore Roosevelt, ed. William H. Harbaugh (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc. 1967), pp. 223, 225

¹⁰² Theodore Roosevelt, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Vol. II. The Department of the Navy, continued, 1898, ed. Elting E. Morison (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), pp. 892-893.

¹⁰³ Letter dated November 17, 1932, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁴ P. B-45, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies: undated, The Piccard Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereinafter referred to as Piccard Family Papers).

The opportunities for 1918 college graduates were circumscribed. Jeannette wanted to go to General Theological Seminary in New York City to pursue her goal of becoming an Episcopal priest, but “it was completely impossible at that time.”¹⁰⁵ Although the United States was at war, women were not allowed to join any military branch. Jeannette had considered becoming a “farmette,” since farming did run in the family. She could become a female farm laborer and take a man’s place in agriculture during the war effort.

Although Bryn Mawr alumnae had visited the campus promoting the farmette program, and Jeannette liked the farmettes’ “smart, clean, blue...uniforms,” her father counseled her against it, saying, “you don’t want to be a farmer for the rest of your life...do something even if it means further education.”¹⁰⁶ Jeannette’s chemistry and physics courses during her freshman year had heightened her interest in these subjects, and so consequently she scheduled all the elective physics and science classes possible. If she was not going to be a “farmette” she could still do her part, reasoning that a science degree would allow her to “free a man for the front.” So, she applied to the University of Chicago to pursue a master’s degree in chemistry.¹⁰⁷

Jeannette began her academic work at the University of Chicago during the summer of 1918, receiving a teaching assistantship in beginning chemistry. Jeannette was one of approximately 283,000 women in college at this time, an increase of almost 200,000 over

¹⁰⁵ Letter dated January 25, 1972, Folder 5, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1973, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁶ P. B-68, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies, undated, Piccard Family Papers. For a discussion of the U.S. government’s efforts to enlist women for agricultural work during World War I and World War II see Katherine Jellison, Entitled to Power: Farm Women and Technology, 1913-1963 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁷ See Margaret W. Rossiter, Women Scientists in America: Volume 1 Struggles and Strategies to 1940 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982) for an excellent discussion and overview of the chemical industry and women chemists during the war years. See especially Chapter Five.

1900. She epitomized the typical demographic of an eastern college woman: raised in a middle-class family supported by a father who was either a businessman or in a profession. Jeannette's receiving a financial boost with a teaching assistantship was also not unusual for the time. In 1928 the American Association of University Women (AAUW) conducted a survey of women holding advanced degrees and found that over 70 percent had received some form of fellowship assistance, although it was "usually not enough to cover expenses."¹⁰⁸

One of the faculty members at the University of Chicago during the summer of 1918 was Visiting Professor Jean Felix Piccard, a French-speaking Swiss chemical engineer and organic chemist. When war in Europe broke out in 1914, Jean Piccard was the "privat-docent" to Professor Adolph von Baeyer¹⁰⁹ at the University of Munich, a very promising position for the up-and-coming chemist. However, when the Germans invaded neutral Belgium, Piccard resigned his position in protest and returned to his native Switzerland. The University of Lausanne offered him a position and he taught there for two years, until he received a call from the University of Chicago, where his research work was already well known.¹¹⁰

Professor Piccard formally met his student Jeannette at the start of the fall quarter. It was an extremely inauspicious beginning. Jeannette needed Piccard's permission to

¹⁰⁸ Dorothy M. Brown, Setting a Course: American Women in the 1920s (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), pp. 133-134, 155-156.

¹⁰⁹ Jean Piccard served as Professor von Baeyer's assistant from 1910 to 1914. The Institute of the Aeronautical Sciences correspondence and papers, 1938, Box 2, Folder 3, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

¹¹⁰ BIOGRAPHY: Jean Piccard was educated..., n.p., Folder 11, Box II: 39, Biographical and Bibliographical Material 1916-1981, Piccard Family Papers. Jean arrived in New York in September 1916. According to Jean's son Paul, the University of Chicago wanted "a German. But because of World War I they settled for a German trained Swiss." See p. 6, interview conducted at the Space Center in Alamogordo, New Mexico, October 17, 1998. Copy of transcript in author's possession.

enroll in his organic preparations course, but she was intimidated by him. His reputation was one of brilliance and high standards, and for Jeannette he was a “fearsome creature to one who lived with a career of failure.” She went to his office to discuss the matter, and without looking up from the work he was doing he said, “You can take my course if you want to.”¹¹¹

Professor Piccard’s perceived unresponsiveness to his student did nothing to bolster Jeannette’s self-confidence. Although she had always received better than passing grades in her chemistry classes at Bryn Mawr, she was sure that Piccard would “discover” her “ineptitude” during the fall quarter. She was so afraid of him she would leave the laboratory by a back door when he entered. Eventually a doctoral student, who had also been intimidated by the professor and had responded to his presence in a manner similar to Jeannette, scolded her and called her “foolish” for running out of the laboratory. Regretting his past behavior, the now-wise doctoral student counseled Jeannette, saying, “That man has more technique in his little finger than all of the rest of the staff put together. If you don’t learn from him now you’ll never get another chance.”¹¹² Jeannette made up her mind to confront her fear of Professor Piccard and began staying in the laboratory when he was present. This was not only beneficial for her studies, but little by little each began to make a more favorable impression on the other.

Their first “date” was November 11, 1918, Armistice Day. Jeannette recalled that Piccard stood “quietly in the doorway, looking the class over, and said ‘you know, I don’t think we ought to work today...’” He and the students proceeded to go on a picnic to the

¹¹¹ Pp. B-73-B74, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies, undated, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. B-73 and B-75.

sand dunes of Indiana. This was the first of several picnics to this area; however, during their future trips the professor and Jeannette were typically not accompanied by the other chemistry class members.¹¹³

Initially, Mrs. Ridlon was not impressed with either Professor Piccard or with the idea of Jeannette seriously dating him. She considered people in the teaching professions, including those at the university level, to be on par with “upper servants.” But by the spring of 1919, Jeannette realized that Jean was falling in love with her, and truth be told, the feelings were reciprocal. However, realizing that marrying a foreigner “would mean a greater change” in her “life than marriage to a fellow citizen,”¹¹⁴ Jeannette went to her father for guidance. Dr. Ridlon’s advice to his daughter was straightforward: if Jeannette believed that there was “no other man in the world” like Jean, and she was “ready to go with him anywhere in the world,” then she should marry the professor.¹¹⁵ Jeannette realized that her father’s questions “struck to the root of the matter.” Was Professor Jean Piccard like no other and would Jeannette follow him to the ends of the earth?¹¹⁶

The answer to both questions was a resounding yes, and in July 1919, Jeannette and Jean announced their engagement and impending nuptials to the chairman of the chemistry department, Dr. Julius Stieglitz. Turning to Jeannette, he responded, “Miss Ridlon, you must turn in your thesis and take your master’s examination before you are

¹¹³ Ibid., p B-77.

¹¹⁴ P. 6, Foreword to the Japanese Edition of TEN MILES HIGH AND TWO MILES DEEP by Alan Honour, Folder 6, Box II: 39, Subject: Piccard, Jeannette: Araki, Tomotane, 1976-1979, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁵ P. B-82, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁶ P. 6, Foreword to the Japanese Edition of TEN MILES HIGH AND TWO MILES DEEP by Alan Honour, Folder 6, Box II: 39, Subject: Piccard, Jeannette: Araki, Tomotane, 1976-1979, Piccard Family Papers.

married.” Jeannette protested, saying that his requirements were impossible to meet because the wedding was to take place in just one month. But Stieglitz would not relent, and he required Jeannette to sit for the exam in two weeks. Faced with the Stieglitz-imposed deadline, Jeannette completed the work on her thesis paper, *The Constitution of the meri-Quinoid Salts*, and studied for her master’s examination. Jeannette received an “A” on her examination, and Professor Piccard promised Stieglitz that he would be responsible for publishing Jeannette’s thesis.¹¹⁷

Two weeks after passing her master’s examination, 24-year-old Jeannette Ridlon married¹¹⁸ 35-year-old Jean Piccard on August 19, 1919, in a formal noontime service at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, in Chicago, Illinois. Jeannette always trusted her mother’s fashion sense, so even for this very momentous occasion, her bridal gown was designed and made by Emily Ridlon.¹¹⁹ The customary groom’s wear for a formal noontime wedding was heavy wool pinstripe trousers and a cut-away coat. However, blue jackets with white flannel trousers were becoming proper summer wear for dances and semi-formal occasions, so taking into account Chicago’s August heat and “fe[eling] a little like iconoclasts,” Jeannette and Jean broke with tradition and the groom wore the more summery attire. With financial concerns always an issue, Dr. Ridlon was mortified that

¹¹⁷ *The Constitution of the meri-Quinoid Salts*, dissertation, 1919, Folder 3: Piccard, Jeannette Ridlon (1895-1981), Box 3, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives. P. 5, August 16, 1971, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁸ Jeannette joined 67% of 1909-1918 Bryn Mawr graduates who chose marriage. See Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 120-121.

¹¹⁹ See pp. B-87-B-88a, B-89, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard, Autobiographies: undated, Piccard Family Papers.

his youngest daughter's wedding cost "somewhat more than \$1,000."¹²⁰ On this, her special day, Chicago-born Jeannette Ridlon became Mrs. Jean Felix Piccard. She also lost her American citizenship.

Jeannette did not enter into marriage to the professor without considerable thought. She had never met her fiancé's family and did not know if, like Jean, they were educated people. She noted that "many a girl has married a foreigner, a professional person or an army officer assuming his family had the same social status only to find them impossibly crude." Jeannette knew of a French family's daughter who married into a Turkish family, and once the couple moved to Turkey, the French family never saw their relative again, even though the father and brothers tried repeatedly over the years. Jeannette understood that Switzerland was not Turkey, yet she still held reservations regarding marriage to Jean.¹²¹ However, Jeannette's love for Jean won the day, and Jeannette became one of an untold number of American women who lost their citizenship based on their marriage choice.

Jeannette did not write extensively on her thoughts or feelings about the citizenship issue; however, she seems to have approached it with her typical forthrightness. Jeannette compared herself to her sister-in-law, Marianne, the French wife of Jean Piccard's twin brother Auguste: "Marianne would have liked to keep her French citizenship, I, too, would have liked to keep my U.S. citizenship but this was impossible for either of

¹²⁰ P. B-89, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated January 18, 1921, Folder 5, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers. For an analysis of the importance of a white wedding in a girl's life see Katherine Jellison, *"It's Our Day": America's Love Affair with the White Wedding, 1945-2005* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008).

¹²¹ P. B-80, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies, Piccard Family Papers.

us...The difference between Marianne and me was that I could accept it. She could not...It was not that I gave up being a United States citizen. I added becoming Swiss to being American.”¹²² Regardless of whether Jeannette believed she was giving up her American citizenship, the legal truth is that she was.

Ironically, Jeannette may have never had to lose her American citizenship, but lacking independent citizenship she had no legal recourse and was impacted by Jean’s career choices and “mistakes.” After the newlyweds arrived in Switzerland in 1919, Jean continued his correspondence with Julius Stieglitz regarding a potential position and return to the University of Chicago. Writing Stieglitz in October 1921, perhaps finally realizing that the opportunity for a return was gone, Jean opened up emotionally to his former colleague:

I’m sorry that the answer could not be different but I was very glad to have it anyway so that I could immediately take the necessary steps. I now see that, hesitating between Lausanne and Chicago, I have from the very beginning taken too much the letter rather than the spirit of the offers made me. Your first letter asked me to come to Chicago for one year and I asked only a leave of absence from Lausanne. When, therefore, you offered me a permanent situation in Chicago I unfortunately felt myself bound by my promise to come back to Lausanne. Then, when I left Chicago, I made the opposite mistake and considered the situation in Lausanne as a permanent one. Also I has [sic] the somewhat naïve idea that since Lausanne wanted me I had to give my services to my own country. Were things to be done over again, I would immediately after my landing in America make an application for citizenship so that I could consider as my country the United States in which I had been received with so much magnanimity.¹²³

¹²² Pp. 3-4 & 7, Folder 6, Box II: 39, Subject File: Jeannette Piccard: Araki Tomotane 1976-1979, Piccard Family Papers.

¹²³ Letter dated October 12, 1921, Folder 3, Box I: 52, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1901-1929, Piccard Family Papers.

Jean explained to Steiglitz that several events had occurred that changed the situation in Lausanne. The salary that had been promised by the university was not coming through, and when a higher salary had been re-negotiated Jean felt resentment from his Lausanne colleagues. In addition, the man Jean was hired to replace because of his upcoming retirement chose not to retire due to the bad post-war European economy. And finally, Jean was not appointed professor as promised. He concluded the letter saying, "...the first pleasure of being in my old country and seeing my parents being over---I gradually felt an increasing desire to go back to Chicago. I have certainly fulfilled my moral obligations toward Switzerland and the greatest thing which could now happen to me would be that I could once call the United States my country...under the circumstances I don't care to stay in Lausanne the rest of my life..."¹²⁴ While Jean was lamenting to Steiglitz about his predicament and his desire to become an American citizen, his 26-year-old wife, now a mother of a 17-month old toddler,¹²⁵ and who *had* called the United States "my country," was living far from her native land and family.

Jeannette was not the only woman to lose her American citizenship upon marriage, but the actual number remains unknown. Some of the women affected by the expatriation law were famous: Ruth Bryan, daughter of William Jennings Bryan; Gladys Vanderbilt, of the famous and wealthy Vanderbilt family; and Harriot Stanton Blatch, daughter of women's rights advocate Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Others were known only to their kith and kin.¹²⁶ How did this happen to these American women? Why did it happen? Why

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Jean Auguste Piccard (John) was born July 25, 1920.

¹²⁶ Candice Lewis Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own: Women, Marriage, and the Law of Citizenship (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 170; J. Stanley Lemons, The Woman Citizen: Social

did native-born American women lose their citizenship upon marriage to a foreigner?

The questions are not easy to answer because matters of immigration and naturalization, ideas about expatriation and citizenship, and biases and prejudices regarding race, ethnicity, and gender are all intertwined.

The Expatriation Act of 1907 is an often overlooked piece of legislation. Although a country's sovereign right to determine citizenship is critical and is a fundamental right of the state, the determination of who is a citizen, and who has rights, can change. Who is granted full citizenship, particularly in the United States, is a malleable concept. The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868 and referred to as the "citizenship amendment," states that if a person is born in the United States she or he is a U.S. citizen. It further guarantees against states making any laws that "deprive" citizens of "life, liberty, or property, without due process...." This amendment also offers "equal protection" of the law to all American citizens.¹²⁷ But from 1907 to 1922 this was not the case for many native-born American women, including Jeannette Ridlon Piccard.

Typically laws evolve, often "correcting" previous oversights in legislation. For many members of the United States Congress, and perhaps for some men in Theodore Roosevelt's Administration, the law passed in 1907 was doing just that, correcting existing law and codifying existing international practice. But for the first time in United States history all women, including native-born white women, lost their American

Feminism in the 1920s (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p. 65. For a sociological report on the impact of the law for poor women in Chicago see Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, Marriage and the Civic Rights of Women: Separate Domicil and Independent Citizenship (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931), p. 63.

¹²⁷ The Constitution of the United States and The Declaration of Independence (Washington, D.C.: Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution, 1990), pp. 25-26.

citizenship if they married a foreigner, even if they never intended to leave the country. For example, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) member and native New-Englander Marjorie P. Hoinko grew up “cherish[ing] American traditions,” and as a teacher passed these treasured ideals to the next generation. Yet when she married a Polish man she became a Polish citizen, even though, as she stated, “I had not then and have not since been nearer to Poland than Eastport, Maine.”¹²⁸

The law was not codifying existing U.S. practice, although it brought the United States in line with other countries’ practices and interpretations of citizenship. But is there more to the story? Was there a “feeling” in the United States, often emanating from Theodore Roosevelt’s White House, that something should be done about the “unpatriotic” women who were “above” marrying a good American man? Only after ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment granting women’s suffrage in 1920 did women possess the political power necessary to force Congress to change the law. Appeals made by legislators and women’s groups before 1920 often fell on unsympathetic or uninterested congressional ears.

Origins of the Expatriation Act of 1907

Theodore Roosevelt, the leader of the “Rough Riders,” was confident in his beliefs about American men, American women, and immigrants, writing extensively about what he believed to be “true” American ideals: “if a man lacks patriotism, love of country, and pride in the flag...[he] is a useless creature, a mere encumbrance to the land.” During the 1890s, Roosevelt took every opportunity to espouse his beliefs, typically following the

¹²⁸ Marjorie P. Hoinko, “Naturalizing a Yankee: An American Woman Who Married an Alien Before the Cable Act Became Law Measures the Red Tape That Restored Her to Citizenship,” The Woman’s Journal (April 1928): 13.

theme that “to be a first-class American [was] fifty-fold better than to be a second-class imitation of a Frenchman or Englishman...”¹²⁹ But Roosevelt was also concerned about the immigration situation in the United States. In his first presidential speech to Congress, he stated that the “present immigration laws” were “unsatisfactory.” He was concerned not only about the “influx” of “cheap labor,” but that those immigrants who were not “physically fit,” or economically capable of taking care of themselves, were finding their way to American shores.¹³⁰

In 1903 Roosevelt wanted Congress to develop some system “that would keep the undesirable immigrants out entirely,” and he encouraged representatives to pass “wise” immigration laws that would “protect and elevate” the nation generally. Roosevelt espoused the nativist belief that if immigrant men were of “good character,” then their offspring would be “worthy fellow citizens of our children and grandchildren.”¹³¹ Still, the president did not want to make immigration a political issue. He wanted to highlight the issue during his messages to Congress rather than making immigration reform part of a Republican platform plank.¹³²

Nevertheless, by December 1905 there seemed to be more urgency in Roosevelt’s message. He told Congress that in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1905, 1,026,000 alien immigrants came to America, a figure that exceeded the total number of new arrivals that had come to the continent’s eastern shores “between the landing at Jamestown and the

¹²⁹ Theodore Roosevelt, American Ideals, The Strenuous Life, Realizable Ideals, Vol. XIII, The Works of Theodore Roosevelt, ed. Hermann Hagedorn (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1926), pp. 17-18; 45.

¹³⁰ Theodore Roosevelt, State Papers as Governor and President: 1899-1909, Vol. XV, The Works of Theodore Roosevelt, ed. Hermann Hagedorn (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1926), pp. 95-96.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 96 & 175.

¹³² Theodore Roosevelt, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Vol. IV., The Square Deal: 1903-1905, ed. Elting E. Morison (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 803.

Declaration of Independence.”¹³³ Although during the decade of 1901-1910, the percentage of immigrants to native-born remained relatively constant; America absorbed the second highest number of immigrants in its history, a total of almost 8.8 million, with the majority from three countries: Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Russia.¹³⁴

The question of immigration was of “vital interest” to Roosevelt, but so was the parallel issue of naturalization, particularly fraudulent naturalization.¹³⁵ In his 1904 speech to Congress he stated that the naturalization of “improper persons” was a “curse to our government.” Responding to an increase in the number of “false, fraudulent, and improper cases of naturalization of aliens” coming to the attention of the executive branch, Roosevelt called for a “comprehensive revision” of the naturalization laws. He was concerned that the courts were not issuing a “standard” certificate of naturalization, and that there was a “lack of uniformity” in the rules concerning naturalization. Roosevelt believed that some courts were strict while others were not, and so he called upon Congress “to establish a uniform rule of naturalization.” He wanted Congress to determine which courts had power to naturalize, and to make the naturalization applications “uniform.”¹³⁶

Reflecting the Progressive era’s belief in scientific inquiry and systemization, Roosevelt wanted Congress not only to change the defective naturalization laws, but to propose legislation that would address and correct the complicated and inadequate laws

¹³³ Roosevelt, *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt*, Vol XV, p. 317.

¹³⁴ Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (Princeton, NJ: HarperPerennial, 1991), pp. 123-125.

¹³⁵ Roosevelt, *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt*, Vol XV, p. 319.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 247-248. Until Roosevelt’s request to examine the naturalization process, courts had some latitude with both the type of testing involved for naturalization, and the wording that was on naturalization certificates.

regarding citizenship. He wanted to know: what acts by an individual constituted expatriation; how long could an American citizen live abroad and receive the protection of the U.S. government; and how much protection should be given to an individual who “declare[d]” his intention to become a citizen, but had yet to go “through the naturalization process?” Roosevelt believed the U.S. laws were “silent” about these questions.¹³⁷ Congress did not act at this time on Roosevelt’s immigration concerns, but Roosevelt continued to press his case.

On June 29, 1906, Roosevelt asked Charles P. Neill, the Commissioner of Labor, to conduct “as full an investigation of the whole subject of immigration as the faculties at hand will permit.” Roosevelt wanted Neill to work in “cooperation” with the Commissioner General of Immigration, and for reasons not stated, to “carefully avoid all unnecessary publicity in the carrying on of the investigation.” Roosevelt considered it “a confidential investigation” for his own use.¹³⁸

However, by 1906, Congress was addressing some of the immigration concerns Roosevelt was raising. In April the Senate passed a joint resolution that provided for a commission “to examine the subjects of citizenship of the United States, expatriation, and protection abroad.” This commission was to make “recommendations” for congressional “consideration.” In June, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs reported: “legislation is required to settle some of the embarrassing questions that arise in reference to citizenship, expatriation, and the protection of American citizens abroad.” The House

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 248.

¹³⁸ Frank P. Sargent was the Commissioner General of Immigration. Theodore Roosevelt, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Vol. V. The Big Stick: 1905-1907, ed. Elting E. Morison (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 323.

Committee recommended that the State Department conduct the investigation and prepare its findings for Congress.¹³⁹

On December 18, 1906, Secretary of State Elihu Root submitted the board's "labors...commending it to the consideration of the House as a very clear and thorough exposition of this most important subject, upon which it seems to be generally agreed legislation is much needed." The committee recommended three types of legislation: constructive legislation, declaratory legislation, and executive regulations.¹⁴⁰ Declaratory legislation specifically addresses when an "act declaring that expatriation of an American citizen may be assumed." Those conditions include if the person becomes naturalized in a "foreign state"; if she or he takes an "oath of allegiance" to a foreign state; or if he or she lives for five years in a foreign state without "intent" to return to the United States. However, one's "right to expatriation" can only be "exercised in times of peace."¹⁴¹

Also included in this section of the report was a recommendation that an "American woman" marrying a "foreigner" should take "during coverture"-that is during her marriage-the "nationality of her husband." Only upon her husband's death, or through a divorce, would her American citizenship have the potential to be reinstated. Conversely, the board "declared" that a "foreign woman" who marries an American citizen "acquires American citizenship and retains that citizenship even if her husband dies, or the marriage ends in divorce," unless she "makes a formal renunciation of her American

¹³⁹ 59th Cong. 2d sess., 1906. H.Doc. 326. Citizenship of the United States, Expatriation, and Protection Abroad, pp. 1-2 & 4.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 3.

citizenship.”¹⁴² In both cases the woman assumed her husband’s nationality. Her citizenship was “dependent” on that of her husband.

To support their recommendation for women’s citizenship, the committee referred to court cases that stood in opposition to each other. For instance, the 1830 *Shanks v. DuPont* decision concluded that the “status of an American woman was not changed by her marriage to a foreigner.”¹⁴³ However, since the 1883 case *Pequignot v. Detroit* gave an alien wife American citizenship, it would be logical to assume the converse, that “marriage to an alien husband denationalized her.”¹⁴⁴ The committee wanted to avoid “conditions of dual allegiance,” basing their decision on the rationale that citizenship equates to allegiance. Therefore a person with a dual citizenship will necessarily have dual allegiance. The committee concluded the rationale of the *Pequignot v. Detroit* decision “seem[ed] the sounder.”¹⁴⁵

In January 1907, Representative James B. Perkins (R-NY)¹⁴⁶ introduced H.R. 24122, in reference to the “expatriation of citizens and their protection abroad,” to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.¹⁴⁷ The committee referred the bill, accompanied by the State Department committee’s report, to the House, and that body began discussion of the bill on January 21.¹⁴⁸ Representative William S. Bennett (R-NY)¹⁴⁹ was the lone voice

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁴⁵ 59th Cong. 2d sess., 1906. H.Doc. 326. Citizenship of the United States, Expatriation, and Protection Abroad, p. 33.

¹⁴⁶ James B. Perkins (1847-1910) served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1901 until his death, <http://politicalgraveyard.com/bio/perkins.html>.

¹⁴⁷ Congressional Record Vol. 41, Part 2, p. 1120.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 1377.

raised concerning the status of American-born women marrying foreigners. Perkins assured him that this was “presently the law” and that this was “simply a codification of the law...the courts had decided that a woman forfeits her citizenship by marrying an alien.”¹⁵⁰ In essence, Perkins said, “the bill contained nothing new.”¹⁵¹ The House voted 89-10 in favor of the bill and it was sent on January 22 to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.¹⁵²

Although the Senate made several amendments to the bill, there was nothing said regarding Sections Three and Four, the sections that pertained to women’s citizenship status. The legislation was sent to the White House, and on March 3, 1907, Roosevelt signed it into law. With the stroke of his pen, female American citizens potentially lost their birthright to citizenship because of whom they might marry. The 1907 act revoked all married American women’s claims to an independent nationality.¹⁵³

Rationale for Section Three of the Expatriation Act

Although one can accept the general reasoning for the passage of the Expatriation Act of 1907, understanding the necessity of Section Three is more challenging. Was Representative Perkins correct in his assessment that “derivative citizenship” was already the law? Or were there also supposedly patriotic concerns behind the motives for its inclusion?

¹⁴⁹ William S. Bennett (1870-1962) served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1905 to 1911 and then again from 1915 to 1917. He ran unsuccessfully in 1910, 1936, and 1944, <http://politicalgraveyard.com/bio/benjamin-bennet.html>.

¹⁵⁰ Congressional Record Vol. 41, Part 2, p. 1463.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 1465.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 1501.

¹⁵³ Comparison: A Collection of Nationality Laws of Various Countries as Contained in Constitutions, Statutes, and Treaties, eds. Richard W. Flournoy, Jr. and Manley O. Hudson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 601; and H.Doc 326, Section 5b and Expatriation Law Section.

The State Department committee's report indicated that it wanted to "avoid" the problem of "dual nationality," and so it made sense for a woman's citizenship to follow her husband's.¹⁵⁴ However, the committee did not indicate that this was the current law. Gaillard Hunt, a member of the committee, confirmed this viewpoint, stating that the "first naturalization laws," beginning in 1789, "said nothing about married women...Courts held that naturalization was a personal privilege."¹⁵⁵ Women experienced independent citizenship in that marriage had no effect on their citizenship status. For almost seventy-five years after the American Revolution, a woman's hold on her nationality appeared to be about the same as a man's: *not* directly affected by marriage or coverture. Historian Nancy F. Cott argues that "the 1830 Supreme Court decision, *Shanks v. DuPont*, confirmed that marriage to a foreigner did not ipso facto contravene an American woman's allegiance."¹⁵⁶

However, by 1855 women's citizenship status was specifically addressed. Congress passed a law "requiring a foreign woman marrying an American to be considered an American."¹⁵⁷ Representative Francis Cutting (D-NY) stated the law's intention: "by the act of marriage itself the political character of the wife shall at once conform to the political character of the husband."¹⁵⁸ This, Cott argues, "made the foreign-born wife's

¹⁵⁴ H.Doc. 326, p. 33.

¹⁵⁵ Gaillard Hunt, "The New Citizenship Law," The North American Review Vol. CLXXXV (July 5, 1907): 538.

¹⁵⁶ Nancy F. Cott, "Marriage and Women's Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934," American Historical Review Vol. 103 (Dec 1998), p. 1455. Cott argues that "Story's inference was that marriage itself did not, and could not, alter a woman's membership in a national polity." See pp. 1455-1456.

¹⁵⁷ Hunt, "The New Citizenship Law," p. 538.

¹⁵⁸ Cott, "Marriage and Women's Citizenship in the United States," p. 1456.

consent to marry her ‘definitive act’ of political consent.”¹⁵⁹ In many cases, it was not necessary that the woman ever resided in the United States to become a citizen.

Why did Congress make this change in 1855? Political Scientist Virginia Sapiro offers several possible reasons: the U.S. was “following” Britain’s lead; the expansion of the societal ideology of the “cult of true womanhood”; a woman’s citizenship was politically unimportant.¹⁶⁰

In 1844, Britain had passed the “Alien’s Act,” which declared “that any woman married to a British citizen was deemed to be naturalized herself.” Although the U.S. statute was very similar to its British counterpart, Cott points out that there was a “racial specificity proviso” in the U.S. law. This meant that only women “who might lawfully be naturalized under existing laws” could become American nationals. “It was a racial qualification,” Cott argues, “[because] the wives who were welcomed into the American polity in 1855 were free white wives.”¹⁶¹

The second reason the United States Congress changed the law was that American society was “expanding the ideology of subordination of the wife to the husband.” Sapiro argues that “within 19th century ideology of ‘the cult of true womanhood,’ the political character of the woman should change upon marriage so that she might be of better service to her husband.” In her role as “socializer of her husband’s children,” it was

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Virginia Sapiro, “Women, Citizenship, and Nationality: Immigration and Naturalization Policies in the United States,” *Politics and Society*, Vol. 13, No.11 (1984): 9.

¹⁶¹ Cott, “Marriage and Women’s Citizenship in the United States,” p. 1458.

important for her to be “tied to his political fortunes,” and “inculcate the appropriate national values in the children.”¹⁶²

The final reason Sapiro puts forth is that citizenship was “relatively meaningless” for women. Women did not have “formal political rights, such as voting”; therefore, men did not view women as “participants in the political system in the broadest sense.” Although birth established a female’s “first tie to a jurisdiction of the state,” when she married it was “her moral and legal tie to the husband...that determined her political character.”¹⁶³

However, the issue of American women marrying foreigners was not part of the 1855 act. Since marriage to an American husband automatically bestowed American nationality upon an alien woman, was the converse true? Did marriage to a foreigner “deprive an American woman of U.S. citizenship?” Secretaries of state, attorneys general, and various courts debated the question for the next fifty years. It is not surprising that John P. Roche refers to the period 1790 to 1907 as the “years of confusion” when discussing the idea of “loss of American nationality.”¹⁶⁴

In April 1876, Secretary of State Hamilton Fish stated that “it never has been ‘incontrovertibly established’ as the law of the United States that an American woman by marriage with an alien loses the quality of a citizen.”¹⁶⁵ However, Chester A. Arthur’s secretary of state, Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, believed that “the wife’s political status was identical to that of her husband, and suggested that a woman who married an alien

¹⁶² Sapiro, “Women, Citizenship, and Nationality,” p. 9. In 1966, Barbara Welter coined the term “cult of true womanhood” to represent mid 19th century societal ideals for women. See Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood,” American Quarterly 18 (Summer 1966): 151-174.

¹⁶³ Sapiro, “Women, Citizenship, and Nationality,” p. 9.

¹⁶⁴ John P. Roche, “Loss of American Nationality: The Years of Confusion,” The Western Political Quarterly, Vol. 4, No. 2 (June 1951): p. 288; Sapiro, “Women, Citizenship, and Nationality,” p. 9.

¹⁶⁵ Roche, “Loss of American Nationality: The Years of Confusion,” p. 268.

might have dual nationality.” Roche argues that “the most popular theory was that an American woman’s citizenship was in ‘abeyance’ during her marriage.”¹⁶⁶

Federal courts “failed to agree on a solution” about the citizenship question. In 1883, U.S. District Court Justice Henry B. Brown¹⁶⁷ held in *Pequignot v. Detroit* that “since Congress stated in 1855 that marriage to an American husband automatically gave an alien wife American citizenship, it would be logical to assume the converse,” that in fact, “marriage to an alien husband denationalized” an American woman. Contrary to Brown, in 1893, District Judge Edward Coke Billings,¹⁶⁸ of the Louisiana Circuit Court, “reached the opposite conclusion,” ruling in *Comitis v. Parkerson* that “nothing had occurred to alter the validity of the *Shanks v. DuPont* rule.” However, in 1898 a “third case, *Jens v. Landes*, reaffirmed...Brown’s views.” By the “end of the 19th century,” Roche argues, “Brown’s holdings seemed to reflect the general judicial opinion.”¹⁶⁹ As Cott posits, in 1907 “Congress ended indeterminacy on this question by expressly declaring ‘that any American woman who marries a foreigner shall take the nationality of her husband.’”¹⁷⁰ Congressmen were clarifying what had been a matter of debate and, by doing so, establishing a new, universal opinion.

In addition to whatever other motivations may have been behind the inclusion of Section Three in the Expatriation Act, I would submit that women who married

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 289.

¹⁶⁷ Justice Henry Billings Brown (1836-1913) served on the U.S. District Court Eastern District of Michigan from 1875 to 1891, and in 1890 was appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court by President Benjamin Harrison. www.ku.edu/~ojclass/brown/profiles/profile_hbbrown.html and www.cab.uscourts.gov/lib_hist/courts/supreme/judges/brown.html.

¹⁶⁸ Justice Edward Coke Billings (1829-1893) served the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana from 1876 until his death in 1893. <http://politicalgraveyard.com/bio/billings.html>.

¹⁶⁹ Roche, “Loss of American Nationality: The Years of Confusion,” p. 289

¹⁷⁰ Cott, “Marriage and Women’s Citizenship in the United States,” p. 1461.

foreigners, for whatever their personal reasons, were considered by many to be unpatriotic. Sapiro argues that “a woman’s marriage to an alien continued to be viewed as a voluntary statement on her part.” In essence, it “indicated her lack of commitment to America...”¹⁷¹ Roosevelt certainly believed this to be the case; in fact, he “deplored hyphenated” Americanism.¹⁷²

Roosevelt attacked the European “nobleman” who crossed the Atlantic to marry an “American girl.” *New York Times* writer John Callan O’Laughlin described Roosevelt’s 1908 speech to Congress: “If the President could have his way, marriages between American girls and foreign noblemen would be forbidden...[He thinks] that the least admirable of all our citizens [is] a man whose son is a fool and his daughter a foreign princess.”¹⁷³

Others rivaled Roosevelt in expressing their sentiments against transnational marriages. The Reverend Dr. R. B. McArthur, of New York City’s Calvary Baptist Church, addressed the church’s Current Events Class about “the type of women who have contracted international marriages.” He asked rhetorically, “What is the price these American women and their ambitious fathers and mothers are willing to pay for titles?” He answered his own question, saying, “American girls have sold their womanhood, their country, their language and their religion for husbands who are peculiarly contemptible cads and altogether worthless...These abominable transactions bring the blush to the

¹⁷¹ Sapiro, “Women, Citizenship, and Nationality,” p. 17.

¹⁷² Leroy G. Dorsey and Rachel M. Harlow, “‘We Want Americans Pure and Simple:’ Theodore Roosevelt and the Myth of Americanism,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* Vol. 6 (Spring 2003): p. 75. The chapter’s opening quote is from Roosevelt’s essay “Fear God and Take Your Own Part,” Theodore Roosevelt, *The Writings of Theodore Roosevelt*, ed. William H. Harbaugh (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc. 1967), pp. 223, 225.

¹⁷³ John Callan O’Laughlin, “Roosevelt Censures Foreign Marriage,” *New York Times*, 3 May 1908. p. 18.

cheek of every honorable American man and woman.” McArthur not only “talked the talk,” he “walked the walk:” he refused to perform the marriage between “the first American woman to carry great wealth to England,” Mrs. Louis Hammersley, and the Duke of Marlborough.¹⁷⁴ But legislators were not to be outdone by ministers.

Representative Charles McGavin, of Chicago, “denounced the international marriage habit.” Speaking before the United States House of Representatives, McGavin said that the “women sacrifice their souls and their honor on the altar of snobbery and vice...I wonder what the early pioneers who battled with the Indians, challenged the forest, and braved the Winter’s winds and snows to establish a Government where manhood might be recognized for its true value, instead of...[by]...accident of birth, would say from their graves if they could see these women.” McGavin was “critical” of those “particular women who have made a mockery of the most sacred relations of life—of those not satisfied with any other name than Countess Spaghetti or Macaroni.” The woman to be admired was one who “spurned the wiles of earls, lords and counts for the love of His Majesty, an American Citizen.”¹⁷⁵

However, American girls were not the only ones attacked. In a speech to the Cincinnati Manufacturers’ Club, Charles Davis, one of the founders of the National Association of Manufacturers, criticized the British for “coming over here every day, and trad[ing] us a second-class duke or a third-class earl for a first-class American girl...”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ “Says Our Women Influence Europe,” New York Times, 20 January 1908, p. 6; Richard W. Davis, “‘We are All Americans Now!’ Anglo-American Marriages in the Later Nineteenth Century,” Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 135, No. 2 (June 1991): 145, n.16. Upon the duke’s death, the Duchess of Marlborough remarried but still retained a title, this time becoming Lady William Beresford.

¹⁷⁵ “American Women of Titled Scorn,” New York Times, 29 January 1908, p. 3.

¹⁷⁶ Alfred E. Eckes, Jr. and Thomas W. Zeiler, Globalization and the American Century, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 34; Albert K. Steigerwalt, The National Association of

Reverend McArthur, Representative McGavin, and Mr. Davis represented the minority opinion; nevertheless, their comments demonstrate that society's concerns about nationality and class were so profound that they crossed gender lines.

Although the McGavins and the McArthurs railed against “the American heiress,” in reality marriages involving “socially prominent families” were not the majority of the trans-national marriages. Scholar Maureen E. Montgomery investigated the “American women who married British peers or the younger sons of peers” between 1870 and 1939. Although her study does not reflect marriages to the nobility of France or Italy, the British numbers help to put this phenomenon in perspective. From 1870 to 1914, a total of 333 British peers married, but only sixty married Americans—approximately 18% of the marriages. During this same period, 252 of the peers' sons also took the plunge into matrimony, but the percentage involving American women is less than for their fathers: a little less than 16% took American women as their brides.¹⁷⁷ If marriages to Italian and French royalty followed the same approximate numbers, it is somewhat difficult to understand what all the fuss was about.

Although the total number of women whose marriages were directly affected by the 1907 Expatriation Law is impossible to establish, what is known is that it affected women across the socio-economic spectrum: Jeannette Ridlon became a Swiss citizen and Ruth Bryan and Harriet Stanton Blatch both became British citizens. More typical than these

Manufacturers 1895-1914: A Study in Business Leadership (Grand Rapids: The University of Michigan, 1964), p. 45.

¹⁷⁷ Maureen E. Montgomery, ‘Gilded Prostitution’: Status, Money, and Transatlantic Marriages, 1870-1914 (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 1, 249-278.

three women, however, were the Chicago women that sociologist Sophonisba P. Breckinridge studied in 1930.

Breckinridge interviewed eight American women who automatically became Polish citizens when they married. Mrs. Sloninski was typical of Breckinridge's interview subjects. She was born in 1893 to naturalized Polish parents living in Chicago. She completed eighth grade, was a salesgirl, and later managed her parents' bakery shop. In 1918 she married a non-naturalized Polish man, "whom she introduced to the bakery trade so that they might be able to manage a business of their own"¹⁷⁸

Another of Breckinridge's interviewees, Mrs. Hartja, was born in Pennsylvania to a naturalized father and a native mother. She attended school for ten years, including business school, and worked for several years as a clerk. In 1921 she married a non-naturalized Polish man who made his living selling insurance. A third woman, Mrs. Petrovicz, was born in Illinois of Polish parents. After completing sixth grade she went to work in a factory. In 1917 she married a non-naturalized Polish co-worker and they both worked in the factory until 1920, when their first child was born.¹⁷⁹

Breckinridge also interviewed Mrs. Masewicz, Mrs. Charkowski, Mrs. Zernow, Mrs. Ashinoski, and Mrs. Cusick. Mrs. Masewicz was born in 1885, completed grammar school, and later worked in a dress-making shop. She married a Polish man in 1914. Mrs. Charkowski was born in Chicago in 1884 to a Russian mother and a Polish father. She went through grammar school, worked in a factory, and in 1915 married a Polish steel mill laborer. Mrs. Zernow was born on a farm near Chicago. After completing grammar

¹⁷⁸ Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, Marriage and the Civic Right of Women: Separate Domicile and Independent Citizenship, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931), p. 63.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 63-64.

school she worked as a dress maker. In 1920 she married a Polish man who was a laborer. Mrs. Ashinoski was born in Chicago to Polish parents. After fifth grade she left school to do housework. In 1913 she married a Polish man who was a laborer, and after their marriage, Mrs. Ashinoski helped the family income by cleaning offices.¹⁸⁰ These seven women were a far cry from the “heiresses” that Reverend McArthur, Representative McGavin, and President Roosevelt railed against, but they were more representative of the women affected by the misplaced law.

Problems with Lost Citizenship

Losing their citizenship was often just the beginning of the problems facing American women who married non-Americans. By 1907 many states had enacted laws which penalized aliens, including laws that prohibited them from inheriting property, buying real estate, practicing law or medicine, and teaching school. Many states barred aliens from federal or state civil service exams, and from holding an elected or appointed governmental office.¹⁸¹ Jeannette Piccard encountered her first difficulty of this sort shortly after her wedding day.

The newlyweds were returning to Switzerland where Jean had a position waiting as a professor of organic chemistry at the University of Lausanne, and Jeannette needed a valid passport to accompany him. However, her U.S. passport was automatically invalidated by her wedding, and she could not get a Swiss passport until after she was married.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 64-66.

¹⁸¹ Lemons, The Woman Citizen, p. 64.

The Piccards married on a Wednesday, and the following Saturday morning they went to the marriage license bureau to get a certified copy to include with the passport application sent to the Swiss embassy in Washington, D.C. Jeannette recalled: “the official took our names and the date, August, 19th. He was gone quite a long time. He returned saying ‘sorry, I can’t find any record of it.’ We looked at each other aghast, our sailing date was fixed in early September. Jean had to be in Lausanne for the opening of the University year. Our schedule was tight.

“‘The priest promised to send the license in right away’ I protested weakly.

“‘Well, I looked in last year, and the year before, and the year before that. It isn’t recorded. Are you sure you’ve got the date right?’

“‘Why, of course, August 19th, last Wednesday’

“‘Last Wednesday! He exclaimed, “and you want a certified copy all ready!”’¹⁸²

A woman also lost her right of suffrage if her husband was an alien, and it was this loss of suffrage that prompted one woman to seek redress through the court.¹⁸³ San Francisco resident Ethel Coope lost her American citizenship when she married British citizen Mackenzie Gordon, who also went by the name of Gordon Mackenzie in his career as a Scottish tenor.¹⁸⁴ Since she was considered an alien, Coope lost her right to vote in California, which had granted women the right to vote in 1911.¹⁸⁵ Mackenzie was willing to become a United States citizen so that Coope could go through the

¹⁸² Pp. B-92, 137, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies undated, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁸³ 65th Cong. 2d sess., 1918. House of Representatives, Hearing Before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization Relative to Citizenship of American Women Married to Foreigners, p. 15.

¹⁸⁴ Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own*, p. 1.

¹⁸⁵ *A History of the American Suffragist Movement*, p. 4, <http://www.suffragist.com/timeline.htm>.

naturalization process. Ironically, as a naturalized citizen, she would have regained her voting privilege, but Coope, who had the “financial means to challenge the law and the conviction that she should fight for the political rights due her sex,” decided to go to court.¹⁸⁶ Coope’s attorney argued that Section Three had “deprived her of U.S. citizenship without her express consent, thus violating her constitutional guarantee of due process.”¹⁸⁷

Unfortunately the supreme courts of California and the United States ruled against Ethel Coope Mackenzie. In 1913 the California court ruled that it was “reasonable for Congress to require that a wife’s citizenship be the same as her husband’s.”¹⁸⁸ In 1915 United States Supreme Court Justice Joseph McKenna concurred. He “bypassed the precedent of *Shanks v. DuPont*, and embraced the ‘ancient principle’ of ‘the identity of husband and wife,’ noting the importance of the Expatriation Act.” McKenna “concluded that Ethel Mackenzie’s marriage to a foreigner must be judged ‘as voluntary and distinctive as expatriation.’” He declared that for however long the marriage might last, it would be “tantamount to expatriation,” and he noted that this situation resulted from “no arbitrary exercise of government...”¹⁸⁹ In the eyes of the court, marriage was considered a voluntary act and, therefore, Congress had not acted unconstitutionally.¹⁹⁰ Coope’s

¹⁸⁶ Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own, p. 65.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Cott, “Marriage and Women’s Citizenship in the United States,” p. 1463.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Waldo Emerson Waltz, The Nationality of Married Women: A Study of Domestic Policies and International Legislation (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1937), p. 36.

marriage to Gordon Mackenzie “equated to the act of expatriation,” equivalent to “serving in a foreign” military, or “swearing allegiance to a foreign government.”¹⁹¹

Some American women found themselves in another predicament with the outbreak of war in Europe. If they had married citizens of the Central Powers, they found themselves “classified” as “alien enemies.” Their property was “confiscated” and remained under the control of the United States Alien Property Custodian.¹⁹² If the husband was not a naturalized U.S. citizen, this law applied even if the marriage took place “twenty or thirty years before.”¹⁹³ Gladys Vanderbilt was one of the most “prominent victims” of property seizure due to her marriage to Count Szecheny, an Austrian.¹⁹⁴ Some members of Congress were “unmoved” by the predicament of Vanderbilt and others. Freshman Representative Harold Knutson (R-MN)¹⁹⁵ “reflected” on the “dear price the country might pay” for the marriage between “a Germany [sic] spy” and a “multi-millionaire American.” Pointedly referencing the Central Powers, Knutson argued that a wife could “secretly and quietly furnish these millions to her husband to assist in destroying the boys of our country when we are at war, as we are now.”¹⁹⁶ Unfortunately, Knutson missed the point that the women testifying before his committee were trying to make, but he also was either ignorant of or did not understand the psychological impact of losing one’s citizenship unwillingly.

¹⁹¹ Ann Marie Nicolosi, “‘We Do Not Want Our Girls to Marry Foreigners:’ Gender, Race, and American Citizenship,” *NWSA Journal* Vol 13, No. 3 (Fall 2001): 10.

¹⁹² Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own*, p. 68.

¹⁹³ Cyril D. Hill, “Citizenship of Married Women,” *The American Journal of International Law* Vol. 18, No. 4 (Oct., 1924): 724. It is estimated that by the end of World War One the U.S. government had seized property “valued at...\$56 million dollars.” Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own*, p. 72.

¹⁹⁴ Lemons, *The Woman Citizen*, p. 65.

¹⁹⁵ Barbara Stuhler, *Ten Men of Minnesota and American Foreign Policy, 1898-1968* (St Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1973), p. 103.

¹⁹⁶ 65th Cong. 2d sess., 1918, p. 5

Jeannette Ridlon Piccard's French-born sister-in-law experienced both the anguish of the war and the anguish of having children given a foreign citizenship. Marianne Denis, the daughter of a prominent Frenchman, married Auguste Piccard, Jean's twin brother, in the spring of 1920. Lacking independent citizenship, Marianne became, like Jeannette, a Swiss citizen. When Marianne and Auguste's first child was due, Marianne desperately wanted the child to be a French citizen, so she went to Paris for the birth. Jeannette recalled that Marianne "confidently expected a boy...[who would become a] soldier to fight for France." Marianne and Auguste became the proud parents of a little girl, Denise. It is difficult to comprehend the emotions a woman experiences when she loses her own identity, including her native citizenship, but years later Jeannette tried to explain Marianne's feelings to a family friend:

Marianne knew, intellectually, that married to Auguste she was Swiss. She knew that her children, born outside of France were not French but she still thought of herself as French. She still in some way made them feel that they were French even those born in Switzerland or Belgium, and that their first obligation was to France...Marianne's son, born in Switzerland, served in the French army at the end of World War II in spite of Swiss laws to the contrary. Marianne's youngest daughter said to me, 'I am French. Where I was born [and] my father's citizenship are irrelevant. I am French.'¹⁹⁷

Push for Change

Legislation to change Section Three had appeared at every Congressional session since 1913, but it always fell on deaf ears. Finally, in April 1917, the United States House of Representatives had a different voice in its midst, Jeannette Rankin (R-MT), the first woman elected to the prestigious chamber. Described as "feminine in manner and

¹⁹⁷ Pp. 137-139, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeanette Piccard Autobiographies undated, Piccard Family Papers.

attractive,” Rankin was elected by her constituency “on a platform favoring equal suffrage, prohibition, and child welfare.” In reply to media inquiries, Rankin “hoped” her first bill would be the “Susan B. Anthony nation-wide woman suffrage amendment.”¹⁹⁸

Jeannette Rankin was elected to represent “the men, women, and children” of Montana, but she “felt her special duty” was to “express...the point of view of woman and to make clear that the women of the country are coming to a full realization of the fact that Congress is a body which deals with their problems.”¹⁹⁹ To that end, Representative Rankin introduced a bill “granting to American women married to foreigners the right to retain their citizenship.”²⁰⁰ On Thursday, December 13, 1917, Rankin’s H.R. 4049 had a hearing before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization. Although the bill never made it out of the committee, the dialogue between members of the committee and supporters of the bill shed light on the issues of concern. Adding to the environment of the committee hearing was the reality of the war in Europe, and America’s entrance into the conflict.

Ellen S. Mussey, an attorney, was the author of the Rankin bill, and the first of several women to speak to the committee.²⁰¹ Either appealing to the sensibilities of the committee or speaking from true belief, she began: “I want to say, first of all, that I do not approve at all of American women going outside for their husbands [laughter and applause]. But that is not a crime, and it ought not to prohibit her from retaining her

¹⁹⁸ “Miss Rankin Stands by the Republicans,” The New York Times, 2 April 1917.

¹⁹⁹ Dr. Louis Levine, “First Woman Member of Congress Well Versed in Politics,” The New York Times, 2 April 1916.

²⁰⁰ 65th Cong. 2d. sess., 1918, p. 5.

²⁰¹ Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own, p. 71n62. Mussey, an attorney in Washington, D.C., founded the Washington College of Law because women were “excluded from many of the country’s law schools.”

nationality...it is not a crime to marry a foreigner; not yet.”²⁰² She continued: “An American girl becomes instantly an alien, and no matter how strong her love of country she is still an alien if she comes back to these shores after a trip abroad and she is classed with the foreigners, and they go through all the indignities under certain conditions that the foreign-born women do to-day when they come to our shores. That is an injustice.”²⁰³

Representative Jacob E. Meeker (R-MO)²⁰⁴ queried: “[S]uppose she would marry a foreigner...and go to reside in that country, and at the time of her marriage either here or abroad she would file her declaration that she intended, even though going to make her home abroad, as a wife of this man, and she would continue to be a citizen of the United States. That is what you want?” “That is what we want,” responded Mussey, “the same as the American man. He goes abroad and resides there, and he is...an American citizen until he says he does not want to be an American citizen...We are perfectly willing that she shall stand in the same way as the American man does.”²⁰⁵

Once again the dialogue devolved into the issue of American women marrying for “titles.” Representative Knutson wondered if “this bill is an inducement for further American girls to marry foreigners...They lose nothing by marrying a foreigner. She becomes ‘Countess So-and-so,’ and under this law she could still remain a countess and yet be an American citizen.”²⁰⁶

²⁰² 65th Cong. 2d.sess., 1918, p. 6.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 7.

²⁰⁴ Jacob E. Meeker (1878-1918) served in congress for a brief period, winning election in 1915 but dying in office three years later. www.politicalgraveyard.com/bio/meeker.html.

²⁰⁵ 65th Cong. 2d.sess., 1918, p. 9.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 14.

The women testifying were frustrated because the questions raised by committee members were issues that the State Department, “which takes care of all of our foreign relations,” would address. Kate Devereux Blake, of New York City, touched on the crux of the problem: “I wish you gentlemen would take for your motto in considering this the old motto, ‘Put yourself in his place.’ You are looking at this from a purely masculine standpoint. Every question you have asked...has been from that standpoint, and from the standpoint of the man who is safe in his citizenship, not from the standpoint of the human being who is weighing even-handed justice—‘How would I feel were I in the woman’s place?’ You have your citizenship; we love ours...[I]t should be a voluntary thing if you choose to give up your citizenship.”²⁰⁷

Referring to women such as those in Sophonisba Breckinridge’s study of Chicago, Dr. Kate Waller Barrett, President of the National Florence Crittenton Mission for unwed mothers, spoke on behalf of the “American woman” who married an American man, only to find out that he was legally an alien. “These illiterate women,” she said, “whose citizenship is the only thing they have to protect them, suddenly find they are citizens of a foreign country...It is pathetic because these women...are born in this country from among the working classes that are working together constantly, the foreign men and the American women, and there are many marriages between them. It is pathetic...when she marries someone who is a [hard worker] like herself and suddenly finds [that she has lost her citizenship.]” Barrett was confident that the “whole problem of naturalization and citizenship is going to be altered after the war. There is no doubt about it...[When] the

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

citizenship laws are rewritten and the standard changed...remember the American woman and protect her in the new laws that will be written...”²⁰⁸

Women’s rights groups did not challenge Congress over marital expatriation before the passage of the 1907 law. In fact, “virtually no substantive public debate” about the law “took place prior to its imposition.”²⁰⁹ This was not the case in 1918. Under the umbrella of the National Council of Women, twenty-seven organizations, including the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA), the National Council of Jewish Women, and the National Federation of Colored Women, and representing a total of 7,000,000 women, supported the presentation of the Rankin bill.²¹⁰ American women were not alone in their battle to change the rule of “dependent citizenship”: women in many Western countries were “agitating” for the right of married women “to retain their nationality.”²¹¹

In 1898, in a letter to Susan B. Anthony, Theodore Roosevelt wrote that although he “always favored allowing women to vote...I do not attach the importance to it that you do...I think that, under the present laws, [a woman] can get all the rights she will take; while she is in many cases oppressed, the trouble is in her own attitude, which laws can not alter.”²¹² He reiterated this sentiment in 1908 to Harriet Taylor Upton, treasurer of NAWSA: “Personally I believe in woman’s suffrage, but I am not an enthusiastic advocate of it because I do not regard it as a very important matter. I am unable to see

²⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 26-28.

²⁰⁹ Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own*, p. 63.

²¹⁰ 65th Cong. 2d sess., 1918, p. 24.

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 25. Women were pushing for change in Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand, and France. Women were also organizing in South Africa.

²¹² Roosevelt, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Vol. II. The Department of the Navy, continued, 1898*, pp. 892-893.

that there has been any special improvement in the position of women in those States in the West that have adopted woman suffrage, as compared with those States adjoining them that have not adopted it...I do not desire to go into a public discussion of this matter, so I will be obliged if you will treat this letter as private.”²¹³

In 1916, three years before Jeannette Ridlon’s marriage, the Republican Party, and Roosevelt, moved beyond the president’s previously expressed sentiment, and for the first time the GOP platform contained a plank “[favoring] the extension of the suffrage to women,” with the “right of each state to settle this question for itself.”²¹⁴ Likewise, the Democratic Party “recommend[ed] the extension of the franchise to the women of the country...upon the same terms as to men.”²¹⁵ In 1920, both Republican and Democratic platforms supported the passage of the proposed 19th amendment to the constitution, granting equal suffrage to women.²¹⁶ That same year the National League of Women Voters, formerly the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), “adopted a resolution urging” the Expatriation Law of 1907 be changed so that “a resident American woman would not suffer loss of citizenship by marriage and that alien women be naturalized by the same procedure as men.” With vote in hand, women became a political force. Congressman John Jacob Rogers (R-MA)²¹⁷ summed up the state of affairs: “[woman’s] suffrage had changed the whole situation, and in my judgment there was no

²¹³ Theodore Roosevelt, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Vol. VI. The Big Stick, 1907-1909, ed. Elting E. Morison (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 1341-1342.

²¹⁴ Kirk H. Porter, National Party Platforms (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1924), p. 402.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 425, 464. The 19th Amendment was ratified on August 21, 1920.

²¹⁷ John Jacob Rogers (1881-1925) served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1913 until his death. <http://politicalgraveyard.com/bio/rogers5.html>.

particular force in the demand for this bill until the nineteenth amendment became a part of the organic law of the land.”²¹⁸

The Cable Act

The bill that Rogers referred to was the “Married Women’s Independent Citizenship Act,” sponsored by John L. Cable (R-OH), and passed by the House of Representatives on September 22, 1922.²¹⁹ Although Rogers acknowledged that women’s suffrage played a key role in the passage of the “Cable Act,” he failed to mention that both Democrats and Republicans had included “the idea of independent citizenship” in their 1920 platforms. The Democrats slipped it within the “Women in Industry” plank, stating that “women resident in the United States, but married to aliens, shall retain their American citizenship...”²²⁰ The Republicans included it within the “Naturalization” plank, stating, “We advocate...the independent naturalization of married women. An American woman, resident in the United States, should not lose her citizenship by marriage to an alien.”²²¹

Reflecting on its passage, Cable said: “As a member of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, I introduced a bill which conformed with these pledges [in the political platform planks], and received the support not only of Congress, but also of the leading women’s organizations in the country.” “The act,” he argued, “was particularly designed to give the citizenship of American women the dignity and individuality which had been the exclusive attribute of male citizenship.”²²²

²¹⁸ Lemons, *The Woman Citizen*, p. 66.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 65; John L. Cable (1884-1971) served from 1921 to 1925 and from 1929 to 1933, practicing law in Ohio during the interim. <http://politicalgraveyard.com/bio/cabana-cadwalader.html>.

²²⁰ Porter, *National Party Platforms*, p. 426.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 461.

²²² John L. Cable, “The Citizenship of American Women,” *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. CXLV (Jan. – June, 1930), pp. 650-651.

The Cable Act was not without its critics. Richard W. Flournoy, Jr., a State Department employee, openly criticized the bill, speculating that a group of “aggressive female lobbyists” forced the law on Congress. Flournoy thought it “questionable whether the majority of women of this country really wanted the new law,” and doubted that “most of them [knew]” anything “about it.”²²³ It is difficult to determine whether Flournoy’s assessment was correct; nevertheless, the passage of the Cable Act, and its inherent recognition of a woman’s independent citizenship, had profound effects at the personal level for women like Jeannette Ridlon Piccard.

Jeannette Returns to America

In 1926, two weeks after the birth of his third son, Jean Piccard left Lausanne, Switzerland, bound for Boston and a research position at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).²²⁴ Jeannette and the boys were to follow in March. During the three month interim Jean wrote extensively and lovingly to Jeannette, describing his comings and goings with fellow instructors at MIT, the weather in Boston, and his attempts at arranging the ship passage for his family. However, due to her two-year-old son Paul’s illness, Jeannette and the boys did not make the voyage until the fall, arriving in New York City on September 20, joining Jean in Watertown, on the outskirts of Boston.²²⁵

For the Piccard family, this was a permanent move to the United States, and for Jeannette it was coming home. “The only difference between me and any other

²²³ Richard W. Flournoy, Jr., “The New Married Women’s Citizenship Law,” The Law Journal, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2 (1923-1924): 169-170.

²²⁴ Letter dated January 1, 1927, Folder 8, Box I: 52, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1901-1929, Piccard Family Papers.

²²⁵ See Folder 1, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1926-1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

immigrant,” said Jeannette, “was that I only had to wait one year instead of five,” to apply for naturalization. On April 16, 1928, in the District Court of Massachusetts in Boston, 5’ 7,” gray-haired, brown-eyed, “mole on the right wrist,” Chicago-born Jeannette Ridlon Piccard became a naturalized citizen of her native United States. Jean, having to wait five years, became a naturalized citizen in 1931. The citizenship of Jeannette’s three sons, John Auguste, Paul Jules, and Donald Louis, followed their father’s, and so they too became naturalized United States citizens in 1931.²²⁶

In a follow-up to her case studies, Sophonisba Breckinridge interviewed her Chicago subjects after the law changed. This small group of native women thought that the “Cable Act was progress.”²²⁷ Seven of the women were successful in obtaining their naturalization papers. Mrs. Sloninski was “naturalized nine years after her marriage, two and a half after her husband’s naturalization...[B]eing a citizen of no country, she asked her husband to speed up his naturalization,” but he did not become a citizen until 1925. When they decided “to open their own shop, she was afraid to undertake anything so important as buying a shop without being naturalized.” Mrs. Sloninski, Breckinridge reported, “has voted and feels happy to have regained her rights.”²²⁸

Mrs. Hartja “took out her papers six years after her marriage and one year after her husband’s naturalization.” Breckinridge noted that Hartja regarded the Cable Act as

²²⁶ See pp. 4-6, Folder 6, Box II: 39, Subject: Araki Tomotane 1976-1979, Piccard Family Papers; See letter dated August 16, 1971 to Ms. Evan Frances, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard, Autobiographies, 1963-75, Piccard Family Papers; See P. 7 A-t, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies, Piccard Family Papers; See receipt to Jean Felix Piccard from U.S. Department of Labor: Naturalization Service, Folder 3, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1930-1933, Piccard Family Papers. The three sons are John Auguste [1920], Paul Jules [1924-2006], and Donald Louis [1926].

²²⁷ Breckinridge, *Marriage and the Civic Rights of Women*, p. 68.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

“promoting women’s rights...[feeling] that the law ha[d] removed an injustice to the American woman.” The Hartjas had wanted to go to Poland and return with Mr. Hartja’s mother, but chose not to go before “the naturalization process was complete.” Breckinridge reported, “Now they are planning the trip.”²²⁹

Mrs. Petrovicz “regained her citizenship after nine years of marriage.” Breckinridge noted that Petrovicz believed that the Cable law made women “equal to men and that’s what was wanted.” In addition Breckinridge reported that both Petroviczs “have voted.”²³⁰

Mrs. Masewicz “regained her citizenship eleven years after her marriage and four years after her husband’s naturalization.” Her husband’s health was poor due to his drinking problem. In 1924, when he had been “out of work for a time,” Mrs. Masewicz began the process towards naturalization. As Breckinridge described Masewicz’s situation: “She could not quite see why she should have had to regain her citizenship, since she was born in this country...but she did it for the sake of the children.”²³¹

Breckinridge commented that “Mrs. Charkowski and her family wanted to ‘buy a home of their own’...but [she] was afraid to invest any money unless Mr. Charkowski became a citizen.” Fortunately she did not have to wait for her husband. Although “[feeling] that all the troubles she had with the naturalization was unnecessary, since she was a citizen before,” in 1927, twelve years after her marriage, she “got her papers and soon after they moved into their new home.”²³²

²²⁹ Ibid., pp. 63-64.

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 64

²³¹ Ibid., pp. 64-65.

²³² Ibid., p. 65.

Mrs. Zernow “got her papers in 1927, seven years after her marriage.” Breckinridge noted that she had voted and thought “that women should take their papers independently because they learn more if they have to do things for themselves.”²³³ Mrs. Ashinoski did “not even know that she had lost her citizenship.” She found out in 1926, “fourteen years after her marriage,” when Mr. Ashinoski “died, and the family was referred to the Juvenile Court...” A social worker helped her with the paperwork. “The procedure did not present any difficulties to her though she has regarded it all as unnecessary, since she always thought of herself as an American citizen.”²³⁴

Mrs. Cusick was a “tragic case.” Born in Illinois in 1885, she married a Polish laborer who was never naturalized. Mr. Cusick died in 1926, and the next year Mrs. Cusick applied for her naturalization papers, but her petition was denied because her “witnesses” were “incompetent.” Like Mrs. Cusick, they were not citizens. Breckinridge stated that Mrs. Cusick “became ill after that and feels very broken. She feels that everything is against her and also that all the naturalization laws are unjust.”²³⁵

One of the Fortunate

Jeannette Ridlon Piccard did not experience a diminished quality-of-life as did some of the women in Breckinridge’s study; in fact, her experience was quite the opposite. Jeannette wrote, “Of one thing I feel fairly sure. If we had staid [sic] in America [and] Jean had continued as professor at the University of Chicago, our married life would have been more difficult. I would have been continually stimulated to discontent [and] resentment of my altered financial status and tempted beyond endurance to live beyond

²³³ Ibid., p. 66.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid., pp. 66-67

my means. My Swiss family helped rather than hindered my adjustment. I learned all sorts of little ways to economize, and ways to take care of things so that they wouldn't need replacement. My friends were women who also had small children and whose life centered in the home. I was not tempted to meet some one at 'The Eagle' (Wanamaker, Phila[delphia]) or 'Under the Clock' (Grand Central Station, NYC) or in the 'Fountain Room' at Marshall Fields for lunch and the theater. I didn't need to be dressed at the height of fashion all the time. I learned to cook, and sew, (my first maternity dress was a disaster) and to enjoy reading...The pace of life was slow, unhurried."²³⁶

Jeannette was fortunate, unlike Mrs. Cusick, but whether a woman was affected positively or negatively by the loss of her American citizenship is irrelevant to the larger issues brought about by women lacking independent citizenship. It is difficult to square the sentimentality that political operative Gaillard Hunt expressed in 1907 with the reality facing women at the time.²³⁷ In a boastful manner, Hunt proposed of the Theodore Roosevelt Administration, "When a future historian shall write an account of the achievement of this the most remarkable administration of our government since the Civil War, he will give prominent place to the naturalization law of a year ago and the citizenship law which was approved last March and is now becoming effective, for these two measures are the culmination of a hundred years of effort for reform and affect the very foundation of our political structure."²³⁸ Hunt also stated that "the determination of a

²³⁶ P. B-103a, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies: undated, Piccard Family Papers.

²³⁷ Gaillard Hunt was chief of the Bureau of Citizenship, Department of State, and a member of the commission that reported its findings to Congress in 1906, which in turn was instrumental in the structure of the 1907 Expatriation Law.

²³⁸ Hunt, "The New Citizenship Law," p. 530.

woman's citizenship is not...as important a matter as it is in the case of a man."²³⁹ As a 21st century historian, I would simply ask: "not important" to whom? Jeannette Ridlon Piccard would not have lost her American citizenship, would have had no need to become a Swiss citizen, and would not have had to go through the naturalization process when she returned to the United States in 1926. It certainly was important to the eight American women in Breckinridge's study, especially Mrs. Cusick. It was important enough for Ethel Coope Mackenzie to seek redress through the court system. It was important enough for Jeannette Rankin to go before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization with a bill to change Hunt's law.

Nancy Cott argues that "any modern nation-state is likely to concern itself with marriage." One must "recognize marriage as an institution that helps to found both men's and women's identity in the polity." That is, by determining the rules for marriages, "governments are involved in erecting civil statuses for both men and women."²⁴⁰ In 1907, the United States Congress, at the behest of Theodore Roosevelt, determined that American women like twenty-four-year-old Jeannette Ridlon, by marrying foreigners, were "un-American" or "disloyal to the American ideals," and passed a law that was capable of stripping a native-born woman of her citizenship.

It would take the United States Congress another fifteen years, a world war, American women gaining suffrage on a national level, and agitation in other democratic countries to finally approve legislation that would begin to modify the misguided Section Three of the 1907 Expatriation Act. Changes in the law "came in part because women's citizenship

²³⁹ Ibid., p. 539.

²⁴⁰ Cott, "Marriage and Women's Citizenship in the United States," p. 1442.

gained political significance through the right to participate in governance.”²⁴¹ “The connection,” Cott argues, “between marriage and citizenship, embedded in political traditions and practices, emerges to the light only in peculiar specific locations such as the treatment of women citizens who marry aliens.”²⁴² Unfortunately, who is considered a full citizen, complete with any, and all, benefits of the civil institution of marriage, regardless of choice of marriage partner, has been, and continues to be, a malleable concept in the history of the United States.

²⁴¹ Sapiro, “Women, Citizenship, and Nationality,” p. 23.

²⁴² Cott, “Marriage and Women’s Citizenship in the United States,” p. 1442. I would argue that the debate in America over same-sex marriage fits within Cott’s definition of a “peculiar specific location.”

CHAPTER THREE: LOCKED DOORS AND HIGH CEILINGS

“Activation of negative stereotypes can have a detrimental effect on women’s interest and performance in domains relevant to success in academic science and engineering.”²⁴³

“In a balloon flight I lose my sense of the earth; you become part of the wind—part of eternity, but the minute you land some newspaper reporter is going to ask what did you have to eat?” Jeannette Piccard²⁴⁴

While Jean Piccard settled into life in Boston and his work at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Jeannette was in Lausanne, Switzerland, preparing for the family’s permanent move to the United States. It is evident from his correspondence that Jean longed for Jeannette, and missed his sons: “I have still one thing to do, which is a little bit sad. Til now I had always set my wrist watch a time but kept the gold watch untouched, so that it always showed me just what time you had and what you and mother were doing. Being just 6 hours ahead of us, you have now 5.55 and the nurse is just going to Donald to bring him to you—and now he begins to suck his milk. Thank you for him, my darling. Now of course I can not always leave [sic] in 2 countries at the same time so I set also my gold watch exactly 6 hours back. So now it shows just 0.00 o’clock and it is Tuesday.”²⁴⁵

Jean was disappointed that Jeannette did not write to him more frequently,²⁴⁶ but Jeannette was not only a wife, she was the mother of three young sons: John was a

²⁴³ Committee on Maximizing the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering and the Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy, Beyond Bias and Barriers: Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering (Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2007), p. 26.

²⁴⁴ P. A-t, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁴⁵ Letter dated Cambridge II. 8th 26, Folder 3, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1926-1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

²⁴⁶ See letter dated Cambridge, Feb. 9th, 26, Folder 3, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1926-1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. Jean received Jeannette’s first letter on February 11th. See letter

rambunctious six-year-old; Donald was a nursing infant; and two-year-old Paul was the reason their return to America was delayed, having become very ill with a high fever and rash over his body. The doctor told Jeannette, “If you try to travel with him [Paul] in March, you will bury him at sea. When your lease is up here in Lausanne, go to the mountains. September will be time enough to join your husband.”²⁴⁷ Although Jeannette was fortunate to have the services of two family maids to help with the household and the children, there was much preparation for the family’s journey to America.²⁴⁸

One of the issues was the visa application for Jeannette and the boys. The American Consul required two letters: one from Jean’s employer, MIT, and one from Jean explaining his reasons for wanting Jeannette to come to the United States. For his part Jean wrote, “Well, I am Instructor at this school and want to stay here and become an [A]merican citizen. You are my wife and you have the children. If I go to Lausanne for 11 months every year, I soon loose [sic] my job and there you are, and the Americans loose [sic] a good teacher. So I want my wife to come here.”²⁴⁹ But to secure Jeannette’s visa took more than letters from her husband; she needed to produce a copy of her wedding certificate, and this task was given to her father. Dr. John Ridlon was never hesitant expressing his impatience to family members, and Jean received the brunt of his father-in-law’s frustration with the certificate episode. Jean shared with Jeannette, “I got a letter from our father, he attends to your marriage license but seems to be angry about

dated Feb. 11th 26, Folder 5, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1920-1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

²⁴⁷ Pp. 6-7, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁴⁸ See letter dated Cambridge le 17 fevrier 1926, Folder 3, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1926-1958, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁴⁹ Letter dated Feb. 19, 1926, Folder 3, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1926-1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

it. He sais [sic] he did loose [sic] a whole day for Barbara's birth certificate which was useless. He sais[sic] that you are American in America no matter whatever you may be in Switzerland. Th[a]t is wrong, but do not write him about it."²⁵⁰ Although by 1922 the United States was modifying the laws pertaining to a woman's independent citizenship, Jeannette's citizenship was informed by the 1907 Expatriation Act. Regardless of Dr. Ridlon's frustration and belief, in 1926 Jeannette was not an American when she arrived on the shores of her home country.²⁵¹

After months of delay, including restoring little Paul's health, Jean, Jeannette, and the boys boarded the ship *Orbiter*,²⁵² and set sail for America, arriving in New York City on September 20, 1926.²⁵³ The five Piccards established their home in Watertown, Massachusetts, and Jean continued his work at M.I.T. Jeannette set about adapting to life back in the United States. Jean and Jeannette struggled, both individually and as a couple.

Jean wondered what he was doing at M.I.T.; questioned why he had been offered employment; and was innocently involved in the chemistry department's "office politics." In addition, Jean's contract paid less than he had initially been told, and it had to be renewed for the 1926 fall term. Jean had expressed these concerns to Jeannette in Spring 1926: "I don't know yet just what they wanted me for because they don't need me

²⁵⁰ Letter dated Cambridge le 17 fevrier 1926, Folder 3, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1926-1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. The "Barbara" mentioned in Jean's letter is a person unknown to the author.

²⁵¹ See Chapter Two.

²⁵² October 17, 1998 interview of John Piccard, Paul Piccard and Donald Piccard at the Space Center in Alamogordo, New Mexico, p. 3. Copy of transcript provided by Paul Piccard.

²⁵³ New York Passenger Lists at <http://www.ancestry.com/> and linked from there to http://landing.ancestry.com/immigration/main/?o_iid=24987&o_lid=24987. The author thanks Richard D. Piccard for providing this information and copies of the Piccard passenger lists.

a bit, they don't use me a bit. [Department Chairman] Keyes, who does not trust much his organic men wanted just 'to stir them up.' But they resented it and don't like the idea of my coming. They are nice to me, but I would not trust them all too much."²⁵⁴ In addition to his work at M.I.T., Jean supplemented his income by teaching summers for the Institute of Chemistry of the American Chemical Society, and started outside consulting work for the Hercules Powder Company in Wilmington, Delaware. Initially he met with the Hercules people once a month, but two years later Jean accepted a permanent position with the company, and the family moved to Wharton, New Jersey.²⁵⁵

The technical director, Mr. G.M. Norman, welcomed the news of Jean's employment. Neither Jean or the company had been hasty in the decision-process, and Norman "hoped" that Jean would "never have cause to regret the move." "I feel confident," Norman stated, "that the future of the chemical industry in this country is comparable to the electric industry in the last few years, provided the right sort of brains is [sic] applied..."²⁵⁶ Jean was excited to finally have his own laboratory for his work.²⁵⁷ Two years later Jean was relocated to the main Hercules plant in Wilmington, Delaware, and once again Jeannette and her sons relocated. Housing was a recurring issue until Jean and Jeannette purchased their Minneapolis, Minnesota, home in 1937. Jeannette wrote her "Dearest Daddy" regarding the move to Wilmington, "All Wednesday and Thursday we

²⁵⁴ Letter dated March 4, 1926, Folder 3, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1926-1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

²⁵⁵ Letter dated May 11, 1927, Folder 5, Box I: 40, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1923-1929, Piccard Family Papers. Letter dated January 26, 1929, Folder 9, Box I: 40, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1923-1929, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁵⁶ Letter dated January 26, 1929, Folder 9, Box I: 40, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1923-1929, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁵⁷ Letter dated May 3, 1929, Folder 3, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1929-1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

spend in the exhaustive business of househunting. I do not know whether we have a house or not...”²⁵⁸

Shortly after arriving in the United States Jeannette took ill, but the diagnosis was something of a mystery. In December 1926, Jeannette wrote her mother that she had been diagnosed with encephalitis, but correspondence between Jean and his father-in-law indicated the diagnosis was sleeping sickness. “I want you to know,” Dr. Ridlon told Jean, “but do not wish to tell Jeanet [sic] so, that even when such cases apparently get well sequellae of a nervous type or brain type may appear after even two years or more. It is therefore important that she explicitly follow her doctor’s direction now but remain under his observation for a long time.” Not disclosing the nature of her illness, Dr. Ridlon warned Jeannette, “You may confidently expect to recover, but must carefully follow the directions of your doctor.”²⁵⁹

Jeannette’s maladies were not just of a physical nature, but also in the spiritual realm. As she later wrote, “...[A]fter seven [S]partan years in the Church at Lausanne, I found the comfort and help of the sacramental life. Without it I might not have weathered the first few years back in America where our income, counted in purchasing power, was so much less than it had been in Switzerland. I felt that life was nothing but a succession of dishes, dirt, and debts.” Upon her arrival in Boston Jeannette reconnected with Father Powell, the spiritual advisor and confidante from her Bryn Mawr days.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Letter dated March 28, 1931, Folder 2, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to John and Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁵⁹ Letter dated December 11, 1926 and letter dated December 13, 1926, Folder 5, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁶⁰ P. 8, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

Father Powell's letters provide a glimpse of the tensions in Jeannette's life: her role as a wife and mother versus her deep spiritual desire to be a servant of God. Father Powell sympathized with Jeannette's feelings and concerns, and tried to persuade her that motherhood was in and of itself a noble calling. Lifting up the mother of the greatest hero of the age, Powell counseled Jeannette, "It is not true that you have already denied the inspirations which you have received. You are in this matter, entirely misjudging yourself...I can hardly imagine any more glorious vocation for a woman than to have been the mother of Charles Lingbergh [sic]...." In essence, Lindbergh would be nowhere without a mother.²⁶¹ Shortly after Jeannette's move to Wilmington, Father Powell commended the mother of three saying, "The task of getting off under the circumstances that you describe must have been prodigious. It is a mercy that you escaped with nothing worse then [sic] a headache, though that must have been bad enough." Powell told Jeannette about his visitations to ill friends and hospital visits, but he was hoping "this afternoon" would provide a "blessed time of quiet in the Church."²⁶²

Six months later Jeannette would get her own "blessed time of quiet," not in the Church, but rather due to a hospital stay. She had developed a cervical ulcer and was hospitalized in January 1930. Dr. Ridlon did not think "the operation" was "in any way a dangerous one," so believed it was unnecessary for either parent to be there. They would remain in Newport, Rhode Island, unless Jeannette wanted them to come.²⁶³ Father

²⁶¹ Letter dated June 16, 1927, Folder 1, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁶² Letter dated June 15, 1929, Folder 3, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁶³ Letter dated January 10, 1930, Folder 6, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

Powell saw the bright side of the upcoming hospitalization. Although Jeannette's suffering "saddened" him, he told her, "...you must not take your bad temper as any wickedness at all. It is only the outcrying that results from pain and weariness. It really will be a comfort to get some rest and to be taken care in the hospital..." He concluded with these reassuring words: "That you should have a great deal of work to do—that you should more often than not be overworked—is a distressing fact. But after all, that is the way to live and the way to die. Better a thousand times, than dribbling off into eternity betwixt awake and asleep in a fatuous old age. My love to the family..."²⁶⁴

Jeannette recovered from her surgery, but still questioned her spiritual health. She constantly asked Father Powell for reading material, probed his mind on spiritual matters, and questioned her ritual life: did she attend confession often enough, should she go away on retreats, and what steps should she follow to make hers a more disciplined life? During spring 1930, Powell tried to assure Jeannette that she was doing enough. "In my opinion, the members of your family furnish quite a sufficient amou[n]t of discipline for you. It is quite true that one becomes an athlete by exercise only, rather than by watching games of sport. But my contention is, that you are not watching the game. You are in the very forefront of it all. A husband, three darling, high-spirited boys that you have, some degree of poverty and having to deny yourself the pleasure of some books you would like and theatres and concerts, to say nothing of companionship that you might wish to have—all this if taken aright, will be as much of a hair-shirt as that of any ascetic, living unmarried and alone. And the best of it is, that none of this discipline is self-chosen. It is

²⁶⁴ Letter dated January 10, 1930, Folder 4, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

all laid upon you by our Blessed Lord Himself. He has graciously condescended thus to take you in His hand. I would fear to make any further suggestions lest the whole process were spoiled.”²⁶⁵

Father Powell continued to counsel Jeannette, believing her role as wife and mother was adequate, and no other spiritual discipline was required. He dissuaded her from attending retreats. Referencing her recent hospitalization, Powell wrote, “...With being away so much I should think that your place is at home, and you have had a retreat with the added blessing of physical pain.”²⁶⁶ And he cautioned Jeannette to resist any “self-inflicted” physical pain saying, “Family life is quite a sufficient discipline for you, if taken lovingly and with a whole heart.”²⁶⁷

Finally in September 1930, Father Powell, with the tone of a frustrated parent, told Jeannette, “The kind of retreat that will be most beneficial for you at this time...will be simply to let yourself alone, forgetting yourself and your sins, remembering God and your Saviour. It was not in my mind to give you any sermons to read, or any plan, say that you should make your Communion each day, assist at the ordinary breviary Offices, make a little meditation in the chapel two or three times during the day, and for the rest of the time sit in the garden or in your own room and read anything to which you feel drawn. It would be well for you to make your Confession on Sunday evening after supper. But do not spend long in the retreat examining your conscience.” Father Powell

²⁶⁵ Letter dated April 3, 1930, Folder 4, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁶⁶ Letter dated May 16, 1930, Folder 4, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁶⁷ Letter dated June 17, 1930, Folder 4, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

concluded the letter by providing Jeannette a conception of the Gospel to consider. Rather than the pictures of “a woman clinging to the cross, in a stormy sea, from which the waves at any moment might wash her to destruction...,” he offered, “or even worse...[the one where] she is clinging with one hand to the Cross, and from that insecure hold with the other hand she is reaching out to save another who is drowning...[think on being] ‘Safe in the arms of Jesus.’ Let that be the thought that you carry...”²⁶⁸

The Early Depression Years

While Jeannette was contemplating her spiritual and domestic life, the economic situation in the United States was rapidly approaching catastrophic proportions. On October 29, 1929, the United States stock market collapsed, and so began a decade-long economic depression that ended only with the country’s mobilization and entrance into World War Two. Historian Caroline Bird describes the 1930s as “years of standstill” where “everybody and everything marked time.”²⁶⁹ From 1929 to 1932 the average American household income declined by more than half, and the depression affected every aspect of American life, with very few people remaining unscathed during the nation’s worse economic crisis. Although the Ridlons were more fortunate than many of their fellow citizens, the Great Depression began to take its toll on members of the family and their spouses.

²⁶⁸ Letter dated September 4, 1930, Folder 4, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁶⁹ Susan Ware, Holding Their Own: American Women in the 1930s, American Women in the Twentieth Century Series, ed. Barbara Haber (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1982), p. xi. The market collapse was not the “cause” of the depression, but popular opinion pointed to it as the beginning of the nation’s woes. In reality, the agricultural sector had been experiencing depression-like conditions throughout the 1920s. An excellent source on the 1930s is William E. Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal 1932-1940 (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).

Shortly after the crash Jeannette inquired of her “Dearest Daddy” about her financial situation. She recalled having approximately \$1,000 in her bank account in 1919 prior to leaving for Switzerland, but when she contacted the Chicago Trust Company, they reported a balance of \$46.02. Acknowledging sounding like “a frightened child in the dark,” she asked her father what happened to her money. “Do you [father] know anything about it? What has happened to the rest of my money?...Looking back to an old letter I see that they [the bank] say they have in keeping for me only...four...bonds. That was an old letter in 1927 which I glanced at but did not apparently absorb. It was written just after I had been so ill.” Jeannette inquired as to the money she had received from her grandmother and the liberty bonds that had been purchased. “They have not all been redeemed have they? Have you anything for me in your safe box? I have so little and I have so industriously refrained from using any of it. It is my only nest egg and I feel rather startled to find my thousand suddenly dwindled...”²⁷⁰

In Spring 1930, Jeannette’s father urged her to put funds into bank stocks, but only if the bank was in a larger city. Dr. Ridlon stated if funds were limited he would ask Mr. James Marshall, “who has long been my friend, and who is the head of the Bond Dep[artment] of the Chicago Trust Company, to pick me two \$500 bonds in different companies that he believed to be secure without regard to the interest paid...If you should

²⁷⁰ Letter dated November 15, 1929, Folder 2, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated November 21, 1929, Folder 2, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

write him to do this, say that you are my daughter and I asked you to mention that fact.”²⁷¹

Early in 1930 there was still some disposable income in the Ridlon household as evidenced by Emily’s plans to sail to Paris on U.S. Lines *Leviathan* to visit son Hugh, who was connected with the ship company. The son, however, was an on-going expense for his father. Hugh checked out of Boston’s LaSalle Hotel without paying his bill, without his baggage, and he left the hotel management holding “two worthless cheques that he had drawn on a Cleveland Bank.”²⁷² Whether it was due to Hugh’s situation or not, by the end of the year Dr. Ridlon made it clear that money was getting tighter. Jeannette requested her parents visit her and Jean over the holidays and winter, but the answer was no. There were repair bills totaling over \$1,000 for the home in Newport, and Emily’s fur coat alone needed \$100 in repairs, so Dr. Ridlon told Jeannette, “I’ll just have to sit tight for some time.” He also discouraged any Christmas gifts stating he would not be “giving anything but the books of the Literary Guild for 1929, and if you have a choice, please tell me which one to send you.”²⁷³

However, for seventy-two-year-old Emily Ridlon neither the economic depression nor advancing age kept her from trying new and thrilling adventures. Writing like an excited conspirator she told Jeannette, “What do you think I did today, I went out and took a lesson in driving...I took advantage [of her husband’s absence] to call up the Pontiac

²⁷¹ Letter dated March 27, 1930, Folder 6, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁷² Letter dated April 19, 1930, Folder 6, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁷³ Letter dated November 24, 1930, Folder 6, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

dealer and go for a ride.” The car “costs a good deal,” but if purchased from the dealer the cost of the lessons “would be credit[ed] on the price of the car.” She disclosed to Jeannette that Jean had helped her to “begin to have confidence.” Emily described in detail the route that she drove and who she met along the way, but when arriving “back to the Public Garden...I let Mr. Grinnell [the dealer] take the wheel for I knew that father would be home and I did not want father to die of the shock till I was sure I could take him out and prove that I could drive. I feel so afraid he will put a spoke in my wheel some way if he knows about it before I feel more sure of my self than I do now. I really got on very well I think.” Victorian-raised Emily Ridlon felt so confident in her abilities she told Jeannette she would drive “Jean over to Herculese [sic] [Powder Company] and drive back to you alone after todays [sic] lesson, if I were there. I drove without panic today, but the idea of going alone makes me shrink!”²⁷⁴ Jeannette’s generation, unlike her mother’s, embraced the automobile and the freedom it provided. Jeannette boasted, “From 1927-1972 I owned and drove my own car whenever and wherever I wanted to. It was a Ford and not a RollsRoyce but I had a car and I enjoyed it.”²⁷⁵

By 1931, however, financial difficulties were developing for more of Jeannette’s siblings. Her sister Margaret’s husband, Dirk Van Ingen, was a horse man, traveling throughout the nation judging horses, attending horse shows, and at one point employed by members of the DuPont family to oversee their horses. In correspondence with her

²⁷⁴ Letter dated April 27, 1931, Folder 3, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: Emily (mother) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1941, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁷⁵ P. B-48, Folder 3, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies: undated, Piccard Family Papers. For an excellent source on women and their influence on the automobile industry see Virginia Scharff, Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age (New York: Free Press, 1991).

father, Margaret stated they had sold their horses, one of the automobiles, and their furniture “excepting the old pieces they had from Mother.” In addition, Margaret asked her father to neither pay any bills that might come to him nor disclose the Van Ingens’ address; certainly an attempt to stay ahead of any creditors. Eventually Margaret and her family became part of the innumerable mass of persons dislocated by economic uncertainty, first moving into a friend’s farmhouse, and eventually returning to her parents’ household.²⁷⁶

Jeannette and her family were weathering the financial storm fairly well, but emotions were rising to the surface. Throughout her life Jeannette had a positive relationship with her mother. They enjoyed being together, they liked to shop, and they shared their thoughts and ideas on a regular basis. However, the relationship began to show some signs of strain in February 1931. In response to a letter from an exasperated Jeannette, confidante Father Powell expressed words of advice and encouragement for the mother-daughter relationship. “Do not scourge yourself,” he cautioned, “with words nor metaphorically cut yourself with knives of self-reproach...If a visit from such a beloved person as your mother were prolonged unduly, I think at whatever cost of giving pain you would have to state the case baldly and say, ‘Mother, under the circumstances, you must go home. I love you dearly, but if I am to be able to live my rather difficult life and keep the team here running smoothly, I must be the only person on the box-seat of the coach. When two people try to drive the family coach things do not go well. And if they begin to pull on separate reins disaster is sure to result.’” Though Jeannette loved her mother, she

²⁷⁶ Letter dated November 18, 1931, Folder 6, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette, Piccard Family Papers.

resented losing her privacy when Emily visited. To this Father Powell stated, to be “resentful is not sinful at all, neither in a wife nor in anyone else. You have a right to keep the integrity of your soul, and to keep yourself uninvaded. Indeed, if you are wise you will keep a hedge of reserve about one little sacred bit of a walled-in garden of the soul, where no one can enter in save by invitation.” Always the priest, Father Powell closed the letter telling Jeannette to “take an opportunity of saying the one hundred and third Psalm as an act of Thanksgiving to God for having kept you in His grace and for honouring you with so many really severe discomforts and trials, and which He gave you the grace to bear, even although you don’t think that you have done it as well as you might have done.”²⁷⁷ In 1932, God would honor Jeannette with increasingly severe discomforts and trials.

The Depth of the Depression and the Soaring of a Balloon

By 1933, between 12 million and 15 million Americans were unemployed, and Jeannette’s husband Jean was one of the statistics. Whether or not they anticipated Jean’s employment problems is not known, but there is evidence that Jeannette’s emotions were edgy in early 1932. Jeannette hosted a Friday night dinner party with both Catholic and Protestant guests, planning the menu so as not to offend anyone’s customs. However, Jean was critical of Jeannette’s menu rationale saying, “you [Jeannette] can’t do a thing with the intention of confessing it.” Emotionally wounded, Jeannette sought spiritual solace from her confidante. Father Powell concurred with the reasoning for having the dinner on a Friday so that Jeannette could “get the people” she wanted. But he cautioned

²⁷⁷ Letter dated February 27, 1931, Folder 5, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

that Jean “probably” meant Jeannette “ought not to do a thing with the intention of confessing it. Naturally when he said ‘you can’t’ you felt like saying ‘I’ll show you if I can’t’”.²⁷⁸

Several months after the dinner party and whatever misunderstanding there might have been between them, Jean and Jeannette had to put it behind them and pull together. Jean was being let go by Hercules Powder Company. “Dearest Daddy,” Jeannette wrote, “This is bad news so be prepared and don’t get a shock. I wish it could be broken to you less suddenly, but like myself, I think that when a fact has to be faced you like to face it. Jean loses [sic] his job on the first of the month. He will be paid two months[’] salary which will keep us through the Summer. We will stay where we are till school closes. [W]hat we do then we will decide later. Jean, as you know, has some money which his parents have given him from time to time and [w]hich he has inherited from his mother. It will keep the wolf from the door for a couple of years so that there is no danger of our being dependent upon you and thus adding to your burdens. So you see that though the news is bad, it isn’t as bad as it might be.”²⁷⁹

Dr. Ridlon was grateful that Jeannette was open about Jean’s situation unlike her sister Margaret, who had kept husband Dirk’s problems from him as long as possible. “Of course,” her father opined, “you are in a much more fortunate position than they [Margaret and Dirk Van Ingen] were; and I am confident that you and Jean will no[t] spend as much money on unnecessary things as Margaret and Dirk have done. My

²⁷⁸ Letter dated January 18, 1932, Folder 6, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers. Powell scolded Jeannette, saying she “should have been content with the oysters and whatever vegetables and fruit were on hand.” See Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Letter dated April 15, 1932, Folder 2, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

advice, in a word, is that at once you cut out all unnecessary expenses...it is also true that Jean has an occupation that is more likely in demand than Dirk had; but I think that he and you ought not to let pride keep him from accepting, and seeking, any job that will pay even a very little. Ten or fifteen dollars a week is very much better than no income at all, humiliating as that thought must be to you both. But for \$10. Or \$15. [sic] a week you can manage to live.” [Emphasis in the original.] Although Dr. Ridlon was critical of Margaret and Dirk’s spending habits, Margaret was constantly trying to find employment, eventually being hired in 1932 as a librarian at the Rhode Island State College Library.²⁸⁰

One of the expenses that Jean and Jeannette eliminated was their boys’ private schooling. Dr. Ridlon voiced his approval in a letter to Jeannette: “I am glad that the boys are in the public school; for as the common people grow in political importance it is better that they learn the ways of such people t[h]an to learn only the ways of the rich and those who ape them.” “I think children,” the wise doctor continued, “ought to be brought up to the life that sixty percent of people have to live. If they have it in them to rise above that level, they will do so anyway...but if they are trained for the upper levels of life and find themselves...low in the scale they have suffered much in their descent, and are generally ever after unhappy...”²⁸¹

Jeannette wrote Father Powell about their situation and Powell, in response, believed Jean’s unemployment was the “most lamentable news.” He was “more sorry” than could

²⁸⁰ Letter dated April 16, 1932, Folder 7, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁸¹ Letter dated September 26, 1932, Folder 7, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette, Piccard Family Papers.

be “express[ed] in words,” yet he tried. “I will not bore you with platitudes,” Powell began, “I can only commend you to God, who carrieth the lambs in His arms and tenderly beareth those that are with young. The world is a hard place just now, but He, the Good Shepherd, goes into the hard wilderness of cold indifference and wasteful pride, searching high and low for his poor wandering sheep...[S]o I do hope and pray that you will be renewed and strengthened by the fattening diet of grace, that you may all keep body and soul together, and when things are at their worst that love will yet be host and meat...”²⁸²

Jean and Jeannette were fortunate to have savings available, and although they never had to experience standing in a bread- or soup-line, they both tried to improve their family’s economic situation. Jean beat the academic and corporate bushes in an attempt to secure employment. He contacted his good friend Julius Stieglitz at the University of Chicago; however, Stieglitz was not optimistic in response. “The outlook of the country is exceedingly bad,” he stated, and “...even in normal times there are some years where not a single position worthy of you would be open, and in times like these the situation is worse.”²⁸³ Despite Stieglitz’s gloomy outlook, Jean continued to seek gainful employment. And like so many women during the economic depression, Jeannette did her part to help stretch the family’s dollars. Sociologist Ruth Milkman’s research indicates women “‘took up the slack’ in the economy...by expanding their unpaid labor in the home,” including the tasks of canning fruits and vegetables, making clothing, and

²⁸² Letter dated April 16, 1932, Folder 6, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁸³ Letter dated April 21, 1932, Folder 6, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

baking bread. Despite the loss of income, families were able to “maintain their former standards of living...because women substituted their own labor for goods and services previously purchased.”²⁸⁴ Jeannette proudly relayed to “Dearest Daddy” her accomplishment of “...put[ting] up eight jars of strawberries this past week and nine glasses of jam,” and was particularly pleased to note, “The very finest berries have cost only ten cents a box here [Marshallton, Delaware] this year.”²⁸⁵ But in spite of Jeannette’s efforts to “help take up the slack” and maintain an optimistic outlook, the toll of the economic unknown was evident in her letters. “It is exasperating,” she told her “Dearest Mumsie,” “that with the present bargains [in real estate] to be had one has no money to profit by them and gobble them up. If Jean had a job, an income of sorts with which to meet taxes...we might be tempted beyond that we are able. As it is I fear that there is nothing for us to do. How shall we dare put what little money we have into something that will cost more rather than pay interest when we do not know in how many months from now we shall be hungry[?]”²⁸⁶ Soon, however, Jeannette’s life changed forever. She was about to leave her troubles on earth behind and touch the edge of outer space.

Since the first manned balloon ascent in 1783, balloonists interested in high-altitude flights faced the problem of pressurization. It was known that somewhere between 40,000 and 50,000 feet the air pressure diminished to the detriment of the human body: lungs would not function and blood gases bubbled away. As recently as November 1927,

²⁸⁴ Ware, *Holding Their Own*, p. 6.

²⁸⁵ Letter dated June 19, 1932, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁸⁶ Letter dated August 7, 1932, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

Captain Hawthorne Gray, of the U.S. Army Air Corp Service, had perished in an attempt to set an altitude record, with both his and the balloon's remains found outside Sparta, Tennessee. However, the world of high-altitude flight drastically changed on May 27, 1931, when Jean's twin brother Auguste, taking off from Augsburg, Germany, flew the first high-altitude pressurized gondola, lifted by a 500,000-cubic-foot-gasbag, to an altitude of 51,775 feet, a new record. Auguste and his assistant, Paul Kipfer, safely returned to Earth, landing on a glacier in the Bavarian Alps. Auguste's purpose was to study cosmic rays and, like his fellow physicists, he believed the research could best be completed above the Earth's atmosphere.²⁸⁷ The flight was "extremely hectic," and only one cosmic-ray measurement was made, but more importantly, with the pressurized gondola Auguste successfully solved one of the major problems humans encountered in high-altitude flights: typically, death occurred at altitudes above 40,000 feet if persons did not have either a pressurized vehicle or garment to protect their vital organs.²⁸⁸ Stratospheric balloonists in the United States and Europe had concentrated their efforts on designing such a vehicle, and Jeannette's brother-in-law's gondola design solved a major problem.²⁸⁹

Jeannette and Jean shared in the exhilaration of Auguste's momentous event.

Jeannette boasted to "Dearest Daddy," "We have passed a most exciting week. Between the Devon Horse Show and Auguste's trip to the stratosphere our emotions have been

²⁸⁷ An excellent source on the history of ballooning is Tom D. Crouch, The Eagle Aloft: Two Centuries of the Balloon in America (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983). The study of cosmic rays, discovered in 1912, and the push for new altitude records presage the United States-Soviet Union space race. An excellent study is David H. DeVorkin, Race to the Stratosphere: Manned Scientific Ballooning in America (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1989).

²⁸⁸ See Alan Honour, Ten Miles High, Two Miles Deep: The Adventures of the Piccards (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1957) p. 40.

²⁸⁹ Crouch, The Eagle Aloft, p. 603 and DeVorkin, Race to the Stratosphere, pp. 20-21.

pretty well stirred. Have the Newport [R.I.] papers carried anything about him? If you can keep us any clipping I should like to have them. A bureau of clippings offered to collect all of them in U.S. and Canada unlimited and bound for \$200.-. We didn't feel that rich so we will have to do our collecting ourselves."²⁹⁰

In August 1932, Auguste made an ascension reaching over 53,000 feet, another new altitude record.²⁹¹ Historian Tom Crouch describes Auguste's celebrity status: His "flight was celebrated in newspapers around the globe. The man himself became one of the great public figures of twentieth-century science. Physically, he personified the popular image of the scientist. Tall, thin, with a wild fringe of fine hair surrounding a balding pate, Piccard was lionized when he came to the United States on a lecture tour in 1933. From the moment of his first talk at the inaugural meeting of the Institute of Aeronautical Sciences in New York, reams of newsprint were devoted to his tour."²⁹² Jeannette and Jean were pleased with Auguste's success, and reveled in it with him, as evidenced by Jeannette's letters to her father. However, in later years Jeannette's writing expressed emotions more raw, perhaps even justifiably envious: "While Auguste experienced the triumphs of these two flights, had published a book, lectured all over Europe, been awarded medals by many countries and entertained by royalty...In 1932 Jean had no job, no prospect of a job, and every effort to get a job met only silence. Early in 1933,

²⁹⁰ Letter dated May 31, 1931, Folder 2, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁹¹ Crouch, *The Eagle Aloft*, p. 605. Max Cosyns, a professor at the University of Brussels, made this flight with Auguste. See p. 9, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁹² Crouch, *The Eagle Aloft*, p. 606.

Auguste came to the United States on a lecture tour. Aside from his lecture, he spoke very little English so Jean traveled with him and acted as his interpreter.”²⁹³

Auguste’s flight was a triumph in stratospheric flight, but this triumph brought a personal setback for Jeannette. Since her marriage to Jean in 1919, Jeannette had put aside her ambition to be an Episcopal priest in order to concentrate on her responsibilities as wife and mother. However, her latent desire for priesthood was rekindled in 1932 when Jeannette developed a close relationship with the bishop of Delaware, the Rt. Rev. Philip Cook. “For the first time,” Jeannette wrote, “I found positive support for my life-long desire. There was no question of my leaving my family to study at a seminary. Bishop Cook said that he would guide my studies, if Father Powell...would continue to guide me spiritually. [Cook] took me into his private chapel, blessed me and sent me to get a book on liturgics to start my study.” Jeannette remembered “walking along the street,” and “gradually bec[oming] conscious that men were turning to look at me. My face must have been aglow with the light of the joy within me. Somehow, I managed not to turn it off but to pull the shades down, so that the light would not show.” However, when Jean and his brother informed Jeannette of their plans for a stratospheric flight, she was not happy. In fact, “the news of the prop[o]sed stratosphere expedition was a terrible shock. Driving Auguste to the train to New York, I wept.” Auguste was “surprised” at Jeannette’s reaction, thinking that she would have been “happy” with the idea. Jeannette told Auguste, “Happy for Jean, yes. For me—my life will be so different!” Resigned to the inevitable, Jeannette wrote, “So my life would be different. I would have to accept it.”

²⁹³ P. 9, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

Plans for the flight would consume the family's time, so any opportunity to study with Bishop Cook had to be put on hold. Jeannette's responsibilities as wife and mother would once again take precedent over her desire to be a priest.²⁹⁴

The sponsors of the Chicago's World Fair took note of the excitement surrounding Auguste's American tour, and to help boost attendance and publicity, began planning for a stratospheric flight to take place during the exposition. The fair's theme, *The Century of Progress*, celebrated the centennial of Chicago, Illinois. However, to attract national and international attention, the organizers chose to unify "every aspect of the exposition around a central scientific theme," and the slogan, "Science Finds—Industry Applies—Man Conforms," was chosen. The fair's management personnel believed a stratospheric flight, taking off from Soldier Field, would represent fully both the theme and the slogan, and perhaps be the crowning event of the fair.²⁹⁵ In March, two months before the scheduled opening, negotiations for the flight began between Auguste and Dr. F. R. Moulton, the fair's director of concessions. However, by the first *Century of Progress* flight five months later, misunderstandings about the purpose of the flight and miscommunications between all parties involved were the order of the day. Throughout the flight preparations there was tension between those who wanted this to be a scientific flight and those who wanted to be sure to set a new altitude record. The Piccards consistently held the former position, whereas during the negotiations and preparations,

²⁹⁴ P. 10, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁹⁵ Lisa D. Schrenk, *Building a Century of Progress: The Architecture of Chicago's 1933-34 World's Fair* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), pp. 22-23. The exposition opened in May 1933, and approximately 49 million visitors attended before its closing in October 1934. Although the fair opened during the depth of the depression, it was in the end a profitable venture. See *Ibid.*, p. 5.

the World's Fair people and other sponsors pushed to make sure there was an attempt at the record.²⁹⁶

Auguste and Jean were "very well received" by the Goodyear Company engineers, and they showed interest in making the *Century of Progress* balloon. Auguste was singularly impressed with Goodyear's Ward T. Van Orman and considered him an excellent candidate for the flight's pilot. Van Orman, Auguste noted, "showed great interest and understanding."²⁹⁷ Auguste indicated the Goodyear contract should "stipulate...Mr. Van Orman or another equally well qualified man who is engineer as well as pilot, should be present during the whole inflation of the balloon and...he should command the start." Auguste continued, "If my brother is to be the pilot he would appreciate it if his name be kept from publicity till the flight is definitively decided. Whenever the flight is announced it would be nice to say that there will be a stratosphere flight organized by me and that it will be made in collaboration with Dr. [Arthur H.] Compton and Dr. [Robert A.] Millikan (if he accepts), and that the pilot and the physicist will be designated later. When we arrived in Akron, [Ohio,] the newspaper men asked me if we were there to discuss the flight from the World Fair. We did not say more than that we were having a conference with the men from the Goodyear [C]ompany and that the reporters could draw their own conclusions. Things get public fast enough anyhow...My

²⁹⁶ See letter dated March 18, 1933, Folder 3, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1930-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁹⁷ Letter dated March 16, 1933, Folder 3, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1930-1934, Piccard Family Papers. Crouch states Van Orman was Auguste's "first choice" for pilot, but "at best" Van Orman "regarded the Piccard brothers with amused tolerance" because "they exhibited far too many eccentricities" for the serious-minded engineer. See Crouch, *The Eagle Aloft*, pp. 607-608.

brother and I would be very much pleased to collaborate with you in this enterprise.”²⁹⁸

Nobel laureates Arthur H. Compton, of the University of Chicago, and Robert A.

Millikan, of the California Institute of Technology, were in a “friendly rivalry” over the origins of cosmic radiation, and both “offered enthusiastic support” and equipment for cosmic ray experiments to the Century of Progress flights.²⁹⁹

In mid-March, Moulton sent Auguste “conditions” for the proposed June ascension from Soldier Field. Moulton was responsible for the “production of a balloon and gondola...[and] provision for the ground forces during the preparation of the take-off...without expense” to Auguste. Auguste was responsible for “providing the pilot and the scientist to make the flight.” Moulton was “most agreeable” if Jean “acted as pilot.” Moulton stipulated that admission would be charged to “witness the preparations for the flight as well as the actual flight itself.” He also noted, “All receipts...except necessary expenses incurred by A Century of Progress [were] to be turned over to [Auguste] up to a total of \$25,000,” and any monies beyond the \$25,000 would be divided equally between Auguste and the exposition. The Union Carbide Company would supply the hydrogen and the Dow Chemical Company would provide a gondola for Auguste’s use, although at no cost to him. Moulton noted, however, that “perhaps...it [might] be necessary for A Century of Progress in some way to underwrite, at least in part, the cost of the balloon,” and suggested contacting the Chicago Daily News and the National Broadcasting

²⁹⁸ Letter dated March 16, 1933, Folder 3, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1930-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

²⁹⁹ See Crouch, The Eagle Aloft, p. 606 and DeVorkin, Race to the Stratosphere, p. 41.

Company (NBC) to determine if there was any monetary interest in such a venture.³⁰⁰

Auguste had business to attend to in Europe, including the impending death of his father, and so withdrew from the exposition's flight plans.³⁰¹ However, he suggested his brother Jean as a very competent replacement, and this was initially acceptable to the organizers.

Jeannette had both personal and professional reservations for Jean making a stratospheric flight. Responding to Jean's correspondence, Jeannette wrote, "Your letter has filled me with a good deal of consternation. Of course, if you want to go you must go but I had rather thought that Auguste would be with you when you went. I understand his feeling that someone else should go now but I should feel safer if he were with you. The stratosphere and the angels already know him!" But Jeannette's handwritten postscript reflected her concern for Jean's and the family's future: "If you get a reputation as a balloonist you'll never get another job as a chemist. Nobody wants a ballooning Chemist! To go with Auguste would be different."³⁰²

Near the end of March, Dr. Moulton wrote Jean, "I have finally completed tentative plans for your flight...The arrangements are not quite what I hoped they might be when we first talked about the project, but I sincerely hope that they will be acceptable to you." The major change dealt with who would be the flight's pilot. The Goodyear Company personnel believed Jean could not qualify and secure a balloon pilot's license in time for the scheduled June flight, and if Jean did not get his license in time it might be too late to

³⁰⁰ Letter dated March 18, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-April 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁰¹ See letter dated April 11, 1933, Folder 4, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1931-1935, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁰² Letter dated February 24, 1933, Folder 4, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1931-1935, Piccard Family Papers.

secure the services of another pilot. Goodyear suggested that Navy Lieutenant Commander Thomas G. W. (Tex) Settle pilot the balloon and Jean act as scientist. Moulton was aware that Jean was “primarily a chemist rather than a physicist” and “might feel some hesitancy in acting as scientist.” To boost his confidence, Moulton told Jean that Professor Compton “[assured him] that [Jean] would be in every respect thoroughly competent after studying the apparatus [that Compton would] supply and making some experiments with it.” “In fact,” Moulton informed Jean, “Compton is very desirous that you agree to this arrangement for it removes our last uncertainty as to the details.” Jean was now bumped from being the pilot, but the last item of the contract perhaps made up for any disappointment: “After the flight the balloon and the gondola would be turned over to you as your property for use in the future as you might see fit.”³⁰³ Jean and Jeannette would become the owners of *The Century of Progress* balloon and gondola.

Jean accepted Settle as the pilot, and talks between the various manufacturers, the fair organizers, and Jean and Jeannette continued for the next several months, although terms of the final contract had remained unresolved. On April 6, Moulton requested Jean to come to Chicago “at once,” believing a “satisfactory contract” was ready to sign.³⁰⁴ However, in a personal letter to Settle, Jean expressed his concerns regarding the contract terms and the impending Chicago flight. Jean reiterated his acceptance of Settle as pilot, but was disturbed by the continual shift in the dispersal structure of gate receipts, stating,

³⁰³ Letter dated March 31, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-April 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁰⁴ Western Union telegram dated April 6, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-April 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

“The part of the...receipts offered to my brother has gradually been reduced.” Jean told Settle the contract stated, “The event shall be described as a ‘Piccard Stratosphere Ascension’ or other name to be agreed upon, and that Auguste shall ‘personally supervise said ascension.’ Previous to this contract the agreement had been made that as long as my brother is not in this country I should visit the Dow Chemical Company...and the Goodyear-Zeppelin Company...and that I should keep in close contact with my brother...Yesterday Dr. Muskat told me that the entire responsibility for the arrangement of the flight should be in your hand and that I did not need to have any further conferences with the Goodyear-Zeppelin Company nor with the Dow Chemical Company.” Jean understood that Settle should oversee the manufacture of the balloon and gondola since Settle was “going to trust his life” to the craft, but there was something else that bothered Jean. “When my brother was first asked by Dr. Moulton to take any part in a flight from the fair,” he told Settle, “his main condition was that the flight should have a scientific aim and that cosmic rays should be measured. Dr. Compton was asked to participate and...agreed to it. This scientific aim of the flight was indicated in the first contract but in the final one it is not mentioned any more. Dr. Muskat told me that such measurements were still intended but I have only his word for it and considering the many changes which took place in the Fair’s conception of this flight it does not seem certain that this aim will always be the aim of the Fair...” Jean apologized for the letter’s length, but wanted Settle to understand “just how things were standing.” Jean closed “hoping very much that all those difficulties, which after all are only of an administrative order, can be solved and that you and I shall be able to make a comfortable and

scientifically interesting trip together.”³⁰⁵ Jean received Settle’s response a few days later. Settle, being “unfamiliar with the ‘background’ with the contracts,” was “sorry that matters [had] taken the turn...describe[d]...and was at a loss to know just what to say...” He confirmed his position to “make the flight, from the scientific and technical aspects...” and reiterated his “great pleasure” to make the flight with Jean “as we discussed in Akron...”³⁰⁶ However, the series of events in the months leading up to and including the Chicago flight are debatable and open to interpretation. David DeVorkin argues Jean was “unfulfilled and unwanted by the professional world he longed for, [and he] turned to the stratosphere as a refuge from politics and economic uncertainty and as a path to fame and freedom. Jean was an unhappy remnant of the romantic explorer, one of *Humboldt’s Children*, who hoped for the best...”³⁰⁷ DeVorkin stresses that Irving Muskat, director of the chemical section of the Century of Progress, wanted the Chicago stratosphere flight to be an “all-American effort,” telling Willard Dow that the “flight will be made by an American pilot with a gondola made by an American manufacturer out of a material developed by an American manufacturer and with a balloon designed and constructed by an American company.”³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Letter dated April 22, 1933, Folder 3, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1930-1934, Piccard Family Papers. To emphasize the scientific aspect of the flight, Jean reiterated the original terms of the contract.

³⁰⁶ Letter dated April 27, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-April 1933, Piccard Family Papers. Settle told Jean the Navy Department had “approved” his “participation in the project...provided satisfactory arrangements can be worked out, involving no cost to the government.” He also believed Auguste’s “previous experience” and the “advice” of both Jean and Auguste “should be utilized to the maximum in order to ensure the success of the project.” [Emphasis in the original.] See Ibid.

³⁰⁷ DeVorkin, *Race to the Stratosphere*, p. 76.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 71.

In early May, Muskat sent Jean copies of the original signed contract and supplemental letters of modification.³⁰⁹ Upon receipt of Muskat's letter, Jean vented to E. H. Perkins, of the Dow Chemical Company, about the changes in the contract: "First the Fair had asked my brother to supervise the flight without obligation to come to Chicago if I would come. Then they asked him to come to Chicago without obligation to pilot the balloon but expressing their desire he should pilot the balloon. Then they decided S[e]ttle should pilot the balloon and my brother would not be allowed to do so. I was to be the scientist for the cosmic ray work. Now [Muskat] wants my brother to sign a contract according to which he would go up as a scientist. It is, of course, out of question for my brother to accept this new alteration. Further more Dr. Muskat asks us both to sign a contract that we would accept orders from the fair. I refuse this too, [e]specially as the new contract specifies that we are not employed by the fair but independent contractors. I am writing Dr. Muskat that one must draw the line somewhere..."³¹⁰ Perkins sympathized with Jean, writing, "It must be very disconcerting to you to have these constant changes requested by Dr. Muskat. I hope to see him the first of the week and I shall try to impress upon him the necessity for clearing up all of the present questions, both with respect to your agreements and our position in this matter."³¹¹ By June, Jean had Auguste's power-of-attorney allowing him to continue negotiations and discussions

³⁰⁹ Letter dated May 6, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received May-June 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

³¹⁰ Letter dated May 10, 1933, Folder 3, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1930-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³¹¹ Letter dated May 11, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received May-June 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

with the various parties involved in the flight.³¹² Jeannette chimed in on the contract situation, cautioning Jean to not “let [Irving] Muskat lull you into sleep by his silence. Don’t you believe that he isn’t working against you for all he is worth and planning. When he is most quiet be the most watchful so that you will be ready and if possible prepared for his spitefulness when it breaks out.”³¹³

For the Century of Progress exposition board time was of the essence for the upcoming Piccard-Compton stratosphere flight. Nathaniel A. Owings sent a letter to all the concessionaires and exhibitors about celebrating the Fourth of July with elaborate ceremonies. The Chief of Events explained “the Fourth of July, in the history of other fairs, had been the point where the attendance has jumped to a high figure and apparently has assisted in maintaining the high attendance from that date on. For this reason we feel that we should make a special effort to make the fourth a really big day at the Fair.” Owings beseeched the participants to “make this a BIG day!!”³¹⁴ However, the holiday would pass without a stratospheric flight.

Finally, Muskat wrote Jean that “all equipment...will be ready on July 15th [and] the flight itself will probably take place on the 17th of July.”³¹⁵ Tickets printed for the Piccard-Compton Stratosphere Ascension named Lt. Com. T. G. W. Settle, U. S. N., as

³¹² Letter dated June 2, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received May-June 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

³¹³ Letter dated June 5, 1933, Folder 4, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1931-1935, Piccard Family Papers.

³¹⁴ Letter dated June 27, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received May-June 1933, Piccard Family Papers. Owings indicated the concessionaires’ and exhibitors’ “participation” could “take any form.” Suggestions included “ice cream cones could be filled with red, white and blue ice cream, or perhaps the flower show could display a large American Flag made up of flowers, lagoon boats specially decorated, etc.”

³¹⁵ Letter dated July 7, 1933, Folder 8, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-September 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

pilot and Dr. Jean Piccard the scientific observer. The forty-cent adult general admission ticket allowed for access into Soldier Field, but not the exposition grounds, and if the flight was delayed due to inclement weather, the ticket was valid through July 21.³¹⁶ The Piccards made arrangements to meet in Chicago, Illinois. Given that Jeannette was returning to her childhood city, and being raised in proper social etiquette, she informed Jean she had written to Mrs. William Allen Pusey, “an old family friend, whose husband Dr. Pusey, is one of the Directors of the Fair,” and to Mrs. Dawes, whose husband Rufus C. Dawes, was the exposition’s president. “I told them that you and Auguste were at the [University of Chicago’s] Quadrangle Club and that I expected to be in Chicago by the eighth. If either of them should write or telephone and invite us anywhere accept and let me know at [my sister] Hester’s so that I can be there. They probably won’t but they might.”³¹⁷

July 17, the scheduled date for the flight, came and went. Muskat, still intent on pushing Jean out of the flight, and with the support of the exposition planners, demanded Jean be medically tested before the flight, including performing a parachute jump. What were the motivations behind this request? Less weight in the gondola would allow for the possibility of reaching a higher altitude. But was this for better scientific results or for the possibility of a new altitude record or a combination of both?

In an April letter to Moulton, Jean indicated Muskat told him “he did not care if [Auguste] accepted the contract...because the flight would take place anyhow. It would then not anymore be a ‘Piccard Stratosphere Ascension’ but a competitive [A]merican

³¹⁶ Original July 17, 1933 Piccard-Compton Stratosphere Ascension ticket #008572 in author’s possession.

³¹⁷ Letter dated July 3, 1933, Folder 4, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1931-1935, Piccard Family Papers.

flight with the aim to beat [Auguste's] altitude record."³¹⁸ Exposition planners asked Jean if he "would guarantee" the flight reaching a record altitude. Jean responded, "With all of the scientific equipment and [the weight] of two men, no, I can't guarantee it."³¹⁹

Sometime between July 17 and July 21, Jean agreed not to go on the flight "in order that an additional altitude may be obtained." Via a telegram to Settle, Lenox Lohr, the general manager, broke the news of what would now be a solo flight, and indicated all parties, including NBC and The Daily News, agreed to the new conditions. Lohr prevailed upon Settle to "keep this strictly confidential until properly announced."³²⁰

Although not public knowledge, news of Jean's acquiescence traveled quickly among the flight participants. Professor Compton, whose interest in cosmic-ray studies was a major impetus for the flight, wrote Jean, "Allow me to express my very high appreciation of the scientific spirit which has prompted you to make this sacrifice."³²¹ Settle congratulated Jean on his "most sportsmanlike and fine action," and "regret[ed] not having [Jean] as [his] shipmate."³²² However, by July 23 the news of the solo flight was public, and Dr. Ridlon weighed in about the situation. I understand, he wrote Jean, "that you are not going up to the [s]tratosphere. If this is so, I am very pleased, and I wish to tell you so. From what I have read in the newspapers during the past weeks I have felt that Commander Settle did not wish you to go with him; but perhaps I should say that he

³¹⁸ Letter dated April 29, 1933, Folder 3, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1930-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³¹⁹ P. 3, Folder 6, Box II: 59, Jeannette Piccard: Paul Maravelas interview with Jeannette Piccard 1979-1980, Piccard Family Papers.

³²⁰ Telegram dated July 21, 1933, Folder 8, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-September 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

³²¹ Letter dated July 21, 1933, Folder 8, Box I, General Correspondence: 1932-1952, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

³²² Postal telegraph dated July 22, 1933, Folder 8, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-September 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

seemed to wish to go up alone. If this is the situation it is much better that you do not go.”³²³ Jeannette suggested “it would be a good idea [for Jean] to get a medical exam...perhaps it could be done quietly.” She also believed “it might be good...to find out from the [Union] Carbon-Carbide [sic] people who said you were ‘ill’ and whether they wrote it. If they were foolish enough to write it-----!”³²⁴ Although Jean continued to protest through backchannels, he was officially off the flight.³²⁵

Finally, after many construction delays and both confusing and testy negotiations, on the evening of August 4 the weather conditions were good for the flight. Thousands of launch spectators were given souvenir programs touting the Century of Progress’ “Piccard-Compton Stratosphere Ascension from Soldiers [sic] Field: A Solo flight by Lt. Commander Settle, U. S. N.” Public events began at 8:30 in the evening, and included music by the United States Army Band and the Commonwealth Edison Drum and Bugle Corps. Mrs. Dawes “christen[ed] the gondola ‘A Century of Progress’ with liquid air,” and as part of the festivities, Dr. Compton, the scientific director of the flight, explained to the crowd gathered at Soldier Field the purpose of the flight. As the military band played “Anchor’s Aweigh,” Lt. Commander Settle was to give the “command” and the balloon “released for its flight into the stratosphere.”³²⁶ However, there was a problem with the balloon’s gas valve: after Settle had tested and released the line, “gas could be

³²³ Letter dated July 23, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

³²⁴ Letter dated August 3, 1933, Folder 4, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1931-1935, Piccard Family Papers.

³²⁵ Jean appealed to Dow Chemical’s H.E. Perkins, “Dow is giving gondola for scientific flight not for stunt flying....Settle prefers going with me says scientific results would increase...is pressure by Dow not possible.” See telegram dated August 3, 1933, Folder 4, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

³²⁶ Original program for the Piccard-Compton Stratosphere Ascension from Soldiers [sic] Field: A Solo Flight by Lt. Commander Settle, U. S. N. in author’s possession.

heard whistling through the giant valve on top of the balloon...” Both Settle and the organizers were faced with a dilemma. Pilots must be able to control the release of gas in the balloon; therefore, the proper control of the gas valve is imperative for the success of a flight. Settle did not have control of the gas valve, but his options were to either “dump” 125,000 cubic feet of hydrogen in an area with thousands of spectators, or proceed with the launch, knowing there was a potential major problem. Settle chose the latter. As the flight’s technical advisor, Jean was present at the launch and his last piece of advice to Lt. Commander Settle was simply, “Don’t crack the valve.”³²⁷

Approximately ten minutes after take-off, Settle “cracked the valve,” and immediately began preparations for the emergency landing. All of the fussing and fuming over who would make the flight, and whether it was a flight for science or the altitude record or both, came to a very inauspicious ending in the railroad yards of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad.³²⁸ The next day Jean wrote, but perhaps did not send, the following telegram to Settle: “Very badly shocked by news of mishap just received...Happy at your escape from personal injury...All the rest unimportant...Most cordial regards to you and Mrs. Settle from all the Piccards.”³²⁹

Ownership of the balloon and gondola... maybe

Three days after Settle’s aborted flight, Jean received a letter from Lenox Lohr’s technical assistant, F.C. Boggs. Boggs had “tried to reach [Jean] by telephone...but was

³²⁷ Crouch, *The Eagle Aloft*, pp. 611-612.

³²⁸ Letter dated August 7, 1933, Folder 8, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-September 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

³²⁹ Telegram dated August 5, 1933, Folder 4, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1933, Piccard Family Papers. Unlike other telegrams, this one is handwritten with no time and date stamped by Western Union.

informed by the Windermere Hotel that [Jean and Jeannette] had gone out and left no word where [they] could be reached.” There was an urgency to Boggs’s letter because “pursuant to...[the] agreement” between A Century of Progress and the Piccards, the “...balloon now...belong[ed] to [the Piccards]. “As a matter of caution,” Boggs wrote, “the balloon was rolled up and placed upon a gondola car [of the railroad company and] through the courtesy of the sponsors of the ascension...a continuous guard was put in custody of the balloon so that you might not suffer from having the property left uncared for. You should make immediate arrangements to take the balloon into your possession, as it is your property and you alone should be responsible for it.” Boggs was informed by Settle that it was “imperative that the balloon be dried out, [preferably within forty-eight hours,] because the moisture, unless taken out, would cause serious damage to the fabric...[if not its ruination.]” Boggs was “passing on this information” and “hope[d]” the Piccards would “not disregard Commander Settle’s advice...,” and would be able to “take such steps as you deem advisable to protect your interests.”³³⁰

Jeannette and Jean Piccard were now owners of a slightly used gondola and a soggy balloon in need of immediate attention. Assessing the situation, Father Powell wrote Jeannette, “It is a relief to know that Jean was not in any way responsible for the fiasco of...Settle’s attempted ascension into the stratosphere.” Powell “hoped” that Jeannette and Jean would not be “sunk financially by owning the balloon and gondola.”³³¹

³³⁰ Letter dated August 7, 1933, Folder 8, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-September 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

³³¹ Letter dated August 23, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

Jeannette claimed to have few influential connections in the city of Chicago, but she was acquainted with Julius Rosenwald, owner of Sears, Roebuck and Company, and the founder of Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. She approached this family friend for help. DeVorkin argues Jeannette "exploited" this family relationship, but the Piccards were facing an impending crisis with the condition of the balloon, and time was of the essence.³³² The agreement between the Piccards and Rosenwald was mutually beneficial, so it is difficult to argue exploitation by Jeannette. Rosenwald agreed to lend his assistance with one major condition: museum volunteers would help get the balloon to the museum where space would be provided to dry out the balloon, in exchange for the Piccards' "promise to present the gondola" to the Museum of Science and Industry for permanent display.³³³ Jeannette and Jean agreed to Rosenwald's terms, and they set to the tasks of planning their own flight to the stratosphere. Within days, however, the Dow Chemical Company contacted Jean with a different proposal. Stating the enclosed letter "puts in writing our verbal agreement regarding the present status and the future plans for your dometal gondola," Dow's E. H. Perkins acknowledged both the Piccards' ownership of the gondola and Dow's agreement to make "all repairs necessary to put the gondola into suitable condition for use in the stratosphere." But Perkins reiterated the Piccards' "promise...to loan the gondola to the Dow Chemical Company for a solo ascent into the stratosphere..." with stipulation that the flight must take place "prior to December 1, 1933." If no flight occurred by that date, "the gondola [was] to be returned...to the Rosenwald Museum [of Science and Industry]" at the expense of the

³³² DeVorkin, *Race to the Stratosphere*, p. 82.

³³³ Crouch, *The Eagle Aloft*, p. 612.

Dow Chemical Company.³³⁴ Jean agreed to “defer” the transfer of title to the gondola until December 15, 1933, and until then, Dow Chemical retained the right to send the gondola into flights.³³⁵

Dr. Ridlon followed the negotiations between Dow and his son-in-law, and was only too eager to express his opinions. “I am glad to know all that you told us,” he wrote Jeannette, “but the situation is not yet at all clear to me. I may be all wrong, but it looks to me that all the use they had for Jean at any time was to make advertising use of the Piccard name. Now if they no longer have use for it you better grab any small amount of money that you can get, and get out of Chicago. I can’t see a thing more in it for Jean. Of course he believed that other men were honest, as he is. Well, they are not, and I hope he now knows it...[As far as] Jean is concerned, get out. It is not worth while for an honest man to try to watch a crook side-step and himself keep time with him.” Dr. Ridlon closed with fatherly advice: “I am sorry if you have wasted a lot of money; but it is better to lose the money than to lose Jean’s life. Don’t try to get JUSTICE. Get MONEY. And then run.” [Emphasis in the original.]³³⁶ Days later, Dr. Ridlon reiterated his feelings about the entire stratospheric business to Jeannette, stating, “I am glad that you have sold the balloon. The responsibility of your owning it has worried me, and I hope that you will

³³⁴ Letter dated August 10, 1933, Folder 8, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-September 1933, Piccard Family Papers. Perkins’s point five stated, “If the gondola is damaged as a result of its use under the terms of this agreement and the damage is of such nature, in our opinion, that it can be repaired and made suitable for stratosphere flights, we agree to do so. If, however, any such damage is of such a nature as to render it unfit in our opinion for further stratosphere flights, we will then make only such repairs as may be necessary to permit the exhibition of the gondola in the Rosenwald Museum of Chicago [Museum of Science and Industry].” This was a point of contention after Settle’s second flight in November 1933. See Ibid.

³³⁵ Addendum dated August 11, 1933, Folder 8, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-September 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

³³⁶ Letter dated August 7, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

never take it back again.” He again raised the issue of whether Settle, or the exposition officials, had ever wanted Jean to be on board the flight. Ridlon, disgusted at the flight officials’ request for Jean to “go up and then jump from parachutes [sic],” called it a “circus-stunt...I would have told them that I was not a circus-monkey and would not act like one.” Presciently Ridlon stated, “Looking at it from here there seems to be no doubt that Settle, and perhaps others interested, did not mean to have Jean go at any time and only wished to use the Piccard name.”³³⁷

Dr. Ridlon’s advice to take the money and run may have reflected his personal financial situation at the time, but his perception that Jean was never wanted on the first Century of Progress flight by Settle and the organizers has validity.³³⁸ Historian Tom Crouch argues Settle “recognized the difficulties involved in [any] solo attempt,” but he did not want Jean to accompany him.³³⁹ In September 1933, Dow Chemical Company’s E. H. Perkins telegraphed Jean with a significant change to the previously agreed to conditions. Jean reluctantly accepted, sending Perkins the following: “Subject to the condition of your [Perkins’] telegram of September 14 1933 and my talk of today with Mr. [Willard] Dow [president of the Dow Chemical Company], I waive requirement of ‘Solo’ flight, it being understood that the second man will be another Navy Officer. September 14, 1933. Jean Piccard.”³⁴⁰ Lt. Commander Settle was going to make another stratospheric flight attempt, he was not going alone, and the man accompanying him

³³⁷ Letter dated August 19, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

³³⁸ See letter dated August 19, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

³³⁹ Crouch, *The Eagle Aloft*, p. 612.

³⁴⁰ See letter dated August 10, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

would be a member of the armed forces. Perkins's "September surprise" helps illuminate some of the possible issues attached to the first Century of Progress flight. Perhaps Jean had been recruited for the marketing cache of the Piccard name, as his father-in-law suggested, and perhaps the primary motive behind the August 1933 flight had not been a desire for sound science but a desire to beat the Soviet Union to an altitude record. The nationalistic fervor in 1933 should not be underestimated, nor should the nascent militarization of space during this period be overlooked.

In 1931 August Piccard shattered the stratospheric ceiling by demonstrating with an enclosed, pressurized gondola the potential for humans reaching altitudes in excess of 33,700 feet and returning safely to earth.³⁴¹ Although Jean and Auguste were identical twins and shared research interests about the stratosphere, it was Auguste the physicist, not Jean the chemist, who ventured into the lower reaches of space. Jean shared the Piccard name, but not the experience.³⁴² This situation, overlaid with the Century of Progress Exposition's determination to make the fair, including the stratospheric flight, an American event celebrating the scientific and technological progress of America, helps clarify why a Swiss-born, naturalized-American chemist would ultimately not be the choice for the flight.

After Auguste's initial successes, nations began making serious plans to exceed his achievements, most often with governmental backing and support. By the end of September 1933, three "new heroes" of the Soviet Union set an altitude record of 60,694

³⁴¹ 33,700 feet is considered the approximate base of the stratosphere. For comparison, Mt. Everest's summit is 29,141 feet. See DeVorkin, *Race to the Stratosphere*, p. ii.

³⁴² See letter dated October 19, 1933, Folder 4, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

feet, bettering Auguste's 1932 attempt by over 7,500 feet.³⁴³ As a result, for those Americans interested in the stratosphere, the memory of the first Century of Progress flight fiasco coupled with the new Soviet record provided the impetus for making sure that subsequent attempts were successful. Nothing, especially a foreign-born civilian, was going to get in the way of the next American stratospheric flight. Dow Chemical Company's "request" for Jean's agreement to the deletion of the "solo" requirement, and the naming of a naval officer to accompany Settle in his next flight, represents the beginning of the militarization of space flight in the United States.³⁴⁴ The "race" for the strategic military "high ground" began.³⁴⁵ Willard Dow's September 23 letter to Jean highlighted the issues and concerns inherent with stratospheric flight, and is worth quoting in full:

I am pleased to receive your letter of September 14 and have been further advised regarding the proposed stratosphere flight about the first of October. I can appreciate that due to the ramifications of the United States Navy Department, it is quite embarrassing for them to propose to put on a so-called "solo flight" and I can say very frankly to you that we appreciate your co-operation in permitting the Navy to take up two persons rather than one. Also the fact that it has become an all Navy flight, rather than a flight sponsored entirely by science, puts an entirely different aspect on the whole venture. I hope you carry out your plans regarding a proposed flight next summer. On the other hand, I will say frankly that I would much prefer to see you carry out your scientific investigations on the ground. After all is said and done, why should you and Mrs. Piccard risk your life for a venture of this type? I should like to urge you to give up the thoughts of such a proposed trip. There are many others, such as the Navy Department, who make it their business as well as their pleasure to make these "dare devil" hops and why not leave it to them to explore these regions; on the other hand, offering you an opportunity to take the results they obtain and correlate them and further laying plans for future experimentation. The above remarks are made with a most friendly thought in mind and with the thought that you and Mrs. Piccard can

³⁴³ Crouch, *The Eagle Aloft*, p. 610.

³⁴⁴ Letter dated August 22, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-September 1933, Piccard Family Papers. Jean never gained employment with Dow Chemical Company.

³⁴⁵ Crouch, *The Eagle Aloft*, p. 609.

render greater service to humanity on the face of the earth, rather than risking your life ten miles above it. I hope you will not be offended by the impertinence of my remarks...³⁴⁶

Jean was not deterred by Dow's "friendly" letter, agreeing "...an all Navy flight is quite a different proposition from a scientific one, [and] such an attempt would be an unnecessary risk for a civilian to run." However, Jean was philosophical about the situation they were in. "Scientific investigation," he told Dow, "...has a commanding appeal. Mrs. Piccard and I cannot see that our lives are so very valuable as they stand now. Without a job, without a laboratory on the ground we are not in a position to render any service to humanity. We are or will be in possession of a gondola and balloon, an aerial laboratory. Such possession was not of our seeking." He reminded Dow it was the Century of Progress who "first came to [the Piccards] with their demands and their promises," and therefore it "seems to [Jeannette and me] that we should make use of the equipment that has been placed in our keeping..."³⁴⁷

Settle's Second Flight

Lt. Commander Settle demanded more control over his second attempt in the Century of Progress gondola. Any serious attempt at an altitude record required the gondola to be under constant control of the pilot, meaning a second person was necessary for instrumentation reading. In addition, a flight from Soldier Field was filled with unnecessary risks, particularly the bowl-shaped launch site with thousands of spectators

³⁴⁶ Letter dated September 23, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 41, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-September 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁴⁷ Letter dated September 26, 1933, Folder 4, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

potentially in harm's way.³⁴⁸ Although the organizers wanted a flight before the seasonal closing on November 12, this date came and went, and with it the strong connections between a stratospheric flight and the exposition. Now Settle could push his preferences, including taking off from Akron, Ohio.³⁴⁹ Finally, on November 20, Settle and his flight companion, Marine Major Chester L. Fordney, successfully launched the balloon and gondola. During the eight-hour flight, with Settle piloting, the duo reached a new world altitude record of 61, 237 feet, besting the Soviets' previous record by a little over 500 feet.³⁵⁰

Ironically, due to easterly winds, Settle and Fordney's landing location was about an hour away from Jeannette and Jean's home. Jeannette relayed to "Dearest Daddy" the particulars: "Settle landed...on the Jersey side of the Delaware River...[and taking the Newcastle ferry] we went over to see what we could see." Settle was still at the landing site, and the Piccards "extended" their congratulations. However, similar to the Chicago flight, the condition of the gondola and balloon were of paramount concern. Jeannette indicated the "navy arrived, rolled the balloon envelope into a bundle, arranged with a strawberry farmer to pull it off the marshes, and took the gondola...to Philadelphia. The wet balloon staid [sic] on the marshes until Thursday when it was finally brought ashore, washed and spread to dry." Jeannette lamented the balloon was "handled by inexperienced men and so dragged about that it [was] damaged," but she did not know to what extent. "In washing it," Jeannette continued, "the interior of the balloon was made wet because of the punctures and pieces removed by souvenir hunters, [and to make

³⁴⁸ See DeVorkin, Race to the Stratosphere, p. 89.

³⁴⁹ See Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 90.

matters worse,] Fordney dried [the balloon] on Friday with a sponge.” She sarcastically added, “(you know how dry sponges get things).” The balloon was rolled up and shipped to Akron.³⁵¹

Jeannette and Jean were once again owners of a now twice-used gondola and a balloon in unknown condition. After the Chicago flight, the balloon had been exposed to damp elements for a relatively short period of time, with drying facilities offered by the Museum of Science and Industry. On this flight, the balloon was in the “wet salt marshes [for] nearly 72 hours.” Jeannette “suspected” the balloon was “partially dried and rolled again damp” for the “sixty hour” truck trip to Akron. “Altogether,” she mused to her father, “the outlook for the condition of the balloon is far from cheerful and our ability to collect damages always is doubtful. This news should make you cheerful.”³⁵² Dr. Ridlon was, in fact, delighted, telling Jeannette, “I sincerely hope that the balloon is damaged beyond repair. At any rate since Settle made the flight I cannot see any reason for you to go up.”³⁵³ But Jeannette and Jean were determined to make a scientifically-based stratospheric flight, and despite innumerable obstacles and difficulties, 1934 was their year to soar.

Breaking Barriers and Shattering Expectations

It was obvious by 1933 that a civilian, let alone a woman, was unwelcome in United States’ stratospheric flight attempts. Navy Lt. Commander Settle’s second Century of

³⁵¹ Letter dated November 27, 1933, Folder 2, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁵² Letter dated November 28, 1933, Folder 2, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁵³ Letter dated November 28, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

Progress flight was manned by two military men, even though he had insisted on a solo flight from Chicago. Jean was pushed aside during the preparations for Soldier Field, and was not an integral part of the planning for the Akron flight. In addition, inter-branch jealousy was appearing within the armed forces. DeVorkin argues that the “Army viewed the Navy’s prominence” with stratospheric flights “with some envy.”³⁵⁴ After Hawthorne Gray’s untimely death in 1927, the Army Air Corps discontinued its balloon research program.³⁵⁵ However, the successes of Auguste Piccard’s and “Tex” Settle’s subsequent flights were the impetus necessary for this arm of the military to “...enter the balloon race to the stratosphere. If beating the Navy record was not enough, there was the national prestige and attention and...the considerable serious scientific study already done...in high altitude research.”³⁵⁶ The Army was willing to provide manpower and logistics, but not the cost of the balloon or gondola, further stipulating any flight involving the Army Air Corps could not “appear to be a military adventure.”³⁵⁷ Therefore, securing private funding sources for stratospheric flights and research was absolutely necessary. When Gilbert H. Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic Society, was presented with opportunities to support stratospheric flights in conjunction with the Army Air Corps, he enthusiastically agreed to provide financial backing.

³⁵⁴ DeVorkin, Race to the Stratosphere, p. 132.

³⁵⁵ In the days leading to Gray’s November 1927 flight, the Army Air Corps promoted it as an opportunity to “study atmospheric conditions at high altitude,” certainly not a “publicity seeking” stunt to break any records. Crouch argues, “propaganda notwithstanding, it was apparent [that this] flight of Hawthorne Gray was nothing more than an all-out effort to set an official world altitude record.” See Crouch, The Eagle Aloft, p. 600.

³⁵⁶ DeVorkin, Race to the Stratosphere, p. 132.

³⁵⁷ DeVorkin, Race to the Stratosphere, p. 133.

According to Crouch, “no one took a greater interest in the exploration of the stratosphere than the National Geographic Society...”³⁵⁸

Historian Tom Crouch provides insight into the stratosphere mystique in early 20th century popular culture: “the word stratosphere conjured up images similar to those that ‘darkest Africa’ had evoked” a century earlier, and “like an unexplored continent, it was a region to be visited by only the most intrepid explorers, members of well-financed and well-equipped expeditions.”³⁵⁹ Jeannette and Jean were intrepid souls, each possessing the drive and desire to perform “work on cosmic rays...during a stratospheric flight.”³⁶⁰ They owned two key components for this venture: the gondola and the balloon, although both needed some degree of repairs. But Jeannette and Jean lacked many necessary and essential items for a flight attempt: a balloon pilot’s license, the cosmic-ray scientific equipment, access to launch facilities, a supply of hydrogen and other flight accoutrements, and perhaps most importantly, funding. In addition, Jeannette had the double burden of maintaining the household and taking care of her children. But Jean had a partner with a stubborn and tenacious personality. Jeannette had shown glimpses of this strong personality during her parents’ discussions over a college education and her struggles with passing the Bryn Mawr college entrance exams. However, Jeannette’s determination would be relentlessly tested in the days and months leading to their stratospheric flight as one by one the obstacles were overcome.

Pushing Against the Acceptable

³⁵⁸ Crouch, *The Eagle Aloft*, p. 595.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Letter dated [Oct or Nov 1933], Folder 4, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

Jean's melodramatic statement to Willard Dow in September 1933 -- "...without a job, without a laboratory on the ground we are not in a position to render any service to humanity"³⁶¹ -- was ameliorated a month later when Jean disclosed to Willard Dow his and Jeannette's collaboration with cosmic-ray physicist William F. G. Swann, director of the Bartol Research Foundation of the Franklin Institute in Swathmore, Pennsylvania. For unknown reasons, Jean wanted the relationship with Swann kept "confidential for the time being..."³⁶² but Jean and Jeannette had "their laboratory on the ground," plus a legitimate mailing address for shipment of materials necessary for their flight.³⁶³ In addition, Swann's working relationship with physicist Robert Millikan aided in the all important acquisition of the cosmic-ray instrumentation needed for the Piccards' stratospheric flight.

It is worth noting that Millikan was not a proponent of women in science, particularly in the field of physics. Historian Margaret Rossiter argues Millikan "continued to justify the antifeminism or sexism (as well as ageism, anti-Semitism, racism, elitism) and other prejudices and provincialities that abounded in academia in the 1920s and 1930s." Millikan's belief was women faculty members in a physics department "lowered" the department's "prestige," even refusing in 1925 to hire Hertha Sponer, a German refugee, but the third ranked woman physicist behind Marie Curie and Lise Meitner. In a 1936 letter to Duke University's president, W.P.Few, Millikan expressed his opinion of Few's

³⁶¹ Letter dated September 6, 1933, Folder 4, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁶² Letter dated [Oct or Nov 1933], Folder 4, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1933, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁶³ Letter dated January 12, 1934, Folder 1, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-April 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

appointment of Sponer to a full professorship in the physics department: “I scarcely know how to reply to your letter of June 11th,” Millikan began, “but since you ask for a most confidential statement I shall be glad to say a word about how I myself would go about building up as strong as possible a department of physics at Duke University...”

Millikan recommended “introducing into the department a number of young men of pronounced ability...and then give them every possible opportunity to rise to positions of influence inside and eminence outside...” It was best to build a “very strong department” by hiring the “most outstanding of the National Research Fellows.” “We have developed in this country,” Millikan continued, “no outstanding women physicists...Also, in the internal workings of a department of physics at a great university I should expect the more brilliant and able young men to be drawn into the graduate department by the character of the men on the staff, rather than the character of the women...only in very exceptional cases would I think that the advance of graduate work would be as well promoted by a woman as by a man.” Millikan concluded with a word of caution to his colleague: “I should want to watch developments very carefully to see that antagonisms were not aroused, since women instructors in physics in the long run might react unfavorably upon the *prestige* of the department, unless they were there solely because of their merit as physicists.” [Emphasis in the original.] What Millikan did not allow for in his argument against women in physics departments is that out of several hundred National Research fellowships awarded in the previous ten years, no woman had ever received one; therefore, women would automatically not be in the pool of applicants that he was proposing.³⁶⁴

³⁶⁴ Margaret W. Rossiter, Women Scientists in America: Struggles and Strategies to 1940 (Baltimore: The

In 1919, as a University of Chicago-trained chemist, Jeannette made the personal decision to follow her heart and marry Jean, rather than enter into the professional world with her master's degree in hand. If she had chosen the latter, instead of moving to Switzerland, she might have had the opportunity of being one of the few women in the new American chemical industry. Rossiter argues that with the war in Europe, there was a "particularly intense...sudden demand for industrial chemists," due not just to the need for war materiel, but also because the United States could no longer rely on chemical imports from Germany. Therefore, when America entered the war there was a shortage of chemists, and the situation provided an opportunity for "women chemists who had formerly been excluded from industrial fields and shunted systematically into home economics...[to be encouraged] to enter industry."³⁶⁵ On the other hand, by June 1919, Jeannette might have found herself in a similar situation to the women chemists employed at the Illinois Steel Company. According to the company's in-house paper, these women had "...learned quickly, did their full share...of the work assigned, took the night shift willingly, were *less* often sick...and ha[d] prove[n] beyond a doubt that they [could] and [would] do at any hour of the day or night, careful, conscientious, reliable, chemical work." [Italics in the original.] However, much to the relief of the company's

Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), pp. 190-193.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 117-118. Rossiter indicates that private industry did hire women chemists, whereas government employment was more difficult for women. "The federal government's recruitment for its wartime projects," she posits, "seems to have been limited to having scientists contact their friends, colleagues, and former students through classic kinds of 'old-boy' networks. Most of these recruits were necessarily men, not only because the workplace was already segregated, but also because most of the government science projects in World War I were within the various branches of the armed forces and functioned by inducting (male) scientists into the military and giving them an officer's rank and uniform." See Ibid., p. 118.

owners, these women chemists "...not only made good as chemists but showed their fine spirit by resigning in order to make places for the men returning from war work."³⁶⁶

The fifteen year interval had not made it any easier for women chemists. If Jeannette had pursued a career in the chemical industry, and been able to maintain employment during the economically difficult 1930s, there was a good chance that she would be doing acceptable "women's work" in chemistry, although "not actually doing chemistry." She might have been a "chemical librarian," or an "abstractor," but almost certainly not a "research chemist," on par with male colleagues. Instead, in 1934, she was fortunate to be sharing laboratory space with her husband at the Bartol Research Foundation.

Unfortunately, however, Jeannette's situation confirms Rossiter's argument that "a woman was dependent on the good will and tolerance of those around her for the opportunity to work..." Jeannette's access to laboratory workspace was through her husband, and a willing non-paying employer, rather than through her as a chemist in her own right.³⁶⁷

With Jean handling the instrumentation and experiments during the stratospheric flight, it was necessary for him to have someone be the pilot. Jeannette stepped forward without any hesitation. She later commented, "Obviously Jean needed either to qualify as a pilot or to have a pilot whose personal loyalty he could depend on. I was not an engineer, nor a physicist. If I were to help Jean, I had to become a pilot."³⁶⁸ Although Jeannette's autobiographical writings do not indicate any hesitation, the decision to

³⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 118.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 190, 253.

³⁶⁸ P. 11, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

become a pilot was not taken lightly and required counsel from her spiritual advisor. “It does not seem to me,” Father Powell wrote Jeannette, “that you are doing wrong in seeking a pilot’s license. In every human undertaking there are risks, and if one allows that sort of timidity to enter into one’s life one will accomplish nothing. There are risks in taking a bath, in crossing a street, [and] quite serious risks in entering a motor [vehicle] whether to drive oneself or to be driven. There is no end to it, so I should say that you are perfectly justified in going ahead with this pilot business.”³⁶⁹ But Powell must have harbored some reservations about Jeannette and the stratosphere because a few months later he was saying, “I do not like to think of you and Jean flying together. It resembles too closely what one is warned about in the proverb about putting all one’s eggs in one basket, though, as a matter of fact, your eggs are all hatched and it is the little chicks who need a mother’s care.”³⁷⁰

However, no woman had ever qualified for a balloon pilot’s license. The Goodyear Company was cool to the idea of providing pilot lessons for Jeannette, but she was not going to be dismissed so lightly by the corporation. Writing in September 1933, to Mr. W.C. Young, manager of Goodyear’s Aeronautics Department, Jeannette said, “My dear Mr. Young, In spite of your very courteous refusal I am going to return to the charge, hoping that persistence will be crowned with success. If there were any college or university in the country offering a course in aeronautics with practical application in ballooning, I should register at that college. However, I am told that Goodyear people are

³⁶⁹ Letter dated August 31, 1933, Folder 7, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁷⁰ Letter dated February 28, 1934, Folder 8, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

the only ones in the country aside from the army and navy, that have such a course. From what you say, I gather that your course is open to employees of the company. That does not appear to me to be an insurmountable [sic] difficulty. There were Dollar-a Year-men in Washington [D.C.] during the war. I am not content with a possible opportunity in the Spring. I hope to be a licensed balloonist before the end of next May. I live in faith, by hope. Next week I expect to start East. Can we not meet in Akron and discuss this matter?...”³⁷¹

Rather than helping Jeannette with pilot lessons, the men at Goodyear encouraged her to contact Edward J. Hill, an employee of the Metalclad Airship Corporation in Detroit, Michigan, and winner of the 1927 Gordon Bennett International Balloon Race.³⁷²

Whether Hill initially understood the pilot lessons inquiry was for Jeannette is difficult to ascertain; however, he never showed any signs of hesitation. The cost of the lessons was approximately \$217.00, and the lessons conformed to the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (F.A.I.) requirements for balloon pilots: 3 flights of two hours each as a passenger, 1 flight of two hours in charge of flight with a pilot, and 1 day solo flight and 1 night solo flight, each being 2 hours in duration. Although Hill was not optimistic about flying in November due to the weather being “quite cold and windy for balloon flights...,” he made arrangements with the Ford Motor Company to fly from the Ford

³⁷¹ Letter dated September 11, 1933, Folder 4, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1933, Piccard Family Papers. There is no indication that Young and Jeannette met to discuss the matter.

³⁷² See letter dated December 4, 1933, Folder 1, Box 2, Hill, Edward J. Correspondence 1933-1937, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

Airport.³⁷³ Jeannette did not begin her flight lessons in November 1933, and in fact, found it difficult to coordinate their schedules until Spring 1934.

Jeannette was mindful of Hill's employment schedule and "suppose[d] that a week-end [would] be better [for him] than during the week." But Jeannette had to "make arrangements for the care of [her] household and children during [her] absence," and so she was hoping that the date of the training flights "could be settled as definitely as possible."³⁷⁴ Jeannette suggested several dates in early April 1934, but Hill wanted to postpone the lessons until the later part of May "due to the pressure of [his] work at present."³⁷⁵

Finally, Jeannette made her first student flight with Hill on Wednesday, May 16, 1934, taking off at 5:12am from the Ford Airport. With Hill as pilot, the wind carried the balloon and its passengers in a northwesterly direction, Jeannette making notation about passing over Henry Ford's home. Hill attempted to land about 8:00am, but the ground winds were too high, so he took the balloon to approximately 7,000 feet. The winds shifted to the southeast, taking the balloon into Canada, and at 10:00am Hill made an intermediate landing on Peter Van Troost's farm in Wallaceburg, Ontario. Confirmation of the landing was provided by gathering the required signatures into Jeannette's logbook from curious locals who had converged at the landing site.³⁷⁶ At 11:18am Jeannette and

³⁷³ Letter dated November 2, 1933, Folder 1, Box 2, Hill, Edward J. Correspondence 1933-1937, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

³⁷⁴ Letter dated March 2, 1934, Folder 1, Box 2, Hill, Edward J. Correspondence, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

³⁷⁵ Letter undated, written on Hotel Webster Hall stationery, Folder 1, Box 2, Hill, Edward J. Correspondence, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

³⁷⁶ Whether women were among the gathered group is not known as only the names of Peter Van Troost, Joseph Millward, I. Pearlman, C. Gray, and A. Summerfield appear in the logbook. See Folder 3, Box I: 63, Ballooning: Logs and Notations 1934, Piccard Family Papers

Hill left the confines of Van Troost's farm, and rising to an altitude of 11,000 feet, began traveling in a southeasterly direction towards Lake Erie. As they passed over the west side of Thamesville, Ontario, Hill valved gas, lowering the balloon. Reaching 4,000 feet, the wind shifted to the southwest, and at 1:20pm, Hill was able to land north of Thamesville on the farm of Mrs. Dave Bebensee, in Kent County, Ontario. Once again locals from Thamesville signed Jeannette's log, and the first two steps toward her balloon pilot's license were complete.³⁷⁷

The third step began on June 3 at 12:15am. Jeannette, now in control of the balloon, but still under Hill's watchful eye and supervision, again departed from the Ford Airport.³⁷⁸ With the wind moving in a southerly direction, the balloon reached an altitude of about 800 feet, where it began gradually to move west and northwest. Jeannette noted the rising of the moon at 12:36am, and about three hours later, the appearance of the morning star and the beginning of dawn. At 4:40am, Jeannette valved gas, but found the velocity on the ground too great for an intermediate landing without help, so she began "dropping lots of ballast," taking the balloon back up to 2,000 feet. The sun came up at 5:15am, and three hours later, Jeannette landed safely on the Vanden Belt's farm near Holland, Michigan. Two members of the Vanden Belt family, John M. and W.J., helped with the landing and signed the logbook. After only ten minutes on the ground, the balloonists took off "easily with no excitement," and with winds approximately two miles

³⁷⁷ Although it was Mrs. Bebensee's farm, her signature was not recorded. However, Fred Jeffrey, Gordon Ruckle, Lee Jeffrey, and J. M. Couth willingly signed Jeannette's log. See Folder 3, Box I: 63, Ballooning: Logs and Notations 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁷⁸ Letter dated June 9, 1934, Folder 5, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

an hour, drifted southeast, landing a little over two hours later near Zeeland, Michigan.³⁷⁹

Jeannette was now ready for the two mandatory solo flights.

Jeannette's pedestrian logbook accounts of her flights provided the information needed for pilot licensing purposes by the governing boards of the F.A.I. and the National Aeronautic Association. However, Jeannette was under contract with Merritt Bond of the North American Newspaper Alliance (N.A.N.A.)³⁸⁰ to provide detailed accounts of her exploits for more popular consumption. The Alliance wanted the "world news rights" to Jeannette and Jean's up-coming stratospheric flight, and also "any story or stories Mrs. Piccard might write after the ascent."³⁸¹ Finding funding sources was imperative for the flight; therefore, Bond's monetary offer was accepted. Although "ascents into the stratosphere [were] now becoming somewhat matter of course," Bond could see that the "presence of Mrs. Piccard in the balloon [would] somewhat compensate for the diminished interest in stratosphere ascents generally." In return for "a couple of preliminary stories,...[a story by each] immediately after the flight...describing [their] sensations, impressions, and experiences,...and a final story detailing [the] scientific conclusions..." Jean and Jeannette would receive \$600.00 if they "managed to penetrate into the stratosphere," and \$1,000.00 if they set a new world altitude record.³⁸² As with all contract negotiations with the Piccards, the final terms took a bit to be hammered out: what constituted a "record," what constituted an "interview," what proof could be given

³⁷⁹ See Folder 3, Box I: 63, Ballooning: Logs and Notations 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁸⁰ The N.A.N.A., based in New York City, was an international alliance of over 80 papers. See letter dated April 6, 1934, Folder 1, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-April 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁸¹ See Ibid.

³⁸² Letter dated April 10, 1934, Folder 1, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-April 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

that an interview had taken place?³⁸³ Final terms of the contract between N.A.N.A. and the Piccards were agreed upon by the beginning of May.³⁸⁴ However, Jeannette still needed to complete the required solo flights.

³⁸³ Letter dated April 12, 1934, Folder 5, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁸⁴ See letter dated May 7, 1934, Folder 2, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received May-June 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

CHAPTER FOUR: UNLOCKING DOORS AND LOWERING CEILINGS

"If we do not add something to the knowledge of cosmic rays by our trip to the stratosphere this summer, we had better not go. We had better stay on the ground, be hewers of wood and drawers of water."
Jeannette Piccard, 1934³⁸⁵

"There are men who cannot see a spirited horse without the desire to ride it, to be part of its pride and its beauty to rule and direct it. There are men who cannot see a sailing ship without the desire to be a part of its swift, leaping strength, to use the winds as they will to rule and direct it. So, I saw a balloon come to life. I would be its master. I would take it into the heavens and rest it in the hollow of God's hand that He might drop it where he would." Jeannette Piccard, 1934³⁸⁶

"... Women are seeking freedom. Freedom in the skies! They are soaring above temperamental tendencies of their sex which have kept them earth-bound. Flying is a symbol of freedom from limitation." Margery Brown, airplane pilot, 1930³⁸⁷

"Some people say that we were lost, that we could not see the earth and did not know where we were. It is true that we could not see the earth. A heavy layer of clouds four thousand feet thick hid it from view but we were not lost. We knew exactly where we were. We were fifty feet below our balloon and fifty-seven thousand feet above earth. What we did not know was what phase of the earth was turned toward us."
Jeannette Piccard, 1934³⁸⁸

"Twelve o'clock. The ring of the telephone woke me. Surely I was crazy! No woman of my age who was in her right mind would be starting off at that time of night for a jaunt in a balloon. Well, then, there was nothing to do but make the best of it so I scrambled into my clothes, fastened my big knife at my hip, picked up my lunch of sandwiches, hot coffee in a thermos, bananas and so forth and walked out to my waiting car...I...kissed my friends and neighbors and husband good-by[e]...I...weighed off...and rose silently into the still air, up and up seren[e]ly like the mere whisper of a thought. I was on my

³⁸⁵ P. 4, Folder 1, Box I: 77, Writings: Jeannette Piccard: Ballooning, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁸⁶ P. 3, Folder 1, Box I: 77, Writings: Jeannette Piccard: Ballooning, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁸⁷ Margery Brown, "Flying is Changing Women," Pictorial Review 31 (June 1930):30, quoted in Claudia M. Oakes, United States Women in Aviation 1930-1939 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), p. 4.

³⁸⁸ P. 1, "Stratosphere Flight," Folder 12, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers.

way...”³⁸⁹ And so began Jeannette’s account for the North American Newspaper Alliance (N.A.N.A.) readers of her qualifying solo flights for the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (F.A.I.) free balloon pilot’s license. On the night of June 14, 1934, flying a balloon named *Patches*,³⁹⁰ Jeannette “slowly rose...and floated softly above the tree tops...” toward Detroit.

Jeannette regaled readers with the description of a conversation that took place during her adventure. Around three in the morning, “a voice from below broke the stillness: Hello, up there.” Jeannette responded in kind, and then the voice asked, “How many of you are up there?” The man was “horrificed,” Jeannette recalled, to be informed that only one person, a female, was in the balloon. Jeannette had difficulty in answering the man’s inquiry about her destination because as any balloonist understands, “where you are going or how long it will take to get there,” is unknowable. A balloonist is always at the vagaries of the wind. As best he could, this man, a cab driver, followed Jeannette throughout her flight, telling anyone within the sound of his voice that “there’s a balloon up there and there’s a girl in it all alone.” “What a shock it must have been to him later,” Jeannette wrote, “to find his ‘girl’ was a middle aged woman in ski pants with a large hunting knife strapped to her hip where it would be handy for cutting ropes or slitting sandbags if necessary.”³⁹¹

³⁸⁹ Pp. 1, 2, Free Ballooning: Solo by Night, Folder 5, Box I: 64, Writings: Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁹⁰ *Patches* was Ed Hill’s 35,000 cubic foot balloon, so named because “somebody had it out one time and it got away from him. He tried to shoot it down with buck shot. Guess there must be a couple of thousand patches on it.” See p. 3, Folder 3, Box I: 77, Speech and Writing File: Jeannette Piccard Typescript: “He Taught Me How to Fly,” April 1958, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁹¹ Pp. 2-4, Free Ballooning: Solo by Night, Folder 5, Box I: 64, Writings: Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers.

After Jeannette landed, she was able to “sit quietly in place...talking to my new friend and others who gathered about even at that early hour,” and when about twenty minutes passed, Jeannette took off again, beginning the daylight portion of her journey.³⁹² At 7:30am, Jeannette safely landed *Patches* on W. W. Danforth’s farm in Leamington, Ontario, successfully completing the solo flight requirements.³⁹³ On July 28, 1934, Jeannette received F.A.I. certificate number 1082, the first woman to be awarded a free ballooning pilot’s license.³⁹⁴ After the solo flight, Jeannette received letters congratulating her on her “well-known courage and determination,” and though a significant hurdle for their upcoming stratospheric flight had been overcome, there was precious little time for Jeannette to bask in her personal accomplishment.³⁹⁵

During the months that Jeannette and Jean criss-crossed the countryside from their home in Marshalltown, Delaware, to the flight facilities in Dearborn, Michigan, Dow Chemical Company in Midland, Michigan, and the Goodyear Company in Akron, Ohio, Jeannette ignored letters from their landlord. As early as May 1934, Jeannette received notification that the owners of the property “felt that better [economic] times [were] coming,” and therefore would be “unable to continue renting” the house to the Piccards “on the basis of the past year or so.” Since rental prospects were better, more money could be charged for the property. Jeannette and Jean had right of first refusal for the new terms, but if they were not interested the rental company needed to be able to show the

³⁹² Ibid., p. 4.

³⁹³ Letter dated June 9, 1934, Folder 5, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁹⁴ Letter dated July 28, 1934, Folder 4, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁹⁵ Letter dated June 15, 1934, Folder 3, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received May-June 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

property.³⁹⁶ In June, a representative of the rental company was more adamant, stating, “Under the circumstances I feel that it might be best if you would vacate at your early [sic] convenience. Sorry to drive you out but I feel we cannot afford to deprive ourselves of adequate rental...”³⁹⁷

Finally in mid-July, Jeannette responded to the landlord’s requests. “I must apologize,” she acknowledged, “for not having answered your letter at once but I have bent every effort to getting back to the house in order to comply with your request... We should be out of the house soon after the first of August.” Jeannette tried to be accommodating, stating: “Should you desire to begin repairs in any one or two of the rooms before that time I am sure that we could arrange to vacate them so that the men could get in to do the work.”³⁹⁸ Jeannette met the August move out date, making arrangements to store the family’s possessions at a storage company in Wilmington, Delaware.³⁹⁹ The move out of the Marshalltown home coincided with Jeannette and Jean taking up residence at Henry Ford’s Dearborn Inn, across the road from the Ford Airport in Dearborn, Michigan. This was to be a temporary move since they planned to make their stratospheric flight by the end of the summer, but just as in 1933 and the Century of Progress flight, there seemed to be an interminable number of delays.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁶ Letter dated May 16, 1934, Folder 3, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received May-June 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁹⁷ Letter dated June 25, 1934, Folder 3, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received May-June 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁹⁸ Letter dated July 16, 1934, Folder 6, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

³⁹⁹ See letter dated August 6, 1934, Folder 4, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁰⁰ Jeannette’s concern for the whereabouts of her children during this time can not be overlooked or overemphasized. The logistics involved many members of her immediate family and friends. See letter dated June 21, 1934, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon

Jeannette also deferred correspondence with her father, who in the spring had inquired as to her reasoning and rationale behind all of the ballooning business, especially due to all of the problems she was encountering. Her response to “Dearest Daddy” clearly demonstrates Jeannette’s determination: “You speak in your letter...of wondering what is my real reason for going in for this ballooning[?] If I knew it perhaps I could tell it, perhaps not. There are many reasons, some of them so deepseated emotionally as to be very difficult of expression. Possibly the simplest explanation is that we got started along this road and because I am I, I cannot stop until I have won.” [Emphasis in original.]⁴⁰¹

Jean attempted to allay his father-in-law’s doubts and fears telling him that Jeannette’s help and involvement were immeasurable, but Dr. Ridlon did not see it in the same way. While he was “pleased” that Jean “appreciated” Jeannette, Dr. Ridlon confided that he had “worried about [Jeannette’s sister] Margaret’s [horse] riding and the risk it was, and the unnecessary waste of money.” And he wanted Jean to know that he was “worrying even more about the same things because of Jeannette’s ballooning.” He assured Jean that he was “always ready to do, and to have any of [his] children do anything that [was] necessary to do, as to cost and risk, but not things that [were] quite unnecessary, as was the riding of horses and going up in balloons.” Dr. Ridlon, however, was not necessarily concerned with the overall safety of his children. His final sentence noted, “...whenever anything unexpected happens more or less of the burden always falls on me.”⁴⁰²

1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated June 24, 1934, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁰¹ Letter dated June 19, 1934, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁰² Letter dated June 26, 1934, Folder 7, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

Problems with Sponsorships and More Delays

Although Jeannette had to arrange accommodations for her three sons and deal with greedy landlords, obtaining the necessary financial support remained the critical component for a successful stratospheric flight. The National Broadcasting Company (NBC) was unwilling to provide financial assistance to the Piccards, although the company was involved in previous stratospheric attempts.⁴⁰³ Nor was the National Geographic Society, a major sponsor of the upcoming Army Air Corps' *Explorer I* flight, interested in providing any financial support to the Piccards.⁴⁰⁴ In January 1934, Jean received a polite brush-off from Gilbert Grosvenor, president of the society.⁴⁰⁵ Jeannette consistently claimed that the National Geographic Society, "with virtue dripp[ing] from their lips, 'would have nothing to do with sending a woman and a mother on so dangerous an expedition!'"⁴⁰⁶ Jeannette may have been correct in her assessment of the Society's actions. The cultural and social milieu of the 1930s helps provide the context for their decision. The 1933 Russian aeronauts' deaths were still fresh in everyone's memories, amplifying the dangers inherent in stratospheric flight. Although many women, including Amelia Earhart, who in 1932 became the first woman pilot to solo the Atlantic Ocean, were pushing the boundaries of aviation for women, the death of Frances

⁴⁰³ See letter dated February 10, 1934, Folder 1, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-April 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁰⁴ See David H. DeVorkin, Race to the Stratosphere: Manned Scientific Ballooning in America (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1989), p. 141.

⁴⁰⁵ See letter dated January 19, 1934, Folder 1, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-April 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁰⁶ P. 11, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

Marsalis during the 1934 Women's Air Meet in Dayton, Ohio, again brought into focus the dangers in aviation pursuits.⁴⁰⁷

While lacking any major corporate sponsorship, Jean and Jeannette nevertheless secured the support of several individuals and small businesses by July 1934. The People's Outfitting Company, a Detroit-based department store interested in aviation, gave \$2,500.00, and the Burgess Battery Company agreed to donate all the batteries necessary for the flight. In addition, Mr. C. F. Burgess, president of the Freeport, Illinois-based company, gave a personal gift of \$1,000.00. Jean wrote Robert Millikan "although the amount [raised] is not yet enough to cover the expenses it will enable us to go through."⁴⁰⁸

Both Jeannette and Jean promoted their anticipated flight whenever and however possible. Capitalizing on the public popularity of radio, Jean was interviewed on Detroit's Station WXYZ during the Saturday evening "Sandlotter's Broadcast," carried over the seven member stations of the Michigan Radio Network.⁴⁰⁹ But they discovered that sponsors were hesitant to provide backing for the flight based on the perceived condition of the gondola. Aware of the tough landing conditions during the two previous flights, sponsors believed the gondola was unsafe, thereby putting the Piccards' lives even more at risk. Jean relayed this concern to E.H. Perkins, of Dow Chemical Company, and asked Perkins if he would be "kind enough" to let him "know the result of the pressure tests as

⁴⁰⁷ Claudia M. Oakes, United States Women in Aviation 1930-1939 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 5-8.

⁴⁰⁸ Letter dated July 20, 1934, Folder 6, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers. A renowned physicist, Millikan provided cosmic-ray instrumentation for stratospheric flights in 1933, and Jean and Jeannette hoped for his collaboration with their upcoming flight. See Chapter Three.

⁴⁰⁹ See letter dated June 25, 1934, Folder 2, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received May-June 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

soon as possible.”⁴¹⁰ On July 25, Jean received confirmation that the gondola had been “thoroughly tested...and entirely repainted,” and in Perkins’ opinion, it was “now in as good condition as when it was originally manufactured.”⁴¹¹

Unbeknownst to Jeannette and Jean, Robert Millikan was sending a letter, also dated July 25, informing them that because six months had passed since their last conversation, he had “been doubtful whether [they] had been able to make satisfactory arrangements for the flight...” In addition, the three cosmic ray instruments that Millikan “[had built] for stratosphere work, [and Jean thought he was getting, were] now at Rapid City, South Dakota, installed in the gondola of Captain Stevens and waiting for favorable weather conditions for a flight.” Millikan would only say that the instruments might be available for another flight, not making any promises.⁴¹² Jean and Jeannette would have to wait for the *Explorer* flight, and hope that Millikan would be willing to make the equipment available for their stratospheric attempt. Adding to the pressure for a flight was Merritt Bond, of the North American Newspaper Alliance (N.A.N.A.). Given that he was “receiving numerous inquiries,” Bond wanted to know “how [the] plans were progressing and when [they hoped] to be able to make [an] attempt.”⁴¹³

On July 28, 1934, Captain Albert W. Stevens, Major William E. Kepner, and Lt. Orvil A. Anderson were launched aboard *Explorer I* from the Black Hills in South Dakota, and for six hours the flight was routine. However, around 1:00 p.m., the three Army Air

⁴¹⁰ Letter dated July 17, 1934, Folder 6, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴¹¹ Letter dated July 25, 1934, Folder 3, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴¹² Letter dated July 25, 1934, Folder 3, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴¹³ Letter dated July 25, 1934, Folder 3, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

Corps men realized something was “terribly wrong”; the bottom of the balloon bag had ripped in several places. The rips were getting bigger and the crew decided it would be best to “land as soon as possible.” As historian David DeVorkin describes it, “...the bag began to rupture at about 5 kilometers during their descent, and the balloon...was now nothing more than a flimsy and rapidly disintegrating parachute. With the gondola falling evermore rapidly, the three bailed out in a terrible rush which was made all the more harrowing when one of them got caught in the escape hatch. Only scant moments after they were free of the gondola, the hydrogen-filled balloon shell, contaminated with atmospheric oxygen, exploded and sent the gondola crashing on the plains near Holdrege, Nebraska.”⁴¹⁴ Fortunately, the men survived, but much of the scientific equipment did not fare so well.

Ironically, Jeannette and Jean received Millikan’s July 25 letter after the crash of *Explorer I*. “Dear Dr. Millikan,” wrote Jeannette, “Your letter...reached us this morning...and the situation certainly looks different. I am sorry. It is quite natural that you should have had more confidence in Stevens than in us but unfortunate. At least it seems so now. Perhaps when our turn comes we will do better.” Jeannette pushed ahead with requesting the cosmic ray equipment. “If you think that you could get instruments ready and in Detroit by the first week in September please let us know...immediately...If we are not to count on your instruments we must make other arrangements...”⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁴ DeVorkin, *Race to the Stratosphere*, pp. 165-167.

⁴¹⁵ Letter dated August 2, 1934, Folder 6, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

Millikan responded that “on account of the Stevens crash and loss of three instruments we can get only one more, possibly two, made by early September.”⁴¹⁶

All of the delays were wearing on Jeannette, emotionally and physically. To Karl Arnstein, a Goodyear-Zeppelin vice-president, she confided she was “hoping against hope that the balloon and instruments will be ready by the middle of August. My children get out of camp August 23rd and I should very much like to make the flight before that time. They take up considerable time and energy. Also I should like the peace of mind of knowing that they are in good hands while I am in the air.”⁴¹⁷ In addition, at the end of July, the family had to vacate their rental home in Marshalltown, Delaware, with the majority of this responsibility placed on Jeannette’s shoulders. She recounted to her brother Hugh, “Last week I was most horribly swamped with getting the house closed. It got to the point where I felt that if I tried to keep up stratosphering [sic] and closing the house at the same time I’d be doing both and neither eternally. So I concentrated on the house. Do you remember Mother’s refrain when we closed up the old house in Evanston? ‘Throw it out! Throw it out!’ I sang the same chorus last week...”⁴¹⁸ So with their sons safely ensconced at camp in Michigan, and the majority of the family possessions stored in Delaware, Jean and Jeannette took up residence in Henry Ford’s Dearborn Inn, optimistically anticipating an early September stratospheric flight.⁴¹⁹ N.A.N.A.’s Merritt Bond reminded Jeannette the importance of the story of her flight, saying that it should

⁴¹⁶ Letter dated August 2, 1934, Folder 3, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴¹⁷ Letter dated July 31, 1934, Folder 6, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴¹⁸ Letter dated August 3, 1934, Folder 2, Box 2, Hydrogen Correspondence 1933-1935, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

⁴¹⁹ See letter dated August 10, 1934, Folder 6, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

“describe your sensations and your impressions, your hardships and thrilling experiences...and should tell how you dressed and what you ate, how you passed the time and what you saw.” Bond concluded this advice reminding Jeannette that her “impressions as a woman are of interest, as you are the first woman to ascend into the stratosphere...”⁴²⁰

In early August, Jean informed Millikan that “the balloon is in Akron, [Ohio] and Goodyear-Zeppelin...will have made all the repairs by the end of the month. We have also made certain alterations to increase the safety.” The gondola, according to Jean, “has been put in condition by Dow Chemical...and is as good as new.” And Jean reiterated his “hope” that Millikan would have at “least two...chambers ready.” The point that stands out in this particular correspondence is Jean’s financial plea: “While Captain Stevens got \$50,000 sponsorship we have received up to now only \$3,500. Would it be possible for you to find anyone sufficiently interested in cosmic rays to make a subscription to our flight? We are still about \$4,000 to \$5,000 short.”⁴²¹ Unfortunately Millikan provided only one electroscope for the flight.⁴²² But in spite of Jean’s optimistic description of the situation to Millikan, the balloon and gondola were not ready. Both would be sources for more miscommunication between the Piccards and the two companies, Dow Chemical and Goodyear-Zeppelin, and increasing delays of their flight.

⁴²⁰ Letter dated August 29, 1934, Folder 6, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received August 15-31, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴²¹ Letter dated August 11, 1934, Folder 6, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴²² Letter dated August 16, 1934, Folder 4, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received August 15-31, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

The people at Goodyear-Zeppelin were becoming very perplexed over the requested changes being made by Jeannette and Jean to the original balloon configuration. The understanding was that after the Settle flight, Goodyear would repair the balloon to its original condition, but now for safety reasons, Jeannette and Jean wanted some major changes to be made. Mr. V. R. Jacobs, Goodyear's sales manager, wrote to Jeannette, "We have very carefully gone over the major points in your August 11 letter and are quite concerned over the changes which you desire..." These changes included such items as the length of the foot ropes, how the ropes were attached, the placement of the ripcord, and also issues with the balloon's appendix. Jacobs reiterated that the original quotation for the balloon repairs was made based on "replacing the eleven rope suspension assemblies with new assemblies identical with those originally constructed for this balloon..." Now, not only was cost an issue, but so was delivering the balloon to the Piccards in a timely way. Jacobs reminded the Piccards that "...our delivery estimate was based on going forward with the work without any additional deviations."⁴²³ After two months of negotiations, on September 18, the balloon arrived at the Ford Airport in Dearborn, Michigan, and based on the final invoice, safety triumphed over economics and expediency.⁴²⁴ Now Jean and Jeannette needed their gondola.

Since the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress debacle, the working relationship between Jeannette and Jean and the Dow Chemical Company was tenuous.⁴²⁵ As recently as July 25, E.H. Perkins had provided Jean with the information that the gondola

⁴²³ Letter dated August 14, 1934, Folder 3, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-August 15, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴²⁴ See Goodyear-Zeppelin Invoice No G-Z 64, Folder 6, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received September 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴²⁵ See Chapter Three.

was safe, in order to calm any potential sponsors' fears.⁴²⁶ But at issue had always been the extent of Dow Chemical Company's obligations to the Piccards and any future flight attempt. By the end of August 1934, any remaining good will between the parties had vanished.

Initially, Jean and Jeannette wanted to make a flight during summer 1934, but as late as August, Jean was requesting changes and additions to the gondola. The controlled anger in the Dowmetal Sales Manager's response to the request was palpable. L.B. Grant wrote, "The gondola has now been completely repainted and repaired and has been thoroughly pressure tested so that we believe it to be in as good condition as it was originally before the flight last year. We have made arrangements to have this gondola shipped immediately to the Ford airport, together with the Poescherlring which Mr. Dow and Mr. Perkins agreed to furnish to you. In regard to the load rings, drift rings, drift window, cupboards, and air locks, drag rope, seats, cleat, etc., we cannot see our way clear to do any of this work because we believe we have fully filled our obligation by putting the gondola back in its original condition as we had previously agreed to do, and we do not feel that we can make additional changes as specified in your letter...Our expense in connection with last year's flight and with the repair and conditioning of the gondola has already been very great and our management does not feel we are justified in spending additional time and money. We trust that you will see our position in this matter..."⁴²⁷ Jean did not see their position, and on August 22, Jean, Jeannette, Perkins,

⁴²⁶ See Footnote 23.

⁴²⁷ Letter dated August 21, 1934, Folder 4, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received August 15-31, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

and Grant met at Dow Chemical headquarters in Midland, Michigan, to hammer out the details.

During their conference Perkins “declared that he would not yield an inch...,” but according to Jean, “We had to wring concessions out one by one.” After several hours of negotiation, Perkins agreed to comply with Jean’s most recent demands, only if the Piccards made “no further requests” of Dow Chemical.⁴²⁸

Bartol Research Foundation Director William Swann assumed that Dow Chemical was providing materials gratis for use in the cosmic ray instruments that Bartol was making for the flight. On September 4, he received a letter from Grant acknowledging that Dow did “supply some Dowmetal gratis for the Stratosphere flight in the summer of 1933 and also for the National Geographic flight in July 1934...,” but he noted that “we have made no arrangements with anyone to supply Dowmetal gratis for...Piccard’s flight this fall...” Grant closed the letter reiterating that “Piccard has definitely understood that we were not going to assist him in this flight beyond doing some necessary repair work on the gondola...”⁴²⁹ Baffled, Swann asked Piccard about the discrepancy.⁴³⁰ Jean informed Swann of the August 22 meeting with the men at Dow Chemical. “I am sorry,” Jean lamented, “that my relations with Dow Chemical...are not good any more...I feel very sorry for the inconvenience and annoyance which this strange acting of Dow Chemical...has caused you. I regret that the promises which I made believing in the Dow

⁴²⁸ Letter dated September 8, 1934, Folder 7, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent August 15-September 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴²⁹ Letter dated September 4, 1934, Folder 6, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received September 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴³⁰ Letter dated September 6, 1934, Folder 6, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received September 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

Chemical Company have been unfulfilled. Up to lately I sincerely believed that...Dow Chemical...would fulfill the promises made in the letters which I have quoted.”⁴³¹

Jeannette was less forgiving in her assessment of the deteriorating business relationship, telling younger brother Hugh, “Don’t feel sorry about the gondola, we’ll get by and [Willard] Dow will get his when his time comes without our worrying. Someday we’ll be surprised to find out what has happened to him and it will probably be a lot worse than anything we could think up ourselves.”⁴³²

Both the gondola and balloon were in the Dearborn area by early September, but flight complications and delays continued, including the proverbial money problems. One of the schemes to raise money was to sell, for \$25.00 each, “covers” of the flight to interested collectors of such memorabilia.⁴³³ Even Father Powell was growing impatient with all of the delays, telling Jeannette, “I wish I could provide you with hydrogen, or indeed anything, that would enable you to make the delayed flight and get it over and off your mind.”⁴³⁴ Adding to Jeannette’s concerns was the fact that summer camp was over, so the boys were now with their parents at the Dearborn Inn.⁴³⁵

In mid-September, Jeannette and Jean caught an economic break. The Grunow Radio Company, an early sponsor for the Piccards, agreed to a monetary advance of several

⁴³¹ Letter dated September 8, 1934, Folder 7, Box I: 53, General Correspondence: Letters Sent August 15-September 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴³² Letter dated September 14, 1934, Folder 8, Box 1, General Correspondence: 1932-1952, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

⁴³³ See letter dated July 22, 1936, Folder 6, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent: 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴³⁴ Letter dated September 7, 1934, Folder 9, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴³⁵ During their stay at the inn, Donald and Paul were “transported by ‘bell boys’ from the hotel to the Lindberg public school.” Paul remembered “carr[ying] great lunches prepared by the hotel kitchen staff.” See Paul Piccard, <paulpic@juno.com> “Re: Mother’s bio-3,” personal email to author, November 3, 2005.

thousand dollars to be repaid from post-flight exhibition revenues.⁴³⁶ This improvement in the financial realm allowed Jeannette and Jean the freedom to concentrate more fully on flight preparations. Though Dow Company pressure tested the gondola while it was being repaired in Akron, Ohio, Jean and Jeannette performed two additional pressure tests after its arrival in Michigan. Both tests were successful.⁴³⁷ Confident with the gondola's condition, now all that was needed was fair weather, which unfortunately can be quite fickle during fall in Michigan. "The excitement," son Paul recalled, "built up and receded whenever the weather looked promising but deteriorated...The weather map was posted daily in the [Dearborn Inn] hotel lobby and I learned that for some strange reason 'high' pressure was better than 'low.' I understood the need for very light to no wind."⁴³⁸

The Stratospheric Flight

The October 12 weather forecast was good, and so began a "day of feverish preparation, [and] a night of work and ex[c]itement..." Jeannette and Jean utilized the labor of local "welfare men" to carry the balloon out to the field, "heave sandbags about, and hold the ropes." Although the men were "willing" workers, Jeannette found them "slow...unresponsive to orders...[and] dull." The flight, however, was called off in the wee hours of the 13th because the "wind did not die down." The winds went calm an hour later, but unfortunately, it was too late for the Piccards "to use them."⁴³⁹ After this "false alarm," Ed Hill contacted thirty business and professional men in the Detroit area. Each

⁴³⁶ See DeVorkin, *Race to the Stratosphere*, p. 121. Some companies gave in-kind donations rather than cash, including the Hamilton Watch Company. See letter dated August 17, 1934, Folder 6, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received August 15-31, 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴³⁷ See P. 2, Piccard Stratosphere Flight: Preparation for Flight, Folder 1, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard 1934-1935, 1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁴³⁸ Paul Piccard, paulpic@juno.com "Re: Mother's bio-3," personal email to author, November 3, 2005.

⁴³⁹ P. 2, Piccard Stratosphere Flight: Preparation for Flight, Folder 1, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard 1934-1935, 1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

agreed to provide ten men, thus “guaranteeing...a volunteer ground crew of 300 men,” eliminating the unsatisfactory “welfare men.”⁴⁴⁰

“Another ten days of waiting finally brought us the night of calm winds for which we had been waiting. Unfortunately,” recalled Jeannette, “with the calm winds were heavy, low hanging clouds.”⁴⁴¹ But they were assured by weathermen that southeast of Dearborn the conditions were clear, and the flight would be “free of the clouds.”⁴⁴² Word spread throughout Dearborn that the Piccards were making another attempt. The ground crew volunteers began arriving at Ford Airport around 6:00pm, and by 10:30pm, all volunteers were at their assigned stations.⁴⁴³ For the next nine hours Ed Hill conducted a symphony of coordinated movement at Ford Airport.⁴⁴⁴

As dawn began to break, the American flag was attached to the balloon, and Hill directed the removal of ballast from the gondola. Everything was ready for the history-making stratospheric flight. Only minutes before the start of flight, 10-year-old Paul and 8-year-old Donald presented their mother a bouquet of flowers they had surreptitiously brought with them.⁴⁴⁵ On Tuesday morning, October 23, at 6:51am, before a crowd of nearly 45,000 persons, including Henry Ford, Jeannette shouted, “Let’s go,” and with the removal of additional ballast, the balloon began to rise. The last sound Jeannette heard

⁴⁴⁰ P. 11, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁴¹ P. 2, Piccard Stratosphere Flight: Preparation for Flight, Folder 1, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard 1934-1935, 1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁴² See p. 2, Timeline of Flight Preparation, Folder 1, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard 1934-1935, 1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁴³ P. 1, Timeline of Flight Preparation, Folder 1, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard 1934-1935, 1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁴⁴ See pp. 1-9, Timeline of Flight Preparation, Folder 1, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard 1934-1935, 1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. The arrival of Dr. Piccard and the boys was noted in the detailed log; however, the arrival of Jeannette was not.

⁴⁴⁵ P. 9, Timeline of Flight Preparation, Folder 1, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard 1934-1935, 1958, n.d. Piccard Family Papers.

was the voices of her youngest sons calling, “Good-by[e], Mother.”⁴⁴⁶ But there was a tense moment at the beginning of the flight. An observer at the scene reported, “The big bag moved sluggishly upward, pulling the silvery gondola after it but only a few feet above the ground. The spectators’ cheers were stilled as the heavy, dangling gondola swept toward a line of automobiles and a fringe of trees. Then Mrs. Piccard proved her skill by quickly releasing ballast to enable the bag to clear the branches. It did clear the cars and trees by a narrow margin and then began its majestic rise.”⁴⁴⁷ The balloon disappeared “in the mist of the low hanging clouds.”⁴⁴⁸ Jeannette and Jean were on their way to the stratosphere.

The weathermen had predicted clear skies, but they were wrong. Instead, for over an hour, Jeannette and Jean had to go through a heavy layer of clouds four thousand feet thick. “This was disagreeable,” wrote Jean, “because it robbed us of all possibility of determining our speed and direction. The only thing we knew was that if we were traveling with a speed of two hundred miles per hour we would reach the ocean after three hours. Speeds of one hundred and even two hundred miles have been observed in the stratosphere.”⁴⁴⁹ While in the clouds, even the balloon could not be seen through the top window of the gondola, but “then in an instant we had risen through the clouds into bright sunlight and the clouds stretched below us as far as we could see in all directions.”

⁴⁴⁶ P. 12, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers. Paul recalled that his parents had “persuaded me that the flight would be safer than walking across a street in Chicago. I had no apprehension at all for their safety.” See Paul Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s bio-3,” personal email to author, November 3, 2005.

⁴⁴⁷ “Piccards Land; Soar 10 Miles in Stratosphere,” The Chicago Daily Tribune, October 24, 1934, Page 1, Final Edition.

⁴⁴⁸ P. 10, Timeline of Flight Preparation, Folder 1, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard 1934-1935, 1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁴⁹ P. 1, “For Our Log Book,” Folder 1, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers.

However, there was a problem. When Jeannette checked on the balloon the valve rope had slacked off and was caught on the load ring, thereby eliminating her ability to control the valve. According to Jeannette, “If we went to the stratosphere like that we would have to remain there until nightfall, prisoners of space.” In spite of her efforts to shake the rope loose, it remained caught: “There was nothing for it but to climb out before we rose to too great an altitude.”⁴⁵⁰

As the pilot Jeannette was responsible for the balloon, the ropes and the valve, so she “snapped her parachute onto her parachute harness and started out.” The gondola doors were wide enough for a person to get through; however, the bottom of the doorway was chin high when standing on the gondola’s floor. Fortunately, there was a shelf below each door, so Jeannette “climbed onto the shelf and put her head and shoulders out. She twisted about and sat on the edge of the door with her feet hanging inside and then drawing up her feet stood on the shelf.” Jeannette’s body “from the knees up was now outside but she could not yet reach the toggle and the snarled rope.” So she “lifted one foot to step onto the door ledge,” but the other foot “slid out from underneath” her. Some of the very fine lead shot used for ballast had been spilled on the shelf during take-off, and Jeannette recalled it was “like stepping on roller bearings.” But she did not fall, either inside or outside the gondola, and after fixing the valve rope problem, went back inside, resealed the doors, and returned to her pilot duties inside the gondola.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁵⁰ Pp. 1-2, “Stratosphere Flight,” Folder 12, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁵¹ P. 2, Ibid. The narrative belies the activity taking place inside the gondola. See “Stratosphere Flight Log,” Folder 1, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writing: Jean and Jeannette Piccard 1934-1935, 1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

Sixty minutes after leaving the security of Ford Airport, Jeannette became the first woman to reach the Earth's stratosphere. For the next three hours, she and Jean performed the experiments and experienced the lower reaches of space they had been dreaming about and that had been consuming their lives for the previous two years. In many ways reaching the stratosphere was a spiritual event, but it was also slightly humorous. Jean remembered that everything about the stratosphere "seemed quite unreal in one way to us. On the other hand it seemed very much as a matter of fact. [Auguste] had told us so much about the stratosphere and the purplish blue sky that I was not surprised at all to see it. But the beauty of the experience was never-the-less overwhelming."⁴⁵² Jeannette's later reflection was of a stratospheric sky being a "very dark blue, about the color of the sky just after sunset when the stars are beginning to appear in the high mountains—this very, very deep blue."⁴⁵³ The flight brought out the best in Jeannette and Jean. "We discovered," Jeannette recalled, "that we were both very well brought up, very polite. You've got four feet to move around in, two people; the gondola was seven feet in diameter, eighteen inches taken off all around for shelves and equipment. And we'd been up for an hour and a half, maybe two hours, and I suddenly laughed: 'Jean, I don't think we need to apologize each time we touch each other.' We were saying 'beg your pardon, please excuse me, so sorry.'"⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵² P. 1, "For Our Log Book," Folder 7, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁵³ P. 5 A-t, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁵⁴ "Interview of Jeannette Piccard," Folder 6, Box II: 59, Subject File: Jeannette Piccard/Maravellas, Paul, 1979-1980, Piccard Family Papers.

For three hours the only sounds heard in the gondola were those “produced by the cosmic ray apparatus which were busily recording the impact of these mysterious travelers from unknown regions. From time to time our mascot, [the family’s box turtle] ‘Fleur-de-lys,’ was scratching on his cardboard box, not knowing what it was all about.”⁴⁵⁵ Jeannette continued to monitor the condition of the balloon while Jean periodically took both temperature and CO2 readings. The first sign of concern during the flight was at 10:50am when Jean and Jeannette discussed “the advisability of coming down.”⁴⁵⁶ Due to the persistent cloud cover below, they were unable to confirm their location. During their entire time in the stratosphere, Jeannette and Jean were “divided by the desire of staying as long as possible and bringing down as many scientific results as possible and by the knowledge that the Atlantic shore was approaching at an entirely unknown speed.” However, as Jean pragmatically noted, “What good would be the most complete investigation of cosmic rays if all the results would at the end of the day be drowned in the salty ocean[?]”⁴⁵⁷

After a thirty minute discussion, Jeannette and Jean decided to begin coming down, still unsure of their location. “We knew that as soon as we would enter the fog bank our balloon would begin dropping rapidly. But what we did not realize was the fight which

⁴⁵⁵ P. 2, “For Our Log Book,” Folder 7, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers. The turtle, nicknamed “Lilly,” was named for the markings on its shell. See letter dated January 10, 1963, Folder 1, Box II: 64, Subject File: Jeannette Piccard Order of St. Anne, Arlington Heights, MA 1963-1971, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁵⁶ “Stratosphere Flight Log,” Folder 1, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁵⁷ P. 2, “For Our Log Book,” Folder 7, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette and Jean had onboard the gondola a “very convenient and accurate apparatus” to help determine speed and direction, but it required seeing the land. See *Ibid.*, p. 1.

the balloon would set up against being brought down.”⁴⁵⁸ The trip back to Earth was “long and arduous,” taking nearly three hours.⁴⁵⁹ Jeannette “worked very hard” getting the balloon to respond, pulling on the valve rope for one minute periods over a dozen times, before the balloon finally began a downward motion.⁴⁶⁰ The balloon acted as anticipated, dropping quite rapidly after breaking through the clouds at 2,000 feet.⁴⁶¹ Jeannette and Jean saw land for the first time during their flight, but was this “charming country of partially wooded rolling hills,” in Ontario, Canada? Or perhaps the gondola was over western Ohio or New Jersey.⁴⁶²

At 2,000 meters, Jean and Jeannette opened the gondola doors, and though they were still in the clouds, Jeannette utilized her free ballooning pilot skills. Jeannette valved the balloon carefully to control its descent, and as the earth grew closer, it appeared they were going to land on the roof of a farm house. Jeannette quickly ordered the last two ballast sandbags released, in addition to throwing over a large fifty-three pound storage battery with a parachute attached.⁴⁶³ The parachute and battery were recovered and

⁴⁵⁸ P. 3, “For Our Log Book,” Folder 7, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁵⁹ P. 4, “Stratosphere Flight,” Folder 12, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁶⁰ P. 3, “Piccard Stratosphere Flight,” Folder 3, Box I: 63, Subject File: Ballooning Piccard Logs and Notations 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁶¹ The balloon gained altitude rapidly when the heat of the sun expanded the hydrogen gas. The reverse happened on the descent. Once the hydrogen lost the heat of the sun it contracted quickly, thereby causing the gondola and balloon to fall rapidly. See “For Our Log Book,” Folder 7, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁶² P. 3, “For Our Log Book,” Folder 7, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁶³ See p. 3, “For Our Log Book,” Folder 7, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers. This was the “first use of pyro-technics on any type of aircraft.” See p. 12, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

returned by a local Cadiz, Ohio, resident.⁴⁶⁴ The balloon began rising again. According to the log book, “The free space between land [and] fog was very narrow so that the manipulation of our great balloon was quite difficult. We did not believe we could easily find better landing conditions but we knew we might find far more unfavorable ones. So we decided to land.”⁴⁶⁵ Jeannette orchestrated the balance between valving gas and dropping lead ballast, and as the drag rope “rushed through the trees,” the gondola came to rest a few yards above the ground.⁴⁶⁶ As Jean and Jeannette contemplated how to climb down the tree branches “like Tarzan and his mate,...suddenly something gave way.” The Piccards never knew if it was a tree branch, or a rope or the balloon itself that let go, but the gondola and its inhabitants fell “heavily to the ground.” “Such a landing,” Jeannette wrote, “would be perfectly normal for an ordinary free balloon made of double or triple ply material. But our thin stratosphere balloon was badly damaged by the trees. The main thing, however, is our instruments came safely on the ground, not even the delicate mercury barometer was broken.” In fact, the balloon was shredded to pieces and many on-lookers at the landing site took bits as mementos.⁴⁶⁷

At 2:45pm, nearly eight hours after leaving Dearborn, Michigan, Jeannette and Jean’s historic flight⁴⁶⁸ ended a little over four miles southwest of Cadiz, Ohio, in woods located

⁴⁶⁴ See “Stratosphere Log Book,” Folder 1, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard 1934-1935, 1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁶⁵ P. 4, “For Our Log Book,” Folder 7, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁶⁶ P. 3, “Piccard Stratosphere Flight,” Folder 3, Box I: 63, Subject File: Ballooning Piccard Logs and Notations 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁶⁷ P. 4, “For Our Log Book,” Folder 7, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁶⁸ Jeannette was the first woman in the stratosphere, but Jeannette and Jean were also the first husband and wife team to enter into space. Two additional “firsts” were: the “first time the temperature inside a space ship had been comfortable...and the first controlled rotation of a balloon in the upper atmosphere.” See p.

on John Fulton's farm. The first two men on the scene were Cadiz locals, Craig Porter and Dan Ross,⁴⁶⁹ although shortly "hundreds of farmers and their wives, aroused by the curiosity of viewing the descent of a gas filled bag as large as a big office building, rushed to the scene of the landing."⁴⁷⁰ While Jean and Jeannette surveyed the damage to the balloon and gondola, two young boys climbed up into the trees to recover the American flag.⁴⁷¹

If the Piccards had achieved some amount of celebrity before the flight, it was nothing compared to the post-flight press coverage. The Cleveland (Ohio) Plain Dealer banner headline read, "Piccards Land Balloon in Ohio, Safe," and by-lines included, "Bag Wrecked by Trees," "Professor's Wife Tells of Stratosphere's Thrill for Its First Visitor of Her Sex," and "Crowds Pierce Hills Near Cadiz to Seize Wreckage for Souvenirs."⁴⁷² The Atlanta Constitution pronounced, "Piccards Descend Safely in Eastern Ohio After 10-Mile Ascent Into Stratosphere," together with "Couple Gathers Valuable Facts on Cosmic Rays," and "Flight Begun at Detroit Early Tuesday Morning Ends Without Serious Mishap Despite Descent Into Trees."⁴⁷³ According to the United Press (UP)

12, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁶⁹ P. 3, "Stratosphere Flight Log," Folder 1, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard 1934-1935, 1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁷⁰ "Piccards Land; Soar 10 Miles in Stratosphere," The Chicago Daily Tribune, October 24, 1934, Page 1, Final Edition.

⁴⁷¹ See P. 3, "Stratosphere Flight Log," Folder 1, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard 1935-1935, 1958, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁷² "Piccards Land Balloon In Ohio, Safe," Cleveland (Ohio) Plain Dealer, October 24, 1934, Front Page, Final Edition.

⁴⁷³ "Piccards Descend Safely In Eastern Ohio After 10-Mile Ascent Into Stratosphere," The Atlanta Constitution, October 24, 1934, Front Page.

correspondent at the scene, Jeannette's first words after exiting the gondola were, "Oh, dear! I wanted to land on the White House lawn."⁴⁷⁴

The landing site was controlled chaos. While Jean worked "nervously," carefully removing the recording instruments from the gondola, preparing them for shipment to Detroit, Jeannette, "her complexion restored from her vanity case," smoked cigarettes and talked with the gathering crowd of men, women, and children. She assured her audience that the flight was a "marvelous experience," the "thrill of her life," and that given the opportunity, she would "go up anytime [she got] the chance." Jeannette told inquiring minds that the flight food consisted of "...chicken sandwiches, milk, water, and chocolate..." Nor was the comfort of the first woman in space an issue because, "It wasn't very cold in the gondola when we were up there, but for a while I was glad I had on my light sweater." For the reader's benefit, the UP correspondent elaborated on Jeannette's fashion choice, describing her sweater as a "gray turtle neck, put on over a yellow sports shirt and black and white knickers."⁴⁷⁵

Jean informed reporters it would "take weeks of careful study to determine the exact results of [the couple's] adventure," but he felt certain "it was a success [because] the conditions were favorable." Jean's only "regret" was the loss of the balloon with the hydrogen gas, a \$2,000 value.⁴⁷⁶ One of the results would be determined by the National Aeronautic Association's (NAA) evaluation of the barograph carried on-board during the

⁴⁷⁴ "Piccards Descend Safely In Eastern Ohio After 10-Mile Ascent Into Stratosphere," The Atlanta Constitution, October 24, 1934, Front Page. Weather experts had thought the balloon might drift as far as Washington, D.C. See "Piccards Land Balloon In Ohio, Safe," Cleveland (Ohio) Plain Dealer, October 24, 1934, Front Page, Final Edition.

⁴⁷⁵ "Piccards Land Balloon In Ohio, Safe," Cleveland (Ohio) Plain Dealer, October 24, 1934, Front Page, Final Edition. No mention is made of Jean's attire.

⁴⁷⁶ "Piccards Land Balloon in Ohio, Safe," Cleveland (Ohio) Plain Dealer, October 24, 1934, Front Page, Final Edition.

flight. In early November, Charles S. Logsdon, of the NAA, notified Jean that the official altitude for the Piccard stratosphere flight was 57,578.566 feet, “falling short of the present record by 3,648.125 feet.”⁴⁷⁷ The letter did not acknowledge Jeannette setting an altitude record by a woman.⁴⁷⁸

About his parents’ monumental flight, Paul remembered that, “instead of being allowed to go to school, I was wisely taken home by some friends and put to bed.” He was playing with his friends in the afternoon when “their mother announced that my parents had landed safely. My reaction was, ‘of course,’ but I thought I was expected to react with greater evidence of [pause] well of something. So I feigned a great reaction and fell to the ground. What a ham!” [Emphasis in original.]⁴⁷⁹ Less theatrical adults sent words of congratulations to Jeannette and Jean, saying, “Bravo for the two new heavenly stars Jean and Jeannette,” “Congratulations of your successful flight,” and “Delighted to know all well and you have been successful.”⁴⁸⁰ On behalf of his congregation, the rector at Detroit’s St. Matthias’ Episcopal Church sent congratulations to Jean and Jeannette, explaining there was a “deep-seated desire in the Parish to meet you on a church basis and to be among the first to have you informally tell us of your experiences.”⁴⁸¹

Writing from the summer home in Newport, Rhode Island, Dr. Ridlon thanked Jeannette and Jean for their “telegram to Mother.” “We were greatly relieved,” he

⁴⁷⁷ Letter dated November 8, 1934, Folder 8, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received November 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁷⁸ Jeannette’s accomplishment illustrates the difficulty in reconciling the “same or different” debate: Jeannette set a record for a woman, but NAA’s “official” parameters could not recognize her feat; there was no category for “woman.”

⁴⁷⁹ Paul Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s bio-3,” personal email to author, November 3, 2005.

⁴⁸⁰ See Western Union telegrams dated October 23, 1934, Folder 9, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁸¹ Letter dated October 25, 1934, Folder 7, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received October 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

declared, “to know that you had landed alive. Sometime in the afternoon...a friend of Mother telephoned to her that while listening to some musical programme [sic] on the Yankee network [the] programme [sic] was interrupted and the statement made that you were safely down. Then in the News announcement we heard it before your telegram came; and your telegram let us breathe freely once again. [Jeannette’s sister] Margaret, with her children, drove over from Kingston in the afternoon to be with us when the news of you came, whatever it might be. She and I had gone up for bed at 9:30 and mother into her room when Mr. Duncan of the Providence Journal and the Newport Daily Herald came to interview us. This morning both papers have sympathetic accounts of you both. Mother has been quite knocked out with her anxiety about you for some time; but I hope she will be back to her usual self after a few days now that it is all over. We were amused at the newspaper’s report that Paul said that he was not worried about you—that Mother could take care of herself. [The reporters] asked when we expected you here. We did not know.”⁴⁸²

Emily’s letter to her “Dear Children” magnified the worry she carried. “God has indeed been good to us,” she began, “and I am grateful that [H]e has brought you safe to earth again...Margaret [and I] were both saying how glad we were it was over and so successfully when she said I don’t think I could have stood it if anything had happened! I am very happy that it is now a thing of the past. Much as I am [glad] to have you succeed in your undertaking, your personal safety and well being means more to me than the glory...I hope you are not too tired and that you will have a chance to rest and relax

⁴⁸² Letter dated October 24, 1934, Folder 7, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette, 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

before you have to face other efforts...” Emily closed with motherly advice to her daughter and son-in-law: “God guide you both and try not to fall too much for the adulation you are sure to get and keep a sane and sober attitude toward life.”⁴⁸³

Post-Flight Life

Although no celebratory tickertape parades down New York’s Broadway Avenue awaited the Piccards, years after their historic flight Jeannette wrote, “doors that had been closed to us for years opened.”⁴⁸⁴ And to some extent that was true. The Piccard flight was front-page news for an extensive network of papers, and courtesy of Pathé News, within days of the flight millions of movie-goers saw pictures of the balloon launch and landing prior to the feature presentation.⁴⁸⁵ The Piccards received invitations to be honored guests at luncheons and dinners, requests for speaking engagements from a wide variety of groups and organizations, and correspondence from well-wishers and individuals excited with the receipt of their cover from the flight.⁴⁸⁶ In addition, a diversity of companies eagerly sought to utilize Jeannette and Jean’s public popularity in

⁴⁸³ Letter dated October 24, 1934, Folder 3, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: Emily (mother) to Jean and Jeannette, 1919-1941, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁸⁴ P. 12, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁸⁵ Starting on Saturday, October 27, Pathé News included pictures of the start and finish of the Piccard flight. See letter dated October 25, 1934, Folder 7, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received October 1934, Piccard Family Papers. Movies were a powerful form of communication even though average weekly attendance dropped during the depression from 110 million in 1930 to about 60 million in 1933. However, as historian T.H. Watkins argues, “given the fact that even the few cents it took to gain admission to the most shabby neighborhood theater was for many an extravagance, 60 million people a week is a figure that demonstrates the power of the movies as a cultural institution.” See T.H. Watkins, The Hungry Years: A Narrative History of the Great Depression in America (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999), pp. 203-204.

⁴⁸⁶ See letter dated October 30, 1934, Folder 7, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received October 1934, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated October 27, 1934, Folder 8, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

promoting their wares. The critical issue for the newly famous couple was how to reap these benefits professionally, and above all, financially.

Immediately after the flight, companies providing materials contacted Jeannette and Jean wanting product endorsements. For instance, Chicago's Dry-Zero Corporation, maker of "the most efficient commercial insulant known," and supplier of equipment and personal insulation products for the flight, hoped that the Piccards would "find the time to write at least a short contribution for [the] house publication, describing the human difficulties of your endeavor, particularly in relation to keeping comfortable and all that sort of thing."⁴⁸⁷ Hamilton Watch Company's Robert Waddell continued his pursuit of a picture of Jean and Jeannette standing near the gondola wearing their "loaned" Hamilton watches for use in the company's publication to retail jewelers.⁴⁸⁸

But companies not affiliated with the flight also wanted to take advantage of the Piccards' public popularity, many hoping to capitalize by utilizing the novelty angle of Jeannette's gender. Gerald Carson, of William Esty and Company, the New York City advertising agency handling the Camel cigarette account, learned through back channels that their client's product was Jeannette's choice for a smoke. Hoping to gain a product endorsement, Carson contacted Ralph Murphy, the advertising manager for the People's Outfitting Company, one of the stratospheric flight's main sponsors, in search of contact information for Jeannette. Murphy acknowledged that he was the "source of information regarding Mrs. Jean Piccard's use of Camels." Murphy saw nothing but benefit for Camel

⁴⁸⁷ Letter dated October 24, 1934, Folder 7, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received October 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁸⁸ Letter dated October 29, 1934, Folder 7, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received October 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

cigarettes with an endorsement from Jeannette, “in view of the nation-wide publicity attending the...flight, plus the fact that Mrs. Piccard is the first and only woman in the United States to qualify as a licensed balloon pilot. She is the only woman ever to have entered the Stratosphere.” As a good advertising man himself, Murphy emphasized the potential “hook” of the endorsement, telling Carson, “I am sure you will find a very dramatic story in Mrs. Piccard’s adventure and you’ll find her to be a striking and remarkably interesting personality. The fact that Mrs. Piccard is the mother of three boys should be still another reason why her endorsement would have a powerful feminine appeal.”⁴⁸⁹ Jeannette never endorsed Camel cigarettes.

In spring 1935, Aaron B. Steiner, from Leading Attractions Incorporated in New York, contacted Jeannette encouraging her participation in a radio broadcast sponsored by OUTDOOR GIRL Beauty Products. Steiner explained that Leading Attractions was producing a series of radio programs, broadcast over the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) every Saturday at 7:30pm, in which “a portion of each...program is devoted to a dramatization in which tribute is paid to the women of America who have achieved fame, established records, and whose contribution in the fields of aviation, sport, exploration and service are of importance.” The material for the “dramatization” was taken from newspaper and magazine accounts, so it was not a matter of Jeannette going to New York to participate in the broadcast; rather Steiner needed Jeannette’s consent because the “tributes” were made in the “course of a commercially sponsored program...” He assured

⁴⁸⁹ Letter dated November 8, 1934, Folder 8, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received November 1934, Piccard Family Papers. For additional correspondence between Carson and Murphy see letter dated November 5, 1934, Folder 8, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received November 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

Jeannette that “no mention of the product will occur in the dramatization relating to you, and no endorsement of such product will be expressed or implied...” Steiner requested Jeannette to sign the release form “expressing your consent to be included.”⁴⁹⁰ Jeannette did not give Steiner permission.

Not to be dissuaded so easily, Steiner tried to assuage Jeannette’s concerns by stating that the broadcasts had kept “meticulously clear of bringing in any bally-hoo [sic] or cheap publicity...” He also did not believe that Jeannette’s dramatization would “trespass on any of the scientific facts or anything that you would not wish publicized concerning your most recent flight.” Steiner offered to “prepare a script of incidents that are now public property...” for Jeannette’s “approval and editing.”⁴⁹¹ Jeannette did not consent to a radio dramatization of the stratospheric flight.

Shortly after the failed negotiations with Steiner, Jeannette received a letter from the associate editor of the Baltimore and Ohio Magazine, the in-house publication for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company employees. Margaret T. Stevens explained that “once each year...an annual Women’s Number” was published highlighting “photographs and stories of women who have done unusual things,” and she was hoping to include Jeannette in the 1935 issue. Stevens told Jeannette the story might “simply be a letter to the Women of the Railroad, or to me personally, telling something about the thrill of your unusual ‘skyward journey,’ the possibility of women’s entry into that field,

⁴⁹⁰ Letter dated March 14, 1935, Folder 2, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received March 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁹¹ Letter dated March 21, 1935, Folder 2, Box I: 43, General Correspondence: Letters Received March 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

or whatever of interest you would care to write about..." At minimum the associate editor was hoping for a "photograph...knowing that it would mean much to our women."⁴⁹²

Within two days of receiving the request, Jeannette submitted to the Baltimore and Ohio Magazine a story titled "Stratosphere Blue," a few pictures, and a request for payment.⁴⁹³ The associate editor's response to the monetary request is evidence of the perceived popularity of Jeannette and her story. "Although it has never been customary with us to pay for articles contributed to our Women's Number by women who are well known," wrote Stevens, "your story is one which we feel that our women will enjoy reading. And in view of the fact that you are an outstanding woman of today, we feel that we are justified in complying with your suggestion."⁴⁹⁴ But Jean was still unemployed, and Jeannette knew that writing \$10.00 articles was not sufficient for keeping food on the table and household bills paid. Therefore, her 1935 goals included establishing a lucrative stratospheric flight lecture tour and securing stable employment for Jean; ideally, the former successfully parlaying into the latter.⁴⁹⁵

Ernest Briggs

"My Dear Dr. Piccard," the letter began, "Our mutual friend, Clara Adams, advises me that there is a possibility that you may have time available for lectures. We would like

⁴⁹² Letter dated March 28, 1935, Folder 2, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received March 1935, Piccard Family Papers. According to Stevens, the magazine was "devoted to the interest of the home as well as those of our women employees." See Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Letter dated March 30, 1935, Folder 1, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁹⁴ Letter dated April 2, 1935, Folder 2, Box I: 43, General Correspondence: Letters Received April 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁹⁵ Jeannette wanted to lecture in spring 1935, rather than fall or winter knowing that Captain Stevens was probably going to make another flight attempt in the summer, creating additional competition for lectures. See letter dated January 14, 1935, Folder 1, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

very much to have the honor of representing you in arranging such speaking engagements.” So began the tumultuous and, at times, contentious relationship between the Piccards and New York City’s Ernest Briggs, president of Management Ernest Briggs. Briggs suggested a meeting, either in Detroit or somewhere in the East, to discuss his proposals.⁴⁹⁶ Although Briggs initially approached Jean, all of his further correspondence was with Jeannette. With the holidays approaching it was difficult for Briggs and his potential clients to schedule a meeting, but by January 1935, serious contract discussions were underway. But the Piccard history of difficult negotiations and problems with miscommunication would repeat itself.

In January 1935, Jeannette informed Briggs the contract as “outlined...[was] not wholly satisfactory,” and that she was “herewith enclosing a few alterations and additions” that she wanted made. The first point of contention was the length of time Briggs wanted exclusive rights to the “attraction,” Jean and Jeannette, and how and when the gondola could be on display. Briggs wanted the Piccards under contractual agreement from June 1935 to February 1936, and the right to display the gondola wherever he thought appropriate and profitable. Jeannette argued these terms would only be acceptable with some “guarantee” from Briggs. She stated the “attraction will agree to some exhibition...of the gondola...outside the radius of one hundred miles centered at Chicago, provided that the gondola be exhibited only in connection with our lectures...” Briggs was to be responsible for all expenses incurred with shipping the gondola to and from its permanent home, Chicago’s Museum of Science and Industry, and exhibition

⁴⁹⁶ Letter dated November 10, 1934, Folder 8, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received November 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

sites. In addition, if an admission fee was charged, then the “attraction should have a considerable share of that ‘gate receipt’ after expenses [were] paid.” The final caveat for accepting the long-term contract was the “attraction’s” agreement “to give lectures when booked provided that in their opinion the engagement [was] not of a kind lacking in dignity suitable to their standing in the scientific world. It remain[ed] also understood that all engagements [were] subject to the approval of the attraction as to terms before the final arrangements [were] concluded...” Jeannette also informed Briggs it would “not be possible” to give two programs in the same day; rather, it would be better to have an evening lecture and the “second lecture...given the following morning or afternoon, not earlier than 10:00 A.M...”⁴⁹⁷

During the next six weeks, the “attraction” and management attempted to reach contractual terms acceptable to all parties. Briggs put forth a shorter three-month contract period (March-May 1935), agreed to the proposed division of receipts, and agreed that his management company was the “exclusive...booking representative for lectures,” but not “radio and motion pictures engagements...” Briggs requested from the Piccards data and pictures from the flight to use in promotional materials. Unfortunately, he addressed the letter to “Mrs. Eugene Piccard.”⁴⁹⁸

Having moved back to the Philadelphia area after the flight,⁴⁹⁹ Jeannette and Jean decided it would be simple to make a stop in New York City on their way to Newport,

⁴⁹⁷ Letter dated January 30, 1935, Folder 1, Box 54: General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-February 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁹⁸ Letter dated February 2, 1935, Folder 1, Box I: 43, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-February 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

⁴⁹⁹ Having lost the lease on their previous Swarthmore, PA, residence, Jeannette and Jean rented a furnished apartment consisting of two rooms, a kitchenette and a bathroom in a house. See letter dated

Rhode Island, and hand-deliver the requested materials to Briggs. So two days later, without a scheduled appointment, they went to his New York City office. Briggs was not in, and instead of leaving the requested materials with his secretary, Jeannette took it with her to Newport. “Dear Mr. Briggs,” she wrote, “We came to your office this afternoon with the data...Unfortunately we did not arrive until five minutes past four and found you had already left...In order to expedite matters I have not taken time to have copies made of the photographs I am sending you so that we would greatly appreciate it if you will return them to us as promptly as possible. Please make a note of the fact that Dr. Piccard’s first name is JEAN which translated into English is John and not Eugene. I feel that this is very important. Regretting that we were unable to reach your office before you left this afternoon...” [Emphasis in the original.]⁵⁰⁰ Jeannette sent the packet of 43 original photos by registered mail to the hotel in Atlanta, Georgia, where Briggs was staying, but he never received the packet.⁵⁰¹

Briggs was reaching his professional endpoint with Jeannette. A week after the unannounced visit and his failure to receive the photos Jeannette sent him, Briggs wrote, “I have no doubt about being able at some time in the future to do some work for you but I have a formula for work and in this instance I am in an impossible position. (1) I have no contract with you and until I do [I] will not make any effort to make any arrangements for engagements. (2) I know nothing except in a superficial way regarding your flight and

April 14, 1935, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁰⁰ Letter dated February 4, 1935, Folder 1, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-February 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁰¹ See letter dated February 25, 1935, Folder 1, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-February 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

until I have this information I will not be embarrassed by trying to talk about your lectures when I cannot give desired information. (3) I must have publicity material before I arrange printed matter and before I can approach [potential lecture venues]. I am not a miracle worker but a hard plugger and need material with which to work.” He continued his controlled tirade, saying, “When these matters are taken care of I will start as I still believe in the possibilities, particularly if we use a balloon demonstration. Judging from what I observe there will be no enormous wealth for you or for me but if you wish to consider it on a weekly return basis we probably could keep you busy until Summer after we get started...If you will take care of the above items I probably can go to Chicago and get you a number of dates working out of Chicago, which will be a good place to try...”⁵⁰²

Adding a layer of difficulty to the situation was the clause within Grunow Company’s sponsorship agreement allowing for exhibition of the gondola after the stratospheric flight. The company desired to highlight their involvement in the flight by displaying the gondola in distributors’ hometowns throughout the Midwest.⁵⁰³ Briggs reiterated to Jeannette that he had “told [her] often that the use of the Gondola for Commercial Advertising destroys any opportunity in any city except the opportunity for speaking for no returns and in that I am not interested.”⁵⁰⁴ Jeannette assured Briggs that Kansas City

⁵⁰² Business memorandum dated February 12, 1935, Folder 1, Box: 43, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-February 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁰³ See letter dated March 12, 1935, Folder 1, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁰⁴ Business Memorandum dated February 12, 1935, Folder 1, Box I: 43, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-February 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

was the last stop on the Grunow tour, and now the gondola was at the Piccards' "disposal."⁵⁰⁵

In spite of Jeannette's assurances, tour terms between Briggs and the Piccards never reached fruition, although over the next several year Briggs continued to stay in touch and promote his ideas for a lecture series. Yet, even without the help of a professional, Jean and Jeannette were successful in arranging lectures for such diverse groups as the University of Michigan's Student Christian Association; the Mathematics Teachers of the Middle States and Maryland annual dinner; the Fordson High School (Dearborn, Michigan) school assemblies; the University of Delaware's College Hour (a radio program); Purdue University's physics department; a Christmas radio program for New York City's American Institute junior member science clubs; and the American Chemical Society's Western New York Section.⁵⁰⁶

Although not with the same financial intention as the Camel cigarette advertising company, the American Chemical Society utilized the novelty of Jeannette's participation in the stratosphere flight. The company's newsletter promoted the Piccards' expected attendance at their April meeting, stating, "Although the ladies are always welcome at Section meetings, those who are not chemists may find the technical lectures of little interest." But the program committee tried annually "...to arrange a program that [would] be of interest to chemists' wives as well as the chemists themselves." The Piccards'

⁵⁰⁵ Letter dated February 25, 1935, Folder 1, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁰⁶ See letter dated March 30, 1935, Folder 1, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated November 10, 1934, Folder 7, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received November 1934, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated November 20, 1934, Folder 7, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received November 1934, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated December 6, 1935, Folder 5, Box I: 43, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-December 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

appearance at the April meeting was “officially acclaimed as Ladies Night and the members of the fair sex [were] cordially invited to be present.”⁵⁰⁷

Nevertheless, Briggs was correct in his assessment that “there [was] no enormous wealth” in the lecture circuit, even though help was offered from several surprising quarters.⁵⁰⁸ Captain A.W. Stevens, pilot of the *Explorer* expeditions, and an unexpectedly, tried to help line-up speaking engagements, telling his contacts that the Piccards had “succeeded in doing a very considerable amount of scientific work on the recent flight and...their flight [was] fully as valuable as any stratosphere flight that has been made.”⁵⁰⁹ Stevens encouraged his friend Hans Adamson to have Jeannette on his Sunday afternoon radio program. The Piccards, Stevens told Adamson, were “very interesting people [and] the longer you know them, the better you like them...Since Mrs. Piccard was the first woman stratosphere pilot, I think that the public would be interested in a radio talk by her.”⁵¹⁰

Baby brother Hugh offered to schedule lectures in Midwestern cities, telling Jeannette, “I am willing to arrange it for you with my friends in an effort to help you make the contacts you may find may help you,” but “when you give your lectures, you should do most of the talking, because it is so hard for people to understand Jean.”⁵¹¹ Jeannette

⁵⁰⁷ “April Meeting: Exploring the Stratosphere,” Folder 6, Box I: 79, Speeches and Writings: Jean and Jeannette Piccard “Exploring the Stratosphere” 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁰⁸ See footnote 110.

⁵⁰⁹ Letter dated December 9, 1934, Folder 8, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received December 1934, Piccard Family Papers. Stevens encouraged Dr. Isiah Bowman, of the American Geographical Society, to try and help Jean and Jeannette secure lectures “in and around New York.” See *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁰ Letter dated December 9, 1934, Folder 8, Box I: 42, General Correspondence: Letters Received December 1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵¹¹ Letter dated May 30, 1935, Folder 1, Box I: 20, Siblings Correspondence: Hugh O.T. Ridlon (brother) to Jean and Jeannette, 1929-1966, Piccard Family Papers.

thanked her brother for his support and encouragement, but lamented that “every time that Jean has been told by anyone that I should do most of the talking and that he should limit himself to five or ten minutes he has talked for half to three quarters of an hour.” Displaying a partner’s sensitivity to the situation, Jeannette continued, “but after all, his pride has to be considered too.”⁵¹²

Although the lecture circuit was not exceedingly lucrative, Jeannette received accolades and honors from many organizations after her historic flight. The Aero Club of Washington, D.C., invited Jeannette to the nation’s capital as an honored guest at the “Fifth Annual Reception and Ball, for America’s distinguished flyers of 1934.” During a formal ceremony, Senator William G. McAdoo, president of the National Aeronautic Association (NAA), presented “each...guest with an engraved certificate of his outstanding flight achievement of the year.”⁵¹³ In 1935, Jeannette was a member of the select group receiving the International League of Aviators’ “coveted” Harmon international trophies by winning the spherical balloon pilot category. In fact, she was the first woman ever to win any Harmon trophy except the aviatrix trophy.⁵¹⁴

Economic Challenges and Dreams of a Second Flight

In addition to scheduling lecture engagements, Jeannette asked her “Dearest Daddy” for help with Jean’s employment situation. “I am about to write,” she informed Dr.

⁵¹² Letter dated June 8, 1935, Folder 3, Box I: 20, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hugh O.T. Ridlon, 1931-1966, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette continued, “If Jean and I were one person we’d be a swell person. Unfortunately the characteristics that I have he doesn’t have and I haven’t got the brains. So there you are. You’ll have to take us or leave us as we are and it is up to you to decide whether we are worth your trouble or not.” See Ibid.

⁵¹³ Letter dated February 9, 1935, Folder 1, Box I: 43, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-February 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵¹⁴ Letter dated March 12, 1935, Folder 2, Box I: 43, General Correspondence: Letters Received March 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

Ridlon, “to the presidents of all the large colleges in the country telling them that Jean wants a job and enclosing a brief biography and a list of his publications. Where I know the trustees I’m going to send them a copy of the material sent to their presidents. It’s a sort of wholesale publicity move but something may come of it and anyway nobody is going to tell me that the reason we haven’t got a job is because we haven’t tried to find one!” Jeannette inquired as to “what doctors” her father knew on the “faculties of what Universities?”⁵¹⁵ Jeannette wholesale publicity move did not garner employment for Jean, but rather a continuance of rejection letters.⁵¹⁶

Throughout 1935 Jeannette tried to schedule lectures that coincided with possible job opportunities. For example, describing a trip to Minnesota in spring 1935, Jeannette wrote her father that they “expected to stop over...at Carleton College, Northfield, Minn[esota], where we will be the guests of the President, Donald Cowling. There is a possibility of our getting a job there. He wrote that they expected a vacancy in a year or two and that he would like to see us the next time that he came East so we wrote him when we knew we were going to Minneapolis [MN] and of course he has asked us to stop over for the college May Fete.”⁵¹⁷

For the first time in several years, Jean, Jeannette and their sons were all together, and summer 1935 became a working vacation. Taking the family’s Pontiac, the Piccards

⁵¹⁵ Letter dated February 10, 1935, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers. Based on handwritten notes, Ridlon provided his daughter eleven faculty contacts at institutions including the University of Wisconsin, Tufts University, the University of Nebraska, Northwestern University, Duke University, the University of Iowa, and the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. See Ibid.

⁵¹⁶ See Folders 1-3, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers and Folders 1-3, Box I: 43, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-March 1935, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵¹⁷ Letter dated May 12, 1935, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

made stops at Lake Champlain near the Canadian border; then headed west, staying two nights at Niagara Falls, New York. After taking care of business matters in Detroit, Michigan, the family headed further west, stopping at Rapid City and the Black Hills in South Dakota, at Yellowstone National Park, and Salt Lake City, Utah, before arriving at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, California, in early August.⁵¹⁸ Rather than repeating the drive back home, the family “splurged” and purchased “Tourist Class” tickets to New York City via Panama Pacific Line’s “S.S. Pennsylvania,” leaving San Francisco on August 30, 1935.⁵¹⁹ Upon arriving back east, Jean and Jeannette continued their lecture engagements, and Jean continued his academic application blitz.

Fall 1935 was also a time when Jeannette’s mother Emily came to Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, for an extended visit with her youngest daughter, with whom she had always shared a special relationship. Jeannette’s 83-year-old father was upset with his wife’s absence, and it became an opportunity for the family’s patriarch to vent his displeasure with his family’s actions. “You left me here three weeks ago today” he told Jeannette. “Alone here all this time, I have thought of many things; and I think I ought to tell you what I am about to write least [sic] a misunderstanding arise as one did under like circumstances between [Jeannette’s sister] Hester and me.” The body of the letter discussed the amount Jeannette owed her father for laundry service expenses incurred. Although Jeannette paid her father eighteen dollars, believing it was a sufficient amount, it was not; in the letter Ridlon itemized the expenses from March through October, 1935,

⁵¹⁸ Letter dated July 15, 1935, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵¹⁹ Letter dated August 27, 1935, Folder 5, Box I: 43, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-December 1935, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated May 18, 1942, Folder 1, Box II: 44, Subject File: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

totaling \$31.96. But his rant regarding the laundry expenses belied the real emotion behind his writing: “The fact that you have not written to me, here alone, since you left three weeks ago may be explained in several ways: A wish to not appear to favor my wish to have mother here, when she wished to go away with you; and that, of course, is quite right. It may be that you have been busy in your new home, and taking care of your young husband and two [sic] small boys, and taking Mother to drive every afternoon. But I think I am entitled to the same consideration from you, and from your brothers and sisters, and your mother, that civilized people show to those not members of the family, or even intimate friends. I do not receive such consideration. Surely you would have written a ‘bread and butter’ letter to anyone else who entertained you for a couple of days.” He closed the letter to his daughter, saying, “I do not ask you to answer this letter, least [sic] Mother ask you or me what we have said to each other, as she so frequently does ask me.”⁵²⁰

The hectic schedule was taking its toll on Jeannette. Though not required, Jeannette responded from her perspective to her father’s emotional tirade and sense of selfishness. “Dearest Daddy,” she began, “Last Sunday I wrote a letter to [her son] John. It is the only letter I have written him in a month and I think the only letter I have written in the month of October, except for one concerning some insurance and a brief note accompanying my belated contribution to the Bryn Mawr endowment fund.”⁵²¹ Jeannette took offense at her father’s insinuation about her letter writing, acknowledging that she “usually [wrote]

⁵²⁰ Letter dated November 1, 1935, Folder 3, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: John (father) to Jean and Jeannette, 1919-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵²¹ Letter dated October 10, 1935, Folder 4, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1931-1935, Piccard Family Papers.

bread-and-butter letters but [that her] conscience [was] not clean on that score at all.” She confirmed her father’s assessment that she had “been busy, so busy that the daily drive you mention had not been possible and there were many days when I could do no more than call Mother on the phone in the evening. At that I haven’t unpacked my papers, answered letters, or attended to any of many important business affairs of Jean’s, [including his experimentation with] plaster [for medical casts, and] his appointment for one quarter at the University of Minnesota...” In addition, Jean had “been translating a paper by [Albert] Einstein and [had] been sick...” Jeannette concluded with the assurance she “[had] not told [her] Mother” about his letter.⁵²²

The letters reflect the complicated relationship between father and daughter. The elderly Ridlon had enjoyed prominence and respect from his colleagues during his career in the nascent orthopedic medical field. Although Jeannette loved her father and would never intentionally harm him, she was undoubtedly the more popularly known member of the family due to her balloon and stratospheric flight accomplishments, and the subsequent publicity. The good doctor’s advancing age and his unsettling economic situation brought on by the Great Depression certainly added to the growing difficulties between the patriarch and family members, but perhaps he was not ready to relinquish to Jeannette the role of “family celebrity.” And so he vented.

The University of Minnesota

⁵²² Letter dated November 3, 1935, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette experienced what is now referred to as the “sandwich generation” challenge; care-giving obligations for one’s parents and children. Jean translated Einstein’s article entitled, “Physics and Reality.” See Folder 27, Box I: 76, Speeches and Writings: Printed Translation of “Physics and Reality,” by Albert Einstein, 1936, Piccard Family Papers.

Finally, after living almost four years without a source of steady income, beating the academic bushes with countless letters of inquiry, and receiving nothing but rejection, a positive piece of employment news came to the Piccard household. During their 1935 western sojourn, Jean, Jeannette and the boys stopped in Minneapolis, and had a meeting with people from the University of Minnesota.⁵²³ This became a fortuitous event because in fall 1935, Jean was invited to come to the university and lecture in the Department of Aeronautical Engineering, either during winter 1936 or spring 1936 quarter. John D. Akerman, chair of the department, sent a congratulatory letter telling Jean, “the faculty and student body are all anxiously awaiting your arrival and we are sure that your presence at the University will be pleasant and useful for all concerned.” Akerman reminded Jean that the dean wanted to hear as soon as possible which quarter Jean wanted to teach in order that the “formal appointment through the Board of Regents...” could be made.⁵²⁴ In a separate “personal” letter to Jean, Akerman indicated, “the news of your possible connection with the University has raised interest in stratosphere flights here in the Twin Cities. I don’t know how far you have promoted your future flight, but there may be some prospects of making one from the Twin Cities.” For that reason, Akerman thought “perhaps it would be better for [Jean] to be [with the university] winter quarter, then if the promotion activities were successful to devote the spring for preparations of the flight.” Akerman reiterated that any stratospheric flight was “a private

⁵²³ Letter dated January 12, 1936, Folder 5, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵²⁴ Letter dated October 3, 1935, Folder 4, Box 5, University of Minnesota Correspondence: 1935-1942, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

matter and [had] no official bearing on your connections with the University *so far*.”

[Emphasis in the original.]⁵²⁵

However, three weeks passed without a reply from Jean, so Akerman sent another letter indicating the administration was “very anxious to hear” which quarter Jean “had selected to spend...at the University...” so that arrangements could be completed for the year.⁵²⁶ Jean’s response to Akerman indicated more interest in a potential flight than commitment to teaching. “My talk with Dean Leland,” he wrote Akerman, “was very indefinite and I am eagerly waiting word from you with regard to the exact subjects for my lectures, the number of courses and so forth. Now as to the question of a new stratosphere flight: There is still plenty of scientific work to be done up there and Mrs. Piccard and myself will be glad to make a new flight.” Jean indicated to Akerman that Minneapolis was a “good geographical location” for a flight, and that the “help of an organized student body [would] greatly facilitate the ground operations.” Jean offered his apology for the delayed response, stating he had “been absent from home.”⁵²⁷

Jeannette was enthusiastic about their professional opportunities with the university, especially the potential stratospheric flight.⁵²⁸ But she was equally enamored with the social aspect of academic life, perhaps a reflection of her class upbringing. Although it

⁵²⁵ Letter dated October 3, 1935, Folder 4, Box 5, University of Minnesota Correspondence 1935-1942, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

⁵²⁶ Letter dated October 28, 1935, Folder 4, Box 5, University of Minnesota Correspondence 1935-1942, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

⁵²⁷ Letter dated November 3, 1935, Folder 4, Box 5, University of Minnesota Correspondence 1935-1942, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

⁵²⁸ Jeannette informed Ellsworth Mills, president of Bastian Blessing Company, that they were “coming into the Middle West bent on Stratosphere business...I haven’t been able to pick up any sponsorship...I haven’t really gotten down to work to look for it but the way seems clearer to do so now.” One of the persons Jeannette planned to contact was Henry Ford. See letter dated January 12, 1936, Folder 5, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

was initially only a temporary appointment, she acted as if Jean had received a tenured position.⁵²⁹ In early January 1936, utilizing university letterhead stationary, Jeannette told her “Dearest Mumsie,” that she was “thrilled at the prospect of your coming. We’ll have lots of parties. I must have Mrs. Lindley and Ella and Ward to dinner with you and Mrs. Lindley will surely ask you to her house and probably Ella too. Then I must have you meet various members of the faculty and the Akermans at least will probably entertain you back.”⁵³⁰

After several months of shuttling back and forth between Swarthmore, PA, and the Twin Cities, on March 30, 1936, Jeannette exclaimed to her mother, “Behold us in Minneapolis. Jean has given his first lecture this morning.”⁵³¹ Several months later Jean was able to tell his friend William Swann, director of Bartol Research Foundation, that “things were going nicely” at the university, and the students were “doing good work.”⁵³² Through Jean’s appointment Jeannette added the new role of professor’s wife,⁵³³ but she also maintained the working partnership established with their stratospheric flight. Based

⁵²⁹ Jean explained to his collaborator, W.F.G. Swann, that the university had “received a grant of \$900 from the National Advisory Committee of Aeronautics [to be used] for development and experimentation with high altitude sounding balloons.” Although Akerman had requested the grant, it was “understood to be used for [Jean’s] work [at the university].” See letter dated May 16, 1936, Folder 6, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵³⁰ Letter dated January 9, 1936, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵³¹ Letter dated March 30, 1936, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette’s responsibilities of academic wife and mother often collided. At one point during the transition to Minneapolis, Jeannette returned to Swarthmore “just in time to go to the recital...in which [son] Paul was making his first public appearance with his violin.” See letter dated March 9, 1936, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵³² Letter dated May 16, 1936, Folder 6, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵³³ See letter dated April 21, 1936, Folder 8, Box 1, General Correspondence, 1932-1952, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

on language in her letters, she seemed to effortlessly embrace both identities.⁵³⁴

Jeannette and Jean continued to give joint lectures about the stratospheric flight, and attend conferences together.⁵³⁵ However, the university did not officially recognize any professional partnership between Jean and Jeannette, and due to rules against nepotism, Jeannette never received a formal appointment.

Any problems and difficulties Jeannette experienced in the Piccards' professional life paled in comparison to her family's personal loss. On February 17, 1936,⁵³⁶ John Ridlon suffered a debilitating heart attack, and though he lingered for several months, the family patriarch succumbed April 27.⁵³⁷ Jeannette visited her parents in Newport, R.I., as often as possible during her father's illness, and when she could not be there, her mother kept her apprised of his condition. But John Ridlon was a proud man, and during one particularly difficult episode, Emily confided to Jeannette that her father "[had] seemed greatly discouraged..." "He told me," an emotionally distressed Emily wrote, "he wished there was some way that he could die and that he could have some simple anesthesia, so he could die...[He was frustrated] 'it took such a long time to die'..."⁵³⁸

Jeannette assumed responsibility for her father's internment in his boyhood home of Rutland, Vermont. Afterward, she recounted to her mother the doctor's final journey: "In

⁵³⁴ See letter dated March 30, 1936, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated April 10, 1936, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵³⁵ See letter dated May 8, 1936, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated May 23, 1936, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵³⁶ Western Union telegram dated February 17, 1936, Folder 4, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: Emily (mother) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1941, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵³⁷ Genealogy information based on a 12-30-82 chart of Robert Dean Jensvold, Ridlon genealogy book, and parish register Vol. III. P. 151, of St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Middletown, Rhode Island, from Kathryn Piccard's personal files provided to author.

⁵³⁸ Letter dated March 9, 1936, Folder 4, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: Emily (mother) to Jean and Jeannette 1919-1941, Piccard Family Papers.

Vermont we had beautiful weather and found everything marvelously peaceful and full of sunshine...[and] we spent the night in Rutland in the same hotel where we staid [sic] in 1916. Do you remember?" Jeannette reported of the decision to bury, rather than scatter her father's ashes; and provided her mother with a vivid description of the Vermont scenery, writing, "I thought those Vermont hills were very lovely and the quiet country graveyard very dignified. It has a great deal of character." In a family where open and straightforward communication was often quite difficult and outright compliments were few, perhaps Jeannette's description of the scenery was her final tribute to her father.⁵³⁹

More than ever, Jeannette's seventy-seven-year-old mother now relied on her youngest daughter for emotional support, encouragement, and perhaps most of all, her visits. As their academic quarter was coming to a close in Minneapolis, Jeannette gave her mother an approximation of the family's summer schedule, with events in June including university commencement, a lecture and conference of the American Meteorological Society in Kansas City, Missouri, the intercollegiate Flying Club meet in Detroit, Michigan, and getting sons Paul and Donald ready for summer camp in Michigan. In addition, Jeannette and Jean were still trying to complete arrangements for a second stratosphere flight. "Plans are hard to make," Jeannette warned her mother, "but I'll try to keep you up with whatever develops."⁵⁴⁰ Emily was not pleased with her daughter's inability to confirm their plans to be together.⁵⁴¹ However, summer was not

⁵³⁹ Letter dated May 4, 1936, Folder 4, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁴⁰ Letter dated May 16, 1936, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁴¹ See letter dated May 19, 1936, Folder 4, Box I: 18, Family Correspondence: Emily (mother) to Jean and Jeannette, 1919-1941, Piccard Family Papers.

the only season of unknown schedules; Jeannette and Jean did not know if the University of Minnesota was inviting Jean back for fall 1936.⁵⁴²

A Pit Bull in Poodle's Clothing

About his mother, Paul Piccard said, “she was a very complicated person with conflicting tendencies. On the one hand she was very assertive; on the other she was very insecure.”⁵⁴³ During late 1935 and throughout 1936, the assertive side of Jeannette dominated, almost to the point of shameless self-promotion and self-importance. Two particular incidents illustrate Jeannette’s attempts to leverage the Piccards’ recent fame into a second stratospheric flight.

Jean was invited to Harvard University’s week-long tercentenary celebration during Fall 1936. Prior to the event, Jeannette wrote her husband a detailed letter on how he should act, whom he should talk with, and perhaps most importantly, what not to say. Jeannette told Jean to “remember” that he was at Harvard to “do homage (ask Swann how to pronounce that) to the greatness of Harvard in the past, to the greatness of Harvard in the future and to learn something from the great men who are gathered there.” She told Jean to, “You know. Lay it on thick. The thicker the better.” Jeannette continued with the admonition to, “Please, please don’t talk about what you are going to do or what you hope to do. If you say anything just say you want to make another [stratosphere] flight. Be dark and mysterious! Don’t talk. Please, PLEASE-PLEASE.” [Emphasis in the original.] Perhaps to bolster Jean’s spirits, she declared, “Oh darling, do you know how I love you? You don’t, of course, but never mind. I do.” She closed with instructions for

⁵⁴² Letter dated June 6, 1936, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁴³ Paul Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s bio-3,” personal email to author, November 3, 2006.

Jean to tell a certain Mr. Conant that he was working at the University of Minnesota, “lecturing on airships, aerostatics, and particularly the engineering problems connected with stratosphere flying. Just talk about it in an off-hand way as an important part of the aeronautical engineering departments of the future, [and] suggest that he might eventually like some of your graduate students to give that kind of thing at Harvard! Who knows if you talk down your nose to him it might work. Another thing I hope you remember while you’re there, you’re six feet two inches and I want you to look six feet three and an imposing figure of a man.” Jeannette closed with, “Sweet heart. I am so proud of you and I love you so much...”⁵⁴⁴ Perhaps Jeannette felt confident in her admonitions to Jean because by late summer he had in hand a request to return to the University of Minnesota for the 1936/1937 academic year.⁵⁴⁵

The second example of Jeannette’s assertive behavior during this period is Jeannette and Jean’s convoluted multi-year relationship with Henry Ford, and Jeannette’s unwillingness or inability to take no for an answer. On the first anniversary of their stratosphere flight, Jeannette and Jean wrote Ford a thank-you note, saying, “Please allow us...to take this occasion to express to you, once more, our deep appreciation for all of your help.” If the letter had stopped with thanking Ford for the use of the facilities at Dearborn, Michigan, it would have been appropriate. But Jean and Jeannette, having “had the privilege of meeting [Ford] personally,” confidently added more to their note in response to Ford’s business decision about the on-going civil unrest in Spain. They

⁵⁴⁴ Letter dated August 29, 1936, Folder 5, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean, 1920-1958, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁴⁵ Letter dated July 28, 1936, Folder 7, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

commended Ford's actions, saying, "We have just read with enthusiasm the stand which you have just taken in regard to shipments of trucks to a country which has started a war of aggression. While others have increased their business you have cut yours down in order to serve humanity and general security. As lovers of peace and as American citizens we thank you."⁵⁴⁶

In January 1936, Jeannette wrote to Ford again, via his personal secretary and gate keeper, Ernest G. Liebold.⁵⁴⁷ Jeannette explained that the Piccards would be in the Detroit area, and that there were "two or three ideas stirring" in their minds that they wanted to discuss with Liebold and later with Mr. Ford—if Liebold considered the ideas "of sufficient interest." First, though, Jeannette had to clear up a potential conflict, writing, "In February of 1928 we put in our order for a Ford car. It was to be our first car. We planned to use it to take our family to New Jersey late in June. Not being able to get a Ford by the middle of June we had to buy a Pontiac and since then because of better trade-in values we have continued to drive Pontiacs. Late last Fall we learned quite by accident that the Pontiac Company in their 'Silver Streak News' had been using our picture and our name for publicity purposes entirely without our knowledge or consent. We resent their having done so. We protested...and have...assurance that our name shall not be used in the future. Nevertheless, we are determined to get rid of our Pontiac this Spring and drive a car of a different make, not General Motors. This I wish to make clear

⁵⁴⁶ Letter dated October 23, 1935, Folder 4, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁴⁷ For an excellent source on Henry Ford's relationship with E.G. Liebold, his difficulties with anti-Semitism during the inter-war years, and his relationship with Adolph Hitler and Germany, see Neil Baldwin, Henry Ford and the Jews: The Mass Production of Hate (New York: Public Affairs, 2001).

in case you are already familiar with last Fall's issue of the 'Silver Streak'." ⁵⁴⁸ In his role as Henry Ford's gatekeeper, Liebold rebuffed Jeannette's inquiries with two brief letters. ⁵⁴⁹

Not to be deterred by Liebold, Jeannette wrote directly to Ford. "My dear Mr. Ford, she began, "Dr. Piccard and I hope that you have returned home from your trip south and that you derived from it all the pleasure and profit for which you had hoped." But she did not ask Ford for financial support; rather she talked about their new car. "Perhaps you know," she continued, "that we bought a [Lincoln] Zephyr last month...before we started for our quarters [sic] work here in Minneapolis. I thought that you might be interested in its performance, especially since our statement has aroused expressions of amazement from all our friends here. We began counting the gas consumption a little West of Mansfield, Ohio. From there we ran over wet and dry roads, flat country and hilly country, and finally over slushy and snow covered roads. Over that distance of 700 miles we averaged 15.58 miles to the gallon. The trip, of course, included city traffic through Chicago as well as open country. Running speeds over extended distances were from 10 to 60 miles an hour. The date of the trip was March 25th to 27th. Not half bad!...With cordial regards and best Easter wishes..." ⁵⁵⁰ There is no evidence of a response from Henry Ford; however, a year later, Jeannette had the temerity to inquire of the automobile magnate where her car might be serviced . This elicited a terse response from Ford's

⁵⁴⁸ Letter dated January 18, 1936, Folder 5, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁴⁹ See letter dated January 29, 1936, Folder 1, Box I: 44, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-April 1936, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated February 6, 1936, Folder 1, Box I: 44, General Correspondence: Letters Received January-April 1936, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁵⁰ Letter dated April 10, 1936, Folder 6, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

secretary: “Dear Mrs. Piccard, The name of the dealer in St. Paul [MN] from whom Lincoln Zephyr service may be secured is, Young Motor Car Company, 850 Grand Avenue. I trust they will be able to serve you satisfactorily.”⁵⁵¹ With Liebold’s response, the battle of wills reengaged, and Jeannette again asked for Ford’s financial help. Liebold kept the gate closed: “I doubt very much whether the matter you have in mind would interest Mr. Ford. He is away more or less at present...”⁵⁵²

Jeannette tried several more times over summer 1937 to gain access to Ford, but to no avail. Though her singleness of purpose was commendable, it also reflected a certain naïveté about events surrounding Henry Ford. Between 1937 and summer 1941, more than 4,000 Ford factory workers, both actual and suspected members of the United Auto Workers (U.A.W.), were fired. Known as the “Ford Purge,” the actions of the company intimidated the remaining rank and file.⁵⁵³ In addition, by 1938 polls revealed that 80% of American men had heard Ford was anti-Semitic, and Jews responded to Ford’s perceived philosophy by boycotting the company’s products. Historian Neil Baldwin argues that it was the “most complete boycott of automobiles by any group in American history.”⁵⁵⁴ There is no evidence that Jeannette comprehended Ford’s complex problems with his workers and his consumers, because she continued through August 1937 to push for a

⁵⁵¹ Letter dated June 3, 1937, Folder 5, Box I: 44, General Correspondence: Letters Received May-June 1937, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁵² Letter dated June 21, 1937, Folder 5, Box I: 44, General Correspondence: Letters Received May-June 1937, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁵³ Baldwin, Henry Ford and the Jews, p. 311.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

meeting with the automobile magnate. However, Liebold was successful in keeping the gate closed and locked.⁵⁵⁵

But if Jeannette was disappointed with her unsuccessful attempts to gain financial backing from Henry Ford, it was offset with news from the University of Minnesota. Beginning in fall 1937, the Board of Regents appointed Jean professor in the Aeronautical Engineering Department, earning \$3,200 in yearly salary. This was approximately three times their yearly income from the lecture circuit, and the knowledge of steady income relieved many family anxieties.⁵⁵⁶ Eleven years after returning to the United States, and with Jean no longer in a tenuous employment situation, Jeannette and her family established a permanent home in the Twin Cities.

Although Jeannette continued traveling cross-country for personal and professional reasons, she spent the remainder of her life firmly rooted in her maternal ancestral home at the headwaters of the Mississippi River.⁵⁵⁷ Jeannette's home-base remained Minneapolis, and she became a "favorite daughter" of Minnesota as she faced life's triumphs and tragedies in the years to come.

⁵⁵⁵ Jeannette, writing from Newport, Rhode Island, hoped to meet with Liebold and Ford during their trek back to Minnesota. See letter dated August 9, 1937, Folder 2, Box I: 55, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1937-1939.

⁵⁵⁶ Memo from L.C. Coffman, president University of Minnesota, Folder 4, Box 5, University of Minnesota Correspondence 1935-1942, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives and letter dated February 25, 1936, Folder 5, Box I: 54, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1935-1936, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁵⁷ See John A. Piccard, transcript of interview with author, October 14, 2006, Athens, Ohio. Transcript in author's possession.

CHAPTER FIVE: TWIN CITIES' TRANSITIONS

"Does this give you what you want in the way of intangibles? I don't like a cold water plunge but I can take it. I wouldn't hunt up a bull – or would I? – but if one is coming at me I'll size up the situation as best I can in the time allowed and grab his horns and try to twist his neck, or get gored in the process. My theory is: when you have a problem, attack it where you can. One thing leads to another. The first thing you know it is solved and you're an older and wiser person." Jeannette Piccard to Thomas Whelan, 1942⁵⁵⁸

"Though I am not a young woman, I have not simply vegetated during the past twenty-three years as a housewife, nor have I lost flexibility and adaptability, but I have kept the ability to envision a goal and stick at the work till I get there." Jeannette Piccard to Minnesota Governor Harold E. Stassen, 1942⁵⁵⁹

Anticipating another one-year appointment, but with nothing definite in hand, Jeannette made rental arrangements for a faculty member's home in Minneapolis, but the journalism professor landlord and his wife reneged at the last minute.⁵⁶⁰ However, with Jean's offer of a professorship from the university, Jeannette could move out of the 1 ½ room apartment and out of the rental market altogether. For the first time since returning to the United States in 1926, Jeannette put down permanent roots with the purchase of the property located at 1445 East River Road, in Minneapolis.⁵⁶¹ Just as importantly, 17-year-old John, 13-year-old Paul, and 11-year-old Donald had a home of their own, no longer shuffling between boarding schools, relatives, and summer camps.⁵⁶² Like most

⁵⁵⁸ Letter dated April 17, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject File: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁵⁹ Letter dated October 11, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁶⁰ See letter dated April 26, 1937, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated early June 1937, Folder 6, Box I: 44, General Correspondence: Letters Received May-June 1937, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁶¹ See letter dated June 22, 1937, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers. The house has remained in the family since its purchase, and in December 2005, the author toured the home courtesy of Donald and Wilma Piccard, the current occupants.

⁵⁶² See pp 2-4, Don and Wilma Piccard, Paul and Betty Piccard, and John and Mary Ann Piccard interview conducted at the Space Center in Alamogordo, New Mexico, October 17, 1998, copy in author's possession.

new homeowners, Jeannette made changes and necessary repairs to her new dwelling,⁵⁶³ and in late October she held an open house to welcome her friends and colleagues.⁵⁶⁴

In addition, the River Road abode allowed Jeannette to continue a Sunday evening tradition, albeit with roomier accommodations. Son Paul recalled that “for several years in the late 1930s and into the war years my parents hosted an open house every Sunday evening when they were home. Guests would be invited only once and thereafter would come whenever they wanted to if the blue front door light was on. We boys often had our friends there. I think one of the primary motivations for the...custom was so that my parents would know what the boys were doing that last night of the weekend. The menu centered on hot dogs, often roasted in the fire place. Guests were shown once where the food was and were expected to serve themselves.”⁵⁶⁵

In some ways Jeannette’s life did not change with Jean’s faculty appointment and the subsequent permanent move to Minneapolis. She continued with the speaking engagements to various groups and clubs,⁵⁶⁶ her role as academic wife,⁵⁶⁷ and her role as mother to three growing boys. And both Jean and Jeannette continued pursuing their goal of another stratospheric flight.⁵⁶⁸ However, the purchase of the “Faculty Row” property,

⁵⁶³ See letter dated September 6, 1937, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated October 17, 1937, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁶⁴ See letter dated November 22, 1937, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁶⁵ Paul Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s bio-8,” personal email to author, January 4, 2006.

⁵⁶⁶ See letter dated November 26, 1936, Folder 4, Box I: 44, General Correspondence: Letters Received July-December 1936, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated June 3, 1937, Folder 6, Box I: 44, General Correspondence: Letters Received May-June 1937, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁶⁷ Due to anti-nepotism policies, Jeannette never received a university appointment; however, she worked closely with Jean and his students. See letter dated January 21, 1946, Folder 6, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁶⁸ See letter dated April 3, 1937, Folder 6, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester “Nan” Hempstead, 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

and the stability it provided for the family, was just one of many Twin Cities' transitions for Jeannette.

Finding Her Moral Voice

Jeannette's celebrity status after the stratospheric flight provided numerous opportunities to speak before diverse groups; however, it appears to have also given her an element of caché with opinions on moral issues. Jeannette was contacted by the United Brewers Industrial Foundation as part of their "effort to secure the opinions of representative men and women on what the public expect[ed] of the relegalized brewing industry."⁵⁶⁹ In response to the inquiry, Jeannette melodramatically wrote, "I am afraid I am a poor person for you to address. The smell and the taste of beer are indelibly connected, in my mind and emotional life, with the stench of stale beer emanating [sic] from cheap beer parlors from which tip[s]ey and noisy sailors burst forth to alarm young girls by their mere presence." It is unknown whether Jeannette ever experienced what she described; however, she acknowledged to the foundation that she "provid[ed] beer for [her] guests who desire[d] to drink it..." She "approve[d] of the foundation's statement with regard to moderation...[yet she believed that] no alcohol at all [was] still better and [was] the ideal toward which we should strive, although it [was] not attainable." Jeannette did not "presume" the publishing of her letter; nevertheless, she requested the foundation "send [her any] part [for her] 'O.K.' before publishing [because] certain sentences separated from others may be misinterpreted."⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁹ Letter dated September 3, 1937, Folder 7, Box I: 44, General Correspondence: Letters Received September-December 1937, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁷⁰ Letter dated September 30, 1937, Folder 3, Box I: 55, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1937-1939, Piccard Family Papers.

Hugh Harley, of the New York-based foundation, was “appreciative” of Jeannette’s thoughts and concerns, and wanted her to be “one of the first to receive a copy” of the foundation’s “recently adopted Code of Practice.”⁵⁷¹ Jeannette challenged Harley about the commitment of retailers of the product, since the code only addressed the practices of wholesalers, and inquired as to which brewers were participating. Attempting to assuage her concerns, Harley stated the foundation was “hope[ful] that there [would] soon be a strong retailer’s code,” and that brewers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, had recently “publicly aligned themselves in the Ministerial Association in a public effort to clean up improper conditions in the distribution of their product.” Harley believed the retailers would soon “follow in line with the movement.”⁵⁷²

Driven by her concern for children’s lives, a decade later, Jeannette again challenged the ramifications of liquor on American society, feeling compelled to write the editor of Life Magazine regarding an article on juvenile delinquency.⁵⁷³ Jeannette argued that “psychiatric direction should be available for those who need and want it.” She also took this letter-writing opportunity to include several articles about “liquor advertising...and the tragedies which drunkenness [could] effect.”⁵⁷⁴

Marion L. Harward, on behalf of the magazine’s editors, “assured” Jeannette that Life Magazine “deplore[d] the tragedies [created by drunkenness]...,” but did not believe that

⁵⁷¹ Letter dated November 19, 1937, Folder 7, Box I: 44, General Correspondence: Letters Received September-December 1937, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁷² Letter dated November 27, 1937, Folder 7, Box I: 44, General Correspondence: Letters Received September-December 1937, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁷³ See Paul J. Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: just saying hi,” personal email to author, February 4, 2006. Jean and Jeannette were introduced to Minnesota island life during summer 1939. See letter dated June 17, 1939, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁷⁴ Letter dated May 17, 1946, Folder 1, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

the “elimination of liquor advertising” would be the solution. In fact, Harward argued the elimination of liquor advertising would “deprive the established liquor concerns of one of their best weapons against the unscrupulous dealings and corruption of the Prohibition era.” “We feel that,” Harward continued, “since the liquor business has been legalized, it is better that its operation be in the hands of reputable companies, and that allowing some of its advertising in our publications serves to keep the business openly, honestly and fairly before the public’s eye.”⁵⁷⁵

Harward concluded the correspondence to Jeannette, stating, “TIME Inc’s publications are read by millions of Americans each week, and only a very few have written to censure LIFE for publishing liquor advertising...[P]erhaps for society as a whole there is no greater nor more practicable wisdom in this matter than the Christian doctrine of moderation.”⁵⁷⁶ There is no evidence Jeannette continued this particular moral crusade.

Graduate School and the Pre-War Years

Prior to her taking on alcohol industry advertising, Jeannette began another Minneapolis transition that profoundly changed her life. Hoping one day to be employed as an “educational administrator, in fall 1936, forty-one-year-old Jeannette registered in the University of Minnesota graduate school to pursue a doctoral degree in education.⁵⁷⁷ She wrote her mother, “I laughed and laughed when I got your last letter because it was

⁵⁷⁵ Letter dated May 17, 1946, Folder 1, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁷⁶ Letter dated May 17, 1946, Folder 1, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁷⁷ See letter dated September 22, 1937, Folder 3, Box I: 55, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1937-1939, Piccard Family Papers.

the day I...registered...[for school]...I am carrying nine hours work in addition to my other duties as Jean's assistant, housekeeper, wife and mother. So...the idea of having a little less to do was just too funny, as you can imagine." But she assured her mother she was "having a grand time." Jeannette explained to her mother that she had classes three days a week and attended Jean's Stratosphere class on the other three days, with only Sunday free from the classroom.⁵⁷⁸ Several days later, Jeannette lamented to her "Darling Mumsie" that she "continue[d] to be very busy...[Perhaps] it is in punishment for my sins that I have been foolish enough to take on this extra study but I am enjoying it very much. I find it interesting and hope I can go places."⁵⁷⁹ However, seven months after beginning her studies, Jeannette confided to her sister Nan, "[I] hope someday to pick off an advanced degree and get a job so that we will have two salaries instead of one."⁵⁸⁰ For the next five and a half years, graduate school commitments and spousal and parental responsibilities often conflicted, but the onus was on Jeannette to find the proper balance. Sometimes she could; other times she could not.⁵⁸¹

An obvious question is why Jeannette pursued a doctorate in education, rather than chemistry, her previous area of study at the University of Chicago. One reason was certainly pragmatic, with Jeannette telling her mother, "So much has developed in Chemistry since I did any that I've practically got to start over which means a lot of

⁵⁷⁸ Letter dated October 8, 1936, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁷⁹ Letter dated October 14, 1936, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁸⁰ Letter dated April 3, 1937, Folder 6, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester "Nan" Hempstead 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁸¹ See letter dated October 23, 1936, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated November 24, 1936, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

work...”⁵⁸² Secondly, it appears that Jeannette’s interests had changed. Although still working closely with Jean on the development of the multi-balloon flight, Jeannette told her mother of needing to “read up on and take an exam in elementary education as that course is a preliminary or rather a prerequisite for most of the courses that I really want to take.”⁵⁸³ Thirdly, Jeannette’s choice, whether consciously or unconsciously, reflected the overall trend during the 1930s of women pursuing doctorates in education rather than in science. Historian Margaret W. Rossiter posits that based on the National Academy of Sciences National Research Council (NRC) data, “...women who had earlier earned doctorates in science and then faced the uncertain job prospects there...might have turned...to the schools of education...and more promising careers in the highly feminized world of professional ‘education.’”⁵⁸⁴ Whatever Jeannette’s rationale may have been, she was now a full-time doctoral student in education at the University of Minnesota. And like most graduate students, and perhaps due to her other responsibilities, she looked for ways to circumvent the bureaucratic process and requirements.

At the beginning of her second year of study, Jeannette petitioned the University of Minnesota Graduate School and “respectfully requested” that she be “exempt” from the part of the preliminary examination for her doctorate which “cover[ed her] minor field.” Jeannette suggested that her successful completion of the Masters of Science in

⁵⁸² Letter dated January 4, 1937, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁸³ Letter dated January 4, 1937, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette’s interest in education surfaced in 1930 when she inquired of the county school superintendent in Morristown, New Jersey, of the possibility of home-schooling her son John. See letter dated April 4, 1930, Folder 4, Box I: 27, Personal Correspondence: Letters Received 1927-1934, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁸⁴ Margaret W. Rossiter, Women Scientists in America: Volume One, Struggles and Strategies to 1940 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982) p. 131. See Chapter Three, footnotes 117-120.

Chemistry at the University of Chicago should “[stand] in lieu of the [required] preliminary examination for the doctor’s degree.”⁵⁸⁵ In late November 1937, Jeannette received notification that the Physical Science Group Committee of the Graduate School had “rejected [her] petition...because in their opinion ‘this part of the requirements for the Ph.D. [was] so important that [they] should not accept any certification from an outside source in lieu of an examination given by the appropriate department of [their] faculty.’”⁵⁸⁶ So as she did in 1913 when faced with the Bryn Mawr entrance examinations, Jeannette put in the necessary effort to successfully pass the university’s requirements. She continued taking the required education classes, earning As and Bs, and began auditing chemistry courses in preparation for her preliminary doctoral examination.⁵⁸⁷

Early in 1938, Jeannette conveyed to her mother “cheerful” news that she was “maybe going to get a part time job that [would] bring...in about \$50.-- (less not more) a month.” Jeannette was frustrated that due to her academic responsibilities and challenged economic situation, she and “Mumsie” had not been able to spend time together. She assured her mother that if the job materialized, the money, “or at least most of it,” would be saved so that a trip East might occur in the fall. But Jeannette was also pragmatic, telling her mother “we’ll have to wait and see.”⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁵ Form letter dated September 29, 1937, Folder 7, Box I: 44, General Correspondence: Letters Received September-December 1937, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁸⁶ Letter dated November 23, 1937, Folder 4, Box 5, University of Minnesota Correspondence 1935-1942, Jean Felix Piccard Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

⁵⁸⁷ University of Minnesota, Graduate School transcript, Folder 5, Box I: 84, Biographical Material: Jeannette 1922-1958, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁸⁸ Letter dated February 28, 1938, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

Jeannette's employment opportunity did come to fruition, and she began working for the National Youth Administration (NYA).⁵⁸⁹ She confided to her sister Hester that the position's title "'Director of Education' [was] a joke but the [part-time] work [was] interesting." Jeannette's responsibilities included "testing and interviewing young people and trying to help them coordinate their N.Y.A. work, their spare time work, their school work, etc. to make them independent people capable [sic] of private employment."⁵⁹⁰

Jeannette appeared to find the NYA work rewarding;⁵⁹¹ however, she only remained employed with the NYA for several months, and she never confided to her sister or her mother the reason for the abrupt termination.⁵⁹² In April, Jeannette wrote Hester, "Jean is going to be at Brigham Young University for the first half of the Summer quarter. The boys and I had planned to go out with him but now that I have this N.Y.A. work we will probably let him go alone and we will just stay on at home."⁵⁹³ In May, Jeannette wrote "Darling Mumsie" that she was "planning to keep on with [her] job [with the NYA] all Summer and register for one course the second half of Summer quarter...and get down to work" on her research project.⁵⁹⁴ Three weeks later Jeannette informed her mother that she had "given up [her] job with the National Youth Administration and [she was] going

⁵⁸⁹ Established in June 1935, the National Youth Administration was a subsidiary of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and offered employment opportunities to both men and women. See T.H. Watkins, The Hungry Years: A Narrative History of the Great Depression in America (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999), pp. 267-271.

⁵⁹⁰ Letter dated April 3, 1938, Folder 6, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester "Nan" Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁹¹ See letter dated May 15, 1938, Folder 8, Box I: 20, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to John Robert Ridlon 1927-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁹² See December 19, 1944, Application for Federal Employment, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁹³ Letter dated April 3, 1938, Folder 6, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester "Nan" Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁹⁴ Letter dated May 15, 1938, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

to Utah with Jean.”⁵⁹⁵ Within days Jeannette wrote her mother that the NYA job had “sort of [fallen] through” and she had “decided [to] accompany Jean and the boys...”⁵⁹⁶

However, Jeannette and the National Youth Administration parting ways, and her accompanying Jean to Provo, Utah, proved auspicious. In a letter to “Darling Mumsie,” filled with descriptions of her brood’s comings and goings, the stratosphere lectures given to “attentive” audiences, and the malady of “charley-horse[s]...from playing too much tennis,” Jeannette nonchalantly described one of their side trips to Salt Lake City, Utah, where they “called on the Bishop” she met the previous fall in St. Paul, Minnesota. During their visit, arrangements were made for the bishop to come to Provo and join Jeannette, Jean and the local priest for a meal at the rector’s house.⁵⁹⁷

Whether Jeannette intimated to the bishop her lifelong desire to be a priest is not known, but shortly upon their return to Provo, Jeannette received an amazing request from her local priest: he asked Jeannette to preach.⁵⁹⁸ In 1938, Episcopal women were excluded from serving on vestries⁵⁹⁹ and participating with full political rights in parish and diocesan meetings;⁶⁰⁰ therefore, asking a woman to preach was incredible. But the priest indicated the bishop had given his approval, and so Jeannette agreed to his request.

“I am to preach on Sunday, July 10th,” she told her mother. “Isn’t that awful! When Jean

⁵⁹⁵ Letter dated June 6, 1938, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁹⁶ Letter dated June 15, 1938, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁹⁷ Letter dated June 23, 1938, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁹⁸ Letter dated June 23, 1938, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁵⁹⁹ A vestry is the local Episcopal Church’s governing board and consists of lay leaders from the congregation. “Episcopal Things: A guide for non-Episcopalians to many of the terms and phrases in use around Sewanee,” n.d., <http://smith2.sewanee.edu/glossary/Glossary--Episcopal.html>.

⁶⁰⁰ Mary Sudman Donovan, *A Different Call: Women’s Ministries in the Episcopal Church 1850-1920* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1986), p. 173.

came home and I told him, his face got as red as I felt. Positively, I am overwhelmed. It just seems to[o] dreadful even if it is a tiny mission parish.”⁶⁰¹

There is no evidence clarifying why Jeannette was asked to preach, nor is there any indication as to what she said on that Sunday morning, but Jean was not the only male Piccard to “turn red” with the news of Jeannette’s preaching. “It was a mystery to me and something of an embarrassment,” Jeannette’s son Paul recalled years later. For the then 14-year-old, his conviction was that “women certainly didn’t belong in the pulpit (I’d never seen a woman in the pulpit so that was sufficient proof.) I was disturbed because she spoke in a different voice.”⁶⁰² Although Paul did not explain what he meant by “a different voice,” the author believes for the 14-year-old boy it was disconcerting to see a woman, let alone his “Victorian” mother, standing in the church pulpit delivering the Sunday sermon.

The Piccard men may have been embarrassed with Jeannette’s role in the pulpit; nevertheless they were proud enough to talk about it to church members upon their return to Minneapolis. Jeannette informed her mother that a “funny sequel [was] developing [as to her] sermon...” “The family broadcast[ed] it for me,” Jeannette reported, “[telling members of the Provo sermon] and so last week when the vestry of St. Paul’s met to plan their ‘every member canvass’ and try to get some extra money out of the parish for an

⁶⁰¹ Letter dated June 23, 1938, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers. A mission church is “a local Episcopal congregation that has not yet attained the status of a church with a full-time priest...[and] usually...does not have the full complement of daily or weekly services.” See “Episcopal Things: A guide for non-Episcopalians to many of the terms and phrases in use around Sewanee,” n.d., <http://smith2.sewanee.edu/glossary/Glossary--Episcopal.html>.

⁶⁰² Paul J. Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s bio-3,” personal email to author, November 3, 2005. On several occasions the author asked for further explanation and understanding of Paul’s statement: “she spoke in a different voice.” Unfortunately, the issue was not addressed prior to his passing in February 2006.

assistant, they voted to have me address the congregation at both the 7:30 and 11:00 o'clock services."⁶⁰³

Days after Jeannette's Provo sermon, Jean's responsibilities to Brigham Young University were finished, and the family "drove as fast as [they] could for home," due to Jeannette's class commitments.⁶⁰⁴ Although Jeannette returned to the life of a college student, Jean and the boys did not have such responsibilities, and so father and sons took advantage of the waning summer days. One of the final hurrahs was a manly camping trip, and Jeannette refused to have any role in the planning and implementation of this adventure.⁶⁰⁵

In many ways the 1938/1939 academic year was a time of normalcy for the Piccard family. In the fall, Jeannette continued her coursework and Jean returned to his work in the classroom and laboratory.⁶⁰⁶ And for the first time, son John joined his parents in their walk to the university, having been admitted in the freshman class.⁶⁰⁷ Just before the holidays, Jeannette passed the dreaded, but necessary, preliminary examinations for her doctoral degree, telling "Dearest Mumsie," she "did very badly." Jeannette lamented it was a "tough three hours but they passed me and they said they had passed people who were worse than I was. It is unbelievable but there it is." She explained to her mother she

⁶⁰³ Letter dated September 19, 1938, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette delivered a well-developed talk to her fellow congregants, encouraging generous giving in order to hire an assistant for their priest, Father Wrinch.

⁶⁰⁴ Letter dated August 21, 1938, Folder 3, Box I: 20, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hugh O.T. Ridlon, 1931-1966, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁰⁵ See letter dated August 10, 1938, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁰⁶ See letter dated July 22, 1939, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁰⁷ See letter dated September 19, 1938, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

had to take “a couple of courses in sociology which [were] going to cramp [her] style during the Winter quarter and then a course in the Spring quarter which [would] probably keep [her] from going to [the Bryn Mawr] reunion.” “But that may be just as well anyway,” she concluded.⁶⁰⁸

At the end of the school year, Jeannette met with her doctoral committee to discuss the dissertation topic. “I am going to have an interview,” she told her mother, “with Professor Neale and Dr. Diehl...Diehl is head of a committee appointed by the [university] president to investigate student housing and we hope that his committee will print my survey questionnaire for me. It will be swell if they do because then not only the expense will be taken care of but besides there can never be any question as to whether the work has been accepted or not.”⁶⁰⁹ Although the research topic addressing student housing was settled, the additional classes would delay Jeannette’s completion of the doctoral requirements and the dissertation at least until the following academic year.

However, adding to Jeannette’s concerns was her mother’s health. During an extended stay with her daughter,⁶¹⁰ Emily suffered her third stroke, and though it was mild and recovery was assured, once again responsibility for an aging parent rested on Jeannette’s shoulders. When Jeannette sent to brothers Bob, Noel and Hugh, and sisters Hester and Peggy, “Health Bulletin No. 2” explaining the condition and circumstances of their

⁶⁰⁸ Letter dated December 7, 1938, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁰⁹ Letter dated July 22, 1939, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶¹⁰ During September 1938, the east coast suffered a catastrophic storm, and Emily’s home in Newport, RI, suffered extensive damage. See letter dated September 28, 1938, Folder 2, Box I: 21, Sibling Correspondence: Margaret “Peggy” (sister) and Dirk Van Ingen (brother-in-law) to Jean and Jeannette 1920-1950, Piccard Family Papers.

seventy-nine-year-old mother, only Peggy responded with an offer of assistance.⁶¹¹

Throughout summer 1939, Jeannette kept one eye on her mother and another on the rapidly changing developments across the Atlantic Ocean.

War Years: At Home and Abroad

“The danger of war seems to recede [sic],” Jean reported, telling Jeannette, “Nobody really wants war [but] it needs only one to want war to have it.” He cautioned his American wife that “there [was], of course, still danger to get war if some one dares the other to fight.” However, Jean was optimistic that war might be avoided because in “Italy and Germany the sympathy for the dictators [was] much weaker than one thought.”⁶¹²

Jean chose to spend the summer of 1939 alone in Europe visiting family and friends.

Having not been to Switzerland in a number of years, and perhaps due to the mischief making of several European leaders, he felt compelled to go home one more time.⁶¹³

Jeannette was not pleased with his individualism, believing that she and his “sons should have been with [him] this Summer...”⁶¹⁴ And when she learned that Jean was not taking advantage of professional opportunities, including not attending the air races with his brother Auguste, Jeannette admonished him saying, “You must not miss any chance to increase your value as a professor of aeronautics...[T]he least you can do is to make the

⁶¹¹ Letter dated March 14, 1939, Folder 6, Box I: 19, Sibling Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester “Nan” Hempstead 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers and Letter dated March 15, 1939, Folder 8, Box I: 22, Sibling Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Margaret and Dirk Van Ingen 1929-1944, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶¹² Letter dated July 11, 1939, Folder 5, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1936-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶¹³ Jean stayed with his brother Auguste and his wife Marianne at their home in Chexbres, Switzerland. Jean described it as a “mansion,” and believed that Auguste and Marianne “put all their money in [the home] because they did not trust any currency.” See letter dated July 16, 1939, Folder 5, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1936-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶¹⁴ Letter dated July 31, 1939, Folder 5, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1936-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

trip [to Europe] as advantageous to yourself as possible. What profits you, profits us.

What harms you, harms us. That is true and will remain true whether you like it or not.⁶¹⁵

With Jean in Europe, Jeannette and the boys had to be content with whatever summer activities they could devise,⁶¹⁶ and part of their plan was to spend as much time as possible on the island in northern Minnesota owned by their friends the MacLeans.⁶¹⁷

Despite being separated by thousands of miles, both husband and wife continued to offer pragmatic advice to each other. Jean was concerned about neglected newspapers left outside the River Road home when Jeannette and the boys were out gallivanting.⁶¹⁸

Jeannette's advice to Jean was more useful. In a letter detailing son Paul's swimming accident and loss of a front tooth, Jeannette described son John's most recent multiple balloon flight attempt. The weather conditions in Chippewa Falls, Minnesota, had been quite windy, which typically hindered preparations. However, a sufficient number of balloons were successfully filled allowing for "enough lift to take the parachute jumper off the ground but not enough to lift him quickly." Jeannette enthusiastically informed Jean what she observed at the aborted flight: "What interested me...was the fact that the balloons were safely inflated in a quite high wind on a plateau on the top of a hill where they had no protection at all. Only one balloon broke...Secondly we released [the

⁶¹⁵ Letter dated July 31, 1939, Folder 5, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1936-1940, Piccard Family Papers. Jean probably inadvertently struck a nerve when he informed Jeannette that "the children [there were] very good" and that he and his nephew Jacques "got along quite fine." See letter dated July 16, 1939, Folder 5, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1936-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶¹⁶ See letter dated June 13, 1939, Folder 3, Box I: 19, Family Correspondence: Jean/Jeanette to John/Emily Ridlon 1920-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶¹⁷ See letter dated July 16, 1939, Folder 5, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1936-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶¹⁸ See letter dated July 11, 1939, Folder 5, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1936-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

balloons] from the ends of the strings on the periphery of the inflation circle and none tore loose at the take-off...Do you see what that means? We could have a stratosphere flight and set it for a given date and time. If each balloon is weighed off, it wouldn't be necessary to weigh off the gondola. Therefore it wouldn't be necessary to have a place protected from the wind."⁶¹⁹ Although Jeannette was always trying to find ways to improve on the family enterprise, events unfolding in Europe soon overshadowed every other family activity.

In late August, Jeannette made "one more attempt" to reach Jean and tell him that his family loved him before he sailed for America. "The war news has been very bad for several days," she said, "and we all hang on the radio." Knowing Jean's brother and family would again experience great hardship if war broke out, Jeannette tried to remain optimistic: "Every day of grace gives us hope that peace will ultimately result." But Jeannette was realistic, closing with, "God keep you and all you love from harm. By His agony on the cross, may He keep you from agony of body, mind, and spirit."⁶²⁰

Still in Switzerland, Jean found himself caught in the turmoil as nations prepared for war. "It seems too insane to believe it," he wrote his wife, "but war is terrifically near."⁶²¹

"Here one listens to the radio, expecting hourly the mobilization of the Swiss Army."

Though Jeannette may have been perturbed at Jean for going to Europe alone, Jean was

⁶¹⁹ Letter dated August 3, 1939, Folder 5, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1936-1940, Piccard Family Papers. As a scientist and balloonist, Jeannette described to Jean the "gusty wind that rose frequently...to twelve or more miles/hour..." As a mother, Jeannette assured Jean that his son did "very well on the preparation of the flight [but] the only trouble was that he didn't have competent assistance." See Ibid.

⁶²⁰ Letter dated August 25, 1939, Folder 5, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1936-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶²¹ Letter dated August 27, 1939, Folder 5, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1936-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

“glad” that his wife and sons were “all in a safe country.”⁶²² He tried to reassure Jeannette saying, “Don’t worry for me. I am not more in danger than thousands of other U.S. citizens and I shall do my best to bring you your husband back in good conditions [sic]...” And as with Jeannette, he was realistic about the impending situation: “If we should never meet again, remember that we had twenty happy years and that we had in that time far more than average happiness, even compared with people married for longer years. Give my love to the boys. I shall always pray for them. I kiss you most cordially, your loving and faithful husband....”⁶²³

Jean was correct in his assessment of the nearness of war. Three days after his last letter to Jeannette, Adolph Hitler’s German army invaded Poland and once again many nations of the world were embroiled in a massive war. During the interim between Hitler’s invasion of Poland and Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor, Americans, including the Piccard family, continued their daily routines, but also kept a nervous watch on the political events at home and the war in Europe.

In spring 1940, Jeannette was facing the end of another academic year, and once again her “thesis [was] not getting done...” However, Jeannette informed her sister Peggy that its completion was still the goal, and she was going to “keep right on trying and eventually--eventually....,” she “hoped” to be finished.⁶²⁴ Jeannette’s stressful life was evident in a letter to Peggy. Although Jeannette adored her mother, Emily had spent the

⁶²² Letter dated August 28, 1939, Folder 5, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1936-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶²³ Letter dated August 27, 1939, Folder 5, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1936-1940, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶²⁴ Letter dated April 23, 1940, Folder 8, Box I: 22, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Margaret and Dirk Van Ingen, 1929-1944, Piccard Family Papers.

winter months at Jeannette's River Road home, during which time she had suffered a stroke. In April 1940, Jeannette wrote her sister, "Mother may give you the impression that she had 'such a happy winter'. Perhaps she may even eventually think so but---she has not written me since she left." Jeannette continued venting, stating, "[Mother] is of course punishing me for my neglect and lack of love. Isn't it funny? I'm the only one of her children who would take her into their home."⁶²⁵ Within a year, Jeannette was in Newport, Rhode Island, packing her mother's belongings and relocating her to Minneapolis.⁶²⁶

Jeannette updated her siblings on their mother's condition after the move and the first few days in Minneapolis. "My apologies for not having written immediately upon our arrival home," she began, but "I'll confess to having been a bit weary." However, Emily's perceived independence was putting an additional strain on Jeannette and her household. "Mother stood the trip very well," Jeannette informed her brothers and sisters, "but she fell again last night on her way to the toilet. She should have used the chair which I bought for her two years ago and which stood at the foot of her bed but she had to have a bowel movement and didn't want to. Just as she got to the bathroom she went down."⁶²⁷

As might be expected with multiple siblings involved, decisions about Emily's home in Newport and her care in Minneapolis were issues of tension and concern. Youngest

⁶²⁵ Letter dated April 23, 1940, Folder 8, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Margaret and Dirk Van Ingen 1929-1944, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶²⁶ See letter dated January 2, 1941, Folder 6, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester "Nan" Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶²⁷ Letter dated January 13, 1941, Folder 6, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester "Nan" Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

daughter Jeannette had taken the lead with her mother's affairs, telling brother Noel that the Newport property most likely would rent for a hundred dollars a month or sell for \$15,000.⁶²⁸ However, a more pressing financial concern was Emily's care. "I am facing a problem," Jeannette confessed, "[Mother] cannot be left alone. I cannot leave her with the boys because nothing would bring her to the point of asking one of the boys to take her to the toilet, lift her gown, etc. She is quite incapable except on her better days, of washing herself." Although Emily was fine mentally, she had extreme physical weakness and "her muscles [were] just not able to carry all that bulk." Jeannette confronted her siblings with the fact that she needed to "hire a visiting nurse to wash her...three times a week at \$1.10 for the first hour and 2 ½ cents every succeeding half hour. [And in addition] whenever [Jeannette went] out, for a lunch, a dinner, an evening meeting, a conference with [her] thesis advisor, for anything, [she had to] hire a girl or woman to stay with [their Mother]." Therefore, Jeannette told her siblings "part of [their Mother's] income must go for the nursing care..." She also pointed out the fact that financially Jean was "carrying a good deal with her food and shelter and laundry and incidental daily care." Jeannette bluntly counseled that "unless the [R.I.] house rents we will have to choose between paying her bills, paying the taxes, or selling her few remaining securities. After that...comes a mortgage, or a sacrifice sale of house and contents." Jeannette assured them that "we'll put off that evil day, however, as long as possible."⁶²⁹

⁶²⁸ Letter dated January 13, 1941, Folder 6, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester "Nan" Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶²⁹ Letter dated January 13, 1941, Folder 6, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester "Nan" Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers. The January 13 letter was addressed to all of Jeannette's brothers and sisters except Hugh. Once again Hugh was struggling emotionally and financially and the relationships with his siblings were challenged, at best. See Ibid.

Jeannette received pushback from her brothers and sisters about the financial arrangements, and six months later tried again to explain and justify her actions: “I would like to make it clear and convincing that [Jean and I] would care for Mother just as we are doing if she didn’t have a cent of money or a stick or stone of real property.” Jeannette explained her Mother’s “financial situation would not and will not alter our love or care of her, [and] as long as we ourselves have anything she is not only welcome to share it – we are glad that we have the privilege of keeping her from want and suffering.” However, Jeannette had “recently learned” that there was a “‘presumption in law’ that, unless claim [was] made during the life of the relative, the care which [was] taken of a relative [was] done out of love...Otherwise no claim [could] be made against the estate.”⁶³⁰

Throughout most of the 1930s, Jeannette had lived without a stable source of income, and financial issues, in general, were always difficult subjects for the Ridlon family to discuss; therefore, it is not surprising that their Mother’s care and financial concerns would be a subject of brisk family dialogue. But Jeannette had more than just the immediate care of her Mother in mind when she presented her siblings with the reimbursement issue. “In justice to [Jean],” she wrote, “who retires without pension in ten or eleven years and who has a life expectancy of twenty-five or thirty years, and in justice to my sons and their prospective families who may in turn have to care for us, in justice to them I must claim, not from Mother but from her estate, repayment for the expenses to

⁶³⁰ Letter dated July 21, 1941, Folder 6, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester “Nan” Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

which we have and will be put for her sake.”⁶³¹ Emily Ridlon’s health condition and care were an integral component of Jeannette’s life for the next several months; however, it was coupled with the family’s involvement in the world conflagration when America formally entered the war.

Doctorate and Discrimination

On March 19, 1942, after six years of juggling family responsibilities with stratospheric work and scholarly research, Jeannette was granted the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Minnesota.⁶³² And immediately, the forty-seven-year-old began seeking employment in the robust wartime economy. Hoping to take advantage of the economic upturn, Jeannette became a “counselor” with Beauty Counselors, Inc., a purveyor of “sensible skin care.” In the company’s welcoming letter, Jeannette was encouraged to “visualize” her “Beauty Counselor work as a business of [her] own,...giving it definite hours each day, setting an earning aim...for the week...and making the necessary calls to meet that aim...” The company suggested “at least a minimum goal of \$15.00 weekly,” which translated into making approximately fifteen calls. Jeannette was assured that the company wanted to “help” her “become successful.” And to do so, according to the company, her ultimate goal should be to have “at least 300

⁶³¹ Letter dated July 21, 1941, Folder 6, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester “Nan” Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶³² Copy of University of Minnesota, Graduate School transcript, Folder 5, Box I: 84, Biographical Material: Jeannette 1922-1958, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette’s dissertation was “The Housing of Married Graduate Students at the University of Minnesota, Fall Quarter 1939-1940.” See Folder 6, Box I: 77, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard, “The Housing of Married Students at the University of Minnesota, Fall Quarter, 1939-1940,” Ph.D. thesis, 1942, Piccard Family Papers.

satisfied Beauty Counselor clients who buy...year after year, and [provide]...a steady income through the years to come.”⁶³³

It is unknown how long Jeannette peddled the beauty products, but it was another occasion for her to be concerned about a company’s unauthorized use of her public image. However, the regional manager assured Jeannette that her “name [would] not be used by Beauty Counselors, Inc. in any publication, radio broadcast or any public advertising with out [her] knowledge or consent.”⁶³⁴ Although counseling women about skin care might prove financially lucrative, Jeannette’s ultimate employment goal was not in selling beauty products; she wanted to be an essential cog in America’s war effort. Jeannette exhausted all channels trying to make it happen; however, there were limitations, albeit some unavoidable. But other limitations were bureaucratically-induced and discriminatory.

Jeannette completed applications with the United States Civil Service Commission⁶³⁵ and the Office of Price Administration (O.P.A.).⁶³⁶ However, her letter to the O.P.A. Regional Rent Officer in Chicago exposed a fact of her life that could not be changed. In the letter to Benjamin Baltzer, Jeannette reiterated her academic accomplishments,

⁶³³ Letter dated January 26, 1942, Folder 1, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶³⁴ Undated handwritten note from Mrs. Pundt, Regional Manager, Folder 1, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶³⁵ Jeannette’s United States Civil Service Commission examination rating for “Principal Personnel Clerk” was marked “eligible.” See memo attached to Form 4006-D Rating Card, May 1941, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶³⁶ Starting in April 1940, the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply (OPA) oversaw the regulation and rationing of civilian commodity purchases including tires, gasoline, sugar, and oil. The federal agency’s slogan, “Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without,” reflected the attempt to keep inflation from spiraling out of control. According to historian Susan Hartmann, “the government succeeded in curtailing the rise in prices to 29 percent between 1939 and 1945, and most of that increase came before the [OPA] issued a general freeze in 1943.” See Susan M. Hartmann, The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), p. 3.

including her doctoral work in housing issues; the scientific and record-breaking stratospheric flight; and the tremendous public exposure and confidence garnered from innumerable stratospheric speaking events. Jeannette confirmed her employment goal to “work in personnel such as counseling and guidance or placement work.” She told Baltzer of the meeting with E. G. Jennings, head of the O.P.A. Minneapolis office legal department, and “whose wife is a friend...” and Jennings “immediate thought of [Jeannette] in connection with the Housing or Rent Control aspect of the O.P.A...” Jeannette closed the Baltzer letter expressing her “eager[ness] to get into some useful work,” but also expressed the reality of her double burden: “[I] must restrict myself geographically to the general area of the Twin Cities because I am a married woman having a household in which I am expected to appear from time to time. I can, of course, travel about the district as long as I headquarter in Minneapolis or St. Paul.”⁶³⁷

Baltzer thanked Jeannette for her letter, and though it “appear[ed]...quite evident from [her] letter that [Jeannette’s] educational qualifications and travel experience [had] given [her] an unusual grasp of human relationship problems,” Baltzer believed it would “probably be a little difficult to fit those experiences into the requirements of rent examiner or supervising rent appraiser.”⁶³⁸ Jeannette graciously accepted Baltzer’s response, agreeing that “perhaps...it [would] be difficult to fit [her] experiences into the requirements of the positions which [he] may have in mind.” But she was not going to

⁶³⁷ Letter dated July 17, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. Twenty-two-year-old John was a Second Lt. in the U.S. Ordnance Reserve on active duty; 18-year-old Paul was a sophomore at the University of Minnesota, and 16-year-old Donald was a senior in high school. See Ibid.

⁶³⁸ Letter dated July 31, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

accept his subtle rejection without the final word: “But there is one promising feature about my various experiences. They seem to show a capacity for making difficult adjustments. I know I feel a thrill of heightened interest whenever I am faced with new and difficult problems.”⁶³⁹

Not to be deterred by an O.P.A. administrator, Jeannette set her sights higher. Hearing that the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)⁶⁴⁰ Officer’s Training School was going to have a “Dean of Women,” Jeannette told her sister Peggy, “I’d like that job...[and did Peggy’s husband] Dirk [have] any ideas how [she] might go about getting it?”⁶⁴¹ In addition Jeannette sent a letter to the United States Army and War Department outlining the “creation of a Women’s Reserve Officers Training Corps.”⁶⁴² “At this time when women are making applications for Officer Candidacy in the [WAAC],” Jeannette began, “it has occurred to me that the Universities and Colleges of the country could furnish a fertile source of officer material for the W.A.A.C., just as they do for the officers of the regular army. Therefore, I should like to propose...that the R.O.T.C. [Reserve Officer Training Corps] in the Universities and Colleges be extended to include the training of women.” Jeannette’s rationale for the seven-point proposal was forward-thinking: “If the young women of college age (18-22 years) receive officer training

⁶³⁹ Letter dated August 4, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁴⁰ In Spring 1941, U.S. Representative Edith Nourse Rogers (R-MA) introduced legislation acceptable to the War Department and the army establishing the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). According to Hartmann, the army “justified” the WAAC to help with the “manpower” situation; employing women would “release men from non-combat duties,” but military officials “insisted that the women’s corps not be part of the army.” See Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, pp. 34-37.

⁶⁴¹ Letter dated June 15, 1942, Folder 6, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester “Nan” Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁴² Letter dated May 29, 1942, Folder 3, Box I: 56, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1940-1945, Piccard Family Papers.

throughout their college course, they will be ready upon graduation to enter into active service. Thus they will provide officers which will be urgently needed if the war lasts several years or, if a quick victory is obtained, they will form a strong reserve officers [sic] corps for future needs.” With self-deprecation, Jeannette concluded the first point with, “You know better than any civilian can possibly know, the value and importance at this time of the officers’ training instituted during the last war. Hence you can judge the value and importance, which I can only envisage, for future generations of instituting now, while interest and public opinion are aroused, a system of reserve officer training for women.”⁶⁴³

Jeannette noted that the WAAC was “interested in enlisting women who [were] qualified to ‘train, supervise, discipline, and command’ women soldiers...” in different fields, and then systematically noted which university departments could train the requested personnel. “It becomes evident...,” she continued, “that the University of Minnesota furnishes an unusually fertile field for the institution of a Women’s Army Auxiliary Reserve Officers Training School.”⁶⁴⁴

There was a “further” type of officer training Jeannette wanted to see “instituted at the University of Minnesota....and one not necessarily...restricted to women...[The] field of Balloon Barrage.” Jeannette explained to King that this type of training was “particularly apt at the University of Minnesota as fundamentally it forms a branch of anti-aircraft work, already a part of the Coast Artillery instruction being given in the R.O.T.C...” Jeannette noted the “large department of Aeronautical Engineering...and the presence on

⁶⁴³ Letter dated May 29, 1942, Folder 3, Box I: 56, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1940-1945, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid.

the University staff of Professor Jean Piccard who, in addition to his engineering work in connection with stratosphere exploration, has had observation balloon training with the Swiss Army, [which] further point[s] to the advantage of placing a balloon barrage training corps at the university...” “My own part,” Jeannette continued, “as pilot of the Piccard Stratosphere Flight of 1934, shows that women can be trained for work in this line formerly attempted only by men. I am not a member of the University staff but I know the Department of Aeronautical Engineering well enough to be confident that the Army will have its full cooperation should a barrage balloon unit be formed for training here.”⁶⁴⁵

Jeannette acknowledge she had not “discussed the [women’s ROTC] matter either with any University officials or students, [but was] confident...the Army [would] find the students responsive when the proposition [was] put before them.” Jeannette was also “confident that the University of Minnesota authorities, as well as those of other leading Universities [sic] and Colleges, [sic] [could] be readily brought to wholehearted cooperation.”⁶⁴⁶

Jeannette hoped Colonel King would give “immediate” attention to the problem, and with clearing through appropriate channels the women’s program could begin in fall 1942. “Even if it were not directly advantageous from a strictly military point of view,” Jeannette counseled King, “there are many reasons why such a school should be opened

⁶⁴⁵ See Ibid. The Department of Aeronautical Engineering was “going full tilt” with war work; Jean was working “all summer...and teaching a large group of young Ensigns,” in addition to his “research work for the government...” See letter dated August 22, 1942, Folder 3, Box I: 20, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hugh O. T. Ridlon 1931-1966, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁴⁶ Letter dated May 29, 1942, Folder 3, Box I: 56, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1940-1945, Piccard Family Papers.

as soon as possible. Among these is the fact that it will be of great value from a morale point of view, rousing in women a sense of individual responsibility, usefulness, and unity with the nation and the men of the nation.”⁶⁴⁷ Jeannette thanked the colonel for his “active consideration,” acknowledging that it “may be foolish...to suggest a new line of endeavor at a busy time like the present.” “But it has been my experience,” Jeannette concluded, “that the busiest people in the world are always the ones who are both willing and able to take on further work and carry it to successful completion. Therefore, I respectfully submit the foregoing suggestions relative to forming a Women’s Reserve Officers Training Corps...”⁶⁴⁸

Unfortunately, Jeannette’s proposal languished in bureaucracy. In August, University President Walter C. Coffey wrote Colonel King expressing his regret that Jeannette’s letter had been “overlooked,” believing Jeannette’s letter expressed “many excellent ideas.” Though Coffey acknowledged “the Army [had] already gone rather far in its thinking relative to the place women may and perhaps must occupy in the war effort,” he encouraged King to “forward [Jeannette’s letter] to the War Department [as it] might offer some suggestions which ha[d] not yet been taken fully into consideration.”⁶⁴⁹

King submitted Jeannette’s proposal through military channels, and on August 24, received the following reply from the Army Reserve headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska: “In view of the forthcoming completion of the training of the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps Officers’ group, and the intent of the War Department to acquire additional

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁹ Letter dated August 5, 1942, Folder 1, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

officers from the ranks of that Corps, it is not deemed advisable at this time to take any action on the suggestion of Mrs. Piccard to establish a Women's ROTC in Universities and Colleges. By command of Major General UHL: W.A.Erwin, Captain, Infantry, Actg Asst Adjutant General."⁶⁵⁰

With the women's ROTC proposal grounded by the army, Jeannette attempted to launch her career with another arm of the military. "I have been following with much interest the development of the 'Waves'⁶⁵¹ [sic]," she wrote Commander Mildred McAfee, "and would like to offer to the Navy, through you, my services in any capacity in which you might deem me useful."⁶⁵² Jeannette explained to McAfee her "qualifications," including the academic degrees, stressing that she went from "Bryn Mawr to the University of Chicago to complete [her] training in chemistry in order to replace a man for the front in the last war;" however, the war was over before her "services could have become valuable." After briefly noting her marriage to Jean and the current status of her three sons, Jeannette stated, "the following data will show that, though I am not a young woman, I have not simply vegetated during the past twenty-three years as a housewife."⁶⁵³

Jeannette proceeded to discuss, in fair detail, the 1934 stratospheric flight, including becoming a licensed balloon pilot, noting that the "management of the [flight], business details, contacts with the sponsors, the public, and the ground crew, was left" to her. And

⁶⁵⁰ Letter dated August 24, 1942, Folder 1, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁵¹ See Jean Ebbert and Marie-Beth Hall, Crossed Currents: Navy Women in a Century of Change, 3rd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Batsford Brassey, Inc., 1999), pp. 38-41.

⁶⁵² Letter dated August 11, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁵³ Letter dated August 11, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

when discussing her extensive involvement with post-flight lecturing, Jeannette indicated the “pleasure” she had “lecturing...on the Wellesely⁶⁵⁴ [sic] campus in the Spring of 1935.” Although Jeannette incorrectly spelled the college, she was trying to make a connection with McAfee, Wellesley’s president since 1936. Jeannette expressed to McAfee her “deep” interest in “personnel work, guidance, [and] counseling” as evidenced by her doctoral work emphasis in Educational Psychology. “My thesis topic was chosen,” Jeannette explained, “because it was a subject of great interest to the University Administration but one for which no funds were available. Although it was an entirely new field to me, not connected with any background experience, I found it extremely interesting, and satisfied myself with regard to the importance of housing in any educational program.”⁶⁵⁵

A week later, Jeannette received a short reply from “W-V(S)” Lieut (jg) Marion R. Enright thanking Jeannette for her “letter of application,” but indicating there was a “problem,” namely 16-year-old Donald. “According to the regulations,” wrote Enright, “applicants are not being considered who have children under eighteen years of age.” Thankful for her “patriotic interest,” the lieutenant acknowledged Jeannette’s “excellent qualifications,” and gave “assur[ance] that the matter [would] be brought to the attention of Lieutenant [Elizabeth] Reynard within the next few days.”⁶⁵⁶ And so began months of correspondence between Jeannette and various naval offices, each presenting the

⁶⁵⁴ See Ebbert and Hall, *Crossed Currents*, pp. 36-37.

⁶⁵⁵ Letter dated August 11, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁵⁶ Letter dated August 18, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. The author believes professional courtesy required Enright to acknowledge Jeannette’s academic title.

rationale for their side of the situation, all the while, Jeannette challenging the idea of “mother” as a protected category and its role in barring her from active naval reserve service.⁶⁵⁷

Jeannette went to the local office of naval procurement, and based on their recommendation, sent a detailed six-page letter to the Women’s Reserve Section of the Office of Naval Officer Procurement. Jeannette requested from the Chicago-based office an application for appointment to “either the administrative division or the technical specialists division of the Women’s Reserve Section.” Again she provided a comprehensive outline of her qualifications, including “educational and non-educational” experiences, explaining such detail was provided in order for the office to “know about” her “broad and somewhat unusual background of experience.” “It is true,” Jeannette wrote, “that I have one son who is under eighteen years of age. He is, however, a tall, well-developed young man and a senior in high school. In case of my appointment, he will remain at home with his father and his next older brother who is eighteen and a sophomore at the University [of Minnesota]. My oldest son is a 2nd Lt....[in] the U.S. Army [Reserve]. In view of the unusual circumstances forming my background I hope

⁶⁵⁷ According to Ebbert and Hall, the “policies concerning women who were married, or wished to marry, changed rapidly and significantly during the WAVES’ first year.” Initially the policy excluded any military wife from entering the women’s reserves; however by 1943, the navy “ceased all attempts” to make women “choose between continued service or marriage...” After completing indoctrination, “a woman could marry anyone she chose without jeopardizing her naval status.” Although the motherhood policy did not change, beginning in the 1960s the Navy brass began overlooking a “regulation loophole” allowing “a woman to be the parent of a minor child if that child resided with her no more than thirty days out of the year.” So children could stay with other relatives such as aunts, uncles, and grandparents, while their mothers served. See Ebbert and Hall, *Crossed Currents*, pp. 90-91, 154-155.

that an exception to the rule regarding the age of children of applicants can be made in my case.”⁶⁵⁸

Jeannette waited less than a month for the reply: “Your request for an application blank in the Women’s Reserve has been considered and according to the information given in your letter, you do not appear to qualify for any division of the Women’s Reserve under the requirements prescribed by the Secretary of the Navy...Your interest and patriotic desire to serve in the Women’s Reserve are appreciated.”⁶⁵⁹

Jeannette secured the Washington D.C. mailing address for Lieutenant Reynard, and again asked for an exception to the naval regulation. She acknowledged to Reynard receiving a “courteous” letter from Lt. Enright explaining the “regulation preventing [her] appointment;” however, since receiving Enright’s letter, Jeannette had given “considerable thought to the reasons for such a regulation and [had] discussed the problem with friends.” “One logical reason,” Jeannette thought, was “simply that the government does not wish to be held liable for the care of a minor child in case the mother should be injured in service and the father die before the child comes of age.” Jeannette assured Reynard that “...in case it is the real reason for the regulation, [she and Jean were] both willing to sign whatever papers [might] be necessary in order to release the government from all obligation relative to the care of [their youngest] son,” explaining to Reynard in detail the potential financial arrangements in place.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁸ Letter dated August 20, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁵⁹ Letter dated September 17, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁶⁰ Letter dated October 25, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

Reynard's reply followed the same naval line, albeit with a glimmer of optimism. She stated that "in the first months...of the general organiz[ing] of the Women's Reserves... no waivers" had been given to women with minor children, but "the possibility of a waiver increases with every month in which we are established." Reynard noted Jeannette's "remarkable qualifications," and asked her to "please be patient" and give the Women's Reserves "time in which to overcome the opposition for special consideration which is inevitable at the outset of any large program." Reynard indicated that "with [her] most enthusiastic endorsement," she was forwarding Jeannette's letter to the Bureau of Aeronautics "believing [they] would be able to assist...in finding a way to make useful your remarkable experience...in scientific investigation and practical experience of stratosphere flying." Although Reynard had "no right to ask it," she "hope[d] that Jeannette would] notify the Women's Reserve of the U.S. Navy before [she] enlisted in any other of the Armed Services or in any other way commit[ted herself] to a definite assignment for the duration."⁶⁶¹ Perhaps Reynard believed Jeannette's request for a waiver would eventually materialize. Jeannette thanked Reynard for her "endorsement" and reiterated her "sincere hope that something may come of the letter...[because she] greatly desire[d] to take a more active part in service to the nation."⁶⁶² However, Jeannette was not confining "service to the nation" to only serving in one of the nation's armed services; with employment possibilities limited in the army and navy, Jeannette turned her sights to civil service and Minnesota state government.

⁶⁶¹ Letter dated December 1, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁶² Letter dated December, 6, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

“Enclosed is the Application...for Federal Employment...,” Jeannette began, “and I have filled it out as best I can...but I confess that I have not in years done anything which I thought was quite as futile.” Jeannette’s frustration with the limited picture provided by the paper application was evident in the letter to the civil service regional director.

“First,” she told Rena Smith, “I am not looking for a job as a wartime emergency. I am not a housewife rushing about looking for something to do. My...application is a result of longtime planning which goes back to my undergraduate days. It was then my intention to complete my college training, get a job, marry and raise a family, and then return to paid employment.” Jeannette explained her marriage to Jean “before completing” her college education “changed her intention...and so [she] was obliged to return to university work when [her] family began to grow up instead of directly seeking a job at that time.” Jeannette stated she would “now be looking for paid employment whethere [sic] there was a national emergency or not.”⁶⁶³

The letter’s second point provides insight into the employment rationale for the forty-seven-year-old: “I am not seeking temporary employment. I am looking for a permanent job which I can keep for the next twenty years.” Although Jean could retire in ten years, it was two decades before Jeannette reached retirement age, and she believed “older people or old people” should not be financial burdens for their children.⁶⁶⁴

Nor was Jeannette choosing an occupation “based upon any emotional ideas as to the type of work” which she might or might not like. “It has been the subject of longtime planning,” she explained. “I have taken into consideration my specific abilities and

⁶⁶³ Letter dated October 7, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid.

disabilities and have planned my training in so far as I was able to fit me to do the kind of work indicated by these abilities and disabilities...[and] it seems to me to be foolish to undertake, even during [a national] emergency, any type of work for which I [am]...unfitted...”⁶⁶⁵ Frustrated but hopeful, Jeannette concluded her letter to Smith, saying, “This letter is doubtless even more futile than the application blank but having once started a futile gesture, I may as well carry it to completion. Having done so, I would like to express my thanks (gratitude is never futile) for your kindness and courtesy...”⁶⁶⁶

Although paid employment continued to elude Jeannette, her persistence eventually bore fruit with a position created by the Minnesota governor’s office. The nation’s mobilization for war created massive internal migration; many cities were concerned with the possible influx of war workers into their communities and concomitant housing stock problems. Governor Harold E. Stassen’s office contacted Jeannette⁶⁶⁷ and she became the Executive Secretary of the Housing Section of the State of Minnesota Office of Civilian Defense, charged with “conducting an important survey of housing facilities and requirements in Minnesota with special emphasis on conditions relative to war defense plants.”⁶⁶⁸

Jeannette’s volunteer position was helping lay the foundation for the establishment of war housing centers in the Twin Cities, and part of her responsibilities included meetings

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁷ Rarely a wallflower, Jeannette wrote the governor on October 11, 1942.

⁶⁶⁸ Letter dated November 19, 1942, Folder 2, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

with “employers of war workers, public housing agencies...and real estate people.”⁶⁶⁹ In one of her reports to the housing council, Jeannette discussed visiting, along with an official from the Minnesota Public Health Department, the Farmington, Minnesota, municipal camp and “the large and small camps scattered throughout the village of Rosemount [MN] and the farms of the surrounding countryside. We talked with the mayor of Farmington...who is doing everything he can to maintain his trailer camp standards. We inspected several privies, of both approved and unsatisfactory types, viewed chicken coops being converted to dwelling units...Excuses are made for the existence and continuance of unsatisfactory trailer camps because of their claimed temporary status.” Jeannette concluded the report, stating, “It may, therefore, become necessary to show that trailers are being used as permanent homes in order to remedy unsanitary and unsafe conditions.”⁶⁷⁰

Jeannette’s work highlighted an acute housing problem exacerbated with America’s entrance into the war. Minutes from the December 11 meeting illustrate the housing bind: “At various times it has been estimated in the [1943] fiscal year that approximately 1,600,000 war workers would be called upon to move to a war impact locality. A population shift of that kind, not only to the war workers but to the families, would be a momentous thing...we are faced with a grave problem...[In addition,] the demands of the armed forces, which it has been stated will number in the neighborhood of 10 million

⁶⁶⁹ Letter dated December 6, 1942, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁷⁰ November 7, 1942, Minnesota State Defense Council Housing Section Report of Executive Secretary, Folder 1, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

within a short time, has caused a manpower problem.”⁶⁷¹ Building additional homes in impacted areas was not the answer due to shortage of building resources; therefore housing would “have to be rationed, the same as other products.”⁶⁷² After months of investigation, the committee concluded no new housing was needed in the Twin Cities area as long as the existing housing was utilized to its maximum potential. Residents were encouraged to participate in a “war guest program” thereby opening rooms in their homes to war workers.⁶⁷³ Jeannette promoted the committee’s findings, including the war guest program, with talks to local civic and church groups.⁶⁷⁴

Jeannette performed her committee work and speech-making with a heavy heart for on November 26, 1942,⁶⁷⁵ her beloved eighty-two-year-old mother and family matriarch passed away. Throughout the summer Emily’s physical condition had “grown slowly worse,” and her care had become “more difficult and expensive.”⁶⁷⁶ Although Jeannette kept all the siblings apprised of their mother’s condition, it was only to her younger brother Hugh that she exposed her own inner feelings. “Jean gets a vacation September 5th to [the] 27th,” she informed Hugh, “and we hope to get up to our island in Lake Vermillion...It is wonderful to go up there and forget that there is anything in the world

⁶⁷¹ December 11, 1942 Minnesota State Defense Council Housing Section Minutes, Folder 1, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁷² Ibid.

⁶⁷³ Ibid. Jeannette received \$215.00 for her work with the housing council. See letter dated January 17, 1943, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁷⁴ An example is the St. Anthony Park Congregational Church in St. Paul where Jeannette gave a “very interesting and inspiring talk...about ‘Housing During and After the War.’” See letter dated January 17, 1943, Folder 2, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁷⁵ See genealogy information based on a 122-30-82 chart of Robert Dean Jensvold, and Ridlon genealogy book and parish register Vol. III, p. 151, of St. Columba’s Episcopal Church, Middletown, Rhode Island. Author thanks Kathryn Piccard for providing the information.

⁶⁷⁶ Letter dated June 26, 1942, Folder 6, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester “Nan” Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

but water, and trees, and sun, and rain, and gorgeous fish. It is wonderful to take a fish right out of the water into the pan...”⁶⁷⁷

Jeannette and Emily shared a special mother-daughter relationship; following the deaths of sisters Betty and Louisa and being the youngest daughter, “Janey” was the beneficiary of her “Dearest Mumsie’s” grief and decreased motherly responsibilities. With her other children off to college or establishing families of their own, Emily enjoyed gossiping, shopping, dining, and going to cultural events with Jeannette. And in 1919, for Jeannette’s special day, Emily designed and made the bride’s wedding gown. But Jeannette also encouraged her Victorian mother and helped her gain confidence in her own abilities; it was with Jeannette’s prodding that Emily learned to drive an automobile at the age of seventy-two.⁶⁷⁸

Jeannette had been the primary caregiver during Emily’s final years, and after her mother’s death, Jeannette continued in this capacity. She was the primary decision-maker for the six siblings with regards to their mother’s remains and the settling of the estate; as with most financial situations within the Ridlon family, the probate process was difficult.⁶⁷⁹

After their mother’s cremation, Jeannette received a letter from the Island Cemetery superintendent in Newport, Rhode Island, informing Jeannette of receiving from Emily a “box containing ashes, which she asked me to take care of until she could call for them or

⁶⁷⁷ Letter dated August 22, 1942, Folder 3, Box I: 20, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hugh O.T. Ridlon 1931-1966, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁷⁸ See Chapters Two and Three.

⁶⁷⁹ Although the house was rented during the period, Emily’s estate was still not settled twenty-two months after her death. See letter dated April 30, 1943, Folder 2, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated June 11, 1943, Folder 2, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

give me directions as to their disposal.” After reading of Emily’s death in the local Newport paper, John Mahan opened the box and found “one of the boxes contain[ed] the ashes of her mother, Mrs. Robinson, and the other two contain[ed] the ashes of her two small children.”⁶⁸⁰

In September 1943, Jeannette took the train to Newport, and with brother Noel, placed their mother’s ashes in the St. Columba’s cemetery in Middletown, Rhode Island. Later Jeannette informed her siblings, “Mother had wanted to lie between two pine trees but it was impossible to purchase that lot. Since she selected the spot, however, one of the pines has disappeared and she now lies at the foot of the other. I think she would have been pleased.”⁶⁸¹ Emily’s remains were placed along with her mother’s, but Noel and Jeannette also buried three of their siblings, not two as Mahan had indicated. Along with Louisa and Beatrice, infant Constance, who died in 1882, was finally put to rest.⁶⁸²

Jeannette was pleased to inform her brothers and sisters the local Newport paper had an announcement providing the particulars for Emily’s interment, “head[ing] the society news in the paper the evening before.” “The society column headlines,” Jeannette reported, “were given over to [Mother]. Silly, isn’t it to count such little things?”⁶⁸³ A year later, Jeannette visited her mother’s final resting spot, reporting to her siblings “the ivy which [they] had hoped would be planted on the grave did not take root.” “Mother’s

⁶⁸⁰ Letter dated December 15, 1942, Folder 1, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁸¹ Letter dated October 11, 1943, Folder 7, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester “Nan” Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁸² Genealogy information based on a 12-30-82 chart of Robert Dean Jensvold, and Ridlon genealogy book, and parish register Vol. III., p. 151, of St. Columba’s Episcopal Church, Middletown, Rhode Island, provided to author by Kathryn Piccard.

⁶⁸³ Letter dated October 11, 1943, Folder 7, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester “Nan” Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

little corner looked dry and unloved, [so] I decided that we would have to put up a stone.” Jeannette informed her siblings a “simple slate with hand made letters...[would do].”⁶⁸⁴ As she had described her father’s final resting place to her mother, Jeannette’s emotions over her loss, and the final tribute to her beloved mother, were expressed in the description of the memorial stone to her siblings: “It is suitable, simple, and dignified. It will wear well.”⁶⁸⁵

Continued Exclusion

Jeannette made one last attempt to join a branch of the armed services. In early 1943 she wrote W.A.V.E.S. Lt. Elizabeth Reynard updating the status of youngest son Donald. “You may be interested in knowing of his progress,” she wrote. “He was seventeen on January 13th and, though he has not yet graduated from high school, he has been admitted to the University of Minnesota, Science, Literature and Arts College, in the new program for accelerating qualified students.” Perhaps to emphasize Donald’s maturity level and patriotism, rather than his chronological age, Jeannette indicated that prior to the university’s offer, Donald intended to drop out of high school and join the marines. “But now,” Jeannette stated, “[Donald] appears to be stimulated by his University program and registration in the army R.O.T.C.”⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸⁴ Letter dated September 5, 1944, Folder 7, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester “Nan” Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers. Once again taking charge, Jeannette informed her siblings of her actions and decisions: “Today I investigated. A hunk of granit[e] with sandblown letters will cost about \$150-175. A simple slate with hand made letters will cost between \$175-200. I think we should do the latter...The inscription that I plan reads: Emily C. Ridlon 1859-1942 her mother Margaret Johnstone Robinson and her daughters Constance, Louisa, & Beatrice Ridlon.” See Ibid.

⁶⁸⁵ Letter dated September 5, 1944, Folder 7, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester “Nan” Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers. See Chapter 4 footnote 152.

⁶⁸⁶ Letter dated January 18, 1943, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

But the purpose of Jeannette's letter was to comply with Reynard's request to not join another branch without first notifying the Women's Naval Reserves.⁶⁸⁷ Jeannette told Reynard of "noticing in the paper a short statement to the effect that Mrs. Thomas W. Streeter...would probably head the Women's Auxiliary of the Marines." Since Mrs. Streeter was "an old classmate...at Bryn Mawr College," Jeannette felt compelled to inform Reynard of "promptly telegraph[ing Streeter] of [her] interest in active, non-civilian, war participation..."⁶⁸⁸

"Dear Ruthie," Jeannette began, "I was clumsy in offering myself to the army, asking to be commissioned for a specific type of service. They didn't like my lack of humility!" [Emphasis in the original.] Jeannette explained to Streeter her hopes of receiving a waiver for the navy, but since one had not materialized, she was "applying" to Streeter "for a position in the Marines." "You know me," Jeannette continued, "the sort of person I am, and you know much of my background and accomplishments and lack of accomplishments...Honestly, Ruthie; I don't know Commander McAfee...but I do know you and...I will be happy to serve with you and under you. Please consider my qualifications dispassionately and don't throw me out because you suspect yourself of being affectionately disposed in my favor."⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁷ See footnote 108.

⁶⁸⁸ Letter dated January 18, 1943, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁸⁹ Letter dated January 17, 1943, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette's telegram to Streeter read, "Have been wanting opportunity for active non-civilian war participation. Can you use me in your marine organization? Have had personnel and housing training recently in addition to free balloon stratosphere work, etc. Am writing. Hurrah for you, Ruthie. The Marines have made a better choice than the WAACs or WAVES." See *Ibid.*

Although Streeter's handwritten response was friendly and informative, it was not encouraging. She advised Jeannette to go to the nearest marine recruiting station to get "a booklet giving [her] all the dope about qualifications..." "Roughly," Streeter advised, "our requirements are the same as the WAVES and the first thing is to see if you meet them...At the moment, I don't know just where a 'high flyer' like yourself would fit in; but if you still want to go ahead with it after reading all the dope in the booklet, just follow its directions and apply in the regular way."⁶⁹⁰ Jeannette "thanked" Streeter for the "nice letter in [her] own hand." "I appreciate it no end," Jeannette confessed, "because when anyone is told to go to hell, the way it is said does make a difference." Jeannette put forth the idea of being "commissioned...in the Marine Reserves and assign[ed] to train free balloon men in the Navy [or women in the] WAVES..." But "to be wholly frank," she wrote Streeter, "I would rather be in the personnel line than in aeronautics, much as I like flying."⁶⁹¹

For the remainder of the war years, Jeannette continued to seek employment and continued the process of settling her mother's estate; but years of rejections and stress took their physical toll. "I have many things to tell you," Jeannette wrote her siblings, "but first about myself. I have now had two epileptic seizures. The first occurred late in March [1943],⁶⁹² 36 hours after I had donated my second pint of blood. The second occurred last Tuesday morning. I woke each time to find that I had wet my bed and bit

⁶⁹⁰ Letter dated February 2, 1943, Folder 8, Box II: Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁹¹ Letter dated February 5, 1943, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁹² See letter dated April 29, 1943, Folder 2, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

my tongue. Apparently I have extreme convulsions also.” Although Jeannette attempted to keep the siblings’ letter upbeat, there was concern: “I hope...Dr. [A.B.] Baker, [chairman, Department of Neurology, University of Minnesota] will...[find] out what is the matter with me – brain tumor or what – and that we will [get] it under control. I certainly do not like going around feeling the way I do all the time, half under the influence of sedatives for fear of another seizure.”⁶⁹³

By mid-summer Jeannette reported to her siblings the extensive tests revealed nothing conclusive, but she was “under medication, [and] taking one kind of pill three times a day and another kind twice a day – like a hypochondriac!” “I am reminded of a letter Father wrote me,” Jeannette continued, “when he learned that he had diabetes. He wrote that he would never again be able to eat anything but spinach and kale as though his mother were a donkey and his father a jack-ass!” Jeannette assured her brothers and sisters that with medication she was “supposed to live a normal life but not push [herself] beyond the point of fatigue.”⁶⁹⁴

Although Jeannette had not been able to secure a position in the military, she was a three Blue Star mother; each son was serving actively in the armed services, and this exacerbated Jeannette’s stress and concern. Her oldest John was commissioned in June 1942,⁶⁹⁵ and spent many years in the Army in Europe during the war. “In preparation for

⁶⁹³ Letter dated May 31, 1943, Folder 7, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester “Nan” Hempstead (sister) 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette explained after the attacks, she “suffered from sore muscles and severe headaches.” Following the first attack she had a “thorough neurological exam and a cranial X ray [and] both were negative,” and was scheduled for “spinal puncture” at the University of Minnesota hospital. See Ibid.

⁶⁹⁴ Letter dated July 15, 1943, Folder 7, Box I: 19, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hester Hempstead 1933-1965, Piccard Family Papers.

⁶⁹⁵ Letter dated August 22, 1942, Folder 3, Box I: 20, Siblings Correspondence: Jean and Jeannette to Hugh O.T. Ridlon 1922-1966, Piccard Family Papers.

D-Day,” John recalled, “[I] worked in oil and gasoline preparation for all vehicles needed in the invasion and the push afterward.”⁶⁹⁶ Middle son Paul “spent most of the war [stateside],”⁶⁹⁷ but in April 1945, “was a combat infantryman—a rifleman—in Germany.” “In May [1945],” Paul recalled, “we were in what is now the Czech Republic. Perhaps the last shot fired by an American soldier in Europe in 1945 was fired by someone in my Division, the 97th.”⁶⁹⁸ Youngest brother Donald was in the Navy, “stationed at Lakehurst, [NJ], a lighter than air base whose blimps patrolled the Atlantic looking for German submarines.”⁶⁹⁹ Jean would occasionally visit his Lakehurst-based naval son, and Donald remembered one 1944 visit in particular. “My father told me,” Donald recalled, “at any point we may all go to heaven. If some physicist somewhere starts a reaction...but if they make a mistake I’ll see you in heaven.”⁷⁰⁰

By mid-1945, the Piccards became a four Blue Star family when Jean was commissioned into the Army Air Forces.⁷⁰¹ As son Paul explained, “My father [was a] blue star [although that] was a modest stretch. Although he was in an Army uniform and treated like a colonel, he was a civilian.”⁷⁰² With the end of hostilities in Europe, Jean reported to the United States Strategic Air Forces headquarters in London, England, spending several months conducting interviews with captured German scientists and

⁶⁹⁶ John A. Piccard, telephone interview by author, September 29, 2006.

⁶⁹⁷ See Paul J. Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s bio-3,” personal email to author, November 3, 2005. ” stayed stateside.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid. While stationed at Lakehurst from 1944 to 1946, Donald served as a “balloon and airship rigger.” See Hamilton, Tom. “Don Piccard,” September 1998, http://www.balloonlife.com/publications/balloon_life/9801/9809/bm9809.htm.

⁷⁰⁰ Donald Piccard, transcript of interview with author, December 7, 2005, Minneapolis, Minnesota. His father was referring to nations’ physicists’ attempts to split the atom.

⁷⁰¹ The University of Minnesota “consented” to Jean’s four month overseas duty on behalf of the Army Air Forces. See letter dated June 7, 1945, Folder 5, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁰² Paul J. Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s bio-3,” personal email to author, November 3, 2005.

officers regarding their knowledge of Germany's weaponry and military inventions, including V-2 rockets.⁷⁰³ Meanwhile, son Paul's division was reassembling at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, for deployment to the Pacific war theater.⁷⁰⁴

Post-War Life

Throughout the summer Jeannette continued to maintain the household, including working the garden and paying the bills,⁷⁰⁵ but she also attempted to negotiate a more prestigious academic position for Jean, including the presidency of Carleton College.⁷⁰⁶ In addition, both she and Jean experienced medical issues, perhaps related to the stresses and tensions of war. While in London, Jean had a short period of amnesia,⁷⁰⁷ and Jeannette was again in contact with Earl Fuller, director of the New Jersey State Hospital. Fuller firmly advised Jeannette, "No...do not...study the material of your illness. You have not the medical background that will make the understanding of your problem a satisfactory one. As a matter of fact, the less you read about your difficulty, the better off you will be. So find something to read that is utterly foreign to your difficulty." Fuller shared the fact his daughter Lilian was "home on a ten-day furlough," and was still "extremely enthusiastic about the Marines..." "She does look grand in her uniform,"

⁷⁰³ See letter dated September 30, 1944, Folder 6, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1941-1944, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated July 31, 1945, Folder 2, Box I: 64, Subject: Braun, Gerhard, and Heinz Lesser interrogations of 1945, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated August 13, 1945, Folder 2, Box I: 64, Subject: Braun, Gerhard, and Heinz Lesser interrogations of 1945, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁰⁴ See Paul J. Piccard, paulpic@juno.com "Re: Mother's bio-4," personal email to author, November 4, 2005.

⁷⁰⁵ See letter dated June 22, 1945, Folder 7, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1945-1949, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁰⁶ See letter dated April 27, 1945, Folder 5, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated May 21, 1945, Folder 5, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁰⁷ See letter dated August 19, 1945, Folder 7, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1945-1949, Piccard Family Papers.

waxed the proud father.⁷⁰⁸ Unwittingly, Fuller's comments reminded Jeannette of her own inability to serve in uniform during the war.

"The Japs are taking so long to send in their surrender," Jeannette wrote Jean, "that I'm beginning to be afraid they were only making a pretense, something traitorous like they pulled when they were negotiating peace and attacked Pearl Harbor. Please God, they really do surrender."⁷⁰⁹ One day after Jeannette's August letter, President Harry S Truman accepted Japan's unconditional surrender. The cataclysmic world war was over; Americans could return to civilian living. According to historian Susan Hartmann, "the expansion of women's public roles in the 1940s did not diminish their attachment to traditional private roles." In fact, the "unshaken claim of family" led to an increase in marriage throughout the postwar years.⁷¹⁰ Soon Jeannette added an additional role to her life: mother-in-law.

"John got home [about 10:00pm]...last Saturday," Jeannette informed Jean, "[and] after kissing [me] and bringing in his baggage and looking over the alterations that have been made in our downstairs since he went overseas and drinking a glass of milk, he asked for Marylin's⁷¹¹ [sic] telephone number. He promptly dashed out to see her as soon as he had her on the phone and got engaged." Jeannette continued the returning G.I.'s story: "On the way home from church, I asked [John] if he and Marylin [sic] were

⁷⁰⁸ Letter dated July 13, 1945, Folder 5, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers. Lilian Fuller was one of 23,000 women to serve with the Marine Corps Women's Reserves (MCWR). See Hartmann, *The Homefront and Beyond*, p. 32.

⁷⁰⁹ Letter dated August 13, 1945, Folder 7, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1945-1949, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷¹⁰ Hartmann, *The Homefront and Beyond*, p. 163.

⁷¹¹ Esther Marilyn Dickson, b. June 19, 1922, d. February 24, 1972. See Kathryn Piccard, kpiccard@comcast.net "Re: my ancestry," personal email to author, September 19, 2006.

planning to be married. Whereupon he said that they had wondered how and where and when to break the news to me gently...[They] plan to be married [this] Friday...”⁷¹²

Perhaps to illustrate that their son had thought through this seemingly rash event, Jeannette explained that John had “calculated that his war bonds, the cash he [had] on hand, and something else that [she had] forgotten should give him an income of \$175 per month for two years after his discharge. Until then [John] had \$150 per month base pay, plus something for food and quarters. Marylin [sic] graduated this Spring and [thought] she too [could] earn something by giving flute lessons.” Jeannette continued, “John is as busting with ideas and inventions as you are. He has come home with several that are pretty well developed...As far as I can see John isn’t changed a particle. He looks and acts just as he always has, except that his eyes are starry when he looks or talks of Marylin [sic]...”⁷¹³

Within weeks of John’s marriage, Jeannette gained another daughter-in-law when Paul married his Catholic girlfriend. From across the ocean Jean wrote to his future daughter-in-law, saying, “My dear Betty, This is to send you a most cordial and affectionate welcome into my family. For a long time I had hoped that you and Paul would find a solution which would make your marriage possible. It was, of course, not up to me to find that solution and I have to accept it, whatever it is. The mere fact that you found a solution is a good proof for the depth and sincerity of your mutual love. I hope it will

⁷¹² Letter dated August 13, 1945, Folder 7, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1945-1949, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷¹³ Letter dated August 13, 1945, Folder 7, Box I: 4, Family Correspondence: Jeannette to Jean 1945-1949, Piccard Family Papers.

make you both happy.”⁷¹⁴ Initially Jean had been “quite shock[ed]” to learn Paul “was going to give up his Anglican faith,”⁷¹⁵ but after mass at Westminster Abbey, Jean knew it was “not God’s intention to have his two Churches separate his children.”⁷¹⁶ Although the family gained two “daughters,” much of their routine stayed the same: the new father-in-law returned stateside in time for the start of the academic year; and Jeannette continued seeking post-war employment opportunities, in both the private and public sector.

To help returning servicemen acclimate again to civilian life, the Veteran’s Administration was considering establishing rehabilitation centers. Jeannette contacted the VA, which in turn suggested contacting Warren H. Stewart, president of the Minnesota State Teachers College Board, the body overseeing one of the centers. “Dear Mr. Stuart [sic],” Jeannette began, “[It is my understanding] the [rehabilitation] program called for two centers, one at the University of Minnesota and one working through the State Teachers College. As my husband is a professor...at the University, it is difficult for me to be appointed through them.” Jeannette requested Stewart consider her application.⁷¹⁷ Stewart did not enthusiastically embrace Jeannette’s request, stating, “Our understanding thus far has been that we are to assign qualified members of the faculties

⁷¹⁴ Letter dated August 26, 1945, Folder 7, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1945-1949, Piccard Family Papers. Jean explained to Betty he “dedicated [his] attendance at Mass [that] morning to prayers for [her] and when the service [sic] was over [he] stood alone for a long time in front of the High Altar asking the Lord’s help for [her].” “It was ‘only’ an Anglican church,” he explained, “but in beauty and majesty it could not be matched by any church of whatever faith in the United States. It was the old Westminster Abbey...” See Ibid.

⁷¹⁵ Letter dated August 27, 1945, Folder 7, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1945-1949, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷¹⁶ Letter dated August 26, 1945, Folder 7, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1945-1949, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷¹⁷ Letter dated December 7, 1944, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d. Piccard Family Papers.

to do the work which is anticipated...” He did “not know” if he would be “employing any additional advisors.” However, Stewart left the door slightly ajar: “I will be glad to bear you in mind and perhaps if you will get in touch with me later on, I will then know more about the subject.”⁷¹⁸

Less than two weeks later, Jeannette sent Stewart a completed copy of a six-page federal employment application, transcripts from Bryn Mawr and the University of Minnesota, and an additional five pages outlining her varied employment experiences. “I hope that you will keep me in mind for the development of your program,” Jeannette stated in the cover letter. “One reason why I am eager to take part in the program is because some of our veterans this time will be women, though we still tend to think of veterans in masculine terms. Secondly, it seems probable that a middle-aged woman, the mother of service-men [sic], will be able to establish ‘raport’ [sic] more quickly and efficiently with returning service-men [sic] than another man who may not have seen service, especially with young and insecure service-men [sic] who are seeking help.”⁷¹⁹

Employment gender bias was evident during and after the war. In the July 1943 issue of Transportation Magazine, male supervisors were provided eleven “tips” for handling “women in the workforce.” In order to “select the most efficient women available,” employers should “pick young married women [since] they usually [had] more of a sense of responsibility than their unmarried sisters...” If employers had “to use older women,

⁷¹⁸ Letter dated December 8, 1944, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁷¹⁹ Letter dated December 19, 1944, Folder 8, Box II: 44, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Employment Applications 1942-1944, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette was not employed by the State Teachers Board. See letter dated July 25, 1945, Folder 5, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

[they should] try to get ones who [had] worked outside the home at some time in their lives. Older women who [had] never contacted the public [had] a hard time adapting themselves and [were] inclined to be cantankerous and fussy.” Employers were encouraged to hire “‘husky’ girls – those who [were] just a little on the heavy side [because they were] more even tempered and efficient than their underweight sisters.”⁷²⁰

By the end of the war almost 19 million women, of all shapes and sizes, overcame biases and were working outside the home; however, within a year this number was reduced to approximately 16,900,000. As historian Susan Hartmann argues, although the actual number of women declined, the proportion of women remaining in the work place was higher than at the beginning of the 1940s.⁷²¹ And just as the government encouraged women to do their patriotic duty through propaganda programs, such as the “Rosie the Riveter” campaign, so the government encouraged women to return to their homes as their husbands and boyfriends were returning from distant lands. Many women, including Jeannette, wanted outside employment; however, they were often passed over for a returning service man. Following is Jeannette’s response from Minneapolis’ Strutwear Knitting Company, home of “Strutwear Hosiery and Peacock Underfairs”: “Dear Dr. Piccard, The position of Assistant Personnel Manager for which you applied has been filled. We hired Mr. Raymond Swartout who has just recently completed two and one

⁷²⁰ “1943 Guide to Hiring Women,” excerpt from the July 1943 issue of Transportation Magazine, from Savvy & Sage, September/October 2007, p. 16. Other tips included: being “tactful when issuing instruction or making criticism. Women are often sensitive; they can’t shrug off harsh words the way men do. Never ridicule a woman – it breaks her spirit and cuts off her efficiency”; giving “the female employee a definite day-long schedule of duties so that they’ll keep busy without bothering management for instructions every few minutes...[women] lack initiative in finding work themselves”; giving “every girl an adequate number of rest periods during the day. You have to make some allowances for feminine psychology. A girl has more confidence and is more efficient if she can keep her hair tidied, apply fresh lipstick and wash her hands several times a day.” See *Ibid*.

⁷²¹ Hartmann, The Homefront and Beyond, p. 24.

half years service in the Navy, part of the time having been spent in the Naval Officer Procurement Division... We regret that we were unable to act favorably on your application..."⁷²² Other than the Hennepin County Chapter of the American Red Cross,⁷²³ Jeannette's attempts to utilize her skills and life experiences continued to be thwarted in both the government and private sector.

Stratospheric Flight Déjà vu: Helios Project

For over a decade Jeannette and Jean harbored the dream of returning to the stratosphere; by 1946 their goal of taking a gondola to an altitude of over 100,000 feet appeared plausible. Their longtime friend and collaborator W.F.G. Swann was interested in providing cosmic ray apparatus,⁷²⁴ and Jeannette once again sought economic sponsorship for their endeavor.⁷²⁵ She contacted the North American Newspaper Alliance (NANA), with whom they had worked in 1934, and the General Electric Company; however, neither source was promising.⁷²⁶ The project caught the attention of the General Mills Company, interested in projects such as Piccards as a result of the company's war work.⁷²⁷ Initially, Jean and Jeannette, General Mills, and the Office of the Navy

⁷²² Letter dated January 11, 1946, Folder 6, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷²³ See letter dated December 5, 1945, Folder 5, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers. According to journalist Emily Yellin, "more than 3.5 million women volunteered in the various divisions of the Red Cross" including the two "most well-known divisions: the Nurse's Aides and Gray Ladies." See Emily Yellin, Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II (New York: Free Press, 2004), p. 168.

⁷²⁴ See letter dated March 5, 1946, Folder 1, Box I: 63, Subject: Ballooning 1947 flight, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷²⁵ See Proposition for Pleiades II Flight, Folder 1, Box I: 63, Subject: Ballooning 1947 flight, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷²⁶ See letter dated February 13, 1946, Folder 6, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated April 17, 1946, Folder 6, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷²⁷ See David H. DeVorkin, Race to the Stratosphere: Manned Scientific Ballooning in America (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1989), p. 268.

cooperated in the research and development of the multi-balloon experimental flight, but as in 1933 and 1934, relationships soon deteriorated; by June 1947, the once-promising scientific experiment was shelved.

Unfettered from anti-nepotism policies that precluded Jeannette from concurrent employment with Jean at the University of Minnesota, the General Mills Corporation allowed Jeannette an active role in the plans and discussions of the Helios project. She was to be the flight's pilot, and was present at the meetings of the various parties, including representatives from the Office of Naval Research and Invention (ONR).⁷²⁸ However, within months it was evident the Navy Department was taking over the project, now classified "confidential: project number 9-U-J," and known as "Free Balloon Research Laboratory." Part "B-1a" specified the contractor "shall design, construct, test and fly the stratosphere balloon specified in the contract with a crew approved by the Navy."⁷²⁹ The December 1946 news release indicated the ONR had "entered into a contract with the General Mills Aeronautical Research Laboratory for the construction of a special cluster-type balloon and gondola to be used for scientific studies in the higher altitudes...The ascent itself [was] planned for mid-June [1947] from the Naval Air Station at Ottumwa, Iowa..." The news release indicated the "services" of Jean Piccard were "under contract," but no mention was made of Jeannette's role as pilot.⁷³⁰

⁷²⁸ Memorandum dated July 10, 1946, Folder 9, Box I: 62, Subject: Ballooning 1947 flight, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷²⁹ Memorandum dated September 13, 1946, Folder 10, Box I: 62, Subject: Ballooning 1947 flight, Piccard Family Papers. The memorandum itemized the Navy's responsibilities; Part B-2a-9 read: "The Navy shall supply the following: Release of all publicity pertaining to the flight both before and after." See Ibid.

⁷³⁰ News Release dated December 21, 1946, Folder 6, Box I: 46, General Correspondence: Letters Received 1942-1946, Piccard Family Papers.

Once again, and against his wishes, Jean agreed to a navy officer pilot, rather than Jeannette.⁷³¹ Jeannette, as a flight consultant, had been attending weekly conferences and filing monthly reports to General Mills executive Otto Winzen; however, with the change in her flight status, she informed Winzen she “no longer [felt] obligated to give as much time to the project as formerly.” “Henceforth,” she said, “unless and until I am designated in writing as [Jean Piccard’s] alternate, I shall attend only such conferences, and come to the [General Mills] laboratory only on such occasions, as I have been, or shall be, specifically requested to do so.”⁷³² During spring 1947, Jeannette continued to make monthly reports; however, they were addressed to T.R. James, the director of aeronautical research, rather than to Otto Winzen.⁷³³

Although Jean remained optimistic that a clustered-balloon flight could be made, the Navy pulled its financial support in June 1947, stating “operational tests of the prototype balloons which were to be used in a cluster to form a lifting medium for project Helios have clearly demonstrated that a piloted flight cannot be accomplished this year.”⁷³⁴ Jean wrote his fellow scientific collaborators that he would do “all...possible...to organize a stratosphere flight at the earliest possible date...” “I shall not leave you stranded,” he stated, “but I shall make a serious effort to get other sponsorship.”⁷³⁵

⁷³¹ Inter-Department Memorandum dated January 31, 1947, Folder 9, Box I: 62, Subject: Ballooning 1947 flight, Piccard Family Papers and memorandum dated February 2, 1947, Folder 9, Box I: 62, Subject: Ballooning 1947 flight, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷³² Inter-Department Memorandum dated February 26, 1947, Folder 9, Box I: 62, Subject: Ballooning 1947 flight, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷³³ Jeannette filed reports in April, May and June 1947. It is evident from the reports she was active in the project even though no longer the designated pilot. See memorandums dated April 8, 1947, May 2, 1947 and June 3, 1947, Folder 2, Box I: 63, Subject: Ballooning 1947 flight, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷³⁴ Letter dated June 10, 1947, Folder 2, Box I: 63, Subject: Ballooning 1947 flight, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷³⁵ Letter dated June 26, 1947, Folder 2, Box I: 63, Subject: Ballooning 1947 flight, Piccard Family Papers.

Jean and Jeannette continued to strive toward another stratospheric flight; however, changes in the nation and in their own family would preclude any such event. Nevertheless, it always remained one of their common goals.

CHAPTER SIX: A FATHER CANNOT BE FEMALE: REDUX

“Thank you for your patience and gentleness with me...I am afraid that I am one of those women who by their aggressiveness defeats their own purpose. There are so many years of frustration behind me! It was more than I could bear to hear you address a congregation, consisting primarily of women, comparing their responsibilities to that of sons and then have you say privately that a national convention of the church in which women have no vote would have to decide as to whether or not a woman is a person.” Jeannette Piccard to the Right Reverend Philip F. McNairy, Suffragan Bishop of Minnesota, 1966⁷³⁶

“I don’t remember exactly but I think it was in the early sixties that I made my first overt act of rebellion. I stopped wearing a hat to Church. I don’t remember what triggered my thinking but I realized that obliging women to wear hats was one method that men were using to make women conscious of their inferiority. I stopped wearing a hat...[For] a woman my age...[it] felt blasphemous [to be] in Church without a hat.” Jeannette Piccard, 1971⁷³⁷

“Dear President Peterson,” the letter began. “The Bureau of Recommendations at the University of Minnesota has notified me that you are looking for a Director of Student Activities beginning September 1951. I would like to apply for the job.” Jeannette explained to the Eastern Montana College of Education president that her husband was retiring in June 1952, and “before that time, we hope that I will be established in a situation that will make it possible for us to continue making a contribution to the education of young people.”⁷³⁸ No longer geographically tied to the Twin Cities’ area, Jeannette sent additional letters of application to New York City’s Hunter College⁷³⁹ and Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kansas for the dean of women’s position.⁷⁴⁰

⁷³⁶ Letter dated November 7, 1966, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Correspondence: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota, 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷³⁷ P. 13, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷³⁸ Letter dated February 7, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷³⁹ See letter dated January 8, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁴⁰ See letter dated March 17, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers.

Fifty-six-year-old Jeannette felt compelled to explain in the letters the time interval between academic degrees; perhaps she was justified in doing so. “You will notice, of course, that my A.B. antedates my Ph.D. by twenty-four years and that the biography shows a considerable range in interests and activities. When Professor Piccard joined the staff at the University of Minnesota our children were beginning to grow up and I went back to school with the intention of preparing myself for the work of a Dean of Women with special emphasis on counseling.”⁷⁴¹ According to scholar Eugenia Kaledin, in post-war America, “older women...continued to pour into the work force.” Throughout the 1940s and into the mid-1950s, the “percentage of employed women between forty-five and fifty-four years old nearly doubled...” However, Kaledin argues there was also a bias against older women: “seniority was invariably the reward of long-term presence on the job—not of capability.”⁷⁴² Although Jeannette was quite capable, for one reason or another, she had never been able to secure an employment position that would allow her to gain the necessary seniority. However, that did not stop her from continuing to press her views and opinions.

The Cold War

“Thank you for your...continued interest in my preoccupation with the utilization of women by the Armed Forces,” Jeannette wrote fellow Minnesotan Hubert H.

⁷⁴¹ See letter dated February 7, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers; and letter dated March 17, 1951, Folder, 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁴² Eugenia Kaledin, Mothers and More, American Women in the 1950s (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984), p. 67.

Humphrey.⁷⁴³ Jeannette and the senator corresponded regarding utilizing women volunteers during the Korean conflict. “I can not see how it is possible,” Jeannette argued, “for the [Truman] Administration to say in one and the same breath that we are being defeated by overwhelming numbers, that we must draft eighteen year old boys and that all the jobs are being adequately filled by women. In view of the number of persons who are needed behind the front in order to maintain one man at the front it seems to me that it would be logical to draft several women for every man. Obviously this is not being done.”⁷⁴⁴

Venting the frustration she had felt since the early 1940s, Jeannette told Humphrey, “I find myself growing very resentful of the demand to draft eighteen year old boys while there is not even an active program for enlisting women volunteers.” “It seems to me,” she told the politician, “that if the armed forces would use women efficiently to the full capacity of women power available that there would be less need to draft boys.”⁷⁴⁵ She again championed the idea of the armed forces “utiliz[ing] the R.O.T.C. facilities now existent in colleges and universities over the country to train women officers so [they]...would be available to train women recruits when training centers for enlisted personnel become available...”⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴³ Letter dated February 26, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁴⁴ Letter dated January 22, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁴⁵ Letter dated January 22, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁴⁶ Letter dated February 26, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers.

Jeannette also corresponded with the director of field recruitment for America's "Truth Campaign," inquiring into a possible position in the program.⁷⁴⁷ "My dear Mr. [John H.] Finlator," she began, "The thing that gets my goat is the fact that new means of reaching the people behind the iron curtain appear to be necessary. As Senator [Richard M.] Nixon of California points out, the peoples of these countries do not dare listen to the radio Voice of America. The Voice could, however, drop messages by balloon over various parts of desired regions." Jeannette discussed the plastic balloons Jean designed and were currently being manufactured by the General Mills Company. The balloons "could be inflated in Europe, or at sea, and travel several hundred – or thousand – miles into Russian controlled territory, at an altitude...that they could not be shot down." Jeannette acknowledged there were "not many civilians who [were] both free and qualified to undertake the direction of a project of this nature...and that, [she] imagine[d], [was] the reason why the State Department [had] not given it serious consideration." Jeannette offered her services to Finlator: "Now that I have broken through your clerical defenses, I hope that you will give the project careful thought." Although Jean was too old for employment "under the conditions...advertised," Jeannette suggested employing him as "Consultant." "You will find," she concluded, "that we form a team that is able to produce desired results."⁷⁴⁸ However, no company hired "the team." After his retirement

⁷⁴⁷ See letter dated February 13, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁴⁸ Letter dated February 26, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated May 11, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers.

in 1952,⁷⁴⁹ Jean and Jeannette spent the remainder of the decade visiting their sons and their growing families,⁷⁵⁰ and making one last extended visit to Switzerland.⁷⁵¹

Jeannette and Jean experienced the frozen Cold War and the pervasive attitudes of the 1950s on several occasions. In her letter of inquiry to the United State Consul General regarding the rules for customs exemptions, she indicated Jean had been asked by the Geneva organization Unité to lecture in March 1954. “We would like very much to be informed by you,” she wrote the Geneva-based consul general, “with regard to the nature of this organization, specifically any possible communist connection. As United States citizens we would, of course, refuse in such a case any collaboration with them...We will greatly appreciate any help you can give us in this connection.”⁷⁵²

While in Switzerland, Jean received word his “secret” clearance for work with the Ralph M. Parsons Company “had not come through”; perplexed, Jean wrote the project manager. “You say I should not be alarmed about that but I am worried anyhow.” Jean wrote General L. D. Worsham, “I have always been, since the first Russian revolution, when most of my colleagues in Chicago were enthusiastically for it, very much opposed to any communism. I have never, in any conversation, shown any pro-communistic tendency. When during the last war the Russians reached the German border I advocated complete stoppage of any and all aid to Russia...In our University I have never been

⁷⁴⁹ See The Emeriti Census 1955, Folder 7, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1955, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁵⁰ Paul and Betty lived in Texas; John and Marilyn and Donald and Joan lived in the Philadelphia area.

⁷⁵¹ Jeannette and Jean rented their River Road home and from October 1953 to July 1954 visited family in Switzerland, including Locarno and Lausanne. See letter dated January 7, 1954, Folder 6, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1951-1955, Piccard Family Papers. See letter dated January 6, 1954, Folder 6, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1951-1954, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁵² Letter dated February 15, 1954, Folder 6, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1951-1955, Piccard Family Papers.

friendly with any man whom I suspected might be a communist.” Jean defiantly continued: “I would welcome very much being confronted with any accusations against me. I believe that, if after 8 months the investigators cannot come to any final decision about a man who is a U.S. citizen, he should be given a chance to clear himself from any suspicion. I have always believed that this was an essential difference between a democracy and any other form of government.” “I thought it was our privilege,” Jean challenged, “to be confronted openly with any accusation. Nobody has the right to cut off a citizen’s work for his country by obscure underground digging.”⁷⁵³

In December 1953, while in Lausanne, Jeannette and Jean were contacted by New York City’s Explorer Club, and offered the opportunity to speak during the 1954-1955 lecture series. The cross-Atlantic distance and miscommunications precluded the Piccards from lecturing to the Explorer Club; however, correspondence provides insight into the prevailing attitude toward women and Jean’s appreciation of Jeannette’s critical role in their joint scientific pursuits. “Of course,” Jeannette wrote the club’s chairman, “we feel greatly honored (especially as a woman I feel honored) to be invited to speak before such a distinguished group. We know that dovetailing dates and speakers is a difficult and thankless task, so we will leave the final decision as to date up to you...” Jeannette continued her letter to Dr. Serge A Korff explaining their standard lecture format: Jean speaking for fifteen or twenty minutes, then Jeannette’s speaking and showing of a twenty minute film, followed by both answering questions. Jeannette concluded, “Please ask your wife and let me know what she says: are long skirts worn on the platform

⁷⁵³ Letter dated May 14, 1954, Folder 6, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1951-1955, Piccard Family Papers.

nowadays when tuxedos are worn or would a short skirt be correct so long as I am careful to wear the ‘family diamonds!’?”⁷⁵⁴

Several months passed and Jean received a note from the club’s secretary, inquiring as to the date of his lecture.⁷⁵⁵ “From your letter,” Jean responded, “I conclude that you are not familiar with the correspondence that Mrs. Piccard and I have had with Dr. Korff on the subject of the lecture.” “Mrs. Piccard was the pilot of our stratosphere flight...,” he explained, “and she has always collaborated with me in our balloon research and stratosphere exploration. We give a joint lecture on this subject.”⁷⁵⁶ The scheduling difficulty was due to women’s exclusion from the Tuesday evening meetings called “smokers.” Although smokers were a common type of social event at the time, they were strictly places for men to congregate, drink and exchange “off-color” stories without concern about bothering “the ladies”; therefore, since Jeannette participated in the stratosphere lecture, it had to be one of the club’s Friday evening events. Jean thanked Alvin Kwint for the invitation to “address the Tuesday Smoker October 19th [1954].” However, Jean “regret[fully]” declined, stating since “Mrs. Piccard’s participation ...rules out the Smokers...[it] will make it impossible for me to be in New York on the 19th.”⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁴ Letter dated May 14, 1954, Folder 6, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1951-1955, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette explained the 16mm film showed their 1934 stratosphere flight, “launching of a plastic sounding balloon in 1946, Jean’s multi-balloon flight in 1937, and release of two large plastic balloons in 1947. The last scene is in color and very beautiful.” See Ibid.

⁷⁵⁵ See letter dated October 10, 1954, Folder 6, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1951-1955, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁵⁶ Letter dated October 10, 1954, Folder 6, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1951-1955, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁵⁷ Letter dated October 10, 1954, Folder 6, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent 1951-1955, Piccard Family Papers.

By the mid-1950s, both Jeannette and Jean were experiencing physical difficulties. Jeannette continued to experience epileptic seizures; in July 1954, her neurologist added the medicine meberoin to the mebaral she had been taking for years.⁷⁵⁸ In early 1955, Jeannette informed A.B. Baker of her condition, stating, "Let me first thank you for...the renewal of the meberoin prescription...before the start of the New Year week-end. It contributed greatly to my peace of mind...You said I should report back if I had any more trouble with 'confusion' attacks. I have had two since I saw you. One was in early November [1954], the other today. Both attacks came after a period of a week or more of excessive physical exertion and nervous tension."⁷⁵⁹ Jeannette explained that in November 1954, she made a trip east; the attack came after she had been caring for son Donald's family following an accident in which her daughter-in-law Joan was injured. "There were two small children⁷⁶⁰ to care for," she bemoaned to Baker, "as well as the daughter-in-law with a broken foot and a son suffering from shock."⁷⁶¹ Jeannette surmised her most recent attack occurred due to the extensive cleaning of her home the previous week in preparation for entertaining, along with the task of upholstering two chairs. "If, under those circumstances you wish to see me," she told Baker, "please have your secretary contact me right away...It is possible also, I should add that both in

⁷⁵⁸ Letter dated November 16, 1955, Folder 7, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1955, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁵⁹ Letter dated January 25, 1955, Folder 6, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1955, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁶⁰ The children were Donald's daughters: four-year-old Ruth-Elisabeth and 16-month-old Marie-Louise. See "l'administration cantonale vaudoise; vit à Lausanne," Folder 11, Box II: 39, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Biographical and Bibliographical Material 1916-1981, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁶¹ Letter dated January 25, 1955, Folder 6, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1955, Piccard Family Papers.

November [1954] and last week I may have occasionally forgotten to take medication.”⁷⁶²

Jean was home alone while Jeannette was caring for Donald, Joan and the children after their accident; a good housekeeper he was not. “I am fine. I had a very good supper yesterday,” he wrote his wife, “and a normal breakfast today. I am o.k. Of course, I have to do all the work alone but the work is only one half normal and $1 \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{2} \times 1$ ain’t it?” However, Jean wanted Jeannette to inform him when she was returning because “there [would] still be lots to do to bring the house up to standard.” “The problem of the dishes,” Jean reported, “is getting more difficult every day because by now it is utterly impossible to use the sink. It is full to the rim but I believe in the principle of letting tomorrow take care of tomorrow and I do not worry utterly.”⁷⁶³

Jeannette was concerned leaving Jean alone, but not because she would come home to a sink full of dishes. In 1954, Jean had developed what was thought to be bronchitis; however, after examination it was discovered that sometime during the previous year he had suffered a heart attack and the heart muscle was weakened. Although they maintained a light travel schedule, Jeannette grew increasingly concerned about her 70-year-old husband’s physical condition. One notices in her correspondence a more frequent reference to Jean’s health.⁷⁶⁴ In addition, Jeannette corresponded with the Social

⁷⁶² Letter dated January 25, 1955, Folder 6, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1955, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated November 16, 1955, Folder 7, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1955, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁶³ Letter dated November 2, 1954, Folder 8, Box I: 3, Family Correspondence: Jean to Jeannette 1951-1958, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁶⁴ See letter dated July 4, 1955, Folder 7, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1955, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated July 22, 1955, Folder 7, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1955, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated October 21, 1955, Folder 7, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1955, Piccard Family Papers.

Security Administration to clarify future benefits, if any.⁷⁶⁵ But health issues or not, throughout the 1950s, Jeannette continued pursuing career goals, including starting a religious-based school and working for the Minnesota Wage Advisory Board.

Wage Advisory Board

Beginning in spring 1956, Jeannette served on a wage advisory board⁷⁶⁶ appointed by Minnesota's Industrial Commission for the purpose of "consider[ing] questions and arguments relative to a recommendation for the minimum rates of pay for women and minors and learners and apprentices in the amusement industry."⁷⁶⁷ Minnesota's wage law specified that a minimum wage should be "sufficient to maintain the worker in health and supply him with the necessary comforts and conditions of reasonable life";⁷⁶⁸ however, the current minimum wage for the industry, Minnesota Minimum Wage Order No. 13, had been enacted in 1938.⁷⁶⁹ Many believed it failed to meet contemporary needs.

The advisory board was presented figures for a working woman's cost-of-living based on "pricing items essential in a minimum budget for self-supporting working women...living alone in a furnished room, eating three meals a day in restaurants, and entirely dependent on her own resources and supporting no dependents." June Cederleaf, from the Division of Women and Children, compiled the figures and painted a picture of

⁷⁶⁵ See letter dated October 3, 1955, Folder 7, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1955, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated August 28, 1956, Folder 2, Box I: 59, General Correspondence: Letters Sent July-December 1956, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁶⁶ Nine members (three women/six men) constituted the board. See March 28, 1956 minutes, Folder 7, Box I: 70, Subject: Wage Advisory Board 1956, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁶⁷ Minority Report: Wage Advisory Board Amusement Industry dated June 1, 1956, Folder 7, Box I: 70, Subject: Wage Advisory Board 1956, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁶⁸ March 28, 1956 minutes, Folder 7, Box I: 70, Subject: Wage Advisory Board 1956, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁶⁹ Copy of Minnesota Minimum Wage Order No. 13 for Women and Minors, Folder 7, Box I: 70, Subject: Wage Advisory Board 1956, Piccard Family Papers.

the working woman's Spartan life for the board. "The [working woman's] budget does not provide for a vacation," Cederleaf reported, "for savings, for organization dues or for emergency expenses...[She] must wash and iron a major portion of her wardrobe, mend and press her clothes, give herself a permanent, and shampoo and set her own hair. She has no budget for tips in restaurants...To achieve proper living within the amount of this budget requires careful planning and considerable self-discipline." Cederleaf concluded with the following budget caveats: "It allows for no serious mistakes in buying [and] it presupposes that she does not deviate markedly from 'average' in that she has reasonably good health and can buy her clothing in the standard range of sizes." In Minnesota a working woman would need an annual income of \$2,050.00 to meet the budgetary projections put forth by Cederleaf.⁷⁷⁰

After months of board meetings and public hearings, the wage advisory board voted five to four, recommending raising the minimum wage for women workers in the amusement industry to .85 cents an hour.⁷⁷¹ In many ways, the majority opinion of the board reflected the philosophy of "equal pay for equal work." As historian Eugenia Kaledin argues, both major political party platforms included an equal pay plank in the early 1950s; in 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower "declared that the principle of equal pay for equal work without discrimination 'because of sex' was a matter of 'simple

⁷⁷⁰ Minnesota Cost of Living for a Working Woman or Female Minor: Amusement Industry Report, Folder 7, Box I: 70, Subject: Wage Advisory Board 1956, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁷¹ See Industrial Commission Order No. 23 dated January 18, 1957, Folder 7, Box I: 70, Subject: Wage Advisory Board 1956, Piccard Family Papers.

justice.”⁷⁷² Jeannette concurred with the non-discriminatory minimum wage increase, voting with the majority.

The dissenting members’ report is noteworthy for its exclusionary tone toward women and minors. The men acknowledged their charge to determine a wage based on “the cost of living sufficient to maintain the worker in health and supply him with the necessary comforts and conditions of reasonable life,” but they balked at instituting the standard across the amusement industry employment spectrum. “There was no control whatever,” they stated, “over the sentimental objective sought and desired.” The minority members put forth the typical justifications during this time for denying women equal pay. They argued that the new minimum wage “wholly fail[ed] to take into account the fact that a majority of employees to be affected [were] not solely dependent upon the earnings so obtained, [and] that such earnings [were] merely supplementary and collateral sources of income...” “The proposed minimum,” the men complained, “cannot economically be paid by many of the employers which would be affected.” “It is incredible,” the four concluded, “...to believe that the Legislature intended such an unrealistic, arbitrary and impractical result.”⁷⁷³

Jeannette took exception to the dissenting viewpoint as evidenced by the underlining and margin notes on her copy of the minority report. She underlined the words

⁷⁷² Kaledin, *Mothers and More*, pp. 71-72.

⁷⁷³ Minority Report dated June 1, 1956, Folder 7, Box I: 70, Subject: Wage Advisory Board 1956, Piccard Family Papers. The minority declared “in [their] opinion, it [was] wholly unrealistic and unreasonable to say that a minimum of \$1.00 per hour [should] be established for a high school girl who [was] a cashier of a small town theatre which [was] open for two hours an evening simply because an adult person in Minneapolis [might] require that amount per hour for a full time job which [was] her sole source of support.” Likewise, the dissenting four found it “equally unrealistic to contend that the pinboy working one or two hours in a bowling alley after school, in preference to delivering newspapers, [should] be paid \$1.00 an hour in order to obtain pin-money...” Jeannette’s margin note reads: “newsboy positions open to all H[igh] S[chool] and Col[lege] boys?” See *Ibid*.

“sentimental” and “merely” to highlight the condescending tone of the report. At one point the minority complained the “basic differences in types of work, hours of work, places of work, ages, abilities, productiveness, intrinsic value of work performed and capacity of the activities to sustain payment were all disregarded” when determining the acceptable minimum wage. Having underlined the words: “types,” “places of work,” “abilities,” “productiveness,” “intrinsic value of work,” Jeannette wrote to the side: “Except for hours and ages none were put forward.”⁷⁷⁴ In January 1957, the Industrial Commission of Minnesota “ordered” the enactment of the new minimum hourly wage.⁷⁷⁵

St. Paul’s Episcopal Day School

For over ten years Jeannette fostered the idea of opening a private school. She discussed her idea with Dr. Reynold Jensen, Head of Child Psychiatry at the University of Minnesota because she “thought that there should be a school of some sort for the case of emotionally disturbed children.”⁷⁷⁶ As initially conceived in 1951, the educational facility would begin as a “nursery school for children who [were] beginning to show symptoms of emotional disturbance,” and therefore ineligible for regular nursery schools.⁷⁷⁷ Jeannette and her supporters hoped that by giving these children “care at the pre-school age they [would] become adjusted children, able to handle themselves and fit

⁷⁷⁴ Minority Report dated June 1, 1956, Folder 7, Box I: 70, Subject: Wage Advisory Board 1956, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁷⁵ See Industrial Commission Order No. 23 dated January 18, 1957, Folder 7, Box I: 70, Subject: Wage Advisory Board 1956, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁷⁶ See “Digest of Interviews,” Folder 6, Box I: 70, Subject: St. Paul’s Episcopal Day School, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁷⁷ Letter dated March 6, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers.

into group living” so they could enter public school at the appropriate time.⁷⁷⁸ Jeannette wanted a “small school, fifteen children or less, in some part of South Minneapolis.” She would employ a “graduate nursery school teacher, and a student assistant to work with her.” Jeannette would “handle the parent counseling.”⁷⁷⁹

Jeannette attempted to garner support for her plans from local Twin Cities’ psychiatrists and pediatricians, including Dr. Benjamin Spock;⁷⁸⁰ however, sometimes she was met with resistance. Dr. John Anderson of the Minnesota Department of Child Welfare “questioned” Jeannette’s “ability to do nursery school work” due to her age. At the end of a six-page summation of her interviews of various local pediatricians, educators, psychologists, and clergy and their respective feedback, Jeannette wrote, “Talked with Father [Daniel] Corrigan. He is pleased with general reaction and interest of [St. Paul-on-the-Hill] parish to the project but feels a valid objection has been made with reference to heavy equipment in the limited space of the parish house. Finis. Now I have to tell everyone that there will be nothing doing before next Fall – if then. It’s later than you think. I feel old and futile!”⁷⁸¹ Jeannette’s idea for the school simmered on the back burner for almost a decade, when, in 1961, the plans came to fruition. However, the school’s emphasis and support came from an entirely different direction.

⁷⁷⁸ “Proposal for a Nursery School,” Folder 1, Box I: 70, Subject: St. Paul’s Episcopal Day School Legal/Financial 1961-1962, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁷⁹ Letter dated June 13, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁸⁰ See letter dated April 9, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated April 13, 1951, Folder 1, Box I: 58, General Correspondence: Letters Sent January-June 1951, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁸¹ “Digest of Interviews,” Folder 6, Box I: 70, Subject: St. Paul’s Episcopal Day School, Piccard Family Papers. St. Paul-on-the-Hill parish had originally agreed to provide space for Jeannette’s preschool.

“For a long time,” Jeannette’s proposal began, “Bishop [Hamilton H.] Kellogg has been calling for the parishes in the Diocese to set up good day-time schools...[W]hether we like it or not, children are going to be taught something, either religion or secularism. Under the present interpretation of the separation of Church and State, religion is not taught in our public school system...If we want Christianity to be a part of everyone’s everyday life we must have religious centered schools.” Emphasizing the double threats of communism and governmental intrusion, Jeannette appealed to her fellow religionists: “If civilization is to survive the enslaving doctrine of Russian Communism and the degradation of Government ‘handouts’, our whole educational system needs a thorough-going overhauling.” “Children must be taught what is good,” Jeannette continued, “that God is good, and that religion cannot be separated from the State, or Business, or Education, or Charity. Children must learn to think, to distinguish good from bad, to recognize evil in sheep’s clothing...and also learn where they can go for strength and courage to choose the good.”⁷⁸²

St. Paul-on-the Hill parish had undergone renovation and now provided adequate space for the potential school; Jeannette appealed to members of the congregation for support. “Ordinary nursery ‘schools’ are a ‘dime a dozen,’” Jeannette implored, “but good ones are scarce. We hope that we can make ours a good one.”⁷⁸³ The vestry board voted to support the nursery school provided it was “financially independent” from the

⁷⁸² “Parochial School,” Folder 4, Box I: 70, Subject: St. Paul’s Episcopal Day School, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁸³ “Parochial School,” Folder 4, Box I: 70, Subject: St. Paul’s Episcopal Day School, Piccard Family Papers. In handwritten notes, Jeannette put forth her dream. See handwritten note beginning “Bishop Kellogg speaking,” Folder 3, Box I: 70, Subject: St. Paul’s Episcopal Day School, Piccard Family Papers.

church.⁷⁸⁴ On September 8, 1961, St. Paul's Episcopal Day School was incorporated under Minnesota law,⁷⁸⁵ and twelve children, ages three to five, enrolled for the fall term.⁷⁸⁶ Within months there were problems among the school, the vestry, and members of the congregation.

Jeannette intimated the problems in the November 1961 school report to the vestry. "The school is in many respects progressing well..." Jeannette reported, "and the parents, for the most part, are apparently satisfied. There has, however, been some friction within the School set-up of which you are doubtless aware. Some people think that these things can be kept within the inner circle but I am sure that you have felt rumblings. I am placed in the [am]bivalent position of owing loyalty to both the School Board and the Vestry..."⁷⁸⁷ Jean was not so subtle in laying out the difficulties brought on by meddling parents within the church. In "The Concept of a School," Jean chastised St. Paul-on-the-Hill mothers, stating, "It was – at any time – perfectly possible and legally as well as ethically above board for a dozen of St. Paul mothers to get together and organize a community baby sitting association.... This is, however, not what they did. They waited

⁷⁸⁴ "Saint Paul's Episcopal Church School," Folder 4, Box I: 70, Subject: St. Paul's Episcopal Day School, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁸⁵ Certificate of Incorporation, Folder 1, Box I: 70, Subject: St. Paul's Episcopal Day School Legal/Financial 1961-1962, Piccard Family Papers and "Articles of Incorporation," Folder 1, Box I: 70, Subject: St. Paul's Episcopal Day School Legal/Financial 1961-1962, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁸⁶ See Annual Report to the Board by the President, April 24, 1962, Folder 6, Box I: 70, Subject: St. Paul's Episcopal Day School, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁸⁷ November 14, 1961 report to the vestry, Folder 6, Box I: 70, Subject: St. Paul's Episcopal Day School, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette reported enrollment had grown to seventeen children; however, "the financial situation remain[ed] precarious..." See Ibid.

– for many years – till a Christian Day School at St. Paul-on-the-Hill was organized and then they came bumping in.”⁷⁸⁸

By January 1963, the “friction” remained, and in the report to the vestry Jeannette argued for maintaining the original governance of the school as outlined in the articles of incorporation and by-laws. “The present enrollment of the school is eleven children,” Jeannette reported, “of whom only three are parishioners of St. Paul’s...Two of these are members of the same family. This small parish enrollment is one important reason why the School should not be (as is advocated by certain persons) a Cooperative School managed by the parents. The parish parents would be in such a minority that the school would have no control by the Parish.”⁷⁸⁹ By spring 1964, Jeannette’s dream of a parochial school at St. Paul-on-the-Hill ended.⁷⁹⁰ Whatever the reason, be it financial instability, congregational in-fighting, or personality clashes, can not be definitively established; however, that was not Jeannette’s greatest concern or challenge.

Jean

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, Jean’s health continued to decline;⁷⁹¹ on January 28, 1963, his 79th birthday, Jean passed away “within five minutes of the time he

⁷⁸⁸ “The Concept of a School,” Folder 6, Box I: 70, Subject: St. Paul’s Episcopal Day School, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁸⁹ Report 6, January 24, 1963, Folder 6, Box I: 70, Subject: St. Paul’s Episcopal Day School, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁹⁰ See letter dated January 22, 1964, Folder 1, Box II: 64, Subject: Jeannette Order of St. Anne, Arlington Heights, MA, 1963-1971, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁹¹ According to Kathryn, her grandparents “earned a lot of money during the Depression on speaking tours so [Jeannette] cultivated the crafts and public grande dame persona which probably helped make money, but once [Jean] started having his little strokes she had to take over a lot of the speaking. And she was very afraid that people would find out about these stroke things and they would lose that source of income.” See Kathryn Piccard, transcript of interview with author, September 15, 2006, Athens, Ohio. Transcript in author’s possession.

was born.”⁷⁹² After Jean’s death Jeannette received condolences from many people, including Minnesota Senator Eugene J. McCarthy,⁷⁹³ but she left little in writing as to her thoughts and emotions regarding losing her partner. For almost forty-four years, Jeannette and Jean were inseparable; not geographically because they were often miles apart from each other. But whether it was in the realm of science and stratospheric work, or in the realms of religion and education, each was supportive of the other’s dreams and aspirations.⁷⁹⁴ And over the course of their marriage, Jeannette believed she had “become a good wife.” Several years before Jean’s passing Jeannette wrote to her friend, confidante, and former St. Paul-on-the-Hill rector, Bishop Daniel Corrigan. “Dear Father Dan,” she began, “In June, Jean will get another honorary degree...Just between you and me...I’ve read the last chapter of Proverbs for years always thinking how far short I fell of the criteria of a good wife. The other day I read it to Jean...and was startled by thinking I’d actually done it. Brash? The Christian ideal goes still further. Perhaps I can move on into that with the remaining days.”⁷⁹⁵

A final glimpse of Jeannette’s emotions following Jean’s death was provided by son Paul: “At my father’s funeral (closed casket) my mother put on a very brave face and I thought, ‘What an act.’ But it wasn’t an act. Had she wept and required assistance walking, that would have been an act. She didn’t cry until the following summer when

⁷⁹² P. 13, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁹³ Telegram dated January 29, 1963, Folder 6, Box II: 41, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Condolences on death of Jean Piccard 1963-1964, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated January 31, 1963, Folder 6, Box II: 41, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Condolences on death of Jean Piccard 1963-1964, Piccard Family Papers.

⁷⁹⁴ See Paul J. Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s bio-8,” personal email to author, January 4, 2006.

⁷⁹⁵ Letter dated January 25, 1959, Folder 8, Box II: 41, Subject: Corrigan, Daniel and Elizabeth 1958-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers and See Prov. 31.10-31 New Revised Standard Version.

she went alone to [their cabin on the] island and saw my father's hat on the table where he had tossed it on their way out the previous fall."⁷⁹⁶

Life After Jean

"The space agency hasn't risen to President [Lyndon B.] Johnson's distaff challenge by appointing a lady astronaut, but it has done the next best thing."⁷⁹⁷ So read one newspaper account of Jeannette's appointment as a consultant to the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA). In February 1964, Robert R. Gilruth⁷⁹⁸ and his wife Jean were in Minneapolis and called on Jeannette. Since both the director of the Manned Spacecraft Center (MSC) and his wife had been students under the tutelage of Jean,⁷⁹⁹ Jeannette presumed theirs was a "visit of condolence." "I was grateful," Jeannette recalled, "but Bob had more in mind than that. He invited me to go to Houston to see how I would like being a consultant for NASA. I thought 'what a nice way to give me a chance to visit the Manned Spacecraft Center.' Only after I was there I discovered he was serious and I actually became a consultant..."⁸⁰⁰

⁷⁹⁶ Paul J. Piccard, paulpic@juno.com "Re: Mother's bio-9," personal email to author, January 10, 2006. Paul continued, "The island clearly had a sacramental value in [my parents'] lives." See Ibid.

⁷⁹⁷ "Dr. Piccard Gets Space Position," *Washington (D.C.) Star*, April 14, 1964, n.p. Two excellent studies of women and NASA astronaut programs are Bettyann Holtzmann Kevles, *Almost Heaven: The Story of Women in Space* (New York: Basic Books, 2003) and Margaret A. Weitekamp, *Right Stuff, Wrong Sex: America's First Women in Space Program* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

⁷⁹⁸ Jeannette affectionately referred to Gilruth as "the Boss." See letter dated September 7, 1969, Folder 2, Box II: 77, Subject: State dinner honoring Apollo 8 astronauts, Los Angeles, Calif., 1969, Piccard Family Papers. Author notes the LOC guide should read Apollo 11.

⁷⁹⁹ See National Air and Space Museum (NASM) Oral History Project, Gilruth #2, Interviewee: Dr. Robert Gilruth, Interviewers: Dr. David DeVorkin, Ms. Linda Ezell, and Mr. Martin Collins, May 14, 1986, <http://www.nasm.si.edu/research/dsh/TRANSCPT/GILRUTH2.HTM>, July 20, 2007, pp. 1-2, 5 and "Second University Radio Broadcast," Folder 6, Box I: 64, Subject: Interviews, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁰⁰ P. 14, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

Jeannette's humor, as well as that of her friends and neighbors, was evident during NASA's standard background investigation for employment. "The F.B.I., of course, went to the church [and] to the university," Jeannette recalled, "and they asked all of the neighbors around the block [about my background]. One neighbor said, 'Well, she chops wood for the fun of it.' And pointed to a great pile of wood that hadn't been chopped at all; it had been sawed... And then they went further down the block and a neighbor said, 'Well, she was learning to ski last summer.' 'Ski? At 69?' Of course, they didn't tell them that I hadn't succeeded... And then they came next door and Dr. Schofield was answering the questions. And they said, 'How is she physically?' And he said, 'Irresistible.'"⁸⁰¹ Jeannette also enjoyed confusing a NASA secretary when she marked both "native born" and "naturalized" on the employment application.⁸⁰²

However, Jeannette's employment was serious; according to historian Bettyann H. Kevles, an "important NASA administrator knew that the space program needed popular support."⁸⁰³ After Soviet Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's successful flight in spring 1961, President John F. Kennedy raised the space-race stakes by challenging Americans and NASA to land a man on the moon and safely return him to Earth by the end of the

⁸⁰¹ P. 9A-t, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1974, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁰² According to son Donald, the secretary thought Jeannette was "nuts." See Donald Piccard, transcript of interview with author, December 7, 2005, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Transcript in author's possession.

⁸⁰³ Kevles, *Almost Heaven*, p. 41. Kevles' single reference to Jeannette is as follows: "In 1965, at least one NASA official thought highly enough of women pilots to ask Janette [sic] Piccard, a famous Belgian [sic] balloonist and aviation hero, to consult at the Marshall Space Center. He [Gilruth] wanted her to talk up NASA's accomplishments. 'You're famous, the people still remember what you did, and it can help our program'... Perhaps he sensed that her support would win women voters to the cause of space exploration." See *Ibid.*

decade.⁸⁰⁴ Scholar Margaret Weitekamp argues that both Kennedy and Johnson “wanted to make sure that female voters felt connected enough to the space effort to support massive allocations of taxpayer funds.”⁸⁰⁵ Jeannette was well-known and provided an important connection between past balloon stratospheric flights and the current Gemini and Apollo space programs.

NASA’s official news release stated, “Dr. Jeannette Piccard...long a participant with her husband, the late Dr. Jean Felix Piccard...in research in the outer limits of the Earth’s atmosphere, will advise Dr. Robert R. Gilruth, Manned Spacecraft Center (MSC) Director, and members of his staff in the development of a program that will keep the nation’s scientific community and the general public informed of events and results of manned space flight development at MSC. She will assist in assuring that the program has the proper content to maintain effective communication with the country’s scientists and the public.” The release highlighted Jeannette’s qualifications, including her work as an “experienced scientific researcher,” her “long association with the world’s scientific circles,” and her “broad experience in speaking to and writing for scientific groups, as well as the general public.” In addition, Jeannette understood the “interest and needs of the scientific community and the public.” The end of the release quoted Gilruth: “Since the opportunity has arisen to gain the use of Dr. Piccard’s outstanding talents, we wish to take full advantage of it.”⁸⁰⁶ David DeVorkin states Jeannette accepted Gilruth’s offer

⁸⁰⁴ See “Women’s Role In America’s Space Program,” April 13, 1966, Folder 5, Box II: 85, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Manuscripts and Typescripts 1913-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁰⁵ Weitekamp, *Right Stuff, Wrong Sex*, p. 134.

⁸⁰⁶ NASA news release dated April 9, 1964, Folder 9, Box II: 60, Subject: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers and see NASA Educational Programs and Services brochure, Folder 7, Box II: 60, Subject: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

because she “wished to preserve the memory of her husband as a man dedicated to the pursuit of science very much in the spirit of the wonders Apollo would bring to mankind.”⁸⁰⁷ Jean’s memory was certainly one reason Jeannette agreed to Gilruth’s offer; however, Jeannette was genuinely excited and challenged by the opportunity presented her. In a thank you note to her Minnesota congressman, Jeannette wrote, “I am very flattered by my appointment to the Manned Spacecraft Center and hope that I will be able to contribute something worthwhile...”⁸⁰⁸ However, financial considerations also played a role. Jeannette recalled that the NASA employment “raised my social security by a tremendous amount.”⁸⁰⁹ And for the next six years she earnestly performed her NASA responsibilities.

Wanting to familiarize herself with research being completed by NASA’s scientists, Jeannette “attempt[ed] to uncover” their articles in recent journals. “I have spent a couple of hours in the Technical Library,” Jeannette reported to her immediate supervisor, “[and] I have found that the Technical Library has no collection of either preprints or reprints of publications in scientific journals made by members of the staff. They have no file of such publications.” Jeannette suggested staff members provide “a list of their publications and invite them to donate [copies of the articles] so that they may be available in the library for use by other staff members.”⁸¹⁰

⁸⁰⁷ David H. DeVorkin, Race to the Stratosphere: Manned Scientific Ballooning in America (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1989), p. 320.

⁸⁰⁸ Letter dated May 4, 1964, Folder 9, Box:II 60, Subject: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁰⁹ See p. 10A-t, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1974, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸¹⁰ Letter dated April 30, 1964, Folder 9, Box II: 60, Subject: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

Jeannette regularly critiqued symposiums, lectures, and demonstrations to “evaluate [their] effectiveness in communicating NASA’s programs to educators and the scientific community.”⁸¹¹ One of NASA’s popular exhibits was the Spacemobile, a large, mobile museum that traveled from place to place. However, Jeannette showed the Spacemobile⁸¹² demonstration no mercy, submitting a typed, two-and-a-half, single-spaced report. “The Spacemobile lecture is good,” the critique began. “It’s most serious defect lies in a certain attitude of flippancy which is probably derived from a somewhat forced effort to be witty.” Jeannette’s initial criticism focused on the definition of the beginning of the Space Age. “The author,” Jeannette began, “considers only the development of the rocket, the propulsive force used to carry the vehicle into space. Without a pressurized vehicle capable of sustaining life beyond the limits of normal atmosphere, no manned space flights would be possible regardless of propulsive power.” Jeannette suggested the “development 34 years ago of the pioneer space vehicle invented by Jean and Auguste Piccard approximately 60 years ago can, in the minds of some, constitute as much of a beginning as Dr. [Robert] Goddard’s rocket research of 20 years ago...and in no way diminishes the importance of...Goddard’s work.” Jeannette had the temerity to challenge the “20 year” timeframe, stating, “Shouldn’t this be more than 20 years? An accurate or more approximate date would be better.” She concluded this particular criticism with: “Limited to balloons as a lifting force, the space vehicle would

⁸¹¹ Memorandum dated April 20, 1965, Folder 10, Box II: 60, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸¹² According to NASA’s Educational Programs and Services pamphlet, the “spacemobile lecture-demonstration program” was designed to “provide a systematic means of filling requests from schools and community groups for lectures and demonstrations in their assembly halls and classrooms about NASA activities.” See NASA Educational Programs and Services, Folder 7, Box II: 60, Subject: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

never go beyond the gravitational pull of Earth. The break, however, between the non-pressurized and pressurized vehicle is more clean-cut for manned space travel than the rocket development. This can be called, of course, only a prejudiced, personal point of view.”⁸¹³

Several months later Jeannette continued the criticism of the Spacemobile demonstration, arguing for the necessity of a lecture “gauged to University level intelligence with more discussion of the problems that have been solved; not only with respect to the development of the rocket, but also something more about the capsule and problems on environment, cabin pressurization, air regeneration, temperature control [and] re-entry heating...” “I have found,” Jeannette informed her supervisor, “people of all ages very interested in looking at a small scrap of the burned heat shield from [Scott] Carpenter’s [Mercury] ship.”⁸¹⁴

Jeannette did not hesitate to put forth ideas that might help space travel; sometimes foreshadowing future NASA developments. “I wish Jean were here,” she wrote Gilruth, “to tell me whether or not my reasoning is completely idiotic or intelligent! What do you think?” Jeannette proceeded to discuss the possibility of attaching balloons to the Gemini capsule. “If we design a balloon with a partial parachute rig...they should open sufficiently to start heating the air in the balloons artificially.” “Once hot,” Jeannette argued, “the air would stay hot in the sun...A 700,000 cubic foot hot air aerostat constructed to superheat in the sun will not only stop the descent of Gemini at 50,000

⁸¹³ Letter dated August 31, 1964, Folder 9, Box II: 60, Subject: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸¹⁴ Letter dated December 14, 1964, Folder 9, Box II: 60, Subject: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

feet, but will keep it afloat and transform it into a controlled aerostat, capable of an ‘egg-shell’ landing in a pre-selected area.”⁸¹⁵ NASA did not adopt this idea for the Gemini and Apollo programs, but Jeannette’s vision of an “egg-shell” landing was a precursor to the glide-plane landing of the space shuttle flights.

On the anniversary of her initial visit to the MSC, Jeannette wrote its director: “I want to thank you for the fantastic experience it has been for me. I’ve enjoyed every minute of it but most of all I’ve had a tremendously good time being made to feel important.”⁸¹⁶

Jeannette was an extremely popular speaker, lecturing to many diverse groups and organizations around the country.⁸¹⁷ The South Bay Council of Girl Scouts sent the following to Gilruth: “Thank you for sending Dr. Jeannette Piccard to Southern California for the recent Space Career Conference...[Her] keynote address and the film presentation of her record stratosphere balloon flight were indeed an inspiration, not only to the 300 Girl Scouts who attended the conference, but also to the Scouting adults and their invited guests from the aero-space industry...” The council’s public relations director was “confident” Jeannette’s “message [would] stimulate increased interest in the exploration of space-science careers and further [their] own Space-Science Scouting Program.”⁸¹⁸

To the Moon

⁸¹⁵ Letter dated May 4, 1964, Folder 9, Box II: 60, Subject: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸¹⁶ Letter dated March 13, 1965, Folder 2, Box II: 57, Subject: Gilruth, Robert R. and Jean 1964-1972, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁸¹⁷ See letter dated March 13, 1965, Folder 2, Box II: 57, Subject: Gilruth, Robert R. and Jean 1964-1972, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁸¹⁸ Letter dated April 6, 1965, Folder 10, Box II: 60, Subject: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated December 11, 1966, Folder 1, Box II: 61, Correspondence: 1966-1970, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

Nineteen-sixty-nine was an exciting year for many Americans, especially those affiliated with NASA. After years of Mercury, Gemini and Apollo space flights, reaching the late President Kennedy's goal of landing a man on the moon was in sight. It was a busy year for Jeannette;⁸¹⁹ not only did she attempt to witness as many Apollo launches as possible,⁸²⁰ but the idea of the moon shot caught the imagination of many and she was in demand for speaking engagements.⁸²¹ The year's highlight was the July flight of Apollo 11 when Neil A. Armstrong, Michael Collins and Edwin E. Aldrin journeyed to the moon. Aldrin and Armstrong landed the lunar module at the *Sea of Tranquility* and with "one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind," walked on the lunar surface while Collins orbited overhead. The trio returned safely to earth and immediately became international celebrities. Jeannette was not present at the historic launch due to budget concerns;⁸²² however, she was able to finagle a "coveted"⁸²³ invitation to President Richard M. Nixon's state dinner to honor the nation's latest space heroes.

⁸¹⁹ See letter dated April 6, 1969, Folder 2, Box II: 61, Correspondence: 1966-1970, n.d., National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸²⁰ See letter dated July 28, 1969, Folder 1, Box II: 64, Subject: Jeannette Order of St Anne, Arlington Heights, MA, 1963-1971, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated June 2, 1969, Folder 2, Box II: 61, Correspondence: 1966-1970, n.d., National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸²¹ See letter dated February 12, 1969, Folder 2, Box II: 61, Correspondence: 1966-1970, n.d., National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers; see letter dated March 18, 1969, Folder 2, Box II: 61, Correspondence: 1966-1970, n.d., National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers; see letter dated March 25, 1969, Folder 2, Box II: 61, Correspondence: 1966-1970, n.d., National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers, respectively.

⁸²² See letter dated June 9, 1969, Folder 2, Box II: 61, Correspondence: 1966-1970, n.d., National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸²³ "Moonmen Welcomed Home," *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 1969, Sec. G., p. 4, Folder 3, Box II: 77, Subject: State dinner honoring Apollo 8 astronauts, Los Angeles, Calif., 1969, Piccard Family Papers. The Library of Congress misidentified this file; it should refer to Apollo 11.

Jeannette was part of the “glittering array of 1,440 celebrity dinner guests”⁸²⁴ gathered in Los Angeles for what newspapers touted as “the dinner of the decade, certainly; the dinner of the century, in all probability.”⁸²⁵ Bea Anderson, Women’s Editor for the Newport Harbor Daily Pilot reported, “Dr. Jeannette Piccard...matriarch of the balloonist family and a balloonist herself, arrived in Newport Beach for a very special reason...she has received and accepted an invitation to the President’s dinner tonight...” “‘I didn’t go out and buy a new gown,’ Jeannette [explained] to Anderson, ‘I just didn’t have time. The invitation arrived Saturday. I had to get to the bank vault Monday so I could wear the family jewels and then catch a plane Tuesday.’”⁸²⁶

Seventy-five-year-old Jeannette’s thrill attending the prestigious dinner was evident in letters to friends. “It was really a fun party in spite of its size,” she told Florence Rumbaugh.⁸²⁷ “I didn’t show on T-V because I was on the ‘second balcony’ and only the main floor got into the...cameras. My table was #50, right at the railing, overlooking the ‘first balcony’ that had two rows of tables and the ground floor. If I had only brought opera glasses with me, I could have seen everyone. Treasury Secretary and Mrs. Kennedy were at my table with two young couples, Michael Sarnoff (RCA) and Buddy Rogers with an indefinite type female...[Rogers and I] had an amusing flirtation...Art Linkletter made a point of coming to speak to me as soon as the dinner was over. Werner [sic] von

⁸²⁴ Ted Thackrey Jr., “Glittering Party for Astronauts,” Los Angeles Times, August 14, 1969, p. 1, Folder 3, Box II: 77, Subject: State dinner honoring Apollo 8 astronauts, Los Angeles, Calif., 1969, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸²⁵ “Moonmen Welcomed Home,” Los Angeles Times, August 17, 1969, Sec. G., p. 4, Folder 3, Box II: 77, Subject: State dinner honoring Apollo 8 astronauts, Los Angeles, Calif., 1969, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸²⁶ Bea Anderson, “Gilt Edge List Grows: More Newport Names on State Banquet List,” Newport Harbor Daily Pilot (Newport Beach, CA), August 13, 1969, Sec. 1, p. 1, Folder 3, Box II: 77, Subject: State dinner honoring Apollo 8 astronauts, Los Angeles, Calif., 1969, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸²⁷ Letter dated August 19, 1969, Folder 2, Box II: 77, Subject: State dinner honoring Apollo 8 astronauts, Los Angeles, Calif., 1969, Piccard Family Papers.

Braun who hates my guts was, I think, at Art's table..."⁸²⁸ To another friend Jeannette explained, "I twice caught a glimpse of the Boss and Mrs. Gilruth and was delighted to see...President [Nixon] stop to speak to him when they were table hopping...I saw many of the astronauts, John Glenn to young ones...and Jimmy Doolittle whom I have not seen since the days when Jean and I used to go [to aviation] meetings in New York..."

Jeannette concluded, saying, "There were a quantity of people there like Admiral [Tex] Settle and His Excellency, Cardinal MacIntyre whom I would have liked to see if I had known they were there, but with 1440 people around, I'm glad I saw anyone. It was a big jam but I did have a good time."⁸²⁹

Along with the other NASA employees, Jeannette received a "billfold size" replica of the plaque left on the moon by the Apollo 11 crew. Gilruth wrote, "The successful landing of man on the Moon and his safe return to Earth is truly one of the most historic accomplishments of this decade. I am sure you are justifiably proud to have been a part of this great national achievement."⁸³⁰ Jeannette responded to "the Boss" with heartfelt emotions: "I am indeed proud and happy to have been able to have some small part in this fantastic achievement. My sincere thanks...for having made my continuing association with the Manned Spacecraft Center (MSC) possible."⁸³¹

⁸²⁸ Letter dated September 9, 1969, Folder 2, Box II: 77, Subject: State dinner honoring Apollo 8 astronauts, Los Angeles, Calif., 1969, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸²⁹ Letter dated September 7, 1969, Folder 2, Box II: 77, Subject: State dinner honoring Apollo 8 astronauts, Los Angeles, Calif., 1969, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸³⁰ Letter dated August 20, 1969, Folder 2, Box II: 77, Subject: State dinner honoring Apollo 8 astronauts, Los Angeles, Calif., 1969, Piccard Family Papers. Gilruth continued, "I am well aware of the personal contributions which MSC employees have made and, with this in mind, I am enclosing a memento of the lunar landing...Please accept my thanks for the magnificent support you and other members of our team have given the Apollo program." See Ibid.

⁸³¹ Letter dated September 7, 1969, Folder 2, Box II: 77, Subject: State dinner honoring Apollo 8 astronauts, Los Angeles, Calif., 1969, Piccard Family Papers.

However, Jeannette's official relationship with NASA and her position within the MSC was coming to an end. In January 1970, Gilruth informed her that with the "first landing on the moon behind us and with the inevitable readjustments now taking place, we are having to reduce our commitments in a major way." Her contract was not being renewed.⁸³² Jeannette received the news philosophically, telling her former student and current friend, "I am glad to have had a part in the Space Program for the past six years. Thank you for having given me an opportunity to serve...It has given me the feeling that I was doing something important and worthwhile. It has been stimulating, exciting, and just plain fun. It has kept me alive and 'young.' Though I have often wished that I had the skills that would have made me more useful, I've enjoyed every minute."⁸³³

Feminist Consciousness and Space

Perhaps Jeannette lacked certain skills "to make her more useful"; however, there were women scientists and aviators who potentially possessed necessary astronaut skills. But Jeannette never came out in favor of women astronauts while working for "the Boss" and NASA. In a speech entitled, "Woman's Role in America's Space Program," Jeannette acknowledged women had an "important role in the space program." "From the Girl Friday to the technician, the scientist and engineer," Jeannette noted, "women have

⁸³² Letter dated January 6, 1970, Folder 3, Box II: 61, Correspondence: 1966-1970, n.d., National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers. During the 1960s, American society and economy experienced turmoil. At the time of Apollo 11, the Vietnam War dominated President Nixon's foreign policy, and issues of poverty, hunger, and inadequate education were foremost on the domestic scene. Historian David C. Whitney argues that Nixon, "partly in response to criticism" about his handling of domestic affairs, "reduced the [NASA] budget for future space explorations, although he pledged that the program would continue in the 1970s with a 'grand tour' of all the planets in the solar system by unmanned spacecraft and with the development of an atomic-powered spaceship." See David C. Whitney and Robin Vaughn Whitney, *The American Presidents*, 8th ed. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Book and Music Clubs, Inc., 1993), p. 341.

⁸³³ Letter dated January 9, 1970, Folder 3, Box II: 61, Correspondence: 1966-1970, n.d., National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

taken their place alongside men in the space age.” Women were in “almost every other category of space employment,” but Jeannette reasoned there were no female astronauts because “we [NASA] have had no women applicants who qualified in every respect.”⁸³⁴ It is unknown if Jeannette had knowledge of attempts being made by women to become astronauts and the barriers encountered from both NASA and Congress. A compelling argument that she did is that in 1966, Jeannette received the American Astronautical Society’s first W. Randolph Lovelace award for “outstanding contributions over the years to the field of space flight.” “Honored” by the award, Jeannette’s acceptance letter stated, Dr. Lovelace is a man whom my husband and I have known and respected since he was a young doctor.⁸³⁵ In summer 1961, Lovelace “invited twenty-five women pilots to take his foundation’s astronaut tests. The privately funded program demonstrated that women would be well suited for space travel.”⁸³⁶ At a Heritage Day celebration in Dearborn, Michigan, that included a “marker ceremony” honoring the 1934 stratospheric flight, Jeannette told reporters she believed “the sky is no limit for inquisitive mankind. I just hope we reach the moon while I’m still around to read about it. I’d like to go myself, but I wrenched my back jumping four feet from a dock to my boat recently and the doctors won’t let me fly anymore.”⁸³⁷ At the May 20 dinner honoring Jeannette, the guest speaker

⁸³⁴ “Woman’s Role in America’s Space Program,” dated April 13, 1966, Folder 5, Box II: 85, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Manuscripts and Typescripts 1913-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. 2.

⁸³⁵ Letter dated March 25, 1966, Folder 4, Box II: 39, Subject: American Astronautical Society, 1966-1968, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸³⁶ See Weitekamp, *Right Stuff, Wrong Sex*, p. 2.

⁸³⁷ See Earl B. Dowdy, “Mrs. Piccard, 70, Wishes She Could Go to the Moon,” *The Detroit News*, May 20, 1965, page 8-B, Folder 6, Box II: 57, Subject: Heritage Day commemorating Piccard stratospheric flight, Dearborn, Mich., 1965, Piccard Family Papers.

was Jane B. Hart, wife of Michigan Senator Philip A. Hart.⁸³⁸ In 1962, Hart, herself an aviator who learned to fly during World War Two, unsuccessfully advocated Congress for NASA's inclusion of women astronauts.⁸³⁹ One would have to believe that Jeannette and Jane Hart discussed women and the space program at this event.

Jeannette's rationale appeared disconnected: long an advocate of women serving in the military (the pipeline for astronauts), it would be logical for Jeannette to agitate for women to become astronauts. However, in 1966, Jeannette was content to state that the NASA space program merely "require[d]...thousands of informed and dedicated women citizens who [would] support the national space effort and help to inform their neighbors, friends, and fellow-citizens of the benefits to be derived from the technological advancements achieved..."⁸⁴⁰

Sexism was acceptable in the culture of the astronauts. Historian Bettyann Kelves writes, "Michael Collins, the third member of the *Apollo 11* crew, had apparently been daydreaming while waiting for his colleagues...Armstrong...and...Aldrin to return from the Moon. He later wrote, 'the possibilities of weightlessness are there for the ingenious to exploit. No need to carry bras into space, that's for sure. Imagine a spacecraft of the future, with a crew of a thousand ladies, off with Alpha Centauri, with two thousand breasts bobbing beautifully and quivering delightfully in response to their every

⁸³⁸ See "Testimonial Dinner for Dr. Jeannette Piccard Program," Folder 6, Box II: 57, Subject: Heritage Day commemorating Piccard stratospheric flight, Dearborn, Mich., 1965, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸³⁹ See Weitekamp, *Right Stuff, Wrong Sex*, pp. 51, 143-148.

⁸⁴⁰ "Women's Role in America's Space Program," Folder 5, Box II: 85, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Manuscripts and Typescripts 1913-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. This was in marked contrast to Geraldine "Jerrie" Cobb who "crisscrossed the country, speaking out for female astronauts." See Weitekamp, *Right Stuff, Wrong Sex*, p. 132. Weitekamp devotes Chapter Six to Cobb's efforts.

weightless movement...and I am commander of the craft, and it is Saturday morning and time for inspection, naturally...”⁸⁴¹

Jeannette thoroughly enjoyed her NASA work; she was not going to jeopardize her standing within its community by going against its culture. It was one thing to criticize symposiums and lecture-demonstrations; it was something entirely different to challenge the gender bias of America’s astronaut program and the newest space heroes. Jeannette’s willingness to toe the company line was demonstrated as early as 1965. Commenting to Gilruth on her recent trip to Los Angeles, Jeannette reported: “My being there...just after the Russian [spacewalk]⁸⁴² flight generated a lot of interest in the ‘first woman astronaut’ and one commentator in introducing my taped interview remarked that I was the most interviewed woman in L.A. that year.” Pleased with her time in the spotlight, Jeannette told Gilruth, “I wanted to point out that if there had not been delays caused by strikes our men would have been there months before the Russians but I was afraid to appear anti-union, so I said nothing on this.”⁸⁴³

In 1969, Jeannette’s feminist appraisal of NASA’s male-only astronaut program began to surface in public. Answering a young woman’s inquiry into being a space explorer, Jeannette wrote, “When I was your age and girls talked about becoming lawyers, people mockingly said: ‘Oh! You want to be a lawyerette?’ So any woman who becomes an astronaut will be an astronaut, not an astronautess or an astronautette...Don’t let them

⁸⁴¹ See Kelves, *Almost Heaven*, p. 45.

⁸⁴² On March 18, 1965, Soviet cosmonaut Alexis Leonov successfully completed the first spacewalk. See http://www.cite-sciences.fr/english/ala_cite/exhibitions/cosmomania/evenements/Leonov-pieton-espace.php.

⁸⁴³ Letter dated March 30, 1965, Folder 2, Box II: 57, Subject: Gilruth, Robert R. and Jean 1964-1972, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

bully you with silly names. The job has a title and that title is not affected by the sex of the person filling the qualifications.” Jeannette reminded the inquirer that anyone’s chances of becoming an astronaut were “slim” since the number was small compared to the nation’s total population. Jeannette’s advice was direct: “Get your science and math with top grades and know more than you are expected to know...Work, not to pass an exam but to learn.” Victorian-raised, seventy-four-year-old Jeannette closed with advice that had served her well in life, albeit with a 1960s twist: “Since you are a girl, be sure you don’t mimic boy’s manners. Be a girl and enjoy being a girl. Be able to pick a boy up and throw him across the street but look as though you needed help to open a car door. Dig?” Jeannette’s closing paragraph read, “...Have you thought of applying for admission to the Air Force Academy? Entry is by political appointment and there is a U.S. law against discrimination on the basis of sex. Good luck!”⁸⁴⁴ In an August 1969 interview with the Seattle Times, Jeannette stated, “Women belong in space...But...only when the women of this country want an astronaut will we have one. As long as women believe men are better we won’t have them.”⁸⁴⁵

In June 1970, no longer obligated by a consultant contract with NASA, Jeannette stated at a news conference that “women [were] being discriminated against in the U.S. space program.” According to the report, Jeannette “insisted that women [were] as well equipped to be astronauts as men.” “At first women were not accepted in the space

⁸⁴⁴ Letter dated July 31, 1969, Folder 3, Box II: 61, Correspondence: 1966-1970, n.d., National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette was referring to Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. However, the Air Force Academy was a separate matter. President Gerald R. Ford signed legislation in October 1975, eliminating the gender barrier; the first women entered the academy in June 1976.

⁸⁴⁵ “‘Women Belong In Space,’ Says Balloonist,” The Seattle (WA) Times, August 2, 1969, p. 5, Folder 8, Box II: 60, Clippings: 1957-1969, n.d., National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

program,” Jeannette explained, “because they were told they could not pass the physical or they were not scientists...Now women can pass both those qualifications but supposedly are not ‘exceptional’ scientists and still are not accepted into the space program.”⁸⁴⁶ By 1970, Jeannette’s internal strength for combating discrimination, whatever the arena, was coming from an unlikely source: her determination for women’s full inclusion in the ministries of the Episcopal Church, including the office of priest. “Perhaps the respect with which I was treated everywhere except in the Church,” Jeannette recalled, “contributed to my rebellion.”⁸⁴⁷ And the social rebelliousness of the 1960s provided Jeannette support from unexpected allies.

Feminist Consciousness and the Episcopal Church

Several priests were instrumental in Jeannette’s life; however, none more so than the Reverend Daniel Corrigan.⁸⁴⁸ During the late 1940s, Father Corrigan became rector at Jeannette’s church, St. Paul-on-the-Hill, and one day encouraged her to join the church’s altar guild. Years later Jeannette remembered her response as one of shock: “I had become so imbued with the subordinate position of a woman in the church that at the time I was afraid to touch the sacred vessels or step inside the alter [sic] rail to change the candles on the altar.” In 1971, Jeannette was still a member of the altar guild; however, during Corrigan’s twelve year tenure she also became the third woman to serve on St.

⁸⁴⁶ “1st Spacewoman Charges Discrimination,” Duluth (MN) News-Tribune, June 25, 1970, p.3, Folder 3, Box II: 61, Correspondence: 1966-1970, n.d., National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁴⁷ P. 14, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁴⁸ Even after Corrigan was consecrated bishop and moved to Colorado, Jeannette sought his advice and counsel in matters large and small. See letter dated December 13, 1966, Folder 8, Box II: 41, Subject: Corrigan, Daniel and Elizabeth 1958-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

Paul's vestry.⁸⁴⁹ Corrigan's encouragement touched a latent dream in Jeannette. "My activity in the Church increased," she later wrote, "at the same time as my rebelliousness. I participated in study groups, parish meetings, Diocesan Conventions, and women's meetings."⁸⁵⁰

Jeannette served on the selection committee for Father Corrigan's replacement, and though she "strongly recommended" Father T. Ronald Taylor to the vestry,⁸⁵¹ it did not take long for the new rector and his parishioner to butt heads. Initially, it was over the Episcopal Day School,⁸⁵² but it evolved into theological differences, including ideas about women's roles in the church. Tensions Jeannette felt toward Taylor grew to the point where she sought out another priest to make her confessions. She told the Reverend Mother at Saint Anne's Covent that she had "telephoned...Father Carty...the negroe [sic] priest in St. Paul..."⁸⁵³ "When I got [him] on the telephone," she reported, "I told him that I was in a bind, could not make my [Easter] confession to Father Taylor and would he hear me..." Initially, Carty was not convinced, but eventually he agreed to hear Jeannette's confession. Jeannette felt compelled to share her experience: "I went into the church without any feeling...It was just going to be another confession. When I knelt, we were enclosed in a cone. It was not light and yet we two were surrounded. Separated from the rest of the church by something that emanated from a point in front of and above

⁸⁴⁹ Pp. 12-13, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁵⁰ P. 14, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁵¹ P. 13, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁵² See letter dated September 15, 1965, Folder 6, Box II: 40, Subject: Carty, Denzil A. 1965-1971, n.d.

⁸⁵³ Letter dated July 12, 1965, Folder 1, Box II: 64, Subject File: Jeannette Piccard Order of St. Anne's, Arlington Heights, MA., 1963-1971, Piccard Family Papers.

Father Carty... We two were there surrounded, enclosed, held close in the presence of God...”⁸⁵⁴ Although Jeannette did not transfer her church membership at this time, she started attending more services and functions at Carty’s church, St. Philip’s. And with Father Carty’s support and encouragement,⁸⁵⁵ Jeannette began to “realize that the way people discriminated against black people, Jews, and southern European immigrants was like the discrimination she suffered from.”⁸⁵⁶ Emboldened, Jeannette started to challenge Episcopal Church canons and traditions.

Lay Reader

“Dear Bishop Kellogg,” Jeannette began a May 1967 letter, “Following our brief conversation... I now ask to be a licensed Lay Reader in the Diocese of Minnesota so that I may, when possible, participate more fully and with greater responsibility in the worship of the Church.”⁸⁵⁷ So began months of correspondence between Jeannette and her bishop. The door had been cracked open during an annual meeting of the Episcopal Church Women (ECW), when someone asked whether or not a woman could be a Lay Reader. The response was in the affirmative requiring a letter from the applicant and a letter of recommendation from her rector.⁸⁵⁸ However, it was not quite that simple: Jeannette’s request required Bishop Kellogg to investigate the matter more closely.

⁸⁵⁴ Letter dated July 12, 1965, Folder 1, Box II: 64, Subject File: Jeannette Piccard Order of St. Anne’s, Arlington Heights, MA., 1963-1971, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁵⁵ See letter dated May 3, 1967, Folder 1, Box II: 64, Subject: Jeannette Order of St. Anne, Arlington, MA., 1963-1971, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette met Father Powell during her Bryn Mawr days, and sought his advice throughout the 1930s. See Chapter One and Chapter Three.

⁸⁵⁶ See Paul J. Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s bio-3,” personal email to author, November 3, 2005.

⁸⁵⁷ Letter dated May 15, 1967, Folder 7, Collection P2522, Piccard-Kellogg Correspondence 1967, Manuscript Division, Jeannette Piccard Papers of the Minnesota Historical Society.

⁸⁵⁸ P. 14, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

Kellogg asked the Secretary of the Executive Council, Charles M. Guilbert, if he knew of any “instance where a woman [had] been licensed as a Lay Reader?” Kellogg was versed in the lay reader canon that began with “competent male person...,” he told Guilbert, “[but] in this day of ferment and revolution in the Church, [he] should not be at all surprised if it might be possible, although not canonical, to license a competent lay person (regardless of sex) as a Lay Reader.” Kellogg confirmed that he had a “competent and qualified” candidate in Jeannette, and “insofar as [he could] see, the fact that she [was] a female [was] the only possible barrier.” “What gives?” Kellogg asked.⁸⁵⁹ Guilbert informed Kellogg the canons allowed for the licensing of a woman as Lay Reader “in isolated areas, when no ordained Clergyman or male Lay Reader [was] available...” The “isolation” was to be determined by the bishop.⁸⁶⁰

After six weeks with no reply, Jeannette contacted Kellogg and inquired into the status of her request. She also brought up the idea of her giving a sermon after the Evening Prayer if he would also license her to preach.⁸⁶¹ “I have been thinking a great deal...,” Kellogg assured her, “because to my knowledge there never has been a lady Lay Reader in the Diocese of Minnesota, and once a precedent has been set, it is very difficult to make a change.” Knowing the canonical exception, Kellogg “suspect[ed] that Piccard Island [was] fairly isolated”; therefore, he “issued” Jeannette a Lay Reader’s license “for the months of July and August with a stipulation that the privileges of [the] license be

⁸⁵⁹ Letter dated May 23, 1967, Folder 7, Collection P2522, Piccard-Kellogg Correspondence 1967, Manuscript Division, Jeannette Piccard Papers of the Minnesota Historical Society.

⁸⁶⁰ Letter dated May 25, 1967, Folder 7, Collection P2522, Piccard-Kellogg Correspondence 1967, Manuscript Division, Jeannette Piccard Papers of the Minnesota Historical Society.

⁸⁶¹ Letter dated July 3, 1967, Folder 7, Collection P2522, Piccard-Kellogg Correspondence 1967, Manuscript Division, Jeannette Piccard Papers of the Minnesota Historical Society.

only exercised for the purpose of reading Evening Prayer on Sunday evenings at Lake Vermillion.” In no way was she to preach at Lake Vermillion, nor was she to be a Lay Reader at any non-isolated church.⁸⁶² Jeannette thanked the bishop for the license, and indicated she would send for the Lay Reader’s sermons. “I know that usually a Lay Reader is not permitted to preach,” she opined, “but most of your Lay Readers are not professional public speakers. I thought there would be no harm in asking.” She then pushed the line a bit further: “Is there any objection to my leading a short ‘discussion’ session? I know that I am innately a ‘rebellious woman’ but I want to be a ‘good girl.’” Jeannette closed the letter stating, “Thank you for accepting me for a few short weeks at least as a person.”⁸⁶³

Bishop Kellogg acquiesced to Jeannette’s discussion proposal, perhaps because he was “genuinely...grateful for [her] acceptance and understanding of the Canon pertaining to lady Layreaders [sic].”⁸⁶⁴ But he misread Jeannette’s convictions. “Please don’t be deceived by my ‘acceptance – of the Canon pertaining to lady Layreaders,’ she proclaimed. “I accept, by the Grace of God, what cannot be changed and I don’t think the canon can be changed this year. However, I do not accept the immutability of the canon, and I trust that you will do everything possible to get it changed.”⁸⁶⁵

⁸⁶² Letter dated July 13, 1967, Folder 7, Collection P2522, Piccard-Kellogg Correspondence 1967, Manuscript Division, Jeannette Piccard Papers of the Minnesota Historical Society. Kellogg informed Jeannette it was “not the policy” of the Dioceses to “permit any of our Lay Readers to preach their own sermons.” Unfortunately, he added that they were “required to preach the sermons prepared and sent out by the Executive Council,” and proceeded to give her the address. See *Ibid.*

⁸⁶³ Letter dated July 19, 1967, Folder 7, Collection P2522, Piccard-Kellogg Correspondence 1967, Manuscript Division, Jeannette Piccard Papers of the Minnesota Historical Society.

⁸⁶⁴ Letter dated July 24, 1967, Folder 7, Collection P2522, Piccard-Kellogg Correspondence 1967, Manuscript Division, Jeannette Piccard Papers of the Minnesota Historical Society.

⁸⁶⁵ Letter dated August 12, 1967, Folder 7, Collection P2522, Piccard-Kellogg Correspondence 1967, Manuscript Division, Jeannette Piccard Papers of the Minnesota Historical Society.

In 1968, Bishop Philip McNairy, the co-adjutor⁸⁶⁶ of the Dioceses of Minnesota, renewed Jeannette's lay reader license, and during the summer Jeannette again held Sunday evening services on Piccard Island. McNairy refused Jeannette's request to remove the limitation to Lake Vermillion, citing her St. Paul's rector's non-use of lay readers. However, Jeannette reported to St. Anne's Reverend Mother that during the absence of the vacationing priest, the Sacrament had been administered by intinction, that is, by dipping the wafer into the chalice. "You remember," Jeannette told her friend, "that the [1967 General] Convention passed the resolution that a Licensed Lay Reader could administer the cup."⁸⁶⁷ If Father Taylor utilized lay readers, Jeannette was in a position to participate.

Jeannette loathed the restrictive nature of her lay reader license. In 1967, she had been requested to preach in Utica, New York; however, Bishop Kellogg entered into ecclesiastical dialogue with his counterpart in New York. "Dr. Jeannette Piccard...is a very intelligent, learned and outstanding person, as well as a very dedicated Churchwoman," Kellogg wrote his friend, Bishop Ned C. Coles, "[but] I must point out that her license is a limited and restricted one."⁸⁶⁸ Jeannette was not one to take "no" for an answer; she began to study the lay reader canons. With encouragement from Father Carty, Jeannette wrote two proposed amendments to be read during the 1969 diocesan convention. However, Jeannette had to seek a co-sponsor, both to "introduce [the

⁸⁶⁶ Co-adjutor bishop is the ordained person designated and consecrated to become the next bishop of the diocese when the current bishop retires. See "Episcopal Things: A guide for non-Episcopalians to many of the terms and phrases in use around Sewanee," <http://smith2.sewanee.edu/glossary/Glossary--Episcopal.html>.

⁸⁶⁷ Letter dated September 20, 1968, Folder 1, Box II: 64, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Order of St. Anne, Arlington, MA, 1963-1971, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁶⁸ Letter dated September 1, 1967, Folder 7, Collection P2522, Piccard-Kellogg Correspondence 1967, Manuscript Division, Jeannette Piccard Papers of the Minnesota Historical Society.

proposals] into the Convention” and to “speak to the proposals” from the convention floor. Jeannette explained to Mrs. Henry Somsen, “The chances of my being a delegate to the Convention are extremely slight. Father Taylor does not give me much support although he does let me shoot my mouth off during the discussion group on Sunday morning.”⁸⁶⁹

Jeannette’s proposed amendment asked the Diocese of Minnesota to go on record as approving the change to “eliminate the outmoded distinction...between male and female lay persons.” In addition, Jeannette wanted the isolation clause removed from canon law. The revised canon would read: “a competent person, ready and desirous to serve the Church in the conduct of public worship statedly as a Lay Reader, shall procure a written license from the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese or Missionary District of which he is a canonical resident.”⁸⁷⁰ The Diocese of Minnesota approved the amendments; with the support of other dioceses moving in a similar ecclesiastical direction, the national canon was amended at the 1969 Special General Convention held in South Bend, Indiana.⁸⁷¹ The gender restrictions for lay reader licenses were removed.

Jeannette’s 1969 license renewal preceded the canonical change; however, Jeannette informed Bishop McNairy that Father Carty “could and would” use her. “At the corporate communion service for the in-gathering of the United Thank Offering of the women,”

⁸⁶⁹ Letter dated November 26, 1968, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁷⁰ 112th Convention Diocese of Minnesota, Folder 3, Box II: 45, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Annual Convention 112th and 113th 1969-1970, Piccard Family Papers. A warden is a member of the vestry, the governing board of the local Episcopal Church. See “Episcopal Things: A guide for non-Episcopalians to many of the terms and phrases in use around Sewanee,” <http://smith2.sewanee.edu/glossary/Glossary--Episcopal.html>.

⁸⁷¹ Letter dated September 15, 1969, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

Jeannette relayed, “I was at St. Philip’s and read the Epistle.”⁸⁷² Shortly after the South Bend meeting, McNairy wrote Jeannette that he wanted to “regularize” her license “at the earliest appropriate moment.” “I would suggest,” he said, “that you send in your present license so that we may either alter it or issue a new one...[It] will communicate to anyone concerned the fact of your relationship to the church’s worship responsibilities.”⁸⁷³ In October 1969, Bishop Kellogg issued Jeannette a regular, unrestricted lay reader license.⁸⁷⁴

Deacon or Deaconess

“Ours is a slow-moving Church, sometimes called ‘The Sleeping Giant,’” Bishop McNairy wrote Jeannette. “Let us hope that it wakes up before it is too late to use the gifts of some of our choicest people.” However, McNairy was not advocating that women in general, nor Jeannette in particular, take any church role other than as a layperson. “There are those of us,” McNairy counseled, “who would regard your contribution as the equal of that of many in Holy Orders. Do not ever minimize the ministry of the laity.”⁸⁷⁵

Since the mid-19th century, the Episcopal Church struggled and debated the place of women within the church hierarchy. In 1871, the General Convention created a Joint Committee on Reviving the Primitive Order of Deaconesses; and by 1889 the church

⁸⁷² Letter dated May 9, 1969, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁷³ Letter dated September 15, 1969, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁷⁴ P. 15, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers and Diocese of Minnesota Lay Reader Certificate, Folder 7, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁷⁵ Letter dated November 10, 1966, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers. In the Episcopal Church, deacon is the initial level of ordination, typically followed within a year by ordination into the priesthood; the office of bishop is the third order within the Episcopal holy orders. A perpetual deacon is one who does not desire to seek the holy order of priest.

gave “canonical status to ‘women set apart by a bishop.’” However by 1961, the combination of restrictions placed on the women, including the requirement of being single or widowed, plus the availability of other economic and social opportunities had depleted the deaconess ranks. Historian Pamela W. Darling states that “there were only eighty-one deaconesses left, from a high of more than two hundred, and of these only thirty were under the age of sixty-five.”⁸⁷⁶ At the 1964 General Convention, the House of Deputies voted to eliminate the “celibacy requirement for deaconesses”; but the governing body also changed the deaconess canon to read “ordered,” rather than “appointed.”⁸⁷⁷ Darling argues the “change of terminology to ‘ordered’ proved to be the beginning of the end of the ambiguous treatment of women in ministry.”⁸⁷⁸

Bishop James A. Pike of California, already a controversial figure within the church for his stated beliefs, announced that he was going to ordain a Mrs. Phyllis Edwards. In September 1965, at a ceremony in San Francisco, Bishop Pike “invested” Edwards “with ministerial status,” thereby becoming “the first woman ‘recognized’ to be a full minister as well as a deaconess of the Episcopal Church.”⁸⁷⁹ A small crack in the episcopate wall had formed. Therefore, as historian Darling asks, “were the holy orders of deacon-priest-bishop eternally reserved for men, or could women be admitted to one of them? If to one,

⁸⁷⁶ Pamela W. Darling, New Wine: The Story of Women Transforming Leadership and Power in the Episcopal Church (Boston: Cowley Publications, 1994), pp. 106-110. Evolution of the office of deaconess is discussed in Chapter One.

⁸⁷⁷ William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne, The Bishop Pike Affair: Scandals of Conscience and Heresy, Relevance and Solemnity in the Contemporary Church (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 39.

⁸⁷⁸ Darling, New Wine, p. 110.

⁸⁷⁹ Stringfellow, The Bishop Pike Affair, pp. 39-40. Edwards was the quintessential deaconess: widowed, mother of grown children and a grandmother. During her 40s she decided to “devote herself to the service of others.” See *Ibid.* pp. 37-38.

why not all three?”⁸⁸⁰ After decades of waiting, perhaps Jeannette’s long-held dream of being a priest would become reality.

In 1967, Jeannette and Father Carty attended the General Convention in Seattle, Washington, as observers. “When the motion to permit any godly person to address a congregation or speak from a pulpit came before the House of Bishops...,” Jeannette wrote the Mother Superior, “they exclaimed, ‘Why this would mean that they could invite a rabbi – or even a woman!’ That is the intention of the House of Deputies, they were told.” Jeannette reported that the bishops “hummed and shrugged their shoulders and passed the confirmation.”⁸⁸¹ Emboldened by the bishops’ actions, Jeannette sought “every opportunity to preach.” Although doubting her preaching “ability,” Jeannette reasoned that “if women [were] given any privilege that [had] been denied them for years, they had better take advantage of that privilege or they [would] lose it again.”⁸⁸²

Jeannette was also encouraged by developments at the 1968 Lambeth Conference in Canterbury, England. “I am told,” she excitedly wrote McNairy, “that the Arch-Bishop of York was shouted down...when he vigorously supported the ordination of women. How binding is action taken at Lambeth?”⁸⁸³ McNairy teased Jeannette, stating, he “thought [she] would be following with a good deal of interest” the Lambeth discussions; however, he reminded Jeannette that Lambeth was “only a consortium” and “had no power over the

⁸⁸⁰ Darling, *New Wine*, p. 111.

⁸⁸¹ Letter dated September 20, 1968, Folder 1, Box II: 64, Subject: Jeannette Piccard Order of St. Anne, Arlington Heights, MA, 1963-1971, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁸² P. 16, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies 1963-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁸³ Letter dated September 19, 1968, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers. For an excellent history of Lambeth Conferences see Michael McFarlane Marrett, *The Lambeth Conferences and Women Priests: The Historical Background of the Conferences and Their Impact on the Episcopal Church in America* (Smithtown, NY: Exposition Press, 1981).

branches of the Anglican Communion.” McNairy mentioned the passing of a resolution giving Deaconesses the “status and recognition of Perpetual Deacons” within the Church; however, he cautioned the resolution would have to be “adopted by member provinces...before it [had] status or effect.”⁸⁸⁴

Jeannette challenged McNairy’s interpretation, stating that already in some provinces in the United States women were functioning as deacons. “There is nothing in the Constitution or Canons of the Episcopal Church or in the rubrics of the Prayer Book,” Jeannette argued, “that require a Postulant, Candidate, Deacon, or Priest to be a male man...[Therefore] if the Church wishes to restrict ordination to males, then the Constitution and Canons need change.” Jeannette ended this round of verbal jousting with her bishop, declaring, “Constitutional revision is not needed to ordain a woman. All that is necessary are Bishops with enough guts to demand the recognition of the fact that a woman is a person.”⁸⁸⁵

Jeannette spent as much time as possible between the Lambeth Conference and the upcoming 1970 General Convention in Houston, Texas, meeting, writing, and basically cajoling anyone, anytime, about women and the priesthood. She prepared a paper for the Special Convention in South Bend, Indiana, entitled “In Defense of St. Paul,” although it was not delivered.⁸⁸⁶ Jeannette told McNairy she was disappointed and “sorry that the House of Bishops did not invite [her] to read [her] paper...It is the House of

⁸⁸⁴ Letter dated September 23, 1968, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁸⁵ Letter dated September 30, 1968, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers and letter dated May 28, 1969, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁸⁶ “In Defense of St. Paul,” Folder 3, Collection P2522, Drafts of Articles About St. Paul, Manuscript Division, Jeannette Piccard Papers of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Bishops...who must make the decision about the ordination of women. Possibly it needs only a small group of Bishops, or only one.” However, she was not to be denied an audience for her thoughts and ideas, telling the bishop she had sent an “inquiry to The Episcopalian about publishing” her paper.⁸⁸⁷

Receiving no response from the church magazine editor,⁸⁸⁸ Jeannette self-published the paper and requested from Kellogg the names and addresses of those who attended the South Bend gathering. “If you have the addresses available,” Jeannette assured the bishop, “I will be happy to bring my own typewriter...and do the clerical work myself, in any old corner so as to be of as little nuisance as possible.” Jeannette also asked for “any opportunity” to talk about her paper to “any influential group” the bishop knew.⁸⁸⁹

Post-1968 Lambeth Conference found several bishops beginning to ordain women deacons, including the bishop of Nova Scotia. In summer 1970, Jeannette “extended” her “congratulations and thanks” to the Rt. Rev. William Wallace Davis, and inquired of his willingness to “extend the same privilege to other women, particularly one from the Church in the United States?”⁸⁹⁰ Since it is often easier to ask for forgiveness rather than permission, Jeannette wrote Kellogg several days later, explaining to her “Dear friend Bishop” that she did not want him to “think [she] acted in a clandestine manner.” “I may be wrong,” she wrote Kellogg, “but I do not think that you object to my being ordained.

⁸⁸⁷ Letter dated September 17, 1969, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers. The Episcopalian is the “general newspaper” of the church sent to each member’s home. See “Episcopal Things: A guide for non-Episcopalians to many of the terms and phrases in use around Sewanee,” <http://smith2.sewanee.edu/glossary/Glossary--Episcopal.html>.

⁸⁸⁸ See letter dated October 25, 1969, Folder 8, Box II: 41, Subject: Corrigan, Daniel and Elizabeth 1958-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁸⁹ Letter dated November 7, 1969, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁹⁰ Letter dated June 8, 1970, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

You just don't want to do it yourself. Would you consider recommending me to Bishop Davis?" Jeannette informed Kellogg that she was attending the upcoming General Convention in Houston, Texas. Always one to look for an angle, Jeannette stated she had indicated she was a "press representative" because more meetings were "open to the press that would be closed to an ordinary guest observer."⁸⁹¹

Hamilton H. Kellogg supported Jeannette's decision to contact his "esteemed" colleague in Nova Scotia; however, Kellogg raised a potential problem. "I do not wish to 'throw cold water' on your aspirations," he wrote, "but I do think that I should remind you that 72 is the mandatory retirement age for Clergy in the American Church." Kellogg was concerned that even if seventy-five-year-old Jeannette was ordained by Bishop Davis, she might not be "accepted as a Canonical resident" in the United States church on the "basis of having had too many birthdays." Kellogg promised to "inquire of higher authority" and reminded Jeannette that the age limit might not apply to Perpetual Deacons. "However, on the other hand," Kellogg surmised, "I gather that you are not at all interested in becoming a Perpetual Deacon, but only a regular Deacon in anticipation of advancement to the Priesthood." "Go well, Jeannette," he encouraged, "go well, and may God go with you all the way!" [Emphasis in the original.]⁸⁹²

Jeannette was appreciative of Kellogg's support; however, she challenged his rationale. "Please do not consider my age a barrier to ordination," she implored. "To what higher authority will you go? The canons give no upper age limit for ordination. The

⁸⁹¹ Letter dated June 12, 1970, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette was planning to get press credentials from friends in the newspaper industry. See Ibid.

⁸⁹² Letter dated June 17, 1970, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

retirement age concerns parish administration. A retired priest is not defrocked. I am too old to bear children but I can still babysit.” And then she addressed the exclusionary gender practices of 20th century American society: “It is no fault of mine that I could not be admitted to General Seminary (or any other Episcopal seminary) in 1918 because of my sex.” Jeannette explained to Kellogg she wanted “the diaconate as precursor to the priesthood but if perpetual deacon [was] all that [she could] get now [she would] take it and continue to urge advancement.”⁸⁹³

Houston

“I want to be there to whoop and holler if they do and to scream bloody murder if they don’t,” Jeannette told a close friend. She had heard “unofficially” that during the 1970 General Convention the vote to ordain women to the diaconate might be passed.⁸⁹⁴ Jeannette “whooped and hollered.” Historian Pamela W. Darling argues the combination of Bishop Pike’s 1965 ordination of Deaconess Edwards, and the 1968 Lambeth Conference’s recommendations regarding deaconesses and the role of women, made the approval of “woman in the diaconate a *fait accompli*.”⁸⁹⁵ By the end of the convention in October 1970, women could be ordained into the diaconate. According to historian Heather Huyck, “deaconesses were acknowledged to be part of the diaconate and the canon on the diaconate changed to make women’s requirements and status equal to men’s.”⁸⁹⁶ But with the vote, did the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies intend

⁸⁹³ Letter dated June 21, 1970, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁹⁴ Letter dated June 22, 1970, Folder 3, Box II: 61, Subject: Correspondence National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, TX, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁹⁵ Darling, *New Wine*, p. 113.

⁸⁹⁶ Heather Ann Huyck, “To Celebrate a Whole Priesthood: The History of Women’s Ordination in the Episcopal Church” (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1981), p. 18.

for deaconesses to be perpetual deacons; or was it now possible for a woman to be ordained a deacon and similar to her male counterpart, upon meeting all spiritual, educational, physical and mental conditions, be ordained a priest, typically within a year?

Immediately after Houston, Jeannette went to her rector to discuss her application process for the diaconate. “[Father Taylor] tried to discourage me,” Jeannette told Daniel Corrigan, “telling me that it was a complicated business.” After much pestering about the “details,” Taylor finally relented, stating, “Well, you know, Jeannette, when they come back to me to ask about it, I will have to tell them that I am somewhat less than enthusiastic.”⁸⁹⁷ Fortunately Father Carty was more supportive, offering Jeannette to be a deacon at St. Philips if Taylor found it too “unpleasant” to guide her studies.⁸⁹⁸

In early May 1971, Jeannette successfully completed the written examinations for perpetual deacon in the fields of Doctrine, Bible Content, Liturgics, and the Prayer Book;⁸⁹⁹ during a three-day period the following month, Jeannette passed the oral examinations covering the same topics.⁹⁰⁰ In June, Jeannette received the certificates confirming the completion of all necessary requirements to be ordered “Perpetual Deacon.”⁹⁰¹

The Saint Paul’s Messenger proclaimed the exciting parish news: “Next week brings a very important and happy event in the life of the parish. No less than three of our parish

⁸⁹⁷ Letter dated November 27, 1970, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁹⁸ Letter dated November 18, 1970, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁸⁹⁹ See letter dated April 27, 1971, Folder 6, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁰⁰ See “Certificates,” Folder 4, Box II: 64, Subject: Jeannette Ordination to Diaconate Miscellany 1971, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁰¹ See letter dated June 22, 1971, Folder 2, Box II: 64, Subject: Jeannette Ordination to the Diaconate Correspondence 1971, Piccard Family Papers.

family will be ordained to the Diaconate.” The article discussed the plans for each deacon: Bob Stafford was going on to the priesthood, assigned to a parish in St. Paul, MN; Ted Berktold was completing a year of post-graduate study, and then would be assigned to his “priest’s ordination assignment.” “Jeannette Piccard,” the parish letter stated, “will be the first woman in the diocese, under the new canon, to be ordained to the Perpetual or Permanent Diaconate and will serve under the Bishop as he directs.”⁹⁰²

There was no discussion of Jeannette attending seminary for study to the priesthood; the perpetual deacon order was the uppermost official position for a woman in the Episcopal Church. On June 29, 1971, the Feast Day of Saints Peter and Paul, Bishop McNairy presided over the ordination service of Jeannette and six others during an evening service at the Cathedral Church of St. Mark in Minneapolis, Minnesota.⁹⁰³

Shortly after the service Jeannette wrote Bob and Jean Gilruth: “The ordination service went well even though it had not been rehearsed.” Jeannette noted the church was “practically filled,” and discussed the professional aspirations of her cohorts: “Six men were ordained deacon...Three of them were made Perpetual Deacons and do not expect to go on to the priesthood...The other three were recent graduates of seminary and plan to be priested as soon as they are able.” Jeannette explained her situation, writing, “Of course I legally fall into the category of the Perpetual Deacon but I hope that by 1973 the Canons of the Church will be changed so that I, too, can be priested.”⁹⁰⁴

⁹⁰² “The Saint Paul’s Messenger” dated June 27, 1971, Folder 2, Box II: 64, Subject: Jeannette Ordination to the Diaconate Correspondence 1971, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁰³ See “The Ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons” program, Folder 5, Box II: 64, Subject: Jeannette Ordination to the Diaconate Printed Matter, 1967, 1971, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁰⁴ Letter dated July 5, 1971, Folder 2, Box II: 64, Subject: Jeannette Ordination to the Diaconate Correspondence 1971, Piccard Family Papers.

For Jeannette, the differences between “deacon” and “deaconess” were not just semantics, or that deaconess was the feminine form. “Dear Deacon Zielinski,” Jeannette wrote, “Please! I hope you don’t mind that I use the title Deacon and not Deaconess. There is already a tendency among some clergy to deny that women are truly deacon.” Jeannette explained to the director of the Central House for Women Deacons, who signed her letters, “The Rev. Deaconess,” “If we continue to use the term deaconess we make it easier for them to relegate us to the inferior status of women, to deny us our right to administer the Reserved Sacrament [and] consecrate legal marriages...Furthermore, according to the canons there are no more...deaconesses. The canons ‘of Deaconess’ were repealed.”⁹⁰⁵

Jeannette believed the “intention” at the Houston convention was to “not only clarify the changing status of women but also to create something new.”⁹⁰⁶ She told Bishop McNairy she did not want to be held to the standards of a perpetual deacon but to those of a deacon who was expecting to be priested. In thanking Bishop McNairy for his role in her ordination, Jeannette wrote, “What now?” Episcopalians were aware that the next step for women’s ordination was to the priesthood; in fact, the canonical changes making it possible might happen in 1973 at the next General Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Jeannette told McNairy she wanted to “prepare [herself] and be ready for such ordination when it happen[ed].” Jeannette asked for McNairy’s “support...guidance and

⁹⁰⁵ Letter dated January 16, 1971, Folder 6, Box II: 42, Subject: Deacons and Deaconesses Correspondence 1971-1977, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁰⁶ Letter dated October 5, 1971, Folder 6, Box II: 42, Subject: Deacons and deaconesses Correspondence 1971-1977, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

instruction.”⁹⁰⁷ While on a “vacation of sorts,” McNairy responded to Jeannette’s inquiry: “You mention...something about priest’s orders and the General Convention. I want you to understand quite clearly that this Diocese has practically no interest whatever in priest’s orders for persons who do not intend to accept parish assignment and who do not fit within the age range of the pension type priest.” The bishop did not have reservations about women priests, *per se*; rather, he believed the Diocese of Minnesota currently had an overflow of “non-stipendiary clergy” and did not want to add to their ranks. “I don’t want this to be the closing of a door to you,” he assured Jeannette, “but I do want you to recognize quite candidly that we are interested in a smaller full time committed ministry...”⁹⁰⁸

For several weeks Jeannette and her bishop corresponded, putting forth their respective ideas and concerns about Jeannette’s dream of priesthood. Jeannette apologized for bothering McNairy during his “vacation of sorts”; however, she acknowledged that she would have been better prepared for the deacon examinations if she had “some seminary experience under [her] belt.” “Should I try to get a year of seminary,” she questioned, “or does your lack of interest in ‘persons who do not fit within the age range of the pension type priest’ form an insurmountable barrier to priest’s orders for me?”⁹⁰⁹ Bishop McNairy was mindful of Jeannette’s “long standing yearning...for priest’s orders”; however, even if the issue of women priests was resolved,

⁹⁰⁷ Letter dated July 6, 1971, Folder 6, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁰⁸ Letter dated July 14, 1971, Folder 6, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1971, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁰⁹ Letter dated July 17, 1971, Folder 6, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1971, Piccard Family Papers.

McNairy wanted Jeannette to “recognize the fact that the pension system place[d] an age limitation upon active ministry and retirement.” “I think you would have to agree with me,” McNairy stated, “that the person who, past 75, is capable of the normal load of work and doing it with the normal perspective, is definitely limited.” He acknowledged that Jeannette “would undoubtedly be a notable exception”; however, he “questioned whether or not the standards could be waived with respect to age since it would set a precedent that would be very difficult to overcome.” McNairy reminded Jeannette that any arrangements made to enroll in a seminary as a “special student” would constitute no “commitment on the part of the church, other than to recognize [her] academic achievements.” In closing, McNairy stated, “My advice to you once again is that you make the greatest possible use of your diaconate.” Understanding Jeannette’s ultimate goal, and perhaps protecting himself against any future claim of encouragement, McNairy uncharacteristically sent a carbon copy of the letter to the presiding bishop, the Rt. Rev. John Hines.⁹¹⁰

Jeannette was certainly making the “greatest possible use” of being a deacon, reporting to McNairy her participation in Evening and Morning Prayers, “vesting regularly, reading the Gospel, and administering the sacrament” at St. Philip’s, in addition to the “sick calls” and “pastoral calls” she performed.⁹¹¹ McNairy was “happy” that a “major portion of [Jeannette’s] work [had] been in connection with the pastoral and

⁹¹⁰ Letter dated August 9, 1971, Folder 6, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹¹¹ Letter dated December 19, 1971, Folder 6, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

prophetic side of ministry.”⁹¹² When McNairy learned that Jeannette would be doing several of the Good Friday addresses, he was “delighted” and “certain that the richness” of Jeannette’s life would give her “much to say to the people.” However, he issued a cautionary note: “Keep the messages at your favorite subject (Christ), and away from your second favorite subject (Women’s Lib.),” adding, “I have never had a moment of regret in having ordained you.”⁹¹³

General Theological Seminary

In the letter accompanying her annual donation to the Convent of Saint Anne, Jeannette wrote, “If you must use it for Bethany, O.K., but I would prefer that it went to help women prepare for ordination to the priesthood.” Jeannette also informed the Reverend Mother that at the end of January 1972, she was going to begin studies at the General Theological Seminary (GTS) in New York City.⁹¹⁴ Jeannette began contact with GTS the previous summer;⁹¹⁵ however, as with previous Piccard negotiations, letters were lost and meanings misinterpreted and appointments were not kept or misunderstood. In short, Jeannette’s application and enrollment became a difficult process.

⁹¹² Letter dated January 3, 1972, Folder 7, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹¹³ Letter dated March 31, 1972, Folder 7, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹¹⁴ Letter dated December 18, 1971, Folder 1, Box II: 64, Subject: Jeannette Order of St. Anne, Arlington Heights, MA., 1963-1971, Piccard Family Papers. “Bethany” was a community established by the order to care for developmentally challenged people located in Lincoln, Massachusetts. See “Bethany” brochure, Folder 1, Box II: 64, Subject: Jeannette Order of St. Anne, Arlington Heights, MA, 1963-1971, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹¹⁵ See letter July 24, 1971, Folder 2, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

Dean⁹¹⁶ Samuel J. Wylie was out-of-town when Jeannette's initial letter of inquiry arrived; earnest correspondence between Wylie and the potential student began in the fall. Jeannette traveled to GTS in late October to meet with the admissions committee,⁹¹⁷ and on December 10, 1971, received word of her acceptance as a "special student" to one of the oldest and most prestigious Episcopalian seminaries.⁹¹⁸ However, Jeannette was informed that it was "impossible for the seminary to supply dormitory accommodations for [her] until September 1972." The admissions committee chairman wrote, "We as a committee feel that you will be the best judge as to the precise timing of your entrance and as to the adjustment to seminary life which the special circumstances of your admission entail."⁹¹⁹ Although Jeannette was recovering from her hip surgery and walked with a slight limp, the Rev. O. Sydney Barr did not specify what was meant by Jeannette's "special circumstances," not indicating whether they were age- or gender-related, or both.⁹²⁰

Barr reiterated in late December 1971 that there was "simply no housing available" at the seminary for Jeannette for the "coming Easter Term." "Our accommodations for women," Barr explained, "whether as student or as guests, are severely limited, and such as we have have long since been committed." Barr suggested Jeannette locate alternate

⁹¹⁶ The chief academic officer of a seminary carries the title dean. See "Episcopal Things: A guide for non-Episcopalians to many of the terms and phrases in use around Sewanee," <http://smith2.sewanee.edu/glossary/Glossary--Episcopal.html>.

⁹¹⁷ See "The General Theological Seminary Memo" dated October 27, 1971, Folder 2, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹¹⁸ The General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church in the United States was established by the General Convention in 1817. See *The Episcopal Church Annual 2006*, p. 47.

⁹¹⁹ Letter dated December 10, 1971, Folder 2, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹²⁰ See letter dated November 26, 1971, Folder 2, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

housing if she was planning to begin her studies before September 1971.⁹²¹ Jeannette contacted friends in New York City, including her fellow ordinand Ted Berktold.⁹²² “I have been accepted by [GTS]...,” Jeannette wrote, “but I have no place to live. The Rev. Sydney Barr wrote that their space for women students is very limited. It really must be very, very limited. They only have one resident woman student and can’t find place for another.”⁹²³

Jeannette also expressed her frustration to the admissions chairman. “From a housing point of view, obviously, I would find it easier to start...next September,” she wrote. “However, I had wanted to start [my studies] last September and am impatient to begin...I will confess...to a feeling of resentment that no housing can be found for me at the seminary. That only one room and a fifth floor room at that, for a woman student is available smacks of tokenism.” Jeannette did not understand the rationale of “isolating women students,” arguing that “most colleges and universities now-a-days [had] ‘co-ed’ dorms.” “Why should it be correct for persons of different sex in families...” she posited, “to use the same bathrooms, etc. and sinful for institutions? I suppose it is asking too much to ask General [GTS] to break down the segregation barriers but it is only a few years ago that General admitted women into the student body at all. So why not go whole hog? What better place to start than with a 77-year-old grandmother?”⁹²⁴

⁹²¹ Letter dated December 20, 1971, Folder 2, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹²² See Footnote 172.

⁹²³ Letter dated January 7, 1972, Folder 3, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹²⁴ Letter dated January 3, 1972, Folder 3, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. The financial consequences of staying off-campus factored into Jeannette’s decision also.

After much consideration, Jeannette “reluctantly decided” to wait until fall 1972 to begin her theological studies at GTS.⁹²⁵ On September 6, 1972, Jeannette joined her fellow students, two women and fourteen men,⁹²⁶ for orientation and class registration, and moved into her room assignment, Pintard Hall #2, a single accommodation.⁹²⁷ However, unlike her cohorts, Jeannette’s arrival on the campus of GTS was followed by the press. An article in a Sunday edition of the New York Times stated, “When the former Jeannette Ridlon entered Bryn Mawr in 1914 she indulged a wild hope that, somehow, by the time she had earned her degree...the Episcopal church would have decided to let women become priests...Now that the ordination of women is at least a distinct possibility...Mrs. Piccard has entered [GTS] 54 years later than she had intended.” Despite the fact Jeannette was “at least half a century older” than most of her fellow students, the article asserted Jeannette was greeted with “obvious affection” as she “strolled to class.”⁹²⁸ Jeannette told The Minneapolis Star that she was “enjoying her seminary experience but found herself ‘talking too much.’”⁹²⁹

In some regards, Jeannette struggled at GTS. Classified as a “special student,” she was often given the option of attending meetings and gatherings required of other students;

⁹²⁵ Letter dated January 17, 1972, Folder 3, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹²⁶ See photographs of entering students, Folder 1, Box II: 56, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Printed and near-print matter, 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹²⁷ Letter dated August 1, 1972, Folder 3, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹²⁸ Eleanor Blau, “Balloonist’s Widow, 77, Joins Seminary to Pursue Long Ambition—Priesthood,” The New York Times, October 1, 1972, Sunday edition. See Folder 4, Box II: 21, General Correspondence: 1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹²⁹ Willmar Thorkelson, “Woman balloonist may realize hopes, be an Episcopal priest,” The Minneapolis Star, October 7, 1972, p. 14A, Folder 1, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Clippings, 1972-1973, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

however, she typically made a point to be present.⁹³⁰ In addition, Jeannette's physical ailments sometimes slowed her down. She reported to Bishop McNairy that her schedule was "heavier" than she had "anticipated." "It involves," she explained, "a good deal of walking and stair climbing. As a result I suffer from leg cramps at night but during the day I limp less and less."⁹³¹ And just as in her undergraduate days at Bryn Mawr, Jeannette struggled with the academic rigors of the GTS curriculum.⁹³²

However, Jeannette also experienced personal validation at GTS. Seminary students were required to participate in a "work-learning" agreement with a local New York City parish, and Jeannette chose the Church of the Ascension in Brooklyn. After her initial visit to Ascension, Jeannette noted that "it was a good experience" for her: "Father Davidson is real and when he starts the service you can feel the presence of God."⁹³³ Jeannette assisted Father Davidson as deacon on most Sundays, and preached to the congregation when asked. In addition to Davidson serving as her confessor, Jeannette also accompanied him on visits to the parish's elderly shut-ins.⁹³⁴

Area churches requested Jeannette for either preaching occasions or speaking engagements. One such instance was the request from St. Thomas's Episcopal Church

⁹³⁰ See memo dated September 14, 1972, Folder 3, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹³¹ Letter dated September 21, 1972, Folder 8, Box II: 46, Subject: Episcopal Church-Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette received word in early October that the seminary's insurance carrier would not accept her into their hospital insurance program due to her age. See memo dated October 2, 1972, Folder 33, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹³² See "Evaluation," Folder 8, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Miscellany 1972-1973, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹³³ According to the "Precis of Parishes," Church of the Ascension was a "small-average size lower-middle class black/white parish with one priest, but a varying and close knit community of others who live and/or share parish life..." See letter dated September 12, 1972, Folder 3, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹³⁴ See letter dated December 27, 1972, Folder 6, Box II: 21, General Correspondence 1972, Piccard Family Papers.

asking Jeannette to be the keynote speaker at the celebration of their one hundredth anniversary. In the letter requesting Jeannette's participation, the Rev. J. Jay Johnson stated, "Your resolute endurance as evidenced by your life experiences, ambitions and present study program make you the precise personality we desire to have address us on the wealth of contributions women are making to Christianity and the world."⁹³⁵

And her good friend John Carter sent her words of encouragement. "Don't worry about fruitless comparisons of age and energy," the reverend wrote, "between yourself and the younger students at the Seminary." Carter told Jeannette of a seventy-two-year-old man who was in his seminary class: "He got better grades than almost all of us because he worked steadily and consistently while we worked in spasms." Carter encouraged Jeannette to "stick with it," and gave his assurance that she would "begin to find that the whole academic side of it [was] going to begin to hang together and to become a pleasure..."⁹³⁶

Perhaps the greatest support for Jeannette came with her realization that although she was undoubtedly the oldest woman that had the dream and goal of one day becoming an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church, she was not the only woman to have such aspirations. However, these like-minded women would need to sustain and care for one another in the exciting and tumultuous days ahead.

⁹³⁵ Letter dated October 16, 1972, Folder 3, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹³⁶ Letter dated December 26, 1972, Folder 7, Box II: 21, General Correspondence 1972, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette's studies did improve; she received an "excellent credit" in the course on canon law. See "Evaluation: Epiphany Term 1973," Folder 8, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Miscellany 1972-1973, Piccard Family Papers.

CHAPTER SEVEN: PHILADELPHIA FREEDOM: FALLOUT AND FULFILLMENT

“Since I was eleven years old, I have wanted to take that precious body and blood in my hands and give it to others. Oh, I know I am not worthy. You say that some day it will come. Some day! I will be seventy-two next January 5th. The day had better come soon for me. God’s will be done.” Jeannette Piccard to the Right Reverend Philip F. McNairy, Suffragan Bishop of Minnesota, 1966⁹³⁷

“So long as we assign to woman an inferior position in the scale of being, emphasize the fables of her creation as an afterthought, the guilty factor in the fall of man, cursed of God in her maternity, a marplot in the life of a Solomon or a Samson, unfit to stand in the ‘Holy of Holies,’ in the cathedrals, to take a seat as a delegate in a Synod, General Assembly, or Conference, to be ordained to preach the gospel or administer the sacraments—the Church and the Bible make woman the football for all the gibes and jeers of the multitude...” Elizabeth Cady Stanton⁹³⁸

“As women grow, losing nothing that is essential to womanhood, but adding steadily the later qualities of humanness, they will win and hold a far larger, deeper reverence than that hitherto vouchsafed them. As they so rise and broaden, filling their full place in the world as members of society, as well as their partial places as mothers of it, they will gradually rear a new race of men, men with minds large enough to see in human beings something besides males and females...” Charlotte Perkins Gilman⁹³⁹

“Appeasement of the ultra-right-whites in the Episcopal Church is now so widespread, has happened so often in so many ways in so many places, that it is apt to become habitual among bishops.” William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne, 1967⁹⁴⁰

“We call not for study, but for action...[We call] for bishops immediately to ordain to the priesthood women deacons [and] for diocesan and general conventions to make appropriate canonical and liturgical revision...We call upon all women seriously to consider their own predicament in the church and to make no peace with oppression.”⁹⁴¹

So read parts of the Episcopal Women’s Caucus (EWC) 1971 letter to The Most Rev.

⁹³⁷ Letter dated November 7, 1966, Folder 5, Box II: 46, Correspondence: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota, 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹³⁸ Christian Golder, History of the Deaconess Movement in the Christian Church (Cincinnati, OH: Jennings and Pye, 1908), pp. 527-528.

⁹³⁹ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “Are Women Human Beings? A Consideration of the Major Error in the Discussion of Woman Suffrage,” Harper’s Weekly, May 25, 1912, p. 11, quoted in Aileen S. Kraditor, ed., Up From the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), p. 331.

⁹⁴⁰ William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne, “The Bishop Pike Affair” Scandals of Conscience and Heresy. Relevance and Solemnity in the Contemporary Church (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 192.

⁹⁴¹ “Epistola 1,” newsletter of the Episcopal Women’s Caucus, dated November 19, 1971, Folder 1, Box II: 53, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus, printed and near print matter 1965-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

John E. Hines, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church.⁹⁴² After the canon to ordain women to the priesthood was closely defeated in 1970, a small group of Episcopal women were committed to being better prepared to press their cause at the next general convention in 1973 at Louisville, Kentucky. “Our thought,” noted the caucus organizers, “is that we would like to meet as Episcopal women seminarians, seminary graduates, postulants, candidates and deacons to see if we can unite to pursue our common interests within the Episcopal Church.” The conference, opened to “interested Episcopal Women,” was organized by Nancy Hatch Wittig, Suzanne Hiatt, Betty Rosenberg and Alison Cheek.⁹⁴³

In late October 1971, fifty-nine women, including Jeannette, descended on the Virginia Theological Seminary campus in Alexandria, for the two-day conference.⁹⁴⁴ An added impetus during the conference was the release of a statement by the liberal bishop of California during his diocesan convention expressing opposition to women’s ordination. Afterwards, Jeannette reported to friends at the General Theological Seminary (GTS) the conference participants’ response to Bishop C. Kilmer Myers’ statement about “the maleness of God.” “Of course Myers stated he did not mean that God was male,” Jeannette said. “But we all went into a tizzy. The more I think about it the more I boggle. And the more I am astonished that no one rose to challenge his statement...” “Even if they [the bishops] were caught off guard,” Jeannette concluded, “it amazes me that no

⁹⁴² Ibid.

⁹⁴³ Letter dated October 1, 1971, Folder 5, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1973, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁴⁴ See “Participants, Episcopal Women’s Caucus Alexandria, Virginia, Oct. 29 & 30th, 1971,” Folder 1, Box II: 53, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus printed and near print matter 1965-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

one was quick enough on his feet to rebut.”⁹⁴⁵ Perhaps no one challenged Bishop Myers at the diocesan convention, but Jeannette sent a letter to The Most Rev. John E. Hines, the presiding bishop.⁹⁴⁶

“Dear Bishop Hines,” Jeannette began, “The statement which Bishop Myers made...astonished and grieved me. Over the years, it has frustrated me to occasionally meet clergy who suffer from the Blessed Mary syndrome, who think that a woman’s only function is to ‘receive’ the seed from a man and bear children to which she contributes nothing but the place of incubation. To find a modern bishop, presumably an educated man, doing so is shocking beyond words, at least any words of mine.” Jeannette continued to vent her frustration, stating that the “bishop’s emphasis on the ‘essential’ masculinity of God” seemed to her to “flair heresy.” “If he ‘does not mean that God is a male,’” Jeannette argued, “then just what does he mean – if anything? Why bring it up at all? What is its relevance to those who being born of the Spirit are neither male nor female?” Jeannette discussed the role of women in the early Christian church, and argued that “since...women [were] named in the New Testament as fellow workers, prophets, teachers, heads of congregations, deacons and even an apostle, where [was] the consistent masculinity of the commissioned ministry” that Myers was basing his statements on? Jeannette “begged” the spiritual head of the Episcopal Church to “persuade some

⁹⁴⁵ Letter dated November 26, 1971, Folder 2, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. For Myers statement, see “Statement on the Proposed Ordination of Women to the 122nd Diocesan Convention by the Rt. Rev. C. Kilmer Myers, Bishop of California,” October 1971, Folder 1, Box II: 53, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus printed and near-print matter 1965-1972, Piccard Family Papers. Myers followed Bishop James A. Pike in California.

⁹⁴⁶ The presiding bishop is the “elected episcopal head,” and is the “chief administrator and spiritual head” of the Episcopal Church in America [PECUSA]. See “Episcopal Things: A guide for non-Episcopalians to many of the terms and phrases in use around Sewanee,” <http://smith2.sewanee.edu/glossary/Glossary--Episcopal.html>.

acknowledged scholar or scholars to proclaim loudly and publish widely the truth of the matter.” “I grieve for Bishop Myers,” Jeannette said. “He must be suffering greatly. And I shall continue to remember him in my prayers. May he repent, cease to be afraid, and face the truth with love, the love of God.”⁹⁴⁷

Within days Jeannette received Hines’ reply. The presiding bishop “appreciated” her letter, and acknowledged that Myers’ comments were “bound to draw controversy and wide discussion.” However, he also appreciated the bishop of California’s comments because in Hines’ “mind, [it] underline[d] the necessity of more adequate study of the whole problem and opportunity of the ordination of women,” to which, Hines reminded Jeannette, the “House of Bishops had committed itself.”⁹⁴⁸ Jeannette continued their correspondence, “appreciating [that Hines took] the time to write.” But she told the elected head of the Episcopal Church, “My contention and that of the women meeting at the Virginia Theological Seminary last October is simply that more than adequate studies have already been made. The time for study has passed. The time for action is at hand.”⁹⁴⁹ However, Jeannette’s friend Father William J. Wolf was prescient in his assessment of the situation, stating, “Most alarming of all, [Myers’s comments] probably denote the beginning of an organized effort to defeat the ordination of women...”⁹⁵⁰

⁹⁴⁷ Letter dated November 27, 1971, Folder 6, Box II: 46, Subject: Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁴⁸ Letter dated November 30, 1971, Folder 6, Box II: 46, Subject: Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁴⁹ Letter dated December 10, 1971, Folder 6, Box II: 46, Subject: Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1966-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁵⁰ “A Reply to Bishop Myers on the Ordination of Women,” Folder 1, Box II: 67, Subject: Ordination to Priesthood Notes and Miscellany 1973-1975, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

The initial meeting of the Episcopal Women's Caucus developed more questions than answers;⁹⁵¹ however, it was the beginning of a grass-roots-based, systematic effort to change canon law allowing for the ordination of women to the priesthood.⁹⁵² To encourage more widespread participation in their efforts, the EWC held six regional conferences in 1972. Jeannette was unable to attend the meeting for her province in St. Louis, Missouri, but she wrote a letter of support to the organizers, stating, "Please give my greetings to everyone and tell them that I wish I were with you all...Right on! More power to you all! Be sure to let me know what happens."⁹⁵³ Jeannette did gather signatures on petitions supporting women's ordination to be presented at the Louisville convention, and she proposed "demonstrating" at ordinations of male deacons to the priesthood where women, who were also qualified deacons, were being denied. "I wonder what would be the effect," Jeannette wrote Suzanne Hiatt, "of quiet picketing with signs?...The quieter and more dignified the picketing the better. Any press statement should be brief and quiet and dignified..."⁹⁵⁴ In addition, smaller groupings of women were lending support to one another, including women from the Diocese of New York. Jeannette was on their mailing list, but with the delay in her admittance to General Theological Seminary (GTS), she did not attend initial meetings.⁹⁵⁵

⁹⁵¹ See "Epistola 1," newsletter of the Episcopal Women's Caucus, November 19, 1971, Folder 1, Box II: 53, Subject: Episcopal Women's Caucus printed and near-print matter 1965-1972, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁵² For an excellent history of the Episcopal Women's Caucus see Heather Ann Huyck, "To Celebrate a Whole Priesthood: The History of Women's Ordination in the Episcopal Church" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1981), Chapter Three.

⁹⁵³ Letter dated May 11, 1972, Folder 5, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women's Caucus Correspondence 1971-1973, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁵⁴ Letter dated January 21, 1973, Folder 5, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women's Caucus Correspondence 1971-1973, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁵⁵ See letter dated February 17, 1972, Folder 1, Box II: 21, General Correspondence: 1972, Piccard Family Papers.

Jeannette was active in the annual diocesan conventions in Minnesota, in 1971 co-sponsoring with Father Denzil Carty and others, a “resolution on the ordination of women,” which stated that the Episcopal Church should amend the Canons to “allow women to have the same rights and privileges as men in serving the Church,” and to “provide for their ordination to the diaconate and priesthood, and their consecration to the episcopate.” It passed during the convention.⁹⁵⁶ In addition, seventy-six-year-old Jeannette actively wrote and spoke her mind whenever and to whomever would listen. During the 1971 Twin Cities’ chapter meeting of the National Organization for Women (NOW), Jeannette told those gathered that “the position of women in the Episcopal Church [had] always been a source of frustration to [her].” “I may never get priested,” she stated, “but there are young women who will.”⁹⁵⁷ Jeannette told The Rev. John Paul Carter that Bishop McNairy was not “pleased by the wide publicity” of her remarks. “Of course,” Jeannette confessed to Carter, “I knew that the papers were there at the NOW meeting but I didn’t expect any word to go beyond our local papers...”⁹⁵⁸

Most importantly, Jeannette prepared for the general ordination examinations administered by the Diocese of Minnesota under the direction of Bishop McNairy. The required examinations tested her knowledge and understanding in seven ecclesiastical

⁹⁵⁶ See Folder 4, Box II: 45, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota Annual Convention 114th 1971, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁵⁷ “Priesthood Is Sought By Widow,” *The Washington (D.C.) Post*, April 17, 1971, p. F2, Folder 5, Box II: 40, Subject: Carter, John Paul 1967-1971, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁵⁸ Letter dated April 28, 1971, Folder 5, Box II: 40, Subject: Carter, John Paul 1967-1971, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. See letter dated May 5, 1971, Folder 5, Box II: 40, Subject: Carter, John Paul 1967-1971, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

fields.⁹⁵⁹ “Generally speaking...,” Jeannette’s examiners reported, “this candidate has performed uniformly well. He [sic] has drawn upon each of the seven fields as appropriate.” Each candidate was given a registration number; however, the results letter was typed, with the candidate’s name, diocese and seminary noted. The exam was blind-graded based on the registration number, but the composer of the letter would have been aware of the candidate’s sex.⁹⁶⁰ The male pronoun may have been used for several reasons. Jeannette was the first female to take the GOE’s in the Diocese of Minnesota, and the use of the male pronoun may simply have been a matter of habit. Furthermore, Jeannette should not have been offended by the use of the male pronoun for she often argued that the canon laws pertaining to the ordination to the priesthood did not specifically exclude females. She interpreted the male pronoun as universal, and argued that if women were intended to be excluded then canon law should be changed to reflect the specificity. The composer of the letter may have intended the universal interpretation of the male pronoun.

The board believed Jeannette’s paper on the “Copernican revolution was disappointingly short and thin,” and the “requested sermon...lacked some clarity”; however, they were impressed with her “interpretation of St. Paul’s attitudes on the status of women.” Jeannette’s response to the question concerning “the young man who asked whether God is black,” also garnered praise from the examiners, with one caveat. “His [sic] rather incautious statement, ‘color has no significance,’” the board stated, “would be

⁹⁵⁹ See “The General Board of Examining Chaplains of the Episcopal Church,” March 5, 1973, Folder 6, Box II: 66, Subject: Ordination to the Priesthood: General Ordination Examination 1972-1973, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁶⁰ “1973 GOE Evolution Registration Number 73-133,” Folder 6, Box II: 66, Subject: Ordination to the Priesthood: General Ordination Examination 1972-1973, Piccard Family Papers.

a faux pas in certain circumstances...His final summary statement of what he hoped to accomplish with this young man is especially good.”⁹⁶¹ Jeannette’s answer reflects her nascent understanding of other’s discrimination. “My immediate reaction to the question ‘Is God black?,’” Jeannette wrote, “is to come out with the old chestnut: ‘Why, of course. Hadn’t you heard? She’s black.’ But hopefully, I’d restrain myself. The question had been put seriously and merits a serious response.” “There are several issues involved,” she continued, “the most important is in the person’s concept of God...[and] the personal identity growing out of socio-economic status and racism. Response will vary depending on whether the questioner is a. Black and, therefore, seeking identity..., b. white and having his sense of superiority shaken...The term ‘Black Power’ is one which we white people need to come to grips with.” Jeannette concluded, writing, “Having abused our power over others, we get a twinge of fear at power being in the hands of those whom we have abused and who may treat us as we have treated them.”⁹⁶² With her seven scores of “satisfactory,”⁹⁶³ Jeannette was now ready to be ordained priest as soon as the church changed the canon law. All eyes were on the upcoming September 1973 convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

Louisville

“I am enclosing a registration Form for General Convention,” Jeannette wrote Anne Ziesmer. “Will you complete the filling out of the form for me so that I get into the same

⁹⁶¹ Ibid.

⁹⁶² See G.O.E. Part I, Group B, 2, 73-133, Folder 6, Box II: 66, Subject: Ordination to the Priesthood: General Ordination Examination 1972-1973, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁶³ “The General Board of Examining Chaplains of the Episcopal Church,” March 5, 1973, Folder 6, Box II: 66, Subject: Ordination to the Priesthood: General Ordination Examination 1972-1973, Piccard Family Papers.

hotel with the rest of you?” Jeannette informed the president of the Diocese of Minnesota Episcopal Church Women (ECW) that she had procured a press badge for the last convention, and had “checked the same spot this time...” “Last time I think I claimed to be a reporter for the Perris Progress in Perris, California,” Jeannette continued, “I know the editor!!! It is a small weekly.”⁹⁶⁴ In late September, Jeannette left for the convention, with the “expectation that the Louisville Convention of 1973 would include having the priesthood [for women] approved.”⁹⁶⁵ It would be the second time the issue of women’s ordination would come before the church’s general convention. However, Jeannette’s optimism, and that of her like-minded cohorts, would soon be dashed.

A bishop once described the Episcopal Church’s general conventions as a “combination of legislature, reunion, eucharistic congress, political convention, job market, sideshow, and benefit.”⁹⁶⁶ During the ten-day period, hundreds of bishops meet in the House of Bishops and thousands of clergy and lay representatives from all dioceses meet in their House of Deputies to discuss, argue, propose amendments and reach compromises regarding church policy and canon law. Either the House of Bishops or the House of Deputies can “originate” legislation; however, it must be passed in both houses for it to become law.⁹⁶⁷

The Committee on the Ordination of Women put forth a resolution supporting the ordination of women. By a vote of 13-7, the majority “resolved” that at this convention

⁹⁶⁴ Letter dated March 12, 1973, Folder 4, Box II: 55, Subject: General Theological Seminary, New York City, N.Y. Correspondence 1971-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁶⁵ P. 13A-t, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies, 1974, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁶⁶ Paul Moore, Jr., Take a Bishop Like Me (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1979), p. 79.

⁹⁶⁷ Moore explained that, “the constitution of [the Episcopal] Church was written by many of the same men who wrote the Constitution of the United States, thus the legislative procedure of the Church functions in the same bicameral fashion.” See *Ibid*.

the “Episcopal Church should proceed to provide for the ordination of women as well as men to the priesthood and the episcopate.”⁹⁶⁸ Likewise, the Episcopal Church Women (ECW)⁹⁶⁹ supported the ordination of women. “Whereas, the Episcopal Church celebrates the worship of Jesus Christ by all persons, in all places, at all times,” the ECW resolution began, “and...the Episcopal Church acknowledges the contributions of women to the spreading of the Gospel...and the Episcopal Church needs the accumulation of knowledge and the variety of expression of the Gospel...[We] resolve....that the General Convention approve the ordering of women to ministries in the Episcopal Church, and, in particular, the ordination of women to the Holy Orders.”⁹⁷⁰

However, the minority report of the Committee on Ordination of Women reflected the issue’s divisiveness at the convention. The report stated that the “mind of the Episcopal Church” was “deeply divided on the matter,” and that ordaining women would have “serious ecumenical consequences.” The minority argued that the “considerations involving the ordination of women to the episcopate and the priesthood [were] not identical, and require[d] deeper reflection...” Rather than denying the ordination of women, the minority recommended that the Episcopal Church undertake “concrete and serious consideration, in each Diocese and congregation...of the nature of the episcopate and the priesthood, and the Christian theology of human sexuality...” In addition, the report called for “formal ecumenical dialogue on these issues between this church and the

⁹⁶⁸ “The Committee on Ordination of Women presents its Report Number 2,” Folder 2, Box II: 49, Subject: Episcopal Church General Conventions 64th, 1973, Piccard Family Papers. The new canon law would read: “The provisions of these Canons for the admission of Postulants and Candidates, and for ordination to the three Orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, shall be equally applicable to men and women...” See Ibid.

⁹⁶⁹ Although separate, the triennial meeting of the Episcopal Church Women coincides with the church’s general convention.

⁹⁷⁰ “Memorials and Resolutions,” Folder 2, Box II: 49, Subject: Episcopal Church: General Conventions 64th, 1973, Piccard Family Papers.

churches of the Anglican communion and the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.⁹⁷¹

Several resolutions initiated in the House of Deputies were put forward regarding aspects of the women's ordination question. A member of the Diocese of Southwest Florida wanted each member of the Episcopal Church to voice in a non-binding vote their feelings about the issue.⁹⁷² A member of the Diocese of Louisiana was more succinct: based on "sound theological reasons..." no "constitutional, canonical, or interpretative" action should be taken by the convention to "authorize the ordination of women to the episcopate or the priesthood."⁹⁷³

When the vote for the ordination of women was taken, it failed. Although many dioceses had approved the ordination of women through their individual conventions, the motion at General Convention was defeated by "an archaic method of counting the votes." Jeannette explained to a friend that when "any single delegation, either the clerical or the lay deputies from any one Diocese call for a 'vote by orders,' the four clerical deputies and the four lay deputies...have a single vote. If the different deputies think differently, say three for and one against, the vote is counted for. If three are against and only one for, the vote is counted against. If the deputies are split two for and two against, it is called a 'divided vote.'" Any motion needed a majority of the votes to pass; therefore, "a divided vote amount[ed] to a no vote." Jeannette was not optimistic about

⁹⁷¹ "The Committee on Ordination of Women presents its Report Number 2," Folder 2, Box II: 49, Subject: Episcopal Church: General Conventions 64th, 1973, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁷² See House of Deputies Resolution Number D-75, Folder 2, Box II: 49, Subject: Episcopal Church General Convention 64th 1973, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁷³ House of Deputies Resolution Number D-45, Folder 2, Box II: 49, Subject: Episcopal Church General Convention 64th 1973, Piccard Family Papers. To understand the rationale behind the resolution, see Ibid.

the future of women's ordination. "The presiding bishop-elect who will take office next May," she wrote, "is opposed. He considers it divisive and he thinks his great 'call' is to reconcile the Church. So women are unhappy, so what?"⁹⁷⁴ Jeannette was understandably frustrated. As historian Pamela W. Darling argues, the defeat of the canon for ordination of women at two consecutive general conventions illustrated that "first, ordination symbolize[d] access to power in the Episcopal Church far more than either baptism or full voting membership; second, most of the men who held that power were not eager to share it with women."⁹⁷⁵ However, the issue of women's ordination in the Episcopal Church must be placed within the context of the social and cultural milieu of the late 1960s and early 1970s. By 1973, years of debate about several controversial issues, including women's ordination, had come to the forefront within the Episcopal Church, threatening congregational schism. For many Episcopalians, changing the canon law to allow for women's ordination was either not high on their list of priorities, or reflected everything that was wrong with their beloved church.

Black Manifesto

"To the White Christian Churches and the Jewish Synagogues [sic] in the United States of America and all other Racist Institutions," began James Forman's presentation, a speech delivered in April 1969, to the National Black Economic Development Conference (NBEDC) in Detroit, Michigan. In what became known as the "Black Manifesto," Forman's eleven-page statement argued against the wrongs perpetuated by

⁹⁷⁴ Letter dated October 20, 1973, Folder 1, Box II: 40, Subject: Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA 1969-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette had been told that "if the individual votes had been counted there would have been 488 for and 400 against." See Ibid.

⁹⁷⁵ Pamela W. Darling, New Wine: The Story of Women Transforming Leadership and Power in the Episcopal Church (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1994), p. 221.

whites against black people, both in the United States and around the world. The manifesto “demanded” \$500,000,000 in reparations from the “Christian white churches and the Jewish synagogues” who were “part and parcel of the system of capitalism.” Forman argued this amounted to “15 dollars per nigger...” and though it was not a large sum of money per person, “it was only a beginning of the reparations due us as people who have been exploited and degraded, brutalized, killed and persecuted.” “We are no longer afraid,” he emphasized, “to demand our full rights as a people in this decadent society.” Forman concluded his remarks, stating, “Our demands are negotiable, but they cannot be minimized, they can only be increased and the Church is asked to come up with larger sums of money than we are asking.”⁹⁷⁶

Forman had years of experience in the civil rights movement, having been a founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and one of the creators of the 1961 “Freedom Rides.”⁹⁷⁷ Within weeks of the Detroit speech, Forman “confronted the white religious establishment,” when he presented the manifesto to the Episcopal Church’s national headquarters in New York City, hoping to speak to John Hines, the presiding bishop. According to theologian and historian Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., Hines was not in New York when Forman arrived; however, the two bishops who received him were “polite,” but “uneasy about his appearance [at their headquarters],” and “flabbergasted by his monetary demands.” After Hines returned to the church’s

⁹⁷⁶ Arnold Schuchter, Reparations: The Black Manifesto and Its Challenge to White America (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1970), pp. 191-202.

⁹⁷⁷ During the Freedom Rides, blacks and whites challenged the segregationist laws of the South by sitting on buses wherever they pleased and disregarding racist signs when utilizing bus facilities. According to historian Mark Kurlansky, Farmer’s rationale for the Freedom Rides was “counting on the racists of the South to create a crisis, so that the federal government would be compelled to enforce federal law.” See Mark Kurlansky, 1968: The Year That Rocked The World (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004), p. 88.

headquarters, he called into meeting the Executive Council to “decide on an official response” to the manifesto demands.⁹⁷⁸

Previously, Hines had been bold in utilizing the Episcopal Church’s resources to attack America’s societal ills. Immediately after the 1967 race riots in Detroit, Michigan, and Watts, California, and shortly before the scheduled General Convention in Seattle, he called a meeting of African-Americans experienced in working with the urban poor. In what Hines “remembered as a day of ‘fearless and furious and agonizing, humiliating debate and testimony,’ these witnesses ‘unburdened themselves without any hesitation and pulled no punches.’”⁹⁷⁹ Acting on his own Christian moral compass and belief that the “church needed to become a ‘channel’ of support,” Hines revised the schedule for the upcoming Seattle convention, and proposed a “radical shift both in stance and priorities for the Church.” Ultimately, Hines envisioned “reapportioning” two million dollars a year to “aid those trapped in poverty.”⁹⁸⁰ At Seattle, his first convention as presiding bishop, Hines received “near unanimous support” for his proposals, and when the convention adjourned, he had “placed the Episcopal Church’s resources in the forefront of a national effort to heal America’s troubled inner cities.”⁹⁸¹

However, by 1969, Hines’s vision of a socially-involved church was marred by “divisions and brokenness.” At the Special General Convention in South Bend, Indiana,

⁹⁷⁸ Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), pp. 188-189.

⁹⁷⁹ Kenneth W. Kesselus, “‘Awake, thou Spirit of the watchmen’: John E. Hines’s Challenge to the Episcopal Church,” Anglican and Episcopal History 64 (1995): 310-311.

⁹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 313. This monetary figure represented 1/6th of the church’s overall budget, and even supporters cautioned that the “altered priority” of the church would “cause a loss of 10 percent of church members.” See *Ibid.*

⁹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 325. Hine’s proposals were met with concern and skepticism by the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU). See Folder 5, Box II: 48, Subject: Episcopal Church General Conventions 62nd, Seattle, Wash., 1967, Piccard Family Papers.

called to complete the unfinished business carried over from Seattle, African-American delegates walked out in protest; white anti-war activists protested at the back of the hall; and “two military deserters appeared without warning and asked to be granted sanctuary by the church...” Also during this meeting on the University of Notre Dame campus, word reached the participants that the controversial Bishop James A. Pike was “missing and presumed dead in the wilderness in Israel.”⁹⁸² One participant observed, “the ‘miracle convention of 1969’ had revealed the true identity of the Episcopal Church: ‘It is not the comfortable upper middle-class version of respectable Christianity [but] the most diverse, motley, widely varied group of human being that could be imagined.’”⁹⁸³

Historian Gardiner Shattuck, Jr., argues that after the 1969 Special General Convention, “many middle-class white Americans...began to wonder whether the Episcopal Church had lost its corporate mind.” The leaders of the church, including Hines, were “caught between two opposing camps: those who wanted the church to become further engaged in the social revolution of the day and those who wanted it to turn back to strictly ‘spiritual’ concerns.”⁹⁸⁴ Leaders of several Southern white parishes questioned why their money should be used by the church to “support black militants.” One white priest in Alabama thought that Hines had been “living in New York for too long.” “If the presiding bishop could get back to his regional roots,” he said, “he would see ‘a great difference in the way people think in [his] Diocese of Texas, and in [his]

⁹⁸² Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, pp. 193-194. African-American delegates were disgruntled that the manifesto and its provisions were not being discussed. The anti-war activists disrupted the proceedings by reading the names of the American soldiers killed in Vietnam. The military deserters did not get a hearing. Ibid.

⁹⁸³ Ibid., p. 194.

⁹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 195. An article in the *New York Times* indicated that the church had agreed to reparations. Hines immediately sent a rebuttal that in fact the church was not in favor of reparations, but “the *Times* report had done its damage.” See Ibid.

home town of Seneca, South Carolina.”⁹⁸⁵ The animosity and concerns experienced by the participants in South Bend, Indiana, resurfaced at the 1970 General Convention in Houston, Texas.

Jeannette, along with many others, arrived in Houston with the hope and belief that the canon law would be changed to allow for women’s ordination to the priesthood.⁹⁸⁶ And while the change in canon law was of primary concern for Jeannette, over time she had personally and spiritually joined with other Episcopalians who wanted their church to be engaged in social revolution. Since the mid-1960s, she received the personal support of the African-American rector of St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, and she returned Father Denzil Carty’s encouragement, trust and guidance by being actively involved in the predominately African-American congregation. After her ordination as deacon, she often served with Carty at the altar, and in 1974 Jeannette requested the transfer of her membership to St. Philip’s. “It seems,” Jeannette told her bishop, “that really I should be resident there where I have been given support.”⁹⁸⁷ In the letter accompanying the formal transfer request, Jeannette reiterated her “regret” at leaving St. Paul’s Church-on-the-Hill, but was compelled to “face the fact” that three years after her ordination as deacon, Father Taylor had “never invited [her] to serve as Deacon in a service nor to assist him in any way that a Deacon may.”⁹⁸⁸

⁹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 195.

⁹⁸⁶ See Chapter Six.

⁹⁸⁷ Letter dated July 15, 1974, Folder 2, Box II: 47, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1973-1978, Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁸⁸ Letter dated July 21, 1974, Folder 5, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia, PA., ordinations, correspondence 1974-1975, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

In addition to shepherding his congregation, Carty was engaged in battling the numerous social problems of the Twin Cities,⁹⁸⁹ and his work served as a strong influence on his white congregant from Minneapolis. Jeannette's hometown university was not immune from the protests that erupted on college campuses across the nation during the late 1960s. John Wright, a black graduate student at the University of Minnesota in 1969, remembered years later that the university was a "very inhospitable place for African-Americans. Dormitories were closed. If you were black you could not live in...[the] dormitories, in this, a public university." Although Wright was upset that the "social life, the fraternities and the sororities were all closed" to him due to his race, what made him most upset was that "there was nothing to reflect [an African-American's] experience or history in the [university's] curriculum." Wright helped form the Afro-American Action Committee (AAAC), and with a list of demands, he and other AAAC members met with the university president. Out of frustration about the apparent "stalling" by the administration, "seven students walked into the student records office in Morrill Hall on January 14, 1969, and refused to leave." At the end of the standoff, three AAAC members were arrested.⁹⁹⁰

Shortly after the "Morrill Hall takeover," Jeannette felt compelled to donate to the "Black Community Defense Fund." As the fund's treasurer, Carty sent a thank-you note, stating that the "funds [would] be used solely for legal expenses, fines and bail bonds for

⁹⁸⁹ See "Father Carty * An Ordained Minister for 40 Years," Folder 1, Box II: 70, Subject: St. Philip's Episcopal Church, General, 1969-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Paper.

⁹⁹⁰ Art Hughes, "The Legacy of the Morrill Hall Takeover," The 1969 Morrill Hall Takeover: University of Minnesota Veteran Activists Reflect as Black Bodies in Resistance, April 21, 2006, <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2006/04/21/morrillhall/> (December 29, 2008). Hughes reported that three of the student organizers were "charged with unlawful assembly, inciting a riot and destruction of property. They were all acquitted of the most serious charges." See *Ibid.*

persons who [were] in trouble because of their involvement in the civil rights movement.” Carty concluded his note by telling Jeannette, “your response is most encouraging in that it assures us there are still those left who are anxious to keep America truly a land where freedom and justice for all remains the top priority.”⁹⁹¹

According to historian Gardiner Shattuck, by the time of the 1970 general convention, the presiding bishop’s agenda and vision for the church were being called into question. Episcopal congregants were voicing their displeasure with their wallets, creating a million dollar shortfall in the church’s national budget. In addition, there were threats made on Hines’s life, thereby making security “extremely tight at the convention hall.” Whatever progress had been made with regards to racial relations and racial empowerment were “effectively reversed” at Houston. For many bishops, however, the issue was not one of Episcopal race programs, but rather how to regain “control over the church itself. And at the 1970 convention, white Episcopalians succeeded in regaining control of ‘their’ church.”⁹⁹² By 1973, at the next convention in Louisville, Kentucky, the control would be complete.

For many Episcopal men and women attending the triennial gathering, there was a hopeful expectation that women’s ordination would become real, and in the words of historian Heather Huyck, the church would “celebrate a whole priesthood.”⁹⁹³ But the reality was that for the Episcopal Church, the 1973 convention in Louisville marked the

⁹⁹¹ Letter dated April 17, 1970, Folder 6, Box II: 40, Subject: Carty, Denzil A. 1965-1971, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

⁹⁹² Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, pp. 203-204.

⁹⁹³ Heather Ann Huyck, “To Celebrate a Whole Priesthood: The History of Women’s Ordination in the Episcopal Church” (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1981).

time when the “painful agenda of the last three conventions” was put to rest.⁹⁹⁴ However, the Louisville convention was not without its own share of drama, most notably Bishop Hines’s unexpected announcement of his early retirement, thereby creating a void in the office of presiding bishop.⁹⁹⁵ Shattuck argues that “although some speculated that [Hines’s] opponents had succeeded in hounding him from office, it is more likely that [he] was simply exhausted from serving almost thirty years as bishop during a turbulent period of social change.”⁹⁹⁶ After hours of debate, the House of Deputies “concurred” with the House of Bishops’ choice of John M. Allin, the bishop of Mississippi.⁹⁹⁷

The fifty-two-year-old presiding bishop-elect was born in Arkansas, and had spent his entire ministry in parishes in the South, including Mississippi and Louisiana.⁹⁹⁸ A fellow bishop argued that Allin had been “elected by a coalition of theologically conservative Western bishops and socially conservative Southern bishops...who wished to slow the pace of change” in the Episcopal Church.⁹⁹⁹ It was with this tide of conservatism that the vote to change canon law to allow for the ordination of women to the priesthood was defeated. According to historian Heather Huyck, Suzanne Hiatt “believed that without the

⁹⁹⁴ Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, p. 211.

⁹⁹⁵ A presiding bishop is “elected for nine years (beginning the first of the year after the close of the General Convention at which he is elected), or until the Convention after he is seventy.” Hines was elected in 1964. See *The Episcopal Church Annual 2006* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2006), p. 444.

⁹⁹⁶ See Shattuck, *Episcopalians and Race*, p. 211.

⁹⁹⁷ According to Shattuck, “Allin was eventually confirmed, but approximately 20 percent of the diocesan delegations refused to concur with the bishops’ decision—a negative vote of unprecedented size. Although one of Allin’s supporters maintained that ‘to pin the racist label on him...is about as reasonable as to assume that the Bishop of Milwaukee must be president of a brewing company,’ his candidacy was strongly resisted by the church’s white liberal wing.” See *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁹⁹⁸ “Twenty-Third Presiding Bishop Dies at Age 77,” *The Living Church: The Archives of the Episcopal Church*, March 29, 1998, http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/the_living_church/TLCArticle.pl?volume=216&i (January 23, 2007).

⁹⁹⁹ Paul Moore, Jr., *Take a Bishop Like Me* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1979), pp. 18-19.

delay caused by the House of Deputies' objections to the newly elected Presiding Bishop, 'we might have squeaked through'”¹⁰⁰⁰

Post-Louisville

“Louisville is over,” Carter Heyward wrote to members of the Episcopal Women’s Caucus (EWC). “What happened there may be having extraordinary effects on us,” she continued, “spiritually, psychologically, [and] vocationally.” “With the future in mind,” Heyward was challenging the EWC to hold a “vocational conference for women who believe they are, or might be, called to the priesthood.”¹⁰⁰¹ Although Jeannette had previous engagements, she finagled her way to the November EWC conference at the Virginia Theological Seminary. “Dear Bishop McNairy,” Jeannette wrote, “In accordance with your telephone conversation...I am writing to request financial help in attending a...conference...” Jeannette was determined to go to the EWC meeting in spite of her busy schedule. She explained to McNairy that she was planning to “fly to Washington, D.C. Friday, the 2nd, and return the evening of November 3rd so [she could] be back in time to assist Father Carty at the 8:00am Eucharist on Sunday and preach and assist...at the 10:30 Eucharist.” Jeannette’s airline ticket cost \$151.27, and “any help” the bishop could provide would be “greatly appreciated.”¹⁰⁰²

After the conference Jeannette reported to her bishop that “all the women [felt] rejected by the Church.” “Not by God,” Jeannette stated, “but by the Church.” According to Jeannette, the outcome of the Louisville convention had “brought an identity crisis to

¹⁰⁰⁰ Huyck, “To Celebrate a Whole Priesthood,” pp. 79-80.

¹⁰⁰¹ Letter dated October 18, 1973, Folder 5, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁰² Letter dated October 29, 1973, Folder 1, Box II: 47, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1973-1978, Piccard Family Papers.

many of the women.” “They are sure of their vocation,” Jeannette assured the bishop, “but confused as to how this can be exercised. All are deeply wounded and will carry the scars for a long time, perhaps all their lives.” Jeannette told McNairy additional members had been added to the EWC steering committee, but she was “afraid little positive action was taken.”¹⁰⁰³ Jeannette expressed to conference organizer Suzanne Hiatt her concern that “very little positive action” was taken at the meeting, stating she was “wanting to get...working for [the general convention in] 1976.”¹⁰⁰⁴

Jeannette, Hiatt, and other participants at the Virginia conference agreed that more needed to be done at the diocesan level to garner support for the women’s cause. Father Carty suggested to Jeannette that they needed to canvass “every parish and mission in the diocese and get the signatures of at least two people in favor” of women’s ordination.¹⁰⁰⁵ Hiatt agreed with Jeannette’s assessment, stating that part of the challenge was “electing the right delegates” to the convention. However, Hiatt acknowledged that one of the EWC’s “great lacks in both Houston and Louisville was a group of supportive local Episcopalians...” [Emphasis in original.] Hiatt argued that “locals” could have “helped by putting up women in their homes, lending...cars, [and] making contacts with [the] local press.” With the 1976 General Convention scheduled for the Twin Cities, Hiatt

¹⁰⁰³ Letter dated November 5, 1973, Folder 1, Box II: 47, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1973-1978, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Letter dated November 6, 1973, Folder 5, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1973-1978, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette’s handwritten random conference notes allow for insight into the topics of concern: “Where do we go from here?” “What is priesthood about? moral issue.” “Do I stay in or leave the Church. Why would any woman in her right mind want to be a priest?” “Strategy – How do you ask for help?” “Anger and Spirituality” “Not our problem, ours alone, Church’s problem – we are part of Church” [Emphasis in original.] “How do you connect with allies.” See “Meeting VTS Nov 2-3 [1973],” Folder 5, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Letter dated November 6, 1973, Folder 5, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1973-1978, Piccard Family Papers.

assured Jeannette that they “should have plenty of allies...and it [was] not too early to start getting them together.”¹⁰⁰⁶ Jeannette concurred with Hiatt’s assessment, and believed that they should “use the ECW as a forum [and] make [themselves] as visible in as many parishes as possible.” “More power to you, darling,” Jeannette wrote her younger compatriot. “Keep me informed, please and especially let me know what I can do to help. My life is bound up in this too, you know.”¹⁰⁰⁷ However, by early 1974 it was evident that the issue of women’s ordination was not going to wait for discussion at the church’s general convention in Minneapolis in two years.

The Episcopal Women’s Caucus scheduled late-winter and early-spring meetings around the country. During their time in New York City, Jeannette, along with fourteen other women deacons and seminarians, met for hours with Presiding Bishop Allin, but came away discouraged.¹⁰⁰⁸ The “general consensus” of the group was that Allin had a “definite stance opposing women’s ordination to the priesthood,” yet he wanted to maintain “open communication,” and had expressed “interest in attending” a future EWC meeting.¹⁰⁰⁹ However, the members of the Episcopal Women’s Caucus could take heart in knowing that they were not in their struggle alone; they had the help and support of allies, including many bishops, male deacons, and church vestries.

In his memoir, Bishop Edward Randolph Welles II recalled that after his daughter, Katrina Swanson, was “ordained Deacon in 1971, she brought [him] into contact with

¹⁰⁰⁶ Letter dated December 8, 1973, Folder 5, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1973-1978, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Letter dated October 26, 1973, Folder 5, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Letter dated February 19, 1974, Folder 6, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Letter dated March 11, 1974, Folder 6, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

other women deacons and increasingly [he] came to have a new understanding of the pervasive discrimination to which all women clergy [were] subjected in the Church.” As early as 1968, Welles was an outspoken proponent of women’s ordination, and though he “heard” after Louisville that “some bishop or bishops planned to ordain women priests regardless of the vote,” he wanted to wait until the canonical change, hopefully in 1976.¹⁰¹⁰ One cleric who did not want to wait for Minneapolis was William H. Mead, the bishop of Delaware. Mead was “prepared to ordain”¹⁰¹¹ Hiatt; however, he died “unexpectedly” in late February.¹⁰¹² After Mead’s death, Jeannette received a letter from her friend Bishop Daniel Corrigan, that read in part: “Bill Mead’s death brought [the issue of women’s ordination] more sharply into focus as he was drawing together those of us in the House of Bishops who strongly favor the ordination of women and tend to think it is the chief theological issue of the day.” “Which diocesan bishop,” Corrigan continued, “will now pick up that torch or baton or whatever, I don’t know. But I do want you to know that many of us have a conscientious necessity to do more than sit and wait.”¹⁰¹³ Some women deacons were not going to sit and wait; rather, they were going to make their spiritual calling known publicly, with the support of male deacons and vestries.

“I have heard through the grapevine,” the New York diocesan bishop wrote Carter Heyward, “that some of you are planning a demonstration of some kind at

¹⁰¹⁰ Edward Randolph Welles II, The Happy Disciple: An Autobiography of Edward Randolph Welles II (Manset, Maine: Learning Incorporated Publishers, 1975), pp. 183-184.

¹⁰¹¹ Huyck, “To Celebrate a Whole Priesthood,” p. 85.

¹⁰¹² Welles, The Happy Disciple, p. 185.

¹⁰¹³ Letter dated April 12, 1974, Folder 6, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

the...ordination [of the Rev. Douglass B. Clark]...For my part, however, I wish to advise you strongly, urgently, and earnestly to avoid any such action.”¹⁰¹⁴ Heyward assured Bishop Moore that she had no intentions of demonstrating during Clark’s ordination service, but she could not speak for members of the parish. “I cannot be sure, any more than you can be,” she told Moore, “that the people of St. Mary’s will not be moved to express their distress at the implications of this particular ordination. I suppose your only guarantee against a ‘demonstration’ would be for someone to convince the people of the church that obedience to God is, afterall, secondary to institutional law.” With the tone of frustration, Heyward ended the letter, stating, “As ever, I am sorry, personally, to be at such odds with you about this. But, Paul, what is the choice? Tell me.”¹⁰¹⁵

Moore and Heyward had reached this impasse due in part to the outcome of the April meeting of the St. Mary’s vestry. They had approved three candidates for ordination to the priesthood, all of whom they “warmly and equally support[ed] as members and pastors of [the] congregation.”¹⁰¹⁶ In addition to Doug Clark, the vestry told Bishop Moore they had approved the Rev. Emily Hewitt, and the Rev. I. Carter Heyward.¹⁰¹⁷ “We request that these three deacons,” the vestry board wrote, “be together ordained to the priesthood in St. Mary’s Church on Friday, May 17, 1974.”¹⁰¹⁸ The vestry assured the

¹⁰¹⁴ Letter dated April 29, 1974, Folder 6, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. There had been several acts of quiet demonstration during ordination services. See Huyck, “To Celebrate a Whole Priesthood,” pp. 85-88.

¹⁰¹⁵ Letter dated May 2, 1974, Folder 6, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰¹⁶ Letter dated April 17, 1974, Folder 6, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰¹⁷ Carter Heyward experienced personally the outrage some priests held regarding the ordination of women. See Huyck, “To Celebrate a Whole Priesthood,” p. 88.

¹⁰¹⁸ Letter dated April 17, 1974, Folder 6, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

bishop that their clergy were “in no way ‘lobbying’ with or pressuring” the St. Mary’s congregation, and that both the clergy and the vestry were “highly aware” that for their parish it was an “essentially pastoral/congregational matter...”¹⁰¹⁹

The tension over a possible demonstration by the female deacons was so great that Clark’s home diocese’s bishop told him that he could be ordained in Southeast Florida, rather than New York. Bishop James L. Duncan reminded Clark that part of his ordination vow included signing a document confirming he would conform to the “doctrine, discipline, and worship” of the Episcopal Church. “The discipline of the Church,” Duncan counseled, “is that women cannot be ordained to the priesthood at this point. Therefore it is a sacrilege to use this occasion as a political demonstration.”¹⁰²⁰

Clark thanked Duncan for his “concern,” but stated that it “seem[ed] to be [his] historical ‘favor’ to have come into a church which...has had the unique experience of having two women deacons...two highly competent and able human beings...work here.” “In many ways,” Clark told the distressed bishop, “it would have been unnatural, from the parish’s point of view, [to] not feel the irony that presents itself when the newest deacon...who happens to be a man, plans his ordination to the priesthood when the National Church at this point does not present this opportunity to its two women deacons.” Clark understood how “emotionally charged” the issue of women’s ordination was for the church; however, “personally” he was “very impressed by the enthusiasm, honesty, and responsibility” which the clergy and members of St. Mary’s had “exercised”

¹⁰¹⁹ Letter dated April 29, 1974, Folder 6, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰²⁰ Letter dated May 3, 1974, Folder 6, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

in speaking to the issue. “I am glad,” he declared, “to be involved as I have been, providing the catalyst in my ordination for St. Mary’s to get together over what may become a pastoral crisis in our church.”¹⁰²¹

On May 17, 1974, no major demonstration erupted during Clark’s ordination service, save for the actions of the five women deacons present, and the penetrating words of Carter Heyward’s sermon. “Tonight we celebrate the ordination of one of us...to the priesthood,” she began. “Believing in the priesthood of all believers, as I do, I believe that all of us as priests have come together to designate one of our brothers as a priest, in no way different from us...All of us are priests, by baptism. Tonight Doug will become a priest, by ordination....” Near the end of the sermon, Heyward thanked the people of St. Mary’s parish for “assuming that all of life’s processes and problems are inherently connected...” “There is no political problem,” she stated, “be it war, Watergate, racism, sexism, crime, or poverty—that is not also a critical religious problem to be taken seriously by the church...Likewise, there is no such thing as a purely ‘theological problem’ or ‘ecclesiastical problem’ that does not relate, profoundly, to some social, political, psychological, or otherwise-badly-categorized dilemma in the larger world.”¹⁰²²

The five women deacons present at Clark’s ordination protested quietly. Jeannette described the scene to her bishop, stating that during the Eucharist the women deacons did not go to the Altar rail “at the proper time” to receive the sacrament. “We waited,” Jeannette explained, “till the priests, and the whole congregation had gone to the Altar

¹⁰²¹ Letter dated May 6, 1974, Folder 6, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰²² “Priesthood,” sermon dated May 17, 1974, Folder 2, Box II: 53, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus printed and near-print matter 1973-1974, Piccard Family Papers.

and then we went. We wanted to symbolize our recognition of rejection by the Church but our knowledge that we are not rejected by God. To our surprise when we started forward numbers of women singly and by twos came from all parts of the Congregation to join us.”¹⁰²³

Clark’s ordination service coincided “to the day” with the 20th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s overturning the “separate-but-equal” doctrine in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Acknowledging that a “separate-but-equal mind-set [was] still perva[sive]” in the United States, Heyward preached that a “separate-but-equal theology [had] long undergirded the exclusion of women from full participation in the life and ministry of the church.” “That we Episcopalians—as a diocese, as a parish, as individuals,” she challenged those gathered, “can comply for one more day with this blatant and fear-tainted discrimination, upheld by our national church legislators against all women, is outrageous to basic Christian and human sensibilities.” [Emphasis in original.]¹⁰²⁴

Toward Philadelphia

Historian Heather Huyck describes the February 1974 meeting of the Episcopal Women’s Caucus as where the “future split” of the organization “first became apparent.” Some members focused on “political strategy,” and others wanted the emphasis on educational efforts. The third group, Huyck argues, were “more radicalized,” and believed that using “polite tactics would postpone women’s ordination in the church.” It

¹⁰²³ Letter dated June 30, 1974, Folder 2, Box II: 47, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1973-1978, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰²⁴ “Priesthood,” sermon dated May 17, 1974, Folder 2, Box II: 53, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus printed and near-print matter 1973-1974, Piccard Family Papers.

was this small group of women and their supporters who considered the idea of “irregular ordinations.”¹⁰²⁵ It was during this meeting that the status of men as members was discussed. It was the “consensus” of the group that there was a “need for sisterhood and the Caucus [was] that kind of support group.” Jeannette “suggested that men should be made ‘consultants’ instead of ‘associated members.’”¹⁰²⁶

When asked how the participating bishops decided to ordain the women deacons, Jeannette said that she did not “really know.” “I just got a telephone call,” she recalled, “that there were three, maybe four bishops who were going to ordain a group of the women who wanted to be ordained and did I wish to join them. They were calling all of the women deacons to ask them if they wanted to be ordained. And there were 11 of us who said, ‘Yes. Let’s go ahead.’”¹⁰²⁷ Suzanne Hiatt remembered that “within the space of ten days in June, things fell into place and the long-discussed ‘irregular’ ordination was in the planning stage...It became clear that the years of networking, strategizing, and discussing the issue had come to fruition.”¹⁰²⁸

On July 10, an ordination planning committee met in Philadelphia, and as participant Bishop Welles remembered, the “meeting was decisive, and by mid-afternoon...a group of us decided to ordain women priests...”¹⁰²⁹ According to historian Leslie Reyman, “July 29 was chosen from an array of women saints’ days [that fell] within the next six

¹⁰²⁵ Huyck, “To Celebrate a Whole Priesthood,” pp. 91-92.

¹⁰²⁶ See letter dated May 28, 1974, Folder 6, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰²⁷ P. 18A-t, Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Autobiographies 1974, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰²⁸ Suzanne R. Hiatt, “How We Brought the Good News From Graymoor to Minneapolis: An Episcopal Paradigm,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 20 (Fall 1983): 580.

¹⁰²⁹ Welles, *The Happy Disciple*, p. 189.

weeks.”¹⁰³⁰ Jeannette was not a member of the committee; however, Hiatt kept her informed. Upon receipt of the proposed “Order of Service,” for their ordination, Jeannette suggested that they needed to be “careful not to make a mish-mash of the BCP [Book of Common Prayer] and Trial Use.” “Since you ask my opinion about the Peace, guitars, etc.,” Jeannette counseled, “if we use BCP we should stick closely to it, varying only from the written world where Anglo-Catholic usage has made something, like the Peace, customary.” Although Jeannette “loved the passing of the Peace,” and “really dig[ged] guitars,” her concern was the “perception” of the service. “We [do not want] to be accused of rowdy and disorderly behaviour, [sic] lacking in due reverence,” she told Hiatt. “If we are going to use BCP, then we should stick to it rigidly. Let’s avoid being charged with unimportant side issues.” Jeannette’s concern was “particularly [about] those who [would] be looking for something with which to charge us...”¹⁰³¹

The decision was made to release information about the up-coming service on July 19th. The eleven ordinands sent a letter to supportive friends announcing their intention that “God willing,” they were going to be ordained by three retired bishops. “We know this ordination to be irregular,” they stated. “[However], we believe it to be valid and right...Our primary motivation is to begin to free priesthood from the bondage it suffers as long as it is characterized by categorical exclusion of persons on the basis of sex. We do not feel we are ‘hurting the cause’, for the ‘cause’ is not merely to admit a few token

¹⁰³⁰ Reyman, Leslie. “The Archive of Women in Theological Scholarship, The Burke Library, Union Theological Seminary: Finding Aid for Suzanne Hiatt Papers, 1963-1998,” October 2000, http://www.columbia.edu/cu/web/img/assets/6396/Hiatt_SFA51305PDF.pdf (November 21, 2006). According to Reyman, other dates “considered were Mary Magdalene (July 22), the Virgin Mary (August 15), the nativity of the Virgin (September 7). July 29 seemed best in terms of timing (not too soon to get ready but not a long wait for word to leak out).” See Ibid.

¹⁰³¹ Letter dated July 18, 1972, Folder 5, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia, PA., ordinations correspondence 1974-1975, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

women to the ‘privilege’ of priesthood. We must rather re-affirm and recover the universality of Christ’s ministry as symbolized in that order.” The women acknowledged that they were “fully cognizant of the risks...”; however, they could “no longer in conscience answer [their] calling by saying ‘Eventually – when the Church comes around to accepting us.’”¹⁰³²

Attached to the women’s correspondence was an “open letter” from the three bishops presiding at the upcoming Philadelphia service. Acknowledging that the church was divided on the issue, the three men stated that their “action” of ordination represented their “obedience to the Lordship of Christ.” “It is intended,” the bishops declared, “as an act of solidarity with those in whatever institution, in whatever part of the world, of whatever stratum of society, who in their search for freedom, for liberation, for dignity, are moved by that same Spirit to struggle against sin, to proclaim that victory, to attempt to walk in newness of life.”¹⁰³³

Ten days prior to the planned ordination service, Jeannette attempted to contact her diocesan bishop. Although she hoped for a face-to-face meeting, due to scheduling conflicts Jeannette was told by McNairy’s secretary to write him. “Dear Bishop,” Jeannette began, “Something very important has come up...A week from next Monday...[four] bishops are planning to ordain a group of women deacons who are qualified to the Order of Priest. I plan to be among those women.” Jeannette wanted to

¹⁰³² Letter dated July 20, 1974, Folder 5, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia Ordination correspondence 1974-1975, Piccard Family Papers. The eleven women seeking ordination were: Merrill Bittner, Alla Bozarth-Campbell, Alison Cheek, Emily Hewitt, Carter Heyward, Suzanne Hiatt, Marie Moorefield, Jeannette Piccard, Betty Schiess, Katrina Swanson and Nancy Hatch Wittig. See Ibid.

¹⁰³³ “An Open Letter,” Folder 10, Box II: 66, Subject: Ordination to the Priesthood printed and near-print matter, Piccard Family Papers. The three willing bishops were Daniel Corrigan, Robert DeWitt and Edward R. Welles, II. See Ibid.

keep McNairy “informed,” and did not want to put him “on the spot of either having to grant or withhold permission.” “I want...very much,” Jeannette concluded, “to have your blessing even if it is not expressed. Above all, I beg your prayers for all of us who are involved in this drastic act of commitment.”¹⁰³⁴ Within days, Jeannette received Bishop McNairy’s response to her news.

“That you plan to participate in an ordination service,” McNairy began, “is a matter of great pain to me. I cannot in any way condone or approve of or sanction this service.” Although McNairy was supportive of women’s ordination, he “believed that for [Jeannette] to share in this service and assume that thereby [she had] received priesthood in which order [she could] function, would be a grave mistake...” The bishop doubted that any of his fellow bishops had the “right to perform the service of ordination without the consent of the clergy and laity of the church,” and therefore doubted the “validity” of the ordination. McNairy asked Jeannette “not to become a participant in the Philadelphia service,” and if she chose to go through with the service, he would not recognize the ordination. In addition, McNairy would deny her permission to “function as a priest” in the Diocese of Minnesota.¹⁰³⁵

With a deep understanding of both Jeannette’s heart-felt desire for the priesthood, and the Episcopal Church’s history and tradition, McNairy cautioned that an ordination service would do “irreparable harm to [her] own cause and ministry and also to the church, which [would] be divided by this incident and preoccupied by the issue.” “This

¹⁰³⁴ Letter dated July 19, 1974, Folder 5, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia, PA., Ordination, correspondence 1974-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰³⁵ Letter dated July 24, 1974, Folder 5, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia, PA., Ordination, correspondence 1974-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

struggle,” the bishop predicted, “will not grip the church and perhaps fracture it. The question from this point on will not be the ordination of women, but it will be the authority and function of a bishop.”¹⁰³⁶ Although McNairy’s response was harsh and to the point, this was not the first time he had cautioned Jeannette. In February 1974, McNairy made it clear that he was “offended” by Jeannette when it “seem[ed] to [him] that ‘women’s rights’ obscure[ed her] own strong call to the priesthood.”¹⁰³⁷ Jeannette thanked her bishop for his words of concern, but stated that she was going to Philadelphia. “Whatever I do, or do not do, while I am there,” she told McNairy, “will be, I hope, in accordance with God’s will.”¹⁰³⁸

Aware of the movement underfoot, Presiding Bishop Allin responded to the pending ordination service with words of warning to Jeannette: “For the sake of the unity of the church and the cause of ordination of women to the priesthood, I beg you to reconsider your intention to present yourself for ordination before the necessary canonical changes are made.” Allin was “deeply concerned” about the “relationship obstacles” which could result within Jeannette’s diocese as well as “the church as a whole.”¹⁰³⁹ Upon receiving

¹⁰³⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰³⁷ See letter Dated February 3, 1974, Folder 2, Box II: 47, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1973-1978, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰³⁸ Letter dated July 26, 1974, Folder 5, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia, PA., Ordination, correspondence 1974-1975, Piccard Family Papers. In response to McNairy’s concern about the “validity” of the service, Jeannette wrote, “Any orders conferred in Philadelphia...to women will I believe (forgive me that I differ from your thinking) be valid, though irregular. You, of course are free to accept or reject the service of any priest in your Diocese.” See Ibid.

¹⁰³⁹ Telegram dated July 23, 1974, Folder 5, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia, PA., Ordination, correspondence 1974-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

the presiding bishop's call for cancellation, Jeannette "humbly" asked him to "reconsider" his position on women's ordination.¹⁰⁴⁰

In an attempt to postpone the service, the presiding bishop reached out to those involved, telling Bishop Welles that the ordaining bishops and "eleven women deacons should be generous and wait and trust generosity in return at Minneapolis in 1976." Welles agreed to convey Allin's message to the others gathering in Philadelphia. "I urged postponement," Welles recalled, "but everyone else was committed to go ahead."¹⁰⁴¹ Despite the pleadings of Allin and others, on July 29, 1974, thousands gathered at the Church of the Advocate in North Philadelphia to bear witness to the women's call to the priesthood. "That awful day," the Advocate's rector Father Paul Washington recalled years later, "when we were disobedient to the church and obedient to God."¹⁰⁴²

The Philadelphia Eleven

Remembered as a "happy day of warm Christian community,"¹⁰⁴³ all those involved in the next day's historic service gathered at the home of Bishop DeWitt for a picnic and fellowship. Jeannette invited her granddaughter, who was "tremendously flattered and honored" to be part of the day's festivities. "I found out that nobody else in the family was going," Kathryn remembered, "and I was the only one from the family there to support her..."¹⁰⁴⁴ Although still doubting his own participation in the next day's ordination service, Bishop Welles celebrated the outdoor Eucharist for the "large group

¹⁰⁴⁰ Mailgram dated July 24, 1974, Folder 5, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia, PA., Ordination, correspondence 1974-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁴¹ Welles, *The Happy Disciple*, p. 198.

¹⁰⁴² Paul M. Washington with David McL. Gracie, "Other Sheep I Have": *The Autobiography of Father Paul M. Washington* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994), p. xviii.

¹⁰⁴³ Welles, *The Happy Disciple*, p. 196.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Kathryn A. Piccard, transcript of interview with author, September 15, 2006, Athens, Ohio. Transcript in author's possession.

of ordinands, family and friends.” “The people,” Welles recalled, “even children, introduced themselves. That was when my ten-year-old grandson said, ‘I’m William Swanson. My mom’s going to be ordained a priest. I hope Grandfather is going to do it. I think we all have to pick up our cross and follow Jesus.’” Perhaps his grandson had touched a nerve. Although Welles “preferred to wait and give the Church ‘one more chance’ to do the right thing” at the next General Convention, he knew there was a possibility that the canonical law would not be changed. “Since I believed that God wanted women to be ordained to the priesthood,” Welles wrote, “[and] that God wanted His Church to be free of discrimination and injustice...I swallowed my pride and personal preference for postponement...” Welles would participate the next day as an ordaining bishop.¹⁰⁴⁵

Son Paul remembered that Jeannette “agonized up to nearly the last moment before going ahead with the ‘irregular’ ordination...” Although Bishop McNairy was not in favor of the service, he “did not literally, explicitly forbid it. [Mother] was very reluctant to cross him but Bishop Corrigan (her former pastor at St. Paul’s-on-the-Hill) encouraged her and she might well have thought that she wouldn’t have another chance.”¹⁰⁴⁶ Only Kathryn was with her grandmother on the previous day; however, on July 29, 1974, “the great gittin’ up morning,”¹⁰⁴⁷ Jeannette was surrounded by family, friends, members of the media, and protestors.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Welles, *The Happy Disciple*, p. 197.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Paul J. Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s bio-3,” personal email to author, November 3, 2005.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Washington, “*Other Sheep I Have*”, p. 168.

“It was absolutely great! It was very ‘Italian,’” remembered Paul. “When the naughty Bishops¹⁰⁴⁸ came into the sanctuary at the end of a long procession...the large congregation packing the church burst into spontaneous applause, as though the Pope had just entered. I had never heard applause in an Episcopal church before.”¹⁰⁴⁹ Estimating at least two thousand people in attendance, historian Pamela Darling states that “black and Hispanic men, women of all colors, and bishops without jurisdiction gathered from the margins of the institutional church to claim a place at the center.”¹⁰⁵⁰

Due to the nature of the service, some thought there might be trouble. One of Jeannette’s son left before the proceedings started in search of some “soda pop.” “I went out,” Donald recalled, “[and] I had to walk a couple blocks away. And two blocks away there sat a car parked by the curb and two guys in it with white short sleeve shirts. And they just smelled like cops. They were out of place. This is North Philadelphia at the Church of the Advocate. These guys could only be cops. So I walked over to them and I said, ‘hi boys, whatcha doing?’ And they said we’re just here for that thing up at the church, there might be some trouble.” Orange lapel ribbons were handed out in order to know “who was on the inside and who was on the outside.”¹⁰⁵¹

The protest took place “inside” by the “antis” during the service. “For the standard, ‘Does anyone object’ part of the ceremony,” Paul recalled, “the Bishops said that they would give the microphone to people who had categorical objections, but, as was normal,

¹⁰⁴⁸ Retired bishops Daniel Corrigan, Robert DeWitt, and Edward Welles ordained the women. Jose Antonio Ramos, the bishop of Costa Rica, participated; however, he did not ordain any of the women.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Paul J. Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s bio-3,” personal email to author, November 3, 2005.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Darling, *New Wine*, p. 129.

¹⁰⁵¹ Donald Piccard, transcript of interview with author, December 7, 2005, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Transcript in author’s possession.

they would hear objections to individual candidates in private.” “One of the young priests objecting to the impending sacrilege,” Paul continued, “was so nearly apoplectic that he couldn’t resist singling out Mother as unfit because of her advanced age...I hadn’t realized before that she was such a lightening rod.”¹⁰⁵²

Charles V. Willie spoke to the hearts of many when he preached that the “‘hour cometh and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship God in spirit and in truth.’” Understanding the ramifications of the ordinands’ and bishops’ participatory actions, Willie stated that “we stand ready to endure the hardship and the personal sacrifice necessary to pull the Episcopal Church back from its mistaken way of refusing to acknowledge the full personhood of women by denying them full participation in the priesthood.” “As blacks refused to participate in their own oppression by going to the back of the bus in 1955 in Montgomery,” Willie continued, “women are refusing to cooperate in their own oppression by remaining on the periphery of full participation in the church in 1974 in Philadelphia.”¹⁰⁵³

After the ordination vows, Episcopal priests and bishops in attendance were invited to come forward to join in the laying on of hands, as one-by-one the eleven ordinands were presented for consecration.¹⁰⁵⁴ Father Denzil Carty and Paul Piccard, as clergy and lay presenter,¹⁰⁵⁵ respectively, stood with Jeannette as her long-time friend and mentor,

¹⁰⁵² Paul J. Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s bio-3,” personal email to author, November 3, 2005. Reflecting his mother’s sarcastic wit, Paul “hoped” that the young priest would “live to be 98.” See Ibid.

¹⁰⁵³ Charles V. Willie, “The Priesthood of All Believers,” Sermon preached on the occasion of a Service of Ordination at the Church of the Advocated, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 29, 1974, copy provided to author by Paul J. Piccard.

¹⁰⁵⁴ “Ordination to the Priesthood, July 29, 1974,” Folder 5, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia, Pa., ordinations, Miscellany, 1974-1975, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁵⁵ The brothers differ on who was lay presenter. Paul remembered all three sons participating; John and Donald remember Paul alone.

Bishop Daniel Corrigan, ordained her a priest.¹⁰⁵⁶ With his view from the choir box, Donald remembered that at Philadelphia, his mother “was the smallest person. She was gray haired and small, and a hand came down, the other bishops came and put their hands on, too. Then priests came and put their hands, and pretty soon the priests couldn’t reach in so the hands were on hands on hands and then deacons and then more and more...and looking down I could see this radiation of people from this little gray head and this was a confluence of faith. If I had been skeptical before, this was a very emotional, very real thing. It was an ordination...”¹⁰⁵⁷

For Paul Piccard, “the most dramatic moments” of the service came “when the new priests were administering Holy Communion to the congregation.” “Many kneeling women,” he reflected, “reached across the alter rail to touch the vestments of the female priests. The ordination may have violated Episcopal canon law, it may have been irregular, but it was done.”¹⁰⁵⁸ Jeannette’s son John’s opinion differed from his brother, stating, “[The service] was well and smoothly run and I was very taken by the fact that none of the opposition took what I would take to be the only proper posture for an old form conservative: to turn to the participants and, in the name of God, forbid them to continue...[but] there was no haranguing the crowd by the antis...” But John was disappointed by his mother’s behavior: “When it came to the ordination and those eleven girls were clustered around the three TV sets, crowing to each other about this or that

¹⁰⁵⁶ Jeannette was the first at Philadelphia to be ordained; however, she was not the first woman to be ordained in the Anglican Communion. See “First Woman Ordained to Anglican Priesthood Dies at 84,” *Episcopal Press and News* 1976-2000, March 5, 1992, http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress_release.pl?pr_number=92060 (January 19, 2007).

¹⁰⁵⁷ Donald Piccard, transcript of interview with author, December 7, 2005, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Transcript in author’s possession.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Paul J. Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s bio-3,” personal email to author, November 3, 2005.

good shot and this publicity here...I saw no semblance of spirituality or spiritualism or appreciation of the correction of an age old wrong in the status of the church.” “It was just eleven girls,” John continued, “reveling in the shocking publicity they were getting. All eleven of them. And I challenged none of them on it.” “My mother,” he reflected, “was doing the best she could by what she thought was right. But not the way she brought me up...” Although John had reservations about the legitimacy of the service, he was firm in his decision to attend his mother’s ordination. “I justified by presence at the ordination,” John remembered, “by the very soundly, Biblical admonition: Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother. And if my mother was participating I would honor her with it.”¹⁰⁵⁹ For Episcopalian and black activist Pauli Murray, her “most cherished memory of the occasion [was] that of kneeling before the newly priested Jeannette Piccard to receive her blessing.”¹⁰⁶⁰

By the completion of the three hour service, eleven women, aged 27 to 79, were Episcopal priests. Joining Jeannette were Merrill Bittner, Alla Bozarth-Campbell, Alison Cheek, Emily Hewitt, Carter Heyward, Suzanne Hiatt, Marie Moorefield, Betty Bone Schiess, Katrina Swanson and Nancy Hatch Wittig.¹⁰⁶¹ Each woman carried her own reason or rationale for participating in the renegade service, knowing there would be

¹⁰⁵⁹ John A. Piccard, transcript of interview with author, October 14, 2006, Athens, Ohio. Transcript in author’s possession.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Pauli Murray, *Song in a Weary Throat: An American Pilgrimage* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1987), p. 431. Jeannette and Murray had met in spring 1970; Murray was ordained an Episcopal priest on January 8, 1977. See *Ibid.*, pp. 418 and 434.

¹⁰⁶¹ “News Release,” Folder 8, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia, Pa., ordinations, Printed and near-print matter, 1973-1977, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. All the ordinands were white; five were single and six were married or widowed, two with children and grandchildren. Five were from the Diocese of New York, two from the Diocese of Minnesota, and one each from the Dioceses of Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and West Missouri. All possessed college degrees, with four earning doctorates. Four, including Jeannette, completed their undergraduate education at women’s colleges. See *Ibid.*

potentially harsh consequences. For thirty-six-year-old Moorefield, it was worth jeopardizing her position as a hospital chaplain, saying it was “important to take a prophetic stance.” A mother of four and a grandmother of one, forty-seven-year-old Cheek “had” to participate in the Philadelphia event, stating, “It feels like a way of getting my integrity again. The church has used power corruptly. We have to speak to that.” Heward, who had experienced the wrath of a priest during communion, stated, “I believe that for some men and women it’s time for an action like this to happen, for the church to be put on the spot about us. The church should have to state what it intends to do with and about women...Women in the church have always been invisible, except for a few individuals. They might call us all the names in the world now, but that’s better than being invisible.” Asked why she was willing to face punishment, Jeannette stated, “I won’t be any worse off now than I was for fifty years.”¹⁰⁶² However, for the next two years, life for the Philadelphia participants was harsh and chaotic.

Philadelphia Fallout

“I thought we had agreed...just two months ago,” Bishop Paul Moore said to his friend and Philadelphia participant Robert DeWitt, “that we were *not* going to ordain any women until after [the 1976] General Convention.” [Emphasis in the original.] “It’s all well for you and Dan and Ed,” Moore continued, “you’re retired or resigned from your dioceses, but it will leave the rest of us out on a limb. The Church will go around the bend and its whole machinery will be turned against us. You’ve double-crossed me...I’m mad as hell about it but I guess there is nothing I can do.” Moore was a supporter of

¹⁰⁶² “News Release,” Folder 8, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia, Pa., ordinations, Print and near-print matter, 1973-1977, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

women's ordinations; however, he was upset with the ordinations in Philadelphia because they "broke the canons." Not only was it a question of the ordinands being women, they had not "been approved by their own bishops and Standing Committees, nor had the three ordaining bishops received approval from the Bishop of Pennsylvania to function in his diocese."¹⁰⁶³

Within days of the jubilant Philadelphia service, Jeannette received a sobering letter from her bishop. McNairy understood Jeannette's deep desire to be a priest and was counted among the supporters of women's ordination; however, he believed in waiting until the Minneapolis general convention. The presiding bishop had ruled that the eleven women were not allowed to officiate as priests, and McNairy reiterated this to Jeannette. "I must herewith ask," he admonished, "that you support this ruling...and that you further agree not to practice priestly acts in Minnesota until such time as the matters of validity and constitutionality have been clarified." Although Jeannette was encouraged to continue her function as a Deacon, McNairy wanted in writing her "agreement" to his "request that the functions of the priesthood be delayed."¹⁰⁶⁴

Jeannette wrote McNairy that she agreed to his request not to perform any priestly functions. "At least I will not celebrate the Eucharist," she assured the bishop. However, she would continue the functions of Deacon, including laying her hands on a "sick or aged person and mark[ing] the sign of the cross or anoint with oil." Jeannette had not been back in Minneapolis since the ordination, and she told McNairy that she had "found an accumulation of mail." "In addition to telegrams and the usual autograph requests

¹⁰⁶³ Moore, *Take a Bishop Like Me*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Letter dated July 31, 1974, Folder 7, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings Correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

[and] begging letters,” she explained, “I have had about fifty congratulatory letters from California to New England, from Texas to Montana; from Episcopalians, protestants [sic], Roman Catholic (lay, nun, and priest).” But Jeannette had received an “adverse” letter from the archdeacon of Chicago. She told McNairy that the archdeacon wrote: “Now that you have for all intents and purposes, submitted to something tantamount to ecclesiastical rape, I write to express my condolences. May God have mercy on you and upon those who have used you so ill.” Jeannette assured her bishop that she was “not planning to respond to such phallic idolatry.” In closing, Jeannette indicated she would be “praying” for McNairy and “all the other Bishops meeting in Chicago” the following week.¹⁰⁶⁵

The Philadelphia ordinations were the first crisis for the new presiding bishop, and he called an emergency meeting of the House of Bishops to convene at the Chicago airport in mid-August.¹⁰⁶⁶ For Allin, the question of the ordinations’ validity was of critical importance. However, in a letter to his “Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,” The Rt. Rev. Frederick B. Wolf, the bishop of the Diocese of Maine, elucidated a major concern of many of his fellow bishops: “What is at stake here is not the question of ordination of women as priests and bishops. The real issue is the disregard of the due process of the Church’s method of ordination, and of the democratic process in the Church’s decision-

¹⁰⁶⁵ Letter dated August 7, 1974, Folder 7, Box II: 59, Subject: McNairy, Philip F., 1973-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Bishop Paul Moore stated that his “hunch” was “that if left alone, [Allin] would not have called this special meeting in Chicago. But, as I understand it, he was counseled otherwise. He was persuaded that this was his first leadership challenge and that he had to assert the order and discipline of the Church by bringing the matter before the House of Bishops.” See Moore, Take a Bishop Like Me, p. 19.

making.”¹⁰⁶⁷ By their participation in Philadelphia, the bishops had gone beyond their legitimate role.

As Bishop Welles recalled, “The 151 bishops (without Bishops Dewitt, Corrigan and Welles) met in provincial buzz groups. In the evening representatives from each of the nine provinces reported results of their buzz group sessions” and then the four “Philadelphia” bishops “served on a panel to answer any and all questions.” Although the evening session maintained the expected collegiality of the august gathering, Welles remembered that “August 15th was a frustrating day.” Although the resolutions committee had been provided numerous “resolutions the night before,” they presented to the bishops in Chicago a one-sentence resolution, stating, ““Resolved, that the House of Bishops declares that priestly orders were not conferred on the eleven deacons at the service in Philadelphia on July 29, 1974.”” The majority of the bishops believed the “complex matter” required more than a one-line resolution, so the committee was required to present “something better” after lunch.¹⁰⁶⁸

According to Bishop Welles, after lunch, a “new, rambling resolution was presented”; however, there was no time for debate. The group had to relinquish their meeting room by 5:00p.m., and so with a vote of 137 for, 3 against, and 7 abstentions, the resolution passed. According to the resolution, the ordaining bishops were “wrong,” and their “actions” were “in violation of the collegiality of the House of Bishops as well as the legislative process of the whole Church.” In addition, the resolution stated that “the

¹⁰⁶⁷ Letter dated July 31, 1974, Folder 3, Box II: 67, Subject: Opponents, 1974-1976, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Welles, The Happy Disciple, pp. 199-200.

necessary conditions for valid ordination to the Priesthood of the Episcopal Church were not fulfilled...”¹⁰⁶⁹

The actions taken in Chicago drew the ire of the eleven ordained women, although they were in no position to contest the bishops’ rulings. “We are shocked and saddened,” began the news release, “that the House of Bishops has seen fit to escalate the conflict and disunity in our church by declaring our ordination to the priesthood invalid.” “We will not speculate,” the women continued, “on the theological implication of their intemperate action except to state our view that such a position calls into question the validity of all Anglican orders.” Within the final paragraph of the release the eleven ordained women indicated they were not going to “wait” anymore: “Each of us will make her own decision as to how and when to affirm the priesthood she knows to be hers.”¹⁰⁷⁰

The presiding bishop attempted to “calm the troubled waters” by writing to the eleven. “Dear Sisters,” he began, “I am deeply aware of the tremendous significance in your life of the action taken by the House of Bishops on August 15th. It was a difficult decision and all of us understand the pain and frustration this would bring to you as a person and to the Church.” Allin acknowledged that it was “clear” that the House of Bishops “saw the ordination of women as an urgent matters” and would “do its part to deal with [it] as swiftly as possible.” But there would be a time gap between July 29, 1974, and when, if ever, the church ordained women. Therefore, the presiding bishop offered the resources

¹⁰⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 200-203.

¹⁰⁷⁰ “For Immediate Release,” dated August 15, 1974, Subject: Philadelphia, Pa., ordinations, correspondence, 1974-1975, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

of the church to help the women “cope as creatively as possible with [their] question of what to do, how to feel and how to plan personally and professionally.”¹⁰⁷¹

For Bishop McNairy, the bishops’ actions in Chicago again raised his concern about Jeannette not waiting for canon law to change before she engaged in any priestly functions. In late August, Jeannette reiterated to McNairy that she would “wait”; however, she clarified her position. “I said: ‘I will wait.’ Lest you interpreted that to mean that I would ‘wait upon and abide by the decision of a General Convention in Minneapolis in 1976,’ let me clarify what I meant. I will wait and see what happens at the Clergy Conference in September. I will wait and see what happens at a conference of the eleven women priests with Bishop Richards if one occurs before the meeting of the Bishops in Mexico. I will wait and see what happens, if anything, at that meeting of the Bishops.” However, Jeannette was not promising to wait forever. “What I shall do, if anything, after that I do not yet know.” “Please understand,” she told McNairy, “that I am not making any threats. I don’t want anymore misunderstandings between us than is necessary. I simply do not know what I will do after the middle of October.”¹⁰⁷²

Jeannette was trying to “wait.” She wrote Carter Heyward that she “planned to wait” until they met with Bishop Richards, and “possibly until after the Bishops [met] in Mexico.” “Let’s see,” she counseled Heyward, “if they don’t rescind the Chicago action. We know we are priests and in emergency can function as priests. We’ve waited a long

¹⁰⁷¹ Letter dated August 19, 1974, Folder 5, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia, Pa., Ordination correspondence, 1974-1975, n.d., Piccard Family Papers and letter dated August 21, 1974, Folder 5, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia, Pa., Ordination correspondence, 1974-1975, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁷² Letter dated August 23, 1974, Folder 5, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia, Pa., Ordination correspondence, 1974-1975, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

time. Let's wait a little longer. Just a few weeks."¹⁰⁷³ However, by early October Jeannette's patience for waiting was growing thin. "You will note," she wrote McNairy, "that the time I promised to wait is fast running out and everything points to your apparent expectation that I will continue to wait indefinitely. I will not wait much longer. I will notify you in advance of the time and place at which I will celebrate the Eucharist. Do not, however, expect much advance notice."¹⁰⁷⁴

Jeannette sought the advice and counsel of her friend and mentor, Bishop Daniel Corrigan. After explaining the give-and-take with McNairy, Jeannette told Corrigan that McNairy had come to her home and said "if...the Bishops...declared" the Philadelphia ordinations "valid but irregular," and "if the [Diocesan] Standing Committee...made its recommendation," McNairy would "regularize...my ordination and license [me] to function in the diocese." However, McNairy also warned Jeannette that if she "did things before they were cleared that there would be a presentment and trial," and McNairy would be "very sorry to see that." Jeannette informed McNairy that she too would be sorry for that action "because it would brand the Church all over the world as a sexist organization."¹⁰⁷⁵ But as Jeannette explained to her friend Frances Trott, she "realized" that the bishops had the eleven women "between the devil and deep blue sea." "If we celebrate," Jeannette wrote Trott, the editor of the Episcopal Women's Caucus monthly

¹⁰⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Letter dated October 9, 1974, Folder 7, Box II: 66, Subject: Priesthood: Correspondence 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Letter dated October 11, 1974, Folder 5, Box II: 67, Subject: Philadelphia Ordination Correspondence, 1974-1975, Piccard Family Papers and see Welles, The Happy Disciple, p. 204.

newsletter Rauch, “we go against the orders of our Bishops who have inhibited us. If we don’t celebrate, we risk being charged with ‘abandonment.’”¹⁰⁷⁶

Riverside Church

Jeannette told Bishop McNairy that her time for waiting was nearing its end; however, she had not been completely honest with him. In September, Jeannette and “Philadelphia Eleven” colleagues Alison Cheek and Carter Heyward were making plans for a “Service of Celebration of Women in Ministry” to be celebrated at New York City’s Riverside Church. Jeannette and the others chose “Reformation Sunday” as the date to publicly function as priests, and on October 27, 1974, nearly 1500 men and women witnessed the historic occasion.¹⁰⁷⁷ New York Times reporter Eleanor Blau described the scene, stating that those “attending the ceremony burst into applause as the women reached an altar set up in the ornate Gothic sanctuary of the interdenominational church.” “There [Jeannette, Cheek, and Heyward],” Blau continued, “wearing yellow chasubles, with red crosses appliquéd on the front, consecrated the elements of communion...”¹⁰⁷⁸ Women ministers from other denominations participated in the service, representing such varied denominations as the Reformed Church in America, the Lutheran Church in America, the United Presbyterian Church, USA, and the United Methodist Church.¹⁰⁷⁹

The participants never intended the “light” of their action to be “kept under a bushel.” In the news release sent a week before the service, the celebrants “invited the coverage”

¹⁰⁷⁶ Letter dated October 17, 1974, Folder 6, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus correspondence, 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁷⁷ “Reformation Sunday Statement,” Folder 7, Box II: 87, Subject: Printed and near-print matter, 1934-1978, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Eleanor Blau, “3 Disputed Women Priests Lead Communion Here,” The New York Times, October 28, 1974.

¹⁰⁷⁹ See “Service in Celebration of Women in Ministry, Riverside Church, Reformation Sunday, October 27, 1974, 7:30 P.M.” program, given to author by Kathryn Piccard.

by film crews, only asking that they “complete the setting up of equipment by 30 minutes prior to the service.”¹⁰⁸⁰ According to the Minneapolis Star, Bishop McNairy warned Jeannette that she might be “disciplined if she perform[ed] priestly functions.” ““But knowing Jeannette,”” McNairy continued, ““it is something she will do although I wish she wouldn’t””¹⁰⁸¹

McNairy was not as polite in his letter to Jeannette. “The announcement of your intended action...,” he began, “fills me with great sadness. This is a further complication of your schismatic act of July the 29th, and it widens the estrangement between you and the Diocese of Minnesota.” McNairy argued that Jeannette’s “announcement [had] elicited from clergy...indignation on the one hand, and a misunderstanding of [her] regard for the church if [she took] this unilateral action.” “Therefore,” the bishop told Jeannette, “I admonish you as a deacon to support Canon 23 and to refrain from participation in the service contemplated...Please know that this letter comes to you with my deepest concern that you shall not harm further the cause of women’s ordination, nor by your act of alienation, render your own ministry ineffective.”¹⁰⁸² Jeannette’s participation in the Riverside service began a firestorm of accusations and innuendos that would continue through the 1976 Minneapolis General Convention.

Concerned about church unity after Jeannette’s Eucharistic celebration at Riverside Church, McNairy sent a diocesan-wide letter to clergy and congregations outlining his positions and proposed procedures. “As a result of the schismatic act performed...,” the

¹⁰⁸⁰ News Release dated October 21, 1974, Folder 5, Box II: 66, Subject: First Eucharist Celebration, 1974, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁸¹ “Dr. Piccard is Warned About Possible Action,” Minneapolis Star, October 26, 1974.

¹⁰⁸² Letter dated October 23, 1974, Folder 3, Box II: 47, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence, 1973-1978, Piccard Family Papers.

bishop implored, “we are now further polarized around two conflicting convictions: Those who would ignore the church and its historic and legal procedures for ministry, and Those who are so deeply hurt by the Philadelphia and New York actions that they question whether they should share ministry with the ‘New York Three,’ (Cheek, Heyward, Piccard.).” McNairy stated that he was “deeply offended” by Jeannette’s ignoring his “constitutional admonitions,” and promised that the “violations” would not go “unheeded.” However, “disciplinary measures” would be “directed toward reconciliation and healing,” and McNairy asked that “each person, lay and clerical, pray daily for healing, forgiveness and reconciliation in the Body of Christ, and for God’s guidance and empowerment within His church until this painful matter is resolved.”¹⁰⁸³

McNairy was receiving correspondence from bishops outraged by the Riverside service, including one from the bishop of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast who wrote, “I have read with sorrow of the latest act of utter defiance of the Church and its order by Allison Cheek, Carter Heyward, and Jeanette [sic] Piccard.” “I am convince,” the bishop continued, “that the good of the whole Church, and the movement for the ordination of women in particular, can best be served by the trial and deposition of these three women.”¹⁰⁸⁴

Initially, perhaps, Jeannette did not appreciate the seriousness of the situation, and the position her bishop was taking. Just days after receiving McNairy’s letter, Jeannette announced that she was joining Suzanne Hiatt and Carter Heyward on December 8, 1974,

¹⁰⁸³ Letter dated November 4, 1974, Folder 7, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings Correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Letter dated October 31, 1974, Folder 7, Box II: 66, Subject: Ordination to the Priesthood correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

for a Eucharist celebration in Oberlin, Ohio.¹⁰⁸⁵ However, by the middle of November, Jeannette wrote her good friend Helen Havens, stating, “A presentment has been made against me and the going is at present pretty rough. Please ask everyone to keep me in their prayers.”¹⁰⁸⁶

After word about her potential involvement at Oberlin reached the local papers, McNairy sent Jeannette a two-page letter. “I am writing this letter to you,” he began, “about disobedience in the church.” McNairy “reaffirmed” his “commitment to the principle of ordination of women to the priesthood”; however, as “chief pastor” in the diocese, his responsibility was to “defend and uphold the faith as the church, through her worship and covenants, holds and declares the same.” “My problem with you is this,” he declared, “One whom I regularly ordained as a Deacon with the consent of all the necessary bodies, laity, clergy and bishop, has now repeatedly violated the oath of loyalty taken at that time. You have three times violated the Constitution of the Episcopal Church by ignoring the godly admonitions specifically directed to you by me.” “By your personal rejection of the church’s lawful procedures,” McNairy continued, “you have incurred such resentment in the church at large and in Minnesota in particular as may harm and set back the cause of the ordination of women everywhere.”¹⁰⁸⁷ Although her bishop, McNairy was also Jeannette’s supporter and friend, and what he said next had to

¹⁰⁸⁵ “Women priests to officiate,” *Minneapolis Star*, November 9, 1974.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Letter dated November 15, 1974, Folder 6, Box II: 52, Subject: Episcopal Women’s Caucus Correspondence, 1971-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette wrote a friend that “an ex-Roman Catholic clergyman, now married and an Episcopal priest has notified the papers that he has made a presentment (accusation) against me and intends to have me brought to trial in the ecclesiastical court.” See letter dated November 2, 1974, Folder 1, Box II: 40, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pa. 1969-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Letter dated November 19, 1974, Folder 7, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings Correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

be personally painful for both. “You know full well that every deacon, priest and bishop has accepted the oath of conformity and is thereby subject to the discipline of the church. You are no exception. You demand recognition. You must accept responsibility. You have received unprecedented leniency and acceptance by your Diocese. I have tried to treat these matters pastorally, not judicially. I still pray for the pastoral way. There is before me a presentment which is specifically leveled at the charge of disobedience...[I]t is the offense about which people feel the most hurt.” McNairy gave Jeannette three options. She could “accept the regular discipline of the church in Christian love, and...desist from further schismatic acts.” Or she could “declare [her] position as that of functioning outside the structure of the Episcopal Church and its disciplinary and sacramental system.” However, if Jeannette did neither of the first two options, McNairy, “in obedience to the church that ordered [him] deacon, priest and bishop,” had no choice but to “refer the statement charging disloyalty and disobedience to the Standing Committee for their investigation.”¹⁰⁸⁸

For the next month, Jeannette and her bishop exchanged lengthy correspondence, although Jeannette stated that the two of them had “great difficulty in communicating with each other,” whatever the form. “I am afraid to talk with you at this point,” she wrote McNairy, “because all I seem to accomplish when we talk is to make you angry. And I in turn find myself frustrated and defensive.” After addressing the bishop’s concerns one-by-one, Jeannette stated that she was “very resentful” when McNairy stated she had “committed a schismatic act.” “You know me,” she implored, “and you know the

¹⁰⁸⁸ Letter dated November 19, 1974, Folder 7, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings Correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

bishops involved [at Philadelphia]. You know schism was the farthest from our thoughts. The ones who have threatened schism are the men who cannot endure being reduced to the status of a woman, of having the functions of a priest being equated to that of a mother.”¹⁰⁸⁹

McNairy appreciated Jeannette’s detailed correspondence, and acknowledged her as “an intelligent woman”; however, he believed her letter “reflect[ed]” her “emotional state” rather than her “grasp of the issues before [them].” McNairy “encouraged” Jeannette to “read again the resolutions passed at the House of Bishops and adopted unanimously, except one vote.” “This binds me,” the bishop wrote, “no matter how I may feel until ‘such ordinations have been approved by the General Convention of this Church.’”¹⁰⁹⁰ McNairy asked for Jeannette’s thoughts and input on a letter to be sent to the clergy and wardens in the diocese regarding their situation. In a conciliatory tone, Jeannette thanked him, and offered three pages of changes; however, she was grateful to her bishop for “allowing” her to “express” her “reactions.” “It is a good letter,” she said, “and I appreciate the effort to bring healing and reconciliation. I will do what I can to help. We need to remember, however, that if we keep too tight a lid on a boiling pot, we will not stop the boiling but will produce a destructive explosion.”¹⁰⁹¹

Reflecting the warmth of the Holy Christmas season, McNairy expressed his “gratitude” to Jeannette for her “willingness to cooperate...however painful” it might be

¹⁰⁸⁹ Letter dated November 30, 1974, Folder 7, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings Correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Letter dated December 3, 1974, Folder 7, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings Correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁹¹ Letter dated December 21, 1974, Folder 7, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings Correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

for her. And on a personal note, McNairy wrote that he had “read with interest the suggested liturgy of thanksgiving” for Jeannette’s upcoming 80th birthday celebration. “I want you to know,” he assured her, “that I shall be praying for you on that day asking God’s blessing upon your ministry and asking Him to empower and strengthen you in the years ahead.”¹⁰⁹² However, any goodwill between the bishop and his eighty-year-old priest would soon become strained once again.

The Rev. S. Ross Jones, of Tallahassee, Florida, had invited Jeannette to assist him at the Christmas Eve services at his parish, the Chapel of the Resurrection, provided there would “be no objection” in his diocese. Jones “reneged” on the invitation when informed by his bishop that the diocese was “refusing permission for sacerdotal functions to all eleven women involved [at Philadelphia], until the matter [could] be clarified by General Convention.” Jones “apologized” to Jeannette for making the offer prior to receiving the necessary permission. Jones closed the letter, stating, “Whether assisting or not, I gather you will be in Tallahassee for Christmas, and we will have time for a chat...”¹⁰⁹³

Jeannette’s son Paul was a member of Jones’s parish, and when he heard that the offer to his mother had been withdrawn, he shot off a letter to the bishop.

“Dear Bishop West,” Paul began, “This morning before church the Reverend Ross Jones told me that according to your instructions he was withdrawing the invitation he had extended to my mother...to assist him in the Christmas celebration...Since Ross gave

¹⁰⁹² Letter dated December 30, 1974, Folder 7, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceeding Correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers. McNairy was grateful that Jeannette had not actively participated in a Eucharist service in Oberlin, Ohio, in early December, and expressed his “appreciation” for her “cooperation.” See Ibid.

¹⁰⁹³ Letter dated November 13, 1974, Folder 7, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceeding Correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

me the news of your phone call to him I have received communion, enjoyed a fine meal, listened to some good music, and split enough wood to fuel our fireplace for a month—so I can no longer express either as fully or as colorfully my initial sense of outrage.” Paul assured the bishop that his letter was “not an attempt to change [the bishop’s] policy,” but rather was “just to express [his] feelings” to the bishop “in person rather than behind [his] back.” Paul believed West’s “position” on the matter “fit so neatly into the best Southern traditions of invoking ‘law and order’ to protect privilege...” “I believe,” he continued, “that were my mother a harlot she would be more warmly welcomed by our Lord than she has been by you.” “Now what am I to do with my mother on Christmas Eve?” Paul inquired. “Before she was ordained a deacon she was invited to read the Epistle at the Chapel...; as a deacon she has previously assisted the priest in the celebration of the Eucharist at the Chapel. All you had to do was remain silent...Can we believe that your verdict, prior to any trial or conviction, was reached prayerfully rather than as a categorical reaction to some perceived general principle?” Paul closed his letter to the bishop, stating, “I have written primarily just to express myself and to let my mother and a few others know that her son did not accept this unkind blow without a protest.”¹⁰⁹⁴

Richmond

Jeannette was also finished with the “unkind blows” toward her. She had been offered to perform priestly functions in Oberlin, Ohio, and Tallahassee, Florida, and both had been denied at the last moment. When presented with the opportunity to participate in a service at Richmond, Virginia, which happened to coincide with a Bryn Mawr alumnae

¹⁰⁹⁴ Letter dated November 17, 1974, Folder 7, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings Correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

function, Jeannette ignored all of her bishop's warnings. In mid-April, Jeannette participated in a communion service at Richmond's St. Peter's Church. According to the newspaper accounts, although Jeannette had been "invited to participate as a deacon and not as a celebrating priest," she "chose during the service to concelebrate the consecration of the Eucharistic elements in violation of recognized denominational standards."¹⁰⁹⁵

Adding fuel to the outrage over Jeannette's participation was the response by the bishop of the Diocese of Virginia as reported in The Living Church, the church's monthly magazine. Under the heading "See No Evil..." it was said that Bishop Robert B. Hall "literally closed his eyes to the fact that a woman was a concelebrant during a Eucharist..." and "when asked to comment on Mrs. Piccard's role, the Bishop of Virginia said he was praying at the time of the consecration and did not see it, so could not comment on it."¹⁰⁹⁶

When Bishop McNairy saw The Living Church article, he immediately wrote to Jeannette. "I have difficulty," he began, "finding words to express my disappointment and hurt at your reported behavior at...Richmond." "You will, I trust, recall that as Bishop of Minnesota," McNairy continued, "I declared...a moratorium on all inflammatory statements and other demonstrations relative to women's ordination, in order that we might have opportunity to lessen the mounting tensions and polarization in this diocese through a clear and factual presentation of both sides of the issue..." In a seething rebuke, McNairy told Jeannette that "by [her] voice and action [she had]

¹⁰⁹⁵ Ed Briggs, "Dream Came In College," Richmond (VA) Times-Dispatch, April 14, 1975, Religion Section, Folder 10, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings, printed and near-print matter, 1974-1975, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁹⁶ "The Living Church, May 11, 1975, p. 6," Folder 10, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings, printed and near-print matter, 1974-1975, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

apparently rejected [his] request for a time to promote understanding and peace.” “This inflammatory demonstration,” he continued, “has in my opinion further divided the church. It has again retarded the acceptance by some of the principle of women to the priesthood. I can only interpret your action in Richmond...as a further act of disobedience against the Bishop of Minnesota. In view of my position on this issue of ordination of women to priesthood, you must know how deeply you have now further embarrassed and hurt me personally.”¹⁰⁹⁷

Jeannette expressed “great shock” at McNairy’s reprimand. “I am a priest,” she wrote her bishop. “Officiating as a priest in a diocese other than my own...does not constitute disobedience... You will remember that before you declared a ‘moratorium’ I called your attention to the fact that just by being somewhere my being there could be called a demonstration...” “You,” Jeannette pleaded, “the only one to whom I can turn for help, you join the cry, ‘disobedient!’ ‘inflammatory!’ ‘demonstration!’ If you do not defend me when others attack, I am indeed defenseless.” A nephew had invited Jeannette to visit him in Switzerland, so she told McNairy that she would be returning in July.¹⁰⁹⁸ However, even when she was out of the country, Jeannette was a lightning rod for events in the United States.

Jeannette and the other Philadelphia rebels received a seething letter from the bishop of Maine. “I am writing to you because you have engaged in ecclesiastical disobedience,”

¹⁰⁹⁷ Letter dated May 7, 1975, Folder 7, Box II: 59, Subject: McNairy, Philip F., 1973-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Letter dated May 10, 1975, Folder 8, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings ordination, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers. Both McNairy and Jeannette sent carbon-copies of their letters to Presiding Bishop John Allin and Bishop Robert B. Hall of the Diocese of Virginia.

the Rt. Rev. Frederick B. Wolf¹⁰⁹⁹ began, “and I feel it is your right to know the price the Church has paid.” Wolf and several fellow bishops who served on the “Council of Advice to the Presiding Bishop” had met in late June in New York City. The meeting was called “to deal with matters relating to the Philadelphia event and subsequent events” in preparation for the House of Bishops’ annual meeting in Portland, Oregon, and as Wolf explained, so that the Church “might get on with its mission to a tragic world without wasting undue time and energy further agonizing over the Philadelphia event and its aftermath.” Unfortunately, the Bishop of Louisiana, the Rt. Rev. Iveson Noland, died in a plane crash on the way to the New York meeting. Wolf did not hold the Philadelphia contingent “personally responsible” for the bishop’s death; however, in Wolf’s opinion, Noland “would not have died in that plane crash” if the events in Philadelphia had never happened. “It is a part,” Wolf argued, “by no means directly so, of the consequences of your ecclesiastical disobedience,” and Wolf believed the Philadelphia participants had “the right to be aware of this.”¹¹⁰⁰

Although initially Wolf’s letter was sent to the bishops and women involved with the ordinations at Philadelphia, his remarks found their way into newspapers, including the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin and the Boston Globe.¹¹⁰¹ Paul M. Washington, rector of the “parish in which that act of ‘ecclesiastical disobedience’ took place,” responded to Wolf’s allegations. “Certainly I nor anyone,” Washington remarked, “could deny that had

¹⁰⁹⁹ Wolf was a vocal critic of the Philadelphia ordinations. See footnote 128.

¹¹⁰⁰ Letter dated July 2, 1975, Folder 8, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers. Wolf’s letter was sent to the three Philadelphia bishops, the eleven women, the presiding bishop, and the presidents of the Church’s nine provinces. See Ibid.

¹¹⁰¹ The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin ran the caption: “Bishop Links Peer’s Death to Women’s Ordination.” See letter dated July 25, 1975, Folder 8, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

there not been...[the ordination of women] to the priesthood...there would have been no occasion for a meeting to deal with the aftermath of that event.” Washington acknowledged that he and Wolf had “different perspectives” about the ordinations; however, Washington argued that the Philadelphia event “would not have taken place had our church been able to make it possible for it to happen both naturally as well as regularly.” “I could therefore say to you,” he continued, “Bishop Noland would not have died had General Convention been able to enable its happening rather than frustrating it. In which case there would not have been a July 29th to relate to a June 24th.” Trying to keep the bishop’s tragic death in perspective, Washington concluded, saying, “Bishop Noland’s loss is a loss to mankind (for we are all so involved). One Hundred Twelve...lives were lost in that flight. They too are involved in all of us. Your line of reasoning, Bishop Wolfe [sic], forces me to argue that had not many things happened previous to that particular flight or during the landing attempt...not only would Bishop Noland’s life have been saved, but one hundred twelve lives...”¹¹⁰²

Challenging Wolf’s logic and rationale, the Rev. John E. Lamb of Cambridge, Massachusetts, was “compelled” for the “first time...to address a bishop in criticism.” “In asserting the connection that you did between the death of Bishop Noland and the women’s ordinations,” Lamb argued, “you reverted to a world view of fate and causal connection between events that is as primitive and pagan as can possibly be dreamt of. Following your illogical reasoning the death of the bishop could be blamed just as well on the Wright brothers. For if they had not invented the airplane in the first place, no

¹¹⁰² Letter dated July 25, 1975, Folder 8, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings correspondence, 1974-1975, Piccard Family Papers.

human being at all would ever have been killed in the crash of one.” Lamb also criticized the House of Bishops and the General Convention, stating that if their “antiquated structure...had not thwarted the will of the clear majority...then the Philadelphia ordination would not have taken place as it did and, indeed, there would be no present controversy over the issue at all.”¹¹⁰³

The Rev. Lamb took offense at Wolf’s assumption that the Church needed to be “free to deal with real tragedy in the world,” rather than “preoccupied” with the “bothersome problem” of women’s ordination. “I beg to remind you,” Lamb wrote, “that neither you nor I are women, so we ought not to set up ourselves as authorities discounting what they tell us by words and acts they feel to be still tragic treatment of themselves.” “Frankly,” Lamb continued, “I don’t know why women have put up with second class citizenship in the ecclesiastical establishment for so many centuries anyhow.”¹¹⁰⁴

Jeannette received from Bishop Welles a letter complimenting her response to Wolf’s accusations and innuendos. “Yours is a simply stunning answer,” Welles stated, “and I am fighting off the evil sin of envy at not being able in such smooth, charitable fashion to reply myself.”¹¹⁰⁵ Jeannette told Wolf that she had been in Switzerland, and was unaware that his “beloved friend,” Bishop Noland, was on the plane that was “reportedly struck down by lightening.” “What a shock it must have been to you!,” Jeannette penned. “You do not need to excuse your anger to me. I understand because I know that much seeming anger is actually a cry of pain. But, please, do not blame or flagellate yourself for having

¹¹⁰³ Letter dated July 29, 1975, Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: “The Fifteen,” 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁰⁵ Letter dated July 25, 1975, Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: “The Fifteen” correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

convened a meeting of the Council. I cannot believe that God struck down a whole planeload of people just to prevent Bishop Noland from participating in a meeting of the Council, whatever its agenda may have been. God is stern and just to be sure, but God is also merciful and forgiving. We have all, female and male, been created with the Godlike power to understand and forgive.”¹¹⁰⁶

Jeannette’s receipt of Welles’s letter coincided with the first anniversary of the Philadelphia ordinations. The eleven women were honoring and celebrating the historic occasion by participating in worship services in their respective dioceses. In Minnesota, Jeannette and Alla Bozarth-Campbell were joining other priests of the diocese to “re-affirm their ordination vows in a ‘Service of Thanksgiving for a Whole Priesthood’” at a nearby park in Minneapolis.¹¹⁰⁷ “This evening in Loring Park,” Jeannette wrote her mentor Daniel Corrigan, “we are having a service of Thanksgiving, evening prayer, and repetition of our ordination vows...No Eucharist. No disobedience! We asked to use the Cathedral and the Bishop refused.”¹¹⁰⁸

Lightning Rod and Honored Guest

Jeannette’s participation as one of the “Philadelphia Eleven,” and her subsequent acts of ecclesiastical disobedience kept her in the public spotlight; however, publicity was nothing new to Jeannette, having reached a level of public fame with the stratospheric

¹¹⁰⁶ Letter dated July 10, 1975, Folder 8, Box II: 66, Subject: Legal Proceedings correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁰⁷ “Episcopalians to Celebrate First Anniversary of Ordination of Eleven Women Priests” News Release, Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: “The Fifteen” 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁰⁸ Letter dated July 29, 1975, Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: “The Fifteen” correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

exploits and her subsequent work with the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA). But her life reflected the complexity of women's issues during the 1970s.¹¹⁰⁹

Jeannette was asked to give the invocation at the ceremony marking the first day of issue of the nation's postage stamp honoring 1975 as the "International Women's Year."¹¹¹⁰ Although the Rev. Betty Schiess, also a participant in Philadelphia, resided in nearby Syracuse, Jeannette was asked to come to Seneca Falls, New York. "Why they didn't ask you," Jeannette wrote Schiess, "I don't know. It would have been simpler and cheaper but then 'Far fetched and dear bought is good enough for the ladies'. I suppose the organizers still function on that premise." However, since Jeannette was flying into Syracuse for the ceremony, she hoped Schiess would "be in town," and they could "have a visit."¹¹¹¹

Jeannette received lengthy correspondence from a church group in Niagara Falls, New York, that was studying the question of women becoming priests. The five women and four men, including a teenage boy, were divided on the issue and wrote Jeannette in hopes of garnering her "thoughts" on "several questions." Three of their members favored ordaining women; however, six of their members, four women and two men, were opposed. They wanted to know: what Jeannette's husband thought of the "role" she

¹¹⁰⁹ Jeannette's ecclesiastical actions irritated her bishop; however, he could not deny that she was a favorite daughter of Minnesota. See "Bicentennial Proposal," Folder 2, Box II: 84, Speeches and Writings: Jeannette Piccard Autobiographies, 1963-1975.

¹¹¹⁰ The United Nations General Assembly had designated 1975 as International Women's Year (IWY). See Winifred D. Wandersee, *On the Move: American Women in the 1970s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988), p. 186.

¹¹¹¹ Letter dated August 7, 1975, Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: "The Fifteen" correspondence, 1974-1975, Piccard Family Papers. Perhaps Schiess was too controversial due to her having filed complaints of discrimination with the New York Division of Human Rights and the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). See "State of New York: Executive Department State Division of Human Rights," Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: "The Fifteen" 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

was “playing in the attempt to change the traditions of the church”; why Jeannette felt it “necessary to promote” the irregular ordinations and her “motivations for disregarding the mandates” of the bishops; and finally, what should they call women priests, since “Father” did not seem appropriate.¹¹¹² Jeannette edited her initial responses to the inquiry, and the second letter is the one the Niagara Falls group received. Although significant portions of the two letters are similar, the differences allow for an examination of Jeannette’s emotional responses, and also disclose how she was determined to present a professional persona to the world.

Initially, Jeannette wrote that their “question with regard to woman’s ‘place’ as a helpmate depends on your definition of help. Who do you go to when you want help, an inferior or someone who knows more than you do? Remember the psalmist says: ‘God is my helper’. Personally, in 1934 my husband needed help in taking a balloon into the Stratosphere. He was not a pilot. Consequently to ‘help’ him, I became a free balloon pilot and was in command of our balloon flight...In order to help one must sometimes be ‘in command’.”¹¹¹³ She stated in her letter to the church group: “Being a helper does not necessarily imply inferiority. Remember the Psalmist says: ‘God is my helper.’ In my personal relation to my husband, I helped him. He helped me. In 1934 my husband

¹¹¹² Letter dated September 9, 1975, Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: “The Fifteen” 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette’s response to the third question was: “The custom to call Priests and Deacons ‘Father’ is contrary to the Scriptures. (Matthew 23:90) Even though it is customary in your diocese and in many others it is still not a church-wide custom. In 1936, the then Diocesan, Bishop Keeler, categorically refused to call any priest ‘Father’. Can you explain the psychology of those who insist that women cannot be ordained because they ‘have been unable to find it in the Bible’ but insist on calling priests ‘Father’ when the Bible specifically forbids it? The correct way to address a woman priest is the same as for any other woman, i.e. Miss, Mrs., Ms., Dr., or by her baptismal name. See letter dated September 30, 1975, Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: “The Fifteen” 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹¹³ Letter dated September 27, 1975, Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: “The Fifteen” correspondence 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

needed help in taking a balloon into the Stratosphere. He was not a pilot. Consequently, I became a free balloon pilot and was in command of our balloon flight...In order to help one must sometimes take command.”¹¹¹⁴

Regarding the news media’s impressions of her, Jeannette initially stated that she was “not responsible” for the impressions they created. “I have felt called to the priesthood since before I was eleven years old. I am now eighty. My sole desire is ‘to serve God in that state of life into which it shall please God to call me.’ If God calls me into ‘states’ that are unusual for my period in history (whether free balloon pilot or priest) that is God’s decision. I can do nothing about it.”¹¹¹⁵ No part of this passage appeared in the final draft.

Jeannette’s most emotional outburst was in her response to the group’s claim that “the Spirit of God guides our lives to its fullest potential. The forces of Satan exist and work in such a way that it appears to be the will of God working within us. There are some who believe this emphatically, and thus feel that men are moved to be Priests by the Spirit of God, but women are moved to be Priests by the forces of Satan making them believe it is the will of God.”¹¹¹⁶ Although it did not make her final draft, Jeannette’s response to this statement once again illuminated her disdain for those who opposed the ordination of women to the priesthood. “Some males appear,” she wrote, “to have been moved to become priests by the Spirit of Satan. It is a socially acceptable way for them to

¹¹¹⁴ Letter dated September 30, 1975, Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: “The Fifteen” correspondence 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹¹⁵ Letter dated September 27, 1975, Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: “The Fifteen” correspondence 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹¹⁶ Letter dated September 9, 1975, Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: “The Fifteen” correspondence 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

wear skirts. They don't have to be intelligent or achievers in order for other men to treat them courteously if not with respect. There is or they thought there always would be one group of people (women) who would gaze at them worshipfully and obey their slightest whim..."¹¹¹⁷ Jeannette closed her letter to the study group in an upbeat tone, saying, "It is wonderful that you and your committee are working so hard on this difficult and emotionally involved and very important matter. May we all strive to grow in Christ and the knowledge and love of God, helped in all things by the Holy Spirit."¹¹¹⁸

Minneapolis

Jeannette and the other women priests needed to be on their best behavior. Carter Hewyard had recently attended a meeting of the Policy Board for the National Coalition for Women's Ordination,¹¹¹⁹ and the board believed that the "issue [of women's ordination would] be decided by 1 or 2 votes and that, accordingly, the situation [was] tense and [would] get more tense during the next 6 months." Heyward warned that they were "bound to get pressure to 'be good' prior to Minneapolis" and during the convention. "We will be those seen as responsible by a great many 'proponents' of women's ordination," Heyward warned, "if the issue is defeated."¹¹²⁰

In April 1976, Presiding Bishop John Allin "reaffirmed" his position on the issue. "I have not taken a position for or against the ordination of women," Allin stated during an interview, "because I maintain that the major responsibility of the office of Presiding

¹¹¹⁷ Letter dated September 27, 1975, Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: "The Fifteen" correspondence 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹¹⁸ Letter dated September 30, 1975, Folder 7, Box II: 65, Subject: "The Fifteen" correspondence 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹¹⁹ For an in-depth history of the National Coalition for Women's Ordination to the Priesthood, see Heather Huyck, "To Celebrate a Whole Priesthood," Chapter 5.

¹¹²⁰ Letter dated January 31, 1976, Folder 8, Box II: 65, Subject: "The Fifteen" correspondence 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

Bishop is to encourage the Church to continue to debate and discuss the issue without putting the influence of this office on one side or the other.”¹¹²¹ Although Allin was remaining ecclesiastically neutral on the issue, in June, sixty-seven bishops, including Jeannette’s Bishop McNairy, announced their “co-sponsorship” of legislation that, if passed in Minneapolis, “would permit the ordination of women to the priesthood.”¹¹²²

On September 11, 1976, Allin welcomed the official delegates and over 25,000 visitors to the thirteen-day convention. On the fifth day of the convention, the House of Deputies discussed the motion to change the ordination canon law, it having been approved by the House of Bishops the previous day. After a lengthy debate, with a total of fifty-eight delegates speaking in the affirmative or negative, there was a five minute period of silent prayer. A vote by orders was called, and though the vote was close, the resolution passed. With its prior passage in the House of Bishops, the new canon allowed for the “admission of Candidates, and for the Ordination to the three Orders: Bishops, Priests and Deacons shall be equally applicable to men and women.”¹¹²³ A convention press release stated, “Women may be ordained priests and consecrated bishops in the Episcopal Church...This change in the Church’s canons will take effect as of January 1, 1977...It has been reported that more than 120 women deacons, who have met all of the

¹¹²¹ “Bishop Allin Reaffirms Ordination Position,” *Episcopal Press and News 1976-2000*, April 12, 1976, http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress_release.pl?pr_number=76130, January 23, 2007.

¹¹²² “67 Bishops to Sponsor Ordination Legislation,” *Episcopal Press and News 1976-2000*, June 22, 1976, http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress_release.pl?pr_number=76199, January 19, 2007. The bishops’ statement raised controversy. Two leaders of the group Episcopalians United (EU) stated that the proposed legislative action was a “regrettable affront to the entire Anglican Communion.” See “Episcopalians United Protest Statement by 67 Bishops,” *Episcopal Press and News 1976-2000*, July 9, 1976, http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress_release.pl?pr_number=76325, January 23, 2007.

¹¹²³ “Resolution Number: 1976-B005,” *The Acts of the Convention*, http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution-complete.pl?resolution=1976-B005. November 21, 2006.

requirements of ordination to the priesthood stand ready to take advantage of the change.”¹¹²⁴

The convention also put forth the requirements for the irregularly ordained women to finally have their ordinations recognized. Decades after her initial calling, and two years after the events at Philadelphia, eighty-one-old Jeannette was soon to be formally recognized as a priest in the Episcopal Church. She received a warm greeting from Bishop DeWitt, a celebrant at Philadelphia. “The resolution,” DeWitt commented, “of the issues before the Convention—the ‘whether’ and the ‘how’ of regularization—were settled so emphatically in your favor that perhaps for the first time in a long time it is possible for you to think of accommodation and charity without feeling it is capitulation or co-optation...And the January 1 date for implementation? Oh, hell! But what the hell!”¹¹²⁵

¹¹²⁴ “A Release for the Press,” September 16, 1976, Folder 5, Box II: 49, Subject: Episcopal Church General Convention 65th, correspondence and memoranda, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹²⁵ Letter dated September 27, 1976, Folder 9, Box II: 65, Subject: “The Fifteen” correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

CONCLUSION: CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS

“Ah, but never underestimate the power of a dismissed dream. I think there must be a place inside us where dreams go and wait their turn.” Sue Monk Kidd¹¹²⁶

“The queen cow is the one the other cows step aside for when she comes around for a tuft of grass or a drink of water. She’s not necessarily the biggest, but she’s the most affirmative. Now lots of people consider [me] abrasive. But I don’t think it’s necessary to be abrasive. Just affirmative. I wouldn’t be a priest now if I weren’t affirmative.” Jeannette Piccard explaining the queen cow bell beside her fireplace, 1978.¹¹²⁷

Jeannette Ridlon Piccard had a “dismissed” dream, and for over seventy years she kept it inside her, nourished it, and with the help of like-minded women and men, eventually her dream became reality. Within hours of the canon’s passage, Jeannette received words of congratulations and encouragement. “On this happily sunny morning,” one friend wrote, “I truly rejoice with you in the final culmination of your lifelong desire! A glorious fulfillment of your personal yearnings, and an even greater achievement in the evolution of the church.” [Emphasis in the original.]¹¹²⁸ Jeannette’s state representative was thankful that she “helped to smooth the path for those of us who wouldn’t have had [her] rare stock of intelligence, initiative, courage and fortitude”; an interesting sentiment coming from the female politician.¹¹²⁹

The Episcopal Church, through its legislative bodies, made clear that it was now the “intent...to authorize the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopal

¹¹²⁶ Sue Monk Kidd, *The Secret Life of Bees* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 7.

¹¹²⁷ Carol Byrne, “Priesthood satisfies Jeannette Piccard,” *The Minneapolis Star*, March 24, 1978, 1B, Folder 3, Box II: 41, Subject: Clippings, 1969-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹²⁸ Letter dated September 17, 1976, Folder 5, Box II: 49, Subject: Episcopal Church General Convention: 65th, correspondence and memoranda, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹²⁹ Letter dated September 17, 1976, Folder 5, Box II: 49, Subject: Episcopal Church General Convention: 65th, correspondence and memoranda, Piccard Family Papers.

orders”;¹¹³⁰ however, the issue of the irregular ordinations of the “Philadelphia” women needed to be resolved. After much discussion and debate, the bishops adopted two “possible courses.” One would involve a “public event, conducted by the appropriate Diocesan Bishop...” Considered an “act of completion,” the bishops determined that it should include “an opportunity for the ordinand to declare her loyalty to the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Church afresh.” However, the second alternative was “preferable” to the majority of the bishops because it allowed space for ecclesiastical reconciliation. Termed “conditional ordination,” it would be “recognized that something of extraordinary significance did indeed occur at Philadelphia...” “But it would also affirm,” the bishops argued, “that a fundamental reason for our Church’s concern about ordination is the desire to assure both the ordinand and the people of the Church that the ordained person is an authorized channel for divine grace.” According to the bishops, a conditional ordination would “demonstrate both the ordinand’s and the diocese’s concern for those in Church who have honest doubts about the validity or regularity of the Philadelphia... ‘ordinations,’ whether those doubts [were] justified or not...” The resolution continued: “Since the matter under consideration is the validity of the priestly office, such pastoral sensitivity seems particularly appropriate.”¹¹³¹

Jeannette was incensed with the idea of conditional ordination. The Bishop of Western Massachusetts requested that the Philadelphia women “prove themselves (to be)

¹¹³⁰ “Report of the Committee on Theology of the House of Bishops as Adopted as ‘The Mind of the House’ at The General Convention of the Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, Minn., September 22, 1976,” *Episcopal News and Press 1976-2000*, September 23, 1976, http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress_release.pl?pr_number=76301, January 19, 2007.

¹¹³¹ Resolution Number: 1976-B300, *The Acts of Convention 1976-2003*, http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution-complete.pl?resolution=197, January 23, 2007.

magnificent pastors by sharing voluntarily in a service of ‘conditional ordination’”¹¹³²

“You call upon the...women ordained in Philadelphia...to prove themselves...Aren’t you expecting a little too much of those whose priesthood you reject,” Jeannette inquired of the bishop. She challenged his claim that “conditional ordination” and “reordination” were “different.” “In what way,” Jeannette asked, “are they different? What words and actions would change? I understand about conditional baptism which occurs when no one knows whether or not the person has been baptized...There is a rubric and proper words to cover that...Just how would one go about ‘conditional ordination’? Should the Bishop say: ‘If you have not already received the Holy Ghost --I now commit it unto thee?’” “I do not remember my baptism,” Jeannette continued, “but I do remember my ordination, so how can I submit to such a travesty? How can a bishop who has publicly stated that he believes the...women to have been validly ordained go through such a hypocritical charade?” “Even if I were ready,” Jeannette continued, “to submit to ‘conditional ordination’ (which I am not because I know I am validly ordained) I could not ask it of my Bishop. ‘Conditional ordination’ under the circumstances would not be a ‘magnificent’ pastoral action but a mockery of the Sacrament.”¹¹³³

Immediately after the New Year, Episcopal bishops across the nation began ordaining women to the priesthood.¹¹³⁴ On January 6, 1977, one day after Jeannette’s eighty-second birthday, Bishop Philip McNairy presided over “A Celebration of the Feast of the

¹¹³² Letter dated November 5, 1976, Folder 9, Box II: 65, Subject: “The Fifteen” Correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹³³ Letter dated November 26, 1976, Folder 9, Box II: 65, Subject: “The Fifteen” Correspondence, 1974-1976, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹³⁴ Among them was Jeannette’s friend, Pauli Murrar, the first African-American woman ordained. See letter dated January 4, 1977, Folder 1, Box II: 66, Subject: Ordination to the Priesthood: “The Fifteen,” Piccard Family Papers.

Epiphany and Recognition of the Priesthood of the Church for...The Rev. Dr. Jeannette Piccard” at the Cathedral Church of St. Mark in Minneapolis, Minnesota.¹¹³⁵ Jeannette explained to a friend that the service was “held, of course, on a Thursday morning so that there would be very few people there but there were several hundred. The whole center part of the nave was filled.”¹¹³⁶ At the completion of the service, those present responded with “spontaneous applause and a standing ovation.”¹¹³⁷ Jeannette appreciated the support of Bishop McNairy, and though he was under “great pressure from the other side,” Jeannette reported that the service went “quite smoothly,” and “afterward there was a great sense of relief,” and a personal ending to a “long painful period.”¹¹³⁸

After the recognition service, Jeannette received a warm letter from Suzanne Hiatt, her friend and colleague. “Your comment in the [newspaper],” Hiatt stated, “that you were afraid you would never live to be a priest took me back to our conversations in 1966 in St. Paul, [MN]...I am gratified that you not only lived to be a priest but to see that priesthood recognized and accepted. How about making the episcopate your next goal? That should keep you busy well into your hundreds.”¹¹³⁹

Ministry

¹¹³⁵ “A Celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany and Recognition of the Priesthood of the Church for The Rev. Dr. Alla Bozarth-Campbell and The Rev. Dr. Jeannette Piccard,” January 6, 1977, Folder 1, Box II: 66, Subject: Ordination to the Priesthood: “The Fifteen,” Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹³⁶ Letter dated January 14, 1977, Folder 2, Box II: 67, Subject: Ordination official recognition of ordination, 1977, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹³⁷ Estyr B. Peake, “Local women are recognized as priests,” *Twin Cities Courier*, February 10, 1977, p. 8, Folder 2, Box II: 67, Subject: Ordination official recognition of ordination, 1977, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹³⁸ Letter dated January 7, 1977, Folder 1, Box II: 66, Subject: Ordination to the Priesthood: “The Fifteen,” Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹³⁹ Letter dated January 21, 1977, Folder 1, Box II: 66, Subject: Ordination to the Priesthood: “The Fifteen,” Piccard Family Papers.

A self-described “ornery, old woman,”¹¹⁴⁰ and now reliant on others for her transportation, Jeannette nevertheless maintained a rigorous schedule for the next several years. Unable to be appointed to her own parish due to her age, she maintained her relationship with St. Philip’s parish as an unpaid assistant to the Rev. Chester Talton,¹¹⁴¹ and was regularly scheduled to preach and concelebrate the Eucharist.¹¹⁴² Jeannette continued her ministry of visiting parish shut-ins and those residing in nursing homes.¹¹⁴³ In addition, Jeannette remained a popular speaker, including such varied activities as leading a women’s seminar at a community college,¹¹⁴⁴ preaching at a local Lutheran Church,¹¹⁴⁵ leading two conference discussions for the Minnesota Council on Family Relations,¹¹⁴⁶ and being the keynote speaker for the Hopkins [MN] Independent School District conference for junior and senior girls, and faculty members.

Jeannette was informed that the school district’s conference title was, “Growing Up Female: I Can; I Count!” “Our keynote needs,” Nancy Wangen explained, “are to

¹¹⁴⁰ See Byrne, “Priesthood satisfies Jeannette Piccard.”

¹¹⁴¹ Talton served at St. Philip’s from 1976 until his election to bishop in 1991. Because Talton knew Jeannette well, preaching at her recognition service and funeral, the author made several attempts to contact the bishop; however, he did not provide any additional information.

¹¹⁴² See “St. Philip’s Episcopal Church Clergy Schedule,” 1978-1980, Folder 5, Box II: 70, Subject: St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, 1969-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers. In addition to her priestly functions, Jeannette supported the parish with her pocketbook, giving \$590 in 1975, \$809 in 1977, and \$1,085 in 1979. See Records of contributions, Folder 4, Box II: 70, Subject: St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, 1969-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁴³ Jeannette had inquired into possible housing options for herself; and in June 1976, had “reached the top” of The Episcopal Church Home of Minnesota’s admission list. See letter dated June 1, 1976, Folder 4, Box II: 47, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence, 1973-1978, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette’s response was brief: “I am not yet ready to come into the home although three weeks ago I thought that maybe I should already be there!” See letter dated June 17, 1976, Folder 4, Box II: 47, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence, 1973, 1978, Piccard Family Papers. Jeannette never moved out of her River Road home.

¹¹⁴⁴ See “Woman: Fitting It All Together,” October 29, 1977, Folder 1, Box II: 76, Subject: Speaking engagements: general Oct. 1977-Apr. 1981, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁴⁵ See letter dated October 31, 1977, Folder 1, Box II: 76, Subject: Speaking engagements: general Oct. 1977-Apr. 1981, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁴⁶ See letter dated December 10, 1977, Folder 1, Box II: 76, Subject: Speaking engagements: general Oct. 1977-Apr. 1981, Piccard Family Papers.

demonstrate and share with the participants that one lifetime can contain many lives and roles; that all of us have unique experiences as females – experiences that need to be supported and encouraged; and that discrimination against women has been, and is real.” “We would especially like to have you share,” Wangen continued, “some of your personal experiences from your youth and young adulthood, the decisions you made, and the facilitators and inhibitors of those decisions.” Wangen concluded, stating, “We are anxious to have you share...not only your ‘accomplishments’ but most certainly your spirit, your enthusiasm, your wisdom and your wit.”¹¹⁴⁷

For years Jeannette had experienced discrimination because of her sex; however, in early 1977 she acknowledged her own personal discriminatory feelings and “fear” toward another minority, in both society and the Episcopal Church. After returning from a meeting in Michigan, Jeannette wrote a note to her host, saying, “There is another thing for which I want to thank you. While I was in Ann Arbor, I got to know a number of Gay People, [sic] not only singly but as a group. I had been afraid of them but I am no longer so.”¹¹⁴⁸ Jeannette’s years of struggle for acceptance as a priest in her beloved church made her more sensitive to the discrimination of others. Father Denzil Carty had encouraged her along racial lines, and now, the Rev. Andrew Foster, chaplain of Canterbury House, the University of Michigan’s Episcopal Student Foundation, and himself a heterosexual, had helped raise Jeannette awareness and empathy for the

¹¹⁴⁷ Letter dated March 31, 1978, Folder 2, Box II: 76, Subject: Speaking engagements: general Oct. 1977-Apr. 1981, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁴⁸ Letter dated January 15, 1977, Folder 2, Box II: 67, Subject: Ordination official recognition of ordination, 1977, Piccard Family Papers.

church's gay population.¹¹⁴⁹ "A group here in Minneapolis has asked me to join them for a pot-luck," Jeannette proudly informed Foster, "and I am going. A year ago I would have backed away."¹¹⁵⁰ Jeannette was invited by the Twin Cities chapter of the gay Episcopalian organization Integrity¹¹⁵¹ to be their "special guest" at their February "Pot-luck and Fellowship" meeting.¹¹⁵² Jeannette became a dues-paying member of the group, and for the next few years, when time and health permitted, she participated in their meetings and celebrated Eucharist with Integrity members.¹¹⁵³

Jeannette was also aware of the uproar created in the Episcopal Church when Ellen Barrett, a lesbian, was ordained a priest by the Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Jr. In a letter to the House of Bishops, Moore wrote, "We in no way looked on this [ordination] as a 'first' or an unusual event. Rather [Barrett] was chosen as a whole person worthy (if any of us is) of ordination by our full canonical process, by those persons designated by the Church to make such decisions." "She is no militant," Moore continued, "nor one who would wish to impose her views on others. Persons known, or virtually known, to be homosexual have been ordained for years. The only difference between such persons, whom many of

¹¹⁴⁹ See letter dated February 2, 1976, Folder 4, Box II: 40, Subject: Canterbury House, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1976-1977, n.d. Piccard Family Papers. In 1976, Jeannette was the first "Guest-in-Residence" at Canterbury House. See letter dated January 5, 1976, Folder 4, Box II: 40, Subject: Canterbury House, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1976-1977, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁵⁰ Letter dated January 15, 1977, Folder 2, Box II: 67, Subject: Ordination official recognition of ordination, 1977, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁵¹ Founded in 1974, Integrity is a "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender justice ministry in and to the Episcopal Church." See The Episcopal Church Annual 2006 (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2006), p. 114. The Twin Cities chapter was started in April 1976. See letter dated April 3, 1977, Folder 1, Box II: 58, Subject: Integrity, Inc., Gay Episcopalians and Their Friends, Twin Cities Chapter, Minneapolis, Minn., 1976-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁵² Letter dated January 17, 1977, Folder 1, Box II: 58, Subject: Integrity, Inc., Gay Episcopalians and Their Friends, Twin Cities Chapter, Minneapolis, Minn. 1976-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁵³ See letter dated May 9, 1977 and letter dated December 27, 1979, Folder 1, Box II: 58, Subject: Integrity, Inc., Gay Episcopalians and Their Friends, Twin Cities Chapter, Minneapolis, Minn. 1976-1980, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

us have ordained, and Ellen Barrett, is her candor. Candor, or, if you will, honesty is not a bar to ordination...”¹¹⁵⁴

Passing

But Jeannette’s health was beginning to fail. In February 1981, after months of correspondence and discussion over a potential article for publication, she conceded to long-time friend and mentor Daniel Corrigan that if she was “going to publish it at all, the time [was] now.” “Today,” Jeannette told Corrigan, “I write to tell you that it may already be too late. But that still remains to be seen.” Jeannette was scheduled for surgery of an “old fibroid [sic] tumor”; however, the doctors thought there might also be a growth in the colon. “If that is the case,” Jeannette explained, “they will call in the colon specialist to womp off a bit of the colon.” Jeannette confessed to Corrigan that she was “not looking forward to it,” but neither was she “looking forward to continuing with things growing progressively worse, if they [could] be changed.”¹¹⁵⁵

According to her granddaughter Kathryn, Jeannette had “ignored the symptoms of bowel obstruction”¹¹⁵⁶ because she had been busy with arrangements for the dedication ceremony of the Piccard Balloon Collection at the University of Minnesota. In late January, Jeannette joined those gathered in the Special Collections Gallery of the Wilson Library to pay tribute to her late husband, Jean. In her moving “Tribute to the Piccards” Lucy Stefan, Jean’s former student, honored him, but Stefan also honored the work that

¹¹⁵⁴ Letter dated January 18, 1977, Folder 2, Box II: 67, Subject: Ordination official recognition of ordination, 1977, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁵⁵ Letter dated February 13, 1981, Folder 8, Box II: 41, Subject: Corrigan, Daniel and Elizabeth, 1958-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁵⁶ Kathryn Piccard, transcript of interview with the author, September 15, 2006, Athens, Ohio. Transcript in author’s possession.

Jean and Jeannette had accomplished as a team. “The Piccards,” Stefan said, “were a remarkable couple in this age. They would have been a remarkable couple in any age. They were shining examples of what it is to have faith, to have life, to have courage.” “It was a tapestry the two of them wove together,” continued Stefan, “the road to science and the way to God.” In introducing the principal speaker, Stefan stated, “When there is someone who is so well-known and so well loved, I only have to say, ‘Behold! The Reverend Jeannette Piccard.’”¹¹⁵⁷ Any physical pain or discomfort that Jeannette was experiencing would never have been great enough for her to miss this moment in the sun.¹¹⁵⁸

Jeannette did not have colon cancer, but rather an advanced stage of ovarian cancer that had metastasized and was blocking the bowel. According to Kathryn Piccard, the doctors started Jeannette on chemotherapy stating that if the treatment worked it would “buy” her “two to three years”; however, if it failed, Jeannette had perhaps just months. While visiting her grandmother in the hospital in early April, Kathryn noted that Jeannette was beginning to develop severe reactions to the chemotherapy treatments, and when the doctors chose to stop the treatments, Kathryn knew that she would not see her grandmother again.¹¹⁵⁹

Just days before her passing, Jeannette’s bishop, the Rt. Rev. Robert M. Anderson,¹¹⁶⁰ came to her hospital room, and consecrated Jeannette an “honorary canon” in the

¹¹⁵⁷ “A Tribute to the Piccards,” January 28, 1981, Folder 1, Box II: 54, Subject: Eulogies Jeannette Piccard, 1981, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁵⁸ Jeannette was in pain and discomfort. See letter dated February 13, 1981, Folder 3, Box II: 48, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota correspondence, 1979-1981, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁵⁹ Kathryn Piccard, interview by author, Athens, Ohio, September 15, 2006.

¹¹⁶⁰ In 1978, forty-three-year-old Robert M. Anderson became the bishop of the Diocese of Minnesota, replacing the retired Philip McNairy. See “Convention Choose Coadjutor, Suffragan,” October 20, 1977,

Episcopal Church.¹¹⁶¹ Kathryn Piccard states that “this was a lovely honor for [Jeannette and] was a real symbol of reconciliation in the diocese.”¹¹⁶² As a child of God, Jeannette did not fear death. Several years earlier during an interview for The Minneapolis Star, the reporter asked Jeannette what she was going to do now that she had “attained her lifelong goal” of the priesthood. “You won’t like this,” she “warned” the reporter, “but I’ve lived my life. I want to die and get on to the next thing.”¹¹⁶³ Jeannette died on May 17, 1981.¹¹⁶⁴

On May 20th, a memorial mass in “Celebration of the Life of the Reverend Canon Jeannette Piccard” was held at the Cathedral Church of St. Mark, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Bishops Corrigan and Anderson, along with the Rev. Chester Talton, led the “packed” church, which included “lots of young women who had been inspired” by Jeannette. Sons Paul and John, aided by a “group of concerned and very supportive women worked out the details” of Jeannette’s service. “We selected hymns,” Paul recalled, “not knowing that my mother had left behind a list of hymns she wanted. I don’t

Episcopal Press and News 1976-2000, http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress_release.pl?pr_number=77343. Prior to the election of the new bishop, Jeannette submitted several names for nomination, including Suzanne Hiatt. She had heard “rumors” that “certain criteria” had been set that if enacted would “eliminate women, not because they lack the qualifications for the job but because they are women.” See letter dated May 15, 1977, Folder 5, Box II: 47, Subject: Episcopal Church Diocese of Minnesota Correspondence 1973-1978, Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁶¹ Although the author had several phone conversations with Bishop Anderson, now in Los Angeles, he never disclosed why he made Jeannette an honorary canon.

¹¹⁶² Kathryn Piccard, transcript of interview with author, September 15, 2006, Athens, Ohio. Transcript in author’s possession. Kathryn explained that the “honorary means of course that she couldn’t, wouldn’t be able to function [as a canon] or be on the payroll...but honorary canons have often been people who...have been serving in the diocese for a certain number of years or have been ordained for twenty-five years or more...This was an honor that the bishop came and did this...” See Ibid.

¹¹⁶³ Carol Byrne, “Priesthood satisfies Jeannette Piccard.”

¹¹⁶⁴ Jeannette’s remains were cremated “under the auspices of a predominantly black funeral home.” See Paul J. Piccard, paulpic@juno.com “Re: Mother’s Bio-3,” personal email to author, November 3, 2005.

remember the others but she asked for ‘We Shall Overcome.’ (Don’t tell me she hadn’t come a long way.)...”¹¹⁶⁵

The entire liturgy was in gender neutral language;¹¹⁶⁶ for example, The Lord’s Prayer began with “Our loving and merciful Father/Mother, Our Parent in Heaven, Hallowed Be Your Name...” The litany, led by Jeannette’s colleague from the Philadelphia service, the Rev. Dr. Alla Bozarth-Campbell, was of “Recognition and Thanksgiving for the Gifts of Women to the Church and the World.”¹¹⁶⁷ But it was the rendering of her chasuble on the front cover of the program that perhaps best represented Jeannette: “Its border is both the water of Baptism and the flames of the Holy Spirit. At its center is wheat, to symbolize the Resurrection and the Eucharist; the wheat is surrounded by the balloon that was so much of her life.”¹¹⁶⁸

Since 1981

Some may argue that the struggles women experienced and the vestiges of coverture they encountered throughout the 20th century have been eliminated from 21st century American society. For example, ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920 gave women the right to vote. Energized with formal political power, women and their allies began overturning the Expatriation Act of 1907 by fighting for the passage of the Cable Act of

¹¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶⁶ Jeannette evoked controversy even in death; on June 16, 1981, The Minneapolis Star editorial page headline read, “Dr. Piccard’s funeral: Is the new liturgy an act of heresy or of Christian charity?” See “Dr. Piccard’s funeral: Is the new liturgy an act of heresy or of Christian charity?” Folder 3, Box II: 98, Subject: Piccard Family Miscellany. 1978-1981, n.d., Piccard Family Papers.

¹¹⁶⁷ “A Celebration of the Life of The Reverend Canon Jeannette Piccard,” original program given to author by Kathryn Piccard.

¹¹⁶⁸ Ibid., Jeannette was survived by three children, fourteen grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. See “The Rev. Jeannette Piccard, 86, Dies, Noted Balloonist, Episcopalian Priest,” The Washington Post, May 20, 1981, Folder 1, Box II: 54, Subject: Eulogies for Jeannette Piccard, 1981, Piccard Family Papers.

1922.¹¹⁶⁹ According to historian Candice Lewis Bredbenner, “The forcefulness of organized women’s domestic challenge to marital expatriation...would eventually convince the federal government to abolish all gender-based double standards in the country’s nationality laws...”¹¹⁷⁰ Unlike Jeannette’s and countless other women’s experiences, American women no longer risk the loss of their citizenship because they fall in love and marry a non-American man.

After her ordination recognition in 1977, Jeannette received a congratulatory letter from her Bryn Mawr classmate, Ruth Cheney Streeter. “If you remember our college days,” Streeter wrote, “we were rather squashed between 1917 and 1919, both of which were sort of loud and noisy and always beat us at games. But we haven’t done so badly nearly 60 years after!” “We have a number of class-mates distinguished in various fields,” she continued, “and I remember saying during World War II, that women had already held high office in all professions except the armed forces and the Episcopal Church. Then I became one of the first women to hold high rank in the military service and now you are one of the first to be accepted into the inner circle of the Episcopal Church.” “So I think,” Streeter concluded, “1918 can feel quite proud of itself!”¹¹⁷¹ Jeannette and Streeter would be pleased that since 1977, women have made further strides in both the armed forces and the Episcopal Church, and with Jeannette’s former employer, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

¹¹⁶⁹ See Chapter Two.

¹¹⁷⁰ Candice Lewis Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own: Women, Marriage, and the Law of Citizenship (Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1998), p. 7.

¹¹⁷¹ Letter dated January 9, 1977, Folder 2, Box II: 67, Subject: Ordination official recognition of ordination, 1977, Piccard Family Papers.

According to historian Margaret Weitekamp, “NASA rejected all women who applied for astronaut training” until 1978 when the Space Transportation System (STS) or space shuttle program was being developed. For these flights, NASA “created a new kind of astronaut” known as a “mission specialist”—a scientist, physician, or researcher who conducted experiments but did not pilot the spaceship.¹¹⁷² In 1983, mission specialist Sally Ride became the first American woman in space since Jeannette’s flight almost five decades earlier; however, Lt. Col. Eileen Collins broke into the ranks of pilot astronauts, and in July 1999 became the first woman commander of a space shuttle.¹¹⁷³ In 2007, almost thirty years after women were first accepted into the NASA space flying family, the International Space Station (ISS) and the space shuttle Discovery were commanded by Peggy Whitson and Pamela Melroy, respectively, marking the first time that “two female commanders [orbited] the Earth.”¹¹⁷⁴

On November 14, 2008, Gen. Ann E. Dunwoody capped a thirty-three year career in the military by becoming the nation’s first female four-star general, and only the eleventh four-star general in the United States Army. Dunwoody is the first female commander of the U.S. Army Materiel Command, and is in charge of “all Army supplies needed to fight [the] nation’s wars, including food, clothing, weapons, water and equipment.” Although

¹¹⁷² Margaret A. Weitekamp, Right Stuff, Wrong Sex: America’s First Women in Space Program (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), p. 177.

¹¹⁷³ Collins came through the “ranks of military flying, the very training grounds that remained close to women from the 1944 Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) disbandment until the early 1970s.” See *Ibid.*, p. 188.

¹¹⁷⁴ Traci Watson, “Missions mark giant leaps for womankind,” October 19, 2007, USA Today, <http://usatoday.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=Missions+mark+giant+lea...>, March 9, 2009.

Dunwoody comes from a long-line of West Point graduates, when she enlisted in 1975, the academy was closed to females.¹¹⁷⁵

Nine years after the General Convention approved the change in the canon allowing women to be priests, the House of Bishops voted “not to oppose the consecration of a woman as a bishop.”¹¹⁷⁶ This vote was tested three years later in 1988 when fifty-eight year-old Barbara C. Harris,¹¹⁷⁷ a divorced, African-American woman, was elected by a vote of 112-31, the first woman bishop in the Episcopal Church, and in the Anglican Communion as a whole. In nominating Harris, the Rev. Mary Glasspool emphasized “her thirty years in the business community, her parish service as a deacon and priest, and her work with diverse groups in the Church on a diocesan and national level.” “[Harris] may at times make us uncomfortable about the way things are,” Glasspool continued, “but that is precisely what Jesus did. He made the religious people of his time uncomfortable...”¹¹⁷⁸

By 2004 there were twelve women bishops in the United States,¹¹⁷⁹ and one, Katherine Jefferts Schori, was elected presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church at the 2006 General Convention in Columbus, Ohio. Jefferts Schori’s elevation coincided with the thirtieth anniversary of women in the priesthood. Elected to the episcopate as Bishop of Nevada in 2001, Jefferts Schori, a former oceanographer, was ordained a priest in

¹¹⁷⁵ Jane VanOsdol, “Four-Star Milestone,” *American Legion Auxiliary: Homefront*, Vol. 1 (2009), 26-27.

¹¹⁷⁶ Pamela W. Darling, *New Wine: The Story of Women Transforming Leadership and Power in the Episcopal Church* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1994), p. 156.

¹¹⁷⁷ Harris challenged the accepted model of an Episcopal bishop. See Darling, *New Wine*, p. 173.

¹¹⁷⁸ “Barbara Harris Elected First Woman Bishop,” September 29, 1988, *Episcopal Press and News 1976-2000*, http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress_release.pl?pr_number=88201.

¹¹⁷⁹ See Harriet Harris and Jane Shaw, eds. *The Call for Women Bishops* (London, England: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), p. 28. New Zealand had elected one female bishop; Canada, three. See *Ibid.*

1994. She told a reporter shortly after her historic election in Columbus, “[My] turn toward the ministry began more than 15 years ago, when [my] opportunities for work in oceanography were narrowing...My sense of call was like looking at a series of doors closing and others opening...” According to witnesses, when the presiding bishop-elect “walked down the hall toward the Eucharist, a woman in a wheelchair flashed her a smile and a pink button that read, ‘It’s a girl!’”¹¹⁸⁰

The “firsts” represented by Bishops Harris and Jefferts Schori, General Dunwoody, and Commanders Melroy and Whitson should be welcomed and celebrated; however, they belie underlying problems within science, religion, and other arenas of 21st century American society.

Vestiges of Coverture

A task force examined the prospects for women in the field of chemistry, and in their analysis stated that “a limitation frequently referred to [was] the one which women meet equally in almost every line of work—the traditional prejudice against them...”

“Directors are skeptical of women’s ability,” the report continued, “there is a lack of confidence on the part of the employer, men do not want to work under women...there is a preference for men.” The report ended optimistically, predicting that “this limitation will diminish and disappear gradually with the accumulating evidence that women are demonstrating their ability to do good work.”¹¹⁸¹ Perhaps this 1922 description of the status of American women in the field of chemistry is not surprising; however, it is

¹¹⁸⁰ Neela Banerjee, “For an Episcopal Pioneer, The Challenge Is to Unite,” The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch, June 21, 2006, p. A10.

¹¹⁸¹ Women in Chemistry: A Study of Professional Opportunities (New York: The Bureau of Vocational Information, 1922), pp.226-227.

disheartening that after nine decades, women's low status and struggles in scientific endeavors continue.

In the 2007 report Beyond Bias and Barriers, distinguished scientists and engineers, led by Chairwoman Donna E. Shalala, were asked to examine: why women are a "small portion of the science and engineering faculty members at research universities"; why women "typically receive fewer resources and less support than their male colleagues"; and why women's "representation...in leadership positions in...academic institutions, scientific and professional societies, and honorary organizations is low relative to the numbers of women qualified to hold these positions."¹¹⁸²

The task force's conclusions challenged many long held biases and prejudices about females.¹¹⁸³ For example, they concluded that "female performance in high school mathematic now matches that of males," thereby dismissing the notion that women are "not as good at mathematics."¹¹⁸⁴ The task force refuted the belief that women are "not as competitive as men" and that women "do not want jobs in academe." "Similar proportions" the task force concluded, "of men and women science and engineering doctorates plan to enter postdoctoral study or academic employment." Shalala and the committee also refuted the ideas that "women faculty are "less productive than men"; that

¹¹⁸² Beyond Bias and Barriers: Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering (Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2007), p. 1.

¹¹⁸³ The task force addressed eleven "commonly held beliefs about women in science and engineering." See *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

¹¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5, 27-28. The 2007 findings reflect those of University of Chicago graduate student Helen Thompson. In the early 1910s, Thompson "challenged the stereotypes of duality in gender" by surveying the school's undergraduate population. "In her dissertation, 'The Mental Traits of Sex,' she concluded that it was training and social expectation that accounted for the differences that did emerge." See Dorothy M. Brown, Setting a Course: Women in the 1920s (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), p. 35.

women are “more interested in family than in careers”; and that women “take more time off due to childbearing, so they are a bad investment.”¹¹⁸⁵

Shalala and her colleagues challenged the assumptions of scientists and engineers that “changing the rules” for evaluating their colleagues would mean that “the standards of [scientific] excellence [would] be deleteriously affected.” When one chooses an academic career, one’s advancement is significantly reliant on the evaluation of one’s accomplishments by their senior colleagues. According to the Shalala task force, for female scientists and engineers, there is an inherent “bias” in the system that “negatively affects the evaluations and judgments made about women scientists and engineers and their work.” “Women consequently,” they argued, “are not only underrepresented in numerous science and engineering fields, but are also likely to work in less prestigious institutions than men, to hold lower rank, to take longer to be promoted and tenured, to win fewer awards and honors, and to be named less often to positions of leadership in their institutions and disciplines.”¹¹⁸⁶ In ninety years, nine women have received ten Nobel prizes in science, most recently in 1988.¹¹⁸⁷ During an interview, Gail G. Hanson, distinguished professor of physics at the University of California, Riverside, stated that women in science “seem to be accepted at relatively junior levels.” “But once we get to more senior levels,” Hanson argued, “a kind of antagonism sets in...I thought these kinds of things only happened in the 1950s. It’s appalling that women still confront these

¹¹⁸⁵ Beyond Bias and Barriers, p. 6.

¹¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹¹⁸⁷ See Hilary Rose, Love, Power and Knowledge: Towards a Feminist Transformation of the Sciences (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 136.

hurdles.”¹¹⁸⁸ A reflection of the 1950s’ female stereotypes is the Shalala-led task force conclusion that the “current bias against women scientists and engineers is often subtle, implicit, and unexamined.” “Under prevailing gender schemas,” the report stated, “competent women are often viewed as ‘overaggressive’ and ‘not nice’ whereas traditionally subservient women are seen as ‘incompetent.’”¹¹⁸⁹

The misogynistic notions of science, particularly physics, and religion, particularly Catholicism, can be linked to the Greek thinker, Pythagoras. As historian Margaret Wertheim argues, Pythagoras “associated the mind/spirit side of reality with maleness and the body/matter side with femaleness. Pythagoras introduced numbers into this mix and put them on the male side of the ledger...Mathematics was associated with the gods, and with transcendence from the material world...” “The Pythagorean association of mathematics with transcendence,” Wertheim continues, “was easily imported into a Christian context, giving rise to the idea of the Judeo-Christian god as a mathematical creator...But this godly-mathematical connection also sat easily with the Catholic tradition of a male-only priesthood.” Early 17th and 18th century scientific societies continued “this misogynistic trend,” including Britain’s Royal Society whose organizational mission was to “raise a Masculine Philosophy.”¹¹⁹⁰

The Episcopal Church prides itself on being the “third way,” that is, a bridge between Catholicism and Protestantism. However, until 1976, it followed exclusively the theological arguments of the Roman Catholic Church, primarily that “Jesus ordained his

¹¹⁸⁸ Margaret Wertheim, “Numbers Are Male, Said Pythagoras, and the Idea Persists,” October 3, 2006, nytimes.com, October 5, 2006.

¹¹⁸⁹ *Beyond Bias and Barriers*, p. 114.

¹¹⁹⁰ Wertheim, “Numbers Are Male, Said Pythagoras, and the Idea Persists.” In 1945, the first woman was admitted as a full member to the prestigious British Royal Society. See *Ibid*.

twelve disciples at the Last Supper; the twelve disciples were all men; therefore, Jesus intended to call only men to the priesthood. In the Eucharist the priest represents Christ; Christ in his human form of Jesus of Nazareth was male; therefore, the representation of Christ in the Eucharist requires a male priest.”¹¹⁹¹

The overt backlash to the 1976 change in canon law has been fairly minimal for the two and a half million baptized members¹¹⁹² of the Episcopal Church. Several “breakaway” parishes and priests have threatened to leave the church in protest over women’s ordination.¹¹⁹³ But by 1994, there were over 1,200 women clergy in the Episcopal Church, an increase of 1,100 since the initial year of 1977;¹¹⁹⁴ however, women accounted for less than ten percent of the 14, 645 ordained priests.¹¹⁹⁵

The more subtle discrimination occurs in the church, as is the case in the laboratory, in the forms of hiring practices, whether the position is full-time or part-time, and in the salary structure, thereby affecting the retirements and pensions of women priests. According to religious historian Sheila Briggs, women and men graduating from seminaries “do not have great difficulty in obtaining a first appointment”; however, the difference “lies in the type of appointments.” About 42% of women and 68% of men are either “sole” or “senior pastors” in their first appointments; however, by the time of his third appointment, a man has a 92% chance of being either a sole or senior pastor. His female cohort’s chances remain around 60%. “The lower status of women on the clerical

¹¹⁹¹ Sheila Briggs, “Women and Religion” in Beth B. Hess and Myra Marx Ferree, eds., Analyzing Gender: A Handbook of Social Science Research (London, England: Sage Publications, Inc., 1987), p. 415.

¹¹⁹² See The Episcopal Church Annual 2006 (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2006), p. 21.

¹¹⁹³ Garance Burke, “California Anglicans leaving fold,” December 3, 2006, The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch, A10.

¹¹⁹⁴ Sally B. Purvis, The Stained Glass Ceiling: Churches and Their Women Pastors (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), p. x.

¹¹⁹⁵ The Episcopal Church Annual 2006, p. 21.

ladder,” Briggs argues, “is, of course, reflected in their salaries, which are appreciably lower than those of men at all points in the career.” Geographically, women are more likely to serve “small congregations, in rural areas or small towns, with older and less wealthy members.” Women also tend to be “interim pastors or serve congregations with declining numbers.”¹¹⁹⁶ Sociologist Paula D. Nesbitt argues that “women’s exposure as interims generally does not lead to their reappointment as rectors.” “The irony,” Nesbitt states, is that “the replacement of interims overwhelmingly tends to be by *male* rectors.” [Emphasis in original.]¹¹⁹⁷

Like many of their counterparts in the fields of science, women priests experience not only “status discrimination,” but also “psychobiological determinism.” According to Prelinger, women make up the “preponderance” of hospital chaplains, and black women are “deployed as chaplains to prisons whose populations are predominately black.” “Stereotypes in general,” Prelinger argues, “have haunted the female priesthood. Older women, who in recent years have entered the clergy in large numbers, have been referred to as ‘housewives whose children are gone, divorcees, or women who’ve been working around the church so long they think they might as well run it.’” These biases “permeate the attitudes of those influential in the placement of clergy.” As the number of part-time positions has grown in the church, “the number of women, particularly at the lower job

¹¹⁹⁶ Briggs, pp. 414-415 and see “Resolution Number: 1988-D080,” The Acts of the Convention: The Archives of the Episcopal Church, http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution-complete.pl?resolution=1988-D080, November 21, 2006.

¹¹⁹⁷ Catherine M. Prelinger, “Ordained Women in the Episcopal Church: Their Impact on the Work and Structure of the Clergy,” in Catherine M. Prelinger, ed., Episcopal Women: Gender, Spirituality and Commitment in an American Mainline Denomination (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.), p. 287. The rector is the “head priest of a parish,” and typically has tenure. See “Episcopal Things: A guide for non-Episcopalians to many of the terms and phrases in use around Sewanee,” <http://smith2.sewanee.edu/glossary/Glossary--Episcopal.html>.

levels, has exceeded the number of men in these part-time positions.” “Yet the assumption,” Prelinger posits, “is almost universal that women can afford part-time positions in the clergy because they are being supported by their husbands.”¹¹⁹⁸

For women, the passage of secular and ecclesiastical laws to ban overt forms of discrimination and open corporate and cultural opportunities is a necessary step toward leveling the playing field and allowing for personal fulfillment. However, even as women’s legal standing improved throughout the 20th century, women encountered more subtle forms of discrimination. As historian Linda Kerber argues, women experienced “coverture as camouflage.”¹¹⁹⁹ Jeannette Ridlon Piccard’s life uniquely illustrates the struggles during the 20th century for women in the spheres of citizenship, science and religion. Jeannette was not “protected” by her husband’s citizenship; she was not “protected” from the rigors of science; nor was she “protected” from the rigors of religion. Rather the vestiges of coverture protected men’s domains from her inclusion.

For all women, the inherent “biases and barriers” in America must be overcome, and the “vestiges of coverture” must be exposed and eliminated. Only then, to paraphrase historian Heather Huyck, can all American women celebrate a whole personhood.

¹¹⁹⁸ Prelinger, p. 294.

¹¹⁹⁹ Linda K. Kerber, No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), p. xxiii.

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