ADELAIDE JOHNSON

SCULPTOR OF THE WOMAN'S MOVEMENT

Abstract of

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of History

Western Illinois University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Shirley J. Burton

April 1985

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This thesis is an investigation of the life of the sculptor Adelaide Johnson. One of the most remarkable women to come out of west central Illinois, Johnson spent her childhood in a log cabin, and received her education in a one-room country school. As an adult she became an intellectual whose political art was presented on two continents and a feminist who marched with suffragists in London and Washington D.C. and counted Susan B. Anthony a close friend.

While Johnson has been the subject of scholarship in her role as a professional artist, her biography has not yet appeared. This study has attempted to emphasize Johnson's personal, rather than professional life, and to find the reasons she was able to evade her seemingly inevitable narrow, domestic existence. Johnson facilitated the task by leaving 35,000 pages of manuscript, most of it now a part of the Adelaide Johnson Collection of the Library of Congress. These papers include diaries which she kept for over sixty years, records of sittings, essays, speeches, and her personal correspondence. Interviews with people who knew her provided additional insight, particularly Meta Grace Keebler, with whom Johnson lived during the last ten years of her life.

This study concludes that Johnson, influenced by her pioneer heritage, developed into an independent, self-sufficient person who believed in her own ability to overcome obstacles. These qualities

also made her a feminist who freed herself from her nineteenth century female existence by becoming an artist, defying convention, and becoming a self-defining woman.

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis by Shirley J. Burton is accepted in its present form by the Department of History of Western Illinois University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree Master of Arts.

[redacted]
Chair, Examining Committee

[redacted]
Member, Examining Committee

[redacted]
Member, Examining Committee

April 15, 1985
Date

ADELAIDE JOHNSON

SCULPTOR OF THE WOMAN'S MOVEMENT

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of History

Western Illinois University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Shirley J. Burton

April 1985

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study has benefited from the encouragement and assistance of a number of individuals, although responsibility for its shortcomings is mine alone. Professor George Hopkins, who directed the thesis, merits special recognition for his guidance in interpreting the almost overwhelming mass of available materials. Professors William Burton and Charles O'Brien read the manuscript and provided valuable criticism. A grant from the Western Illinois University Research Office made it possible for me to utilize primary source material in the Adelaide Johnson Collection of the Library of Congress in Washington D.C.

I am grateful to Meta Grace Keebler for graciously sharing her recollections with me and for taking me for my first visit to The Woman's Movement. Relatives of Adelaide Johnson who generously shared their memories and mementos include Bluford and Hazel Jackson and their cousin Wayne Beadles. Pat Walters of the Interlibrary Loan department at the W.I.U. Library cheerfully handled my frequent requests for obscure and out of print books.

I am indebted to my family, whose cooperation provided the time required to complete this study, and especially to Steven, whose support is unwavering.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The young artist was sure of her talent and seriously devoted to her work. Early on a January morning in 1882, she hurried toward her decorative arts studio in the Central Music Hall at State and Randolph Streets in Chicago. Passing quickly through the doors of the building, she turned toward the wire cage elevator that would take her to the studio where she worked in woodcarving and painting. If the elevator was on another floor the metal grate would be fastened across the elevator entrance, and she would have to wait for its return. If the grate was drawn back she could step immediately into the elevator and ascend to the upper floor where her studio was located. Her daily trips to this building were so routine that she scarcely glanced toward the elevator as she approached it. The metal grate was open, so she walked quickly through the opening—and plunged twenty feet to the bottom of the elevator shaft. Through some error or mechanical failure the door had been left open when the elevator ascended, leaving the open shaft unobstructed.[1]

The result was, in her own words, "A shattered body—bones to nerves." A medical examination revealed several dislocations as well as a cracked skull and right elbow. Her most serious injury was a fracture of the right hip so severe that recuperation required two painful years, a year of it on crutches. At the end of her "recovery," her right leg was three and one-half inches shorter than the left.[2] Yet,

but for her fall down the elevator shaft, Adelaide Johnson might never have become the sculptor of the Woman's Movement. A jury later agreed that the accident had been both tragic and avoidable, and awarded Johnson $15,000 in damages, which she used to fulfill the dream of nearly every nineteenth century artist—to study with the masters of painting and sculpture in Europe.[3]

Forty years later a memorial to the Woman's Movement was placed in the U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C. Carved of the finest white Carrara marble and weighing seven and one-half tons, the monument commemorates the pioneer suffragettes with life-sized likenesses of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucretia Mott. It was presented on 21 February 1921, the anniversary of Susan B. Anthony's birth, with as much pomp and ceremony as the most zealous feminist could have wished.

According to a later account, two young women dressed as Greek goddesses dropped the veil covering the monument as a grand opera singer rendered "Oh, Lord of Hosts." Representatives from the families of Anthony, Stanton, and Mott each placed large garlands around the busts of their ancestors. In the crowded rotunda of the Capitol Jane Addams, who gave the main address, said the placement of the memorial meant that women were "coming into their own." Presented "in the name of all American women," the monument was accepted by Frederick Gillett, Speaker of the House of Representatives. Music was provided by the Marine Band, and fifty young women dressed in white costumes formed a background for the pagentry. Following the speeches, representatives of thirty-nine women's groups marched around the rotunda carrying banners and singing the "Woman's Marseillaise," depositing colorful bouquets and garlands

at the base of the monument.[4]

A few weeks before the presentation ceremonies the Washington Evening Telegram gushed, "Welcome by Millions Awaits Woman with Suffrage Statue."[5] The woman with the statue was Adelaide Johnson, the remarkable sculptor of the monument, which she had named simply, The Woman's Movement. Aboard ship enroute from Italy where the monument was executed, however, Johnson added an inscription on the back of the marble. "The three great destiny characters of the world," she painted, "whose spiritual import and historical significance transcend that of all others of any country or age."[6] Clearly Johnson was committed to the monument and to the movement far beyond the extent of her commission.

The previous May she had signed a contract with the National Woman's Party, a militant group whose members had picketed the White House, chained themselves to the gates of the president's house, and gone to jail in their fight for woman suffrage. Johnson was promised $4,000 for the piece--barely enough to cover her expenses.[7] The artist's feminism was genuine. "The woman's revolution," she wrote, "was different than former revolutions. It involved half of humanity against the most subtle and deeply entrenched tyranny within creation--the tyranny of sex."[8] Johnson believed the revolution required militancy; since 1886 she had been a friend of Susan B. Anthony, whose motto was "Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God."[9] Johnson had occasion to demonstrate her militancy when the suffragettes took exception to an address given by President Woodrow Wilson, and proposed to symbolically burn a copy of his speech. "We will get right in front of the Opera House," a Washington paper quoted one of the suffragists, "and Mrs. Adelaide Johnson will hold the torch that burns the president's words about lib-

erty and democracy."[10]

But while Johnson was a militant, her radicalism was based upon reason rather than emotion. An intellectual, she placed a high value upon her own integrity. During World War I she refused to sign a widely circulated printed petition that asked for the vote.based upon women's support of the war. "I am for the war, but cannot ask for enfranchisement on that basis," she wrote on the form.[11]

Associated with a number of politically active organizations and associations of distinguished women, Johnson was a founder and lifelong member of the National and International Councils of Women; a charter member of the international Lyceum Club, and its American organizer; a longtime member of the National American Woman Suffrage Association; and later a member of the more militant National Woman's Party.

Because of her longtime commitment to art and the prevalent belief that a woman could not successfully combine a career and marriage, Johnson's friends did not expect her to marry. Her surprise wedding in 1896 was celebrated as the bonding of a "new woman and a new man."[12] The groom, an Englishman named Alexander Jenkins, was twelve years her junior, although Johnson discounted the importance of age. "We never either of us," she said, "tell our age, as we reckon not by years, but by growth." She lied, however, about her own age on their marriage license, saying she was twenty-four instead of thirty-seven. Jenkins was twenty-five.[13] "Mr. Johnson looks twenty years younger than he is," she told a reporter, "but it is his pure soul shining through its environment."[14] Jenkins, with whom she shared beliefs in Christian Science, theosophy, and vegetarianism, legally

changed his last name to Johnson at the time of their marriage as "the tribute that love pays to genius." Washington newspapers, which gave extended coverage to the event, could find little to say about the mysterious bridegroom except that he had once spent nine months alone on a ranch in Arizona in meditation and study.[15]

Adelaide Johnson's broad interests ranged into the spheres of physical fitness and nutrition. She was an exercise enthusiast for many years, and she and her husband were reported to take walks of ten to twelve miles. From her youth she ate no meat, and she was active in a national society of vegetarians. Johnson's thick, chestnut colored hair, which she wore in a Grecian-style coil at the back of her head, reached nearly to the floor because, she said, she willed it to grow.[16] Of petite stature, she gave the impression of being tall and graceful, a feat accomplished by her dignified presence and bearing as well as her celebrated force of will.[17] An article in The New American Woman described Johnson as "a little woman of great spirit and iron will."[18] It was a dangerous statement to make. An admirer once wrote Johnson, "Never in my life have I seen so much dignity as you have in your walk from or in a small person." Johnson scrawled in the margin of the letter, "I challenged the word 'small.'"[19]

Johnson's strong will was undoubtedly a factor in her recovery from the 1882 elevator accident which left one of her legs shorter than the other, although she credited Christian Science with the cure. Her physician was amazed, she said, when she returned from two years abroad with her legs returned to equal length.[20]

In spite of her interest in Christian Science, Johnson never

joined that church, but kept her formal affiliations with more conventional religions. Like the Chinese, she never felt that to embrace a particular religion or philosophy meant that one must reject all others, and she maintained an active interest in varied belief systems throughout her long life. One of her interests was theosophy, a combination of religion and philosophy based upon mystical insight. Theosophy follows many Buddhist and Brahmanic theories, especially of pantheistic evolution and reincarnation. In her writings, Johnson customarily refers to death as "transition."

Like many nineteenth century feminists, Johnson was interested in spiritualism. The spiritualists believed that man and woman are not material; and because they dismissed the physical world, they also dismissed the importance of sex and sexual identity. According to one writer, the attraction spiritualism had for these women was primarily political. It did not prohibit women from serving as ministers or mediums, and women found in it a movement they could influence or even dominate. Additionally, many spiritualists shared Johnson's interests in theosophy and Christian Science. Johnson was a member of the National Spiritualist Association, the largest spiritualist organization in the country, and the membership was sixty percent female. The publishing company of the association often printed Johnson's pamphlets and speeches, and Harrison Barrett, the association's president, was a close personal friend of Johnson with whom she frequently corresponded. Johnson had great admiration for many of the leaders of the spiritualist movement; and while her career was largely devoted to immortalizing the pioneers of the woman's movement, she also did a number of busts of

spiritualists such as Caroline Winslow, May Wright Sewall, Henen Densmore, and Reverand Hiram Thomas.[21]

Adelaide Johnson was in many ways an extraordinary woman, but she was unusually possessed of self-confidence and determination, two qualities indispensable in the career she chose for herself. Born during the latter days of the frontier in the western part of Illinois, Johnson spent her childhood in a log cabin. Educated in a one-room school, she left her rustic home at the age of sixteen, already knowing that art was to be her life's work. Because her family was of limited means, she was able to study art in Europe only because she had the misfortune to fall down an open elevator shaft.

When she reached her artistic maturity, Johnson knowingly limited the financial rewards of her chosen profession by declaring herself to be the sculptor of the woman's movement. She found it more important to immortailze in marble the pioneers of the feminist movement than to pursue her own artistic immortality. The feminist leaders whom Johnson chose to model were usually lacking in means to pay for marble portraiture, and while her associations with spiritualists resulted in some profitable commissions, on the whole Johnson's insistence upon making her art political seriously limited her professional income.[22]

When her career stagnated and her financial situation became critical, Johnson remained recalcitrant and unrepentent, believing that she had been true to her purpose. She credited her parents for her indomitible will. Their legacy to their children, she wrote, was "aspiration and will to win without ever lowering the standard borne at the highest reach."[23] Johnson's own highest aspiration was for a

gallery of women, comprised of her own marble portraits, which would stand as a permanent memorial to all of the women who had worked for the liberation of their sex.

Johnson's sculpture bears witness to her idealism. Her portraits are at first glance identified as neoclassical sculpture, but a closer examination shows them to be softer, broader, and more idealized than the typical neoclassical piece.[24] Johnson was totally committed to portraiture, considered the highest form of art during the 1830s, but less highly regarded by the late 1880s.[25] At a time when other American sculptors were using bronze, which has certain advantages in the depiction of detail as well as being less expensive, Johnson used only white marble—the medium of the ancients. She fondly called the busts her "white children."[26] Critical of much of the art of her day, Johnson disliked impressionism, which she thought to be a passing sensation, and found fault with most modern sculptors except Rodin, whose influence some believe is to be found in The Woman's Movement. With supreme confidence in her own talent, Johnson considered herself the artistic equal of the man then considered to be the greatest sculptor of the period, Augustus Saint Gaudens.[27] A relative who visited her frequently in her later years recalls that she was neither modest nor immodest, but possessed of a supreme ego which was based upon something more than fantasy.[28]

Adelaide Johnson's name is scarcely remembered today. Her work in the cause of feminine equality is forgotten, and the husband who took her name is buried in the ages. But The Woman's Movement stands in the crypt of the nation's capitol in Washington D.C. Johnson's other

works are scattered from the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D. C. to the Chicago Historical Society. Some of her pieces are lost, and some are displayed proudly in places where few patrons of the arts go; but many of Johnson's "white children" remain to bear witness to her vision and her will.

NOTES

[1]Adelaide Johnson, "The Story of the Lengthening of My Leg," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.; Ann Lyman Henderson, "Adelaide Johnson: Issues of Professionalism for a Woman Artist" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1981), pp. 22-23.

[2]Adelaide Johnson, "The Story of the Lengthening of My Leg."

[3]Henderson, pp. 22-23.

[4]"World Noted Genius Visits Plymouth Friends," Tri-County Scribe, 29 Sept. 1925; Henderson, p. 216.

[5]Washington Evening Telegram, 19 Jan. 1921.

[6]Henderson, p. 217.

[7]Ibid., p. 182 and p. 214.

[8]Adelaide Johnson, "Susan B. Anthony—Militant Revolutionist," The Suffragist, Sept. 1920, pp. 214-15.

[9]Adelaide Johnson, "The Import of the Woman Movement," Equal Rights, 10 Mar. 1934; Adelaide Johnson, "Susan B. Anthony."

[10]"Suffragette Mob Fights Police and Heroes; Six are Arrested," The World, 5 May 1919.

[11]Printed form, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[12]Clipping, no attribution, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[13]"She Trusts to the Occult," no attribution, Hancock County Historical Society, Carthage, Ill.; Henderson, pp. 118-19.

[14]"She Trusts to the Occult."

[15]Clipping, no attribution, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; "She Trusts to the Occult."

[16]"She Trusts to the Occult."

[17]New York Evening Journal, 3 May 1905.

[18]Jean B. Cook Smith, "Life in Marble—Speech in Silence," The New American Woman, Jun. 1917.

[19]Dorothy T. Wilbur to Adelaide Johnson, 8 Aug. 1928, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[20]Adelaide Johnson, "The Story of the Lengthening of My Leg."

[21]Henderson, pp. 79-81.

[22]Ibid., pp. 198-99.

[23]Adelaide Johnson, "Mother and Father," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[24]Henderson, p. 96.

[25]Wayne Craven, Sculpture in America (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), p. 71.

[26]Henderson, p. 97.

[27]Ibid., p. 100.

[28]James Jackson to Shirley Burton, 12 Jul. 1984.

CHAPTER II

PIONEER ROOTS

The "old" Northwest Territory was a wild and loosely-held area until after the end of the War of 1812. The early pioneers who attempted to settle there found themselves beset by Indians and by the very wildness of the region. Too far from the influence of the United States government to be either helped or hindered by it, they developed a fierce independence whereby man became accustomed to taking care of himself and settling his own affairs. Self-sufficiency became a source of intense pride—a measure of a man's worth.[1]

Among the states that were carved from the Northwest Territory after 1812 was Illinois, which received statehood in 1818. Almost immediately a "human torrent" rushed into Illinois.[2] The pioneers came from all points east, each of them with bright hope for the future. The first settlers were typically adventurers—barely civilized loners who preferred the fringes of civilization as well as of society. They were followed by farmers, who improved the land as quickly as possible and began as best they could to recreate the comforts of the homes they had left behind. Other types of settlers also came—fortune seekers, speculators, and traders. Often of higher social position than the rest, they were country cousins of the robber barons, entrepreneurs who speculated in land and business, and found the chase as compelling as the quarry.[3]

Christopher William Johnson, an energetic, ambitious combin-

ation of farmer and speculator, left his native Indiana for Illinois during the financial crisis of the late 1830s. A young family man, Johnson looked to the west for a more promising future, and found himself drawn to west central Illinois. By 1837 he was apparently living in Carthage,[4] a raw new town which had been laid out only four years earlier.[5] Even though it was the county seat, Carthage was still a rude, primitive place with a plain log cabin serving as the Hancock County courthouse.[6]

Two years later another young man chose Hancock County as the place where he would make his future. His name was Joseph Smith, and with him he brought the members of The Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints.[7] At first the Mormons, as they are commonly known, were welcomed by the local population, who felt the newcomers had previously been the victims of religious persecution. Misunderstanding and intolerance, however, soon led to an outpouring of hate and violence with preceived wrongs on both sides. Unfortunately, the pioneer tradition of self-sufficiency and independence had also evolved into the acceptance of "frontier justice," which condoned people's taking matters into their own hands. The situation culminated in the mob murder of Joseph Smith and his brother Hiram in the Carthage jail in 1844. The aftermath of those murders was a time of turmoil and danger aptly described as the "Mormon War," which ended only with the emigration of the Mormon population to Utah.[8]

Christopher Johnson, his wife Nancy, and their small children were apparently among those who experienced the trauma of the Mormon Conflict in Carthage. Johnson's means of livelihood during this time is

uncertain, but there is evidence that he speculated in land, and he may also have been involved in farming, possibly on a parcel of land that he owned several miles east of Carthage near the village of Plymouth.[9]

The Mormon Conflict was a violent and trying time, and men and women needed to be hard in order to survive. When the crisis was finally over some people found that, as after any war, the longed for peace is poor compensation for the headiness of sustained danger and excitement. Many of them were still suffering from a dearth of excitement when, in 1849, gold was discovered in California.

His numerous real estate transactions must have been profitable, because in 1849 Christopher Johnson was able, in spite of the responsibility of his young family, to join the hoard of prospectors who rushed westward to California in search of gold. It is unclear how long he was in California, but his venture was rewarding. Johnson returned to Hancock County via "the horn," the less arduous and more expensive route from California via the tip of South America. With him he brought the profit of his California venture—almost six thousand dollars.[10]

By the time Christopher Johnson arrived home in Hancock County, pioneer days in Illinois were almost at an end. The rough look of the frontier was giving way, and frame houses were becoming as common as log cabins.[11] People still dressed plainly, the women in homemade linsey, and the men in jeans. Although most people still did not wear underclothes, they wore wool stockings winter and summer.[12] Manufactured goods were not yet available in any significant amount, but

the more luxurious goods from the east were greatly in demand when they were available.

People did talk politics, and one of the most hotly debated issues of the day was that of the liquor traffic. During the early pioneer days whiskey was often the only safe drink, and it was commonly used for everything from curing snakebite to sealing business deals.[13] A nationwide temperance movement during the 1850s saw more evil than good in the spirit, and labored militantly for its elimination. As could be expected, conflicts between the pro-whiskey and anti-whiskey factions often ended in violence. In 1854 there was an attempt in Plymouth to restrict the sale of liquor which brought such a violent response from workers on the Northern Cross Railroad that it is known as the "whiskey riot."[14]

If that were not enough to estrange brother from brother and mother from son, the slavery question, which had seethed in the western territory like a slumbering volcano since before 1820, was again threatening to erupt. By 1837 the abolition fervor was spreading rapidly through northern Illinois.[15] The radicalism of the northern abolitionists was matched by the southern fire-eaters who had settled the lower part of the state. In the central region the issue was volatile, and the battle lines were drawn that would be defended during the early 1860s. There were people in Hancock County quick to take a stand on both sides. The abolitionists were rightous and adamant, but they were probably a minority.[16]

It was not only politics that made life in Illinois difficult in the 1850s. Although the early pioneers had been a hearty breed, ague

and fever had brought down many a strong man. Women faced the additional hazards of childbirth, and children "succumbed pitifully to hardships and disease."[17] The second generation pioneers became "connoisseurs" of poor health and medicine who treated almost everything with calomel and whiskey, and still managed to enrich the makers of patent medicines. Romantic fictional characters of the day were often pale and sickly creatures who lived under a pall of death. This gloom and sickness was so pervasive that it inspired one literary master to describe Illinois during this period as "the valley of shadows."[18]

Christopher Johnson is typical of the second generation pioneer, marked by his great pride, restless, adventurous spirit, and faith in himself. The spirit that had convinced the previous generation that it could subdue the terrible wilderness with an ax and a stout heart commanded men like Johnson to impose order on the Illinois country--to subdue it with deed and plat, and to profitably mesh it into the promising future. Land speculation and railroad building were the spoils of the conquest of the frontier, and they would be sources of wealth to a man who was bold--and lucky.

The economy of Illinois had been based upon agriculture from the state's beginning. Farmers had supplied most of their own needs and relied upon merchants for very little. Commerce was rudimentary before the coming of the railroad, but almost everyone realized that the rail system would bring with it a change in the economic base and create new opportunities.[19]

The Illinois legislature had begun planning internal improvements for the benefit of the railroads since 1836. As it finally developed,

the anchor of the rail system was the Illinois Central Railroad, to run from the Illinois and Michigan Canal in the northern part of the state to the Ohio River at Cairo in the south. The Illinois Central would be complemented by two east-west railways: the Southern Cross, which would run from Mt. Carmel to Alton; and the Northern Cross, laid east to west via Quincy and Springfield.[20] When the exact route of the Northern Cross was finally determined, it bypassed Carthage and passed further east, through Plymouth, on its way toward Galesburg.

The Northern Cross was constructed through Plymouth in 1855, and completed from Quincy to Galesburg by January of 1856.[21] The railroad was a symbol of the future, and it brought stimulus to building and commerce wherever it went. In Plymouth the future looked promising. A large new hotel was built to accommodate the travelers that the railroad would bring, and Thomas Gregg, an early Illinois journalist and historian, started the town's first newspaper.[22] The village of perhaps three hundred persons soon had five churches and four mail deliveries a day. The post office even started staying open on Sundays.[23] It was, then, with some good reason that Christopher Johnson chose to speculate in the village of Plymouth.

Johnson's first speculative venture was in real estate. In 1854 he joined in partnership with two early settlers of the Plymouth community to form Bell, Rook, and Johnson's addition to the original town. Land speculation, especially in fertile tracts, mill seats, and town sites, was the pursuit of the day for men of means, and Johnson's California gold enabled him to play that heady game. Bell, Rook, and Johnson's addition added forty acres to the original fifty in the

plat of 1836, and it was the largest and most successful of the additions to the town that would be made.[24]

Not all of Christopher Johnson's six thousand dollars was spent in land speculation, for the railroad was at least equally compelling to a would-be entrepreneur. In about 1854 Johnson opened a store in the Plymouth business district which sold supplies to railroad men; he affiliated himself with a firm of railroad contractors, and also invested in railroad stock. The ventures were all short-lived. When the Northern Cross was reorganized, Johnson lost much of his investment, and his store closed after a year and a half. The association with the railroad contractors also lasted for only a short time. In spite of the bright promise of the railroad for the future, Christopher Johnson's California gold was soon gone, and none of his subsequent ventures would restore it.[25]

Johnson was only one of many who could not resist the lure of a business venture. A farmer with nine children to support, Jacob Huff went into business with his son-in-law John Hendrickson, about 1850.[26] People found it difficult to live without bread, and a mill nearly always proved to be a profitable business. Hendrickson, who was married to Huff's daughter Margaret, opened a mill on the most promising water source near Plymouth, the LaMoine River, known locally as Crooked Creek. Hendrickson, who was only a few years younger than his wife's father, also became a partner in a mercantile business.[27] He and Margaret had parented at least three children, but the first year of life was difficult to survive during the 1850s, which were still primitive in many ways. Margaret and John's infant son Acial died in 1854 at the age of

two months.[28] In December of 1856 John Hendrickson, at the age of forty-two, also died, and Margaret was left a widow. She probably had step-children to care for as well as her own infant son James, and she was about six months pregnant.[29] John Hendrickson's business interests were extensive, but not especially profitable. When his estate was settled, the debits exceeded the credits by almost seven hundred dollars.[30] Then, on the twenty-second of March, Margaret Hendrickson gave birth to a daughter whom she named Belzora.[31]

Although he owned a number of parcels of land in Plymouth either individually or in partnership, Christopher Johnson purchased two adjoining lots in a favorable location on Plymouth's East Main Street in August of 1858. He paid $120 for the land and borrowed an additional $315 to build a house.[32] On 2 December 1858, Christopher Johnson and Margaret Hendrickson were married.[33] Both of the newlyweds had known hardship and sorrow, and both had experienced the elation of hope for the future and the heartbreak of seeing their hopes dashed. They were both second generation Illinois pioneers with great pride in their independence, and in their ability to endure and to survive hardship. Both possessed a deep-seated faith in their own ability to triumph over their environment and the cruelities of fate.

Margaret was thirty years old, and had been married twice before. She brought two small children to her marriage: James, age two; and Belzora, less than a year old. Christopher Johnson, who had also been married twice before, was about forty-five. His oldest son James was probably no longer living in the family home by this time, and only Mary, age twenty-one, and John, age fifteen, lived with him in the large

house on East Main Street.[34] The newly married couple's first sorrow came very quickly. In February of 1858 baby Belzora died, a month before her second birthday.[35] The sternness of the time allowed little quarter for indulgence in grief or joy. Margaret was already pregnant with her next child.

During the first autumn of their marriage, Christopher and Margaret Johnson's first child was born in the big frame house. Their baby daughter arrived early on the morning of 26 September 1859, and they named her Sarah Adeline.[36]

Christopher Johnson's financial situation continued to deteriorate after 1859, and he mortgaged the house on East Main Street for $370.[37] When the note came due in December he was unable to pay, and on 11 May 1861 the house was sold at auction at the west door of the courthouse in Carthage by the Master in Chancery for $410.[38]

The Johnson family moved to a farm a few miles west of Plymouth. It is indicative of their financial situation that at a time when the log cabins of pioneer times were being replaced by frame houses, the Johnsons moved from a large frame home into a log cabin. They called their new home Mt. Vernon farm because it was located near Mt. Vernon school, a small, simple structure also called Frog Pond School, where the Johnson children would receive their education.[39]

At Mt. Vernon farm the Johnsons became sheep farmers.[40] Adelaide Johnson's recollections of that farm and the life the family lived there were vivid and detailed; and although it was a hard life, she remembered it fondly. "It is my happy fortune," she wrote, "to have been . . . reared . . . in the country, there nurtured upon all that belongs to

genuine country life."[41] The farm comprised about one hundred eighty acres, approximately half of which were tilled, mostly in wheat and Indian corn. There were a few horses and cattle, and always a milk cow.[42] When she was old enough, Johnson helped with the milking and butter making,[43] pouring the milk into gray earthen crocks and cooling it with water carried from the well across the yard. As the day's milk was put to chill, that which had been put into the crocks the day before was skimmed, the cream then churned into butter.[45] Churning was work for children, and Johnson later wrote that she often stood on the porch of the cabin early in the morning with the old dash churn, thinking the butter would never "come."[44]

The main business of the farm was sheep farming, and Johnson helped care for the baby lambs born in cold weather when her father brought them into the warm house.[46] She later recorded the long process by which those lambs finally provided clothing for the family. She wrote of the squeak of the shears and the baaing of the sheep as Christopher Johnson sheared the mature sheep. The wool was washed at the brook, spread upon the grass to dry, and "picked" to prepare it for carding.[47] After being carded into fluffy rolls, it was spun into yarn, then woven into cloth or knitted into warm clothing. As she grew older, Johnson helped with the spinning and weaving, making flannel for the dresses and jeans in which the family dressed.[48] She became especially proficient at sewing, a skill which she had mastered by the age of ten, and which would serve her throughout her life.[49]

There were other animals to tend at Mt. Vernon farm. Besides dogs and cats, there was a "little zoo of fowls" which included chickens,

turkeys, geese, ducks, guineas, and peacocks. All had to be fed each day, and the eggs all gathered. In summer a large vegetable garden had to be tended, for food enough to last through the winter months had to be preserved. Vegetables from the garden and fruit from the grove were prepared and packed into tin cans, as glass jars were not yet in use, then sealed with wax. Johnson recalled "putting up" one hundred fifty cans of cherries alone one year. Other foods were pickled or dried, the children helping with the food preservation as they did with the gardening and field planting.[50]

Johnson romanticized both her parents, and cryptically described her father as "practically mystical," and her mother as "mystically practical."[51] She claimed a special bond with her father, whom she remembered as very grand--tall, slim, and "wonderful" in appearance. "He was a son of the soil," she wrote, "who wrote no poetry or nature works, but he was a poet who lived poetry both in nature and in nature's source." Revealing her family's political leanings, she continued, "He looked and was in every essential of his character like Abraham Lincoln. Among the most vivid pictures of my life are his great, tall, gaunt frame pausing to revere a glorious sunrise or sunset, lifting his head to follow the flight of an eagle--rare in our part--or gaze after some special bird not before observed . . . ."[52]

Of Margaret Johnson she wrote, "Mother was an artist. Her children and her flowers were her materials and how she did work at her art! Even with the eternal round of the monotonous grind of preparing vegetables, cooking, dishwashing three times a day . . . I see her kneading, kneading that hunk of dough that had risen in the bread pan

by the warm stove during the night." Margaret labored "morning, noon, and night," sustained by the consciousness of her own duty and "her dreams of relief in heaven and a better condition here in life for her children. Her ideas and principles held steadfast throughout her life, and nothing could swerve Mother from what she thought right."[53]

In spite of her many labors and cares, Margaret Johnson found time to tend the flowers and shrubs that her daughter called "materials of her art," and they responded to her touch. "It was a common saying," her daughter wrote, "that anything will grow for Mrs. Johnson." Many years later Adelaide Johnson could still name the flowers in her mother's dazzling garden. There were petunias, four o'clocks, touch-me-nots, asters, dahlias, chrysanthemums, as well as shrubs like lilacs and bridal wreath, and a yellow rose bush by the kitchen door near a crab apple tree. A bright orange trumpet vine grew unfettered, covering the chimney of the cabin. Turtle doves cooed in the grove, and just beyond the great oak tree which shaded the wood pile stood the hugh grinding stone where Christopher Johnson sharpened his ax and scythe.[54]

Religion was an important part of the Johnson family life, and on Sundays the children, dressed in their "Sunday best" and admonished to keep still and not muss their clothes, were driven to Plymouth to church. However crowded the wagon might be, any foot traveler they met was sure of a lift.[55]

"Though unable to bequest to their children any material fortune," Johnson wrote of her parents [they] "yet made them legatees of the rarest and priceless inheritance . . . aspiration and will to win

without ever lowering the standard borne at the highest reach." It was the creed of the pioneer passed to yet another generation. "I hold /my parents/ equal to any in all things pertaining to nobleness of life, distinction of character and grasp of things fundamental, aspirational and abiding . . . /they/ would have gone upon the cross rather than swerve from integrity, while yet ramaining plastic to growth . . . ."[56]

The Johnson family continued to grow and change at Mt. Vernon farm. In 1861 another daughter, Mary Elizabeth, was born, and Christopher Johnson's oldest daughter Mary Ann was married.[57] The family failed to escape the trauma of the Civil War that began tearing the country apart in that dark year, and Christopher's older son James became a member of the Union Army,[58] not an uncontroversial thing to do, as Hancock County had never stood united behind President Lincoln. In the presidential election of 1860 they had cast more votes for Stephen A. Douglas than for Lincoln (3,063 to 2,674), and at the end of four years of war they had still not been won over. In 1864 General George B. McClellan polled 2,929 votes in Hancock County to Lincoln's 2,654.[59] There is little question, however, where Christopher and Margaret Johnson stood. Their last child was born during the dark winter of 1862, and they named him Charles Lincoln.[60]

Newton Bateman, who would later sit for Adelaide Johnson's first portrait bust, was Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Illinois in 1860, and he argued to the state legislature that new buildings were absolutely necessary to replace the "rickety old rookeries" then in use as schoolhouses.[61] Surprising, during those hard-pressed

war years, the legislature agreed. By the time Adelaide Johnson started to school about 1865, Mt. Vernon school had been discontinued and moved from the site.[62] A new school was built on the Plymouth-Denver road in 1866, less than a mile east of the Johnson farm. Officially it was School District #197, known as Cain School, but local residents called it "Monkey Hill." Someone suggested the new school be called "Bunker Hill," and a local wit responded, "You had better call it 'Monkey Hill,'" and so it was.[63]

Even the new school was a plain affair, and the teacher, who was paid less than thirty dollars a month, usually had nearly forty "scholars," as students were called, of varying age and ability.[64] While it might be argued that only a poor education could be got in such a school, Johnson later published articles, taught classes in art and philosophy, and was acclaimed as a brilliant conversationalist as well as a cultured and polished public speaker.[65] Although she received art training in both St. Louis and Europe, there is no record of her having received any academic education other than at "Monkey Hill" school.

Margaret and Christopher Johnson soon became aware that their daughter "Addie" was not an ordinary child. Adept with her hands, she made recognizable likenesses of family members in the sand while still quite young, and on cold winter mornings she scratched drawings in the frost on the cabin's glass windowpanes.[66] An unsubstantiated story tells of an Indian woman, the wife of a neighboring farmer, who took young Johnson to the creek and taught her to dig the smooth, reddish clay from the bank and mold it into forms.

Christopher Johnson continued to buy and sell property. Lots in Bell, Rock, and Johnson's addition to Plymouth continued to sell, and although the price was not high, each sale represented a modest profit.[67] He also succeeded in selling an entire block to the Plymouth school authorities for the construction of a new school.[68] In this way he was able to add to the size of his farm, and by 1870 the financial situation of the Johnson family had improved. The farm had been enlarged to 200 acres and was prospering. Christopher Johnson occasionally hired a farm hand to help with the labor, for he was nearing sixty, and had only Margaret's fourteen year old son James to help. In addition to the small animals and fowls, the farm now had half a dozen horses, a pair of mules, five beef cattle, and almost thirty sheep. The barn was full of wheat, oats, Indian corn, and hay; and the orchard yielded enough fruit that the excess could be sold. With two cows and enough children to do the churning, the sale of butter also added to the family income.[69]

As Mt. Vernon farm flourished under their nurture, so did the children of Margaret and Christopher Johnson. The youngest three, their mutual children, seemed especially favored. Charles showed academic promise, and surprised even his teachers by defeating a number of older children in a spelling bee. Both he and Elizabeth, whom her parents called "Lizzie," displayed musical talent.[70] Most talented of all was "Addie," who was unquestionably serious about her art. The Johnson children were all evidently encouraged by their parents to pursue their individual talents; and when she had completed the curriculum at "Monkey Hill" school, arrangements were made for young Addie

to formally study art, a luxury her parents could now afford.[71] Johnson's older half-brother John was living in St. Louis with his wife and children, and arrangements were made for her to board with them while she attended art school.

Johnson left Plymouth on her first train ride on the third of September in 1875. Under five feet tall and weighing less than a hundred pounds, she looked even younger than she was. It was just three weeks before her sixteenth birthday, and Sarah Adeline Johnson had set out to begin her life's work.[72]

NOTES

[1]Theodore Calvin Pease, The Story of Illinois (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 100.

[2]Ibid., p. 83.

[3]Ibid., p. 84.

[4]Hancock County, Illinois, Land Records vol. C, p. 198.

[5]Charles J. Scofield, History of Hancock County vol. II (Chicago: Munsell Pub., 1921), p. 685.

[6]Ibid., p. 692.

[7]K. W. Godfrey, "Causes of Mormon Non-Mormon Conflict in Hancock County, Illinois" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1967).

[8]E. H. Young, A History of Round Prairie and Plymouth 1831-1875 (Chicago: Geo. J. Titus, 1876), pp. 77-78.

[9]Hancock County, Illinois, Land Records, vol. D, p. 184; vol. C, p. 190 & p. 198; vol. O, p. 561.

[10]Ann Lyman Henderson, "Adelaide Johnson: Issues of Professionalism for a Woman Artist" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1981), p. 16.

[11]Charles Beneulyn Johnson, Illinois In the Fifties (Champaign, Ill.: Flanigan-Pearson, 1918), p. 11.

[12]Ibid., pp. 23-24.

[13]Pease, p. 86 and p. 100.

[14]John E. Hallwas, Western Illinois Heritage (Macomb, Ill.: Illinois Heritage Press, 1983), p. 87.

[15]Pease, pp. 147-49.

[16]Scofield, p. 1860.

[17]Pease, p. 88.

[18]Pease, pp. 99-100; Francis Grierson, The Valley of Shadows (New York: John Lane, 1913.

[19]Pease, p. 125.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Board of Supervisors, Hancock County, Illinois, History of Hancock County, Illinois (Carthage, Illinois: Journal Printing Co., 1968), p. 96; Martha Davey, "A History of Plymouth" (Graduation Theme, Plymouth High School, 1913).

[22]Young, p. 93; John E. Hallwas, Thomas Gregg (Macomb, Ill.: Western Illinois Monograph Series, Nbr. 2, 1983), p. 63.

[23]Plymouth Locomotive, 15 Aug. 1857, p. 20.

[24]Young, p. 111.

[25]Henderson, p. 16; Young, p. 101.

[26]U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Population, Hancock County, Ill., p. 39; Hancock County, Illinois, Probate Records, John Hendrickson.

[27]U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Population, Hancock County, Ill., p. 39; Young, p. 101; Pease, p. 85; Rosemont Cemetery tombstone.

[28]Rosemont Cemetery tombstone.

[29]U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Population, Hancock County, Ill., p. 146; Minnie Montanye Bates and Geraldine Hemp Mayhugh, McDonough County, Illinois 1850 Federal Census (Owensboro, Ky.: McDowell, 1981), p. 146; Rosemont Cemetery tombstone.

[30]Hancock County, Ill., Probate Records, John Hendrickson.

[31]Rosemont Cemetery tombstone.

[32]Hancock County, Ill., Land Records, #5797; Bonds and Mortgages, vol. 9, p. 323.

[33]Hancock County, Ill., Marriage Index, p. 144.

[34]U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Population, Hancock County, Ill., p. 88.

[35]Rosemont Cemetery tombstone.

[36]U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Population, Hancock County, Ill., p. 88; Adelaide Johnson, Undated note, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[37]Hancock County, Land Records, Bonds and Mortgages, vol. 10, p. 608.

[38]Ibid., vol. 61, p. 149.

[39]Hancock County Historical Society, Historic Sites and Structures of Hancock County, Illinois (Carthage, Ill.: Journal Printing, 1979), p. 347.

[40]John Hallwas, "Famous Sculptor from Plymouth," Macomb Journal, 7 Nov. 1982, Sect. 1, p. 5.

[41]Adelaide Johnson, "John Burroughs," p. 2, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[42]U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Population, Hancock County, Ill., p. 23.

[43]"Women Who Count," Clipping, no attribution, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[44]Adelaide Johnson, "Mother," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Adelaide Johnson, "John Burroughs."

[47]Ibid.

[48]Adelaide Johnson, Note, 23 Sept. 1916, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[49]"Women Who Count."

[50]Adelaide Johnson, "John Burroughs;" "Mother."

[51]Adelaide Johnson, "John Burroughs."

[52]Ibid.

[53]Adelaide Johnson, "Mother."

[54]Adelaide Johnson, "John Burroughs."

[55]Adelaide Johnson, Undated note, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[56]Adelaide Johnson, "Mother and Father," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[57]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 16 Sept. 1909; Hancock County, Marriage Index, p. 422.

[58]Young, p. 228.

[59]Scofield, p. 1423.

[60]The Centennial Directory of Knox People, (Galesburg, Ill.: 1 Nov. 1936); U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Population, Hancock County, Ill., p. 27.

[61]Scofield, p. 822.

[62]Hancock County Historical Society, p. 347.

[63]Ibid., p. 349.

[64]Scofield, pp. 820-22.

[65]Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More (New York: European Pub., 1898), p. 434; James Jackson to Shirley Burton, 12 Jul. 1984.

[66]Meta Grace Keebler, interview at Washington D.C., 16 Apt. 1984.

[67]Hancock County, Illinois, Land Records, vol. 72, p. 504 & p. 557; vol. 80, p. 162; vol. 89, p. 224.

[68]Hancock County Historical Society, p. 360.

[69]U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Agriculture, Hancock County, Ill., p. 9.

[70]Adelaide Johnson, "Charles Lincoln Johnson: Standard Bearer for the New Time," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[71]John Hallwas, "Famous Sculptor from Plymouth."

[72]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 1 Apt. /1916?/ and 4 Sept. 1895; Sicherman, Barbara et. al., Notable American Women: The Modern Period (Cambridge, Mass.: Belkhap Press, 1980), p. 380.

CHAPTER III

ARTISTIC TRAINING

In the 1870s, St. Louis offered a somewhat favorable climate to an aspiring artist. The St. Louis Academy of Science, the Missouri Historical Society, and the St. Louis Library all owned art collections which included statuary as well as paintings and engravings; and artistic encouragement and camaraderie were provided by three established clubs for amateur artists.[1]

Artistic instruction was offered by two schools: the St. Louis School and Museum of Fine Arts, and the St. Louis School of Design, both relatively new schools. The St. Louis School of Fine Arts was associated with the art department of Washington University. Courses were offered in drawing, modeling, artistic anatomy, perspective, and decorative design. Students drew from both draped and nude models, an opportunity not then always available to art students in the U.S. According to Lorado Taft, the well-known sculptor and art critic, "Puritan horror of the flesh" kept "life" classes at a minimum and drove many artists to Europe for instruction. In the interest of propriety, the St. Louis School of Fine Arts assured prospective women students they would not be required to attend classes with men.[2]

The St. Louis School of Design was founded by Mary Foote Henderson, a civic leader, president of the Missouri State Suffrage Association, and the wife of a civil war general. A patron of the arts, Henderson had studied in Paris as well as at the St. Louis School of Art.[3]

With financial assistance from various wealthy people of St. Louis, Henderson established the St. Louis School of Design as a place where poor women could learn an employable skill. According to the all female Board of Managers, the goal of the school was to "teach the industrial arts, enable women to earn their own livelihood, and promote a more general appreciation of art." Courses were given in oil painting, drawing, porcelain painting, woodcarving, watercolor painting, modeling, decoration of wax candles, photography, and art needlework.[4]

The difference between the two schools is significant. The St. Louis School of Fine Arts was grounded in the academic world and was intended to train professional artists. Most professional artists at this time were male, and so were most of the students at the school. The St. Louis School of Design was primarily intended to train decorative artists, people who would produce handpainted china, art needlework, and other kinds of decorative goods. Decorative artists were employed in a number of different capacities by manufacturers of various items, but they commanded little of the respect and admiration bestowed upon the "professional" artist, who produced paintings, sculpture, and other pieces that were considered works of art. Most decorative artists were female, and so were most of the students at the St. Louis School of Design.[5]

Adelaide Johnson was one of six students attending the St. Louis School of Design when it opened in January of 1877, over a year after she first arrived in St. Louis. As a serious student of art, Johnson might have been expected to choose the School of Fine Arts for her study. Her reasons for not doing so are unclear, but it seems apparent

that she delayed her studies until the opening of the School of Design. It is possible that her family lacked the money to enroll her in the Fine Arts School or that they objected to the nude models that were used there. Johnson may have chosen the School of Design because she was more sure of securing admission or because she felt more comfortable with students of her own sex and social position. She might have seen greater opportunity in the newer school. Mary Henderson worked hard for the school. She secured commissions for artwork, founded a Woman's Exchange to sell the student's work, and personally funded fifty scholarships. After a year, enrollment had increased to three hundred students, most of them women who planned to be professional artists.[6]

Adelaide Johnson was an outstanding student. She excelled in a drawing class instructed by Roy Robertson in which students sketched a simple object, then developed their sketches into designs. Her forte, however, was woodcarving. It was the most popular and viable department at the school, and by the end of 1878 more than three hundred students had received woodcarving instruction there. In June of 1878 the school's exhibition, which featured woodcarving, received rave reviews from the St. Louis press. Johnson was the best student of woodcarving instructor J. Albert Pries, himself hailed as a genius by the newspapers. At the Missouri State Exposition of 1877 both Pries and Johnson received first prizes in woodcarving. Johnson also received a medal for excellence in execution.[7]

The following year, at age nineteen, Johnson exhibited a woodcarving which was a representation of Sir Edwin Lanseer's painting The Stag at Bay. Measuring two and one-half feet by one and a half feet,

the carving depicted a stag being pursued by two hounds. Johnson is said to have completed the carving in twenty days, and it was highly praised in the St. Louis Daily Times.[8]

During the two and one-half years that Johnson studied at the St. Louis School of Design she devoted most of her time to painting and woodcarving, and appears to have done little or no work in sculpture. Little is known about Johnson's political beliefs at this time, but she was undoubtedly influenced by Mary Henderson's ideas of woman suffrage and financial independence.[9]

Life in St. Louis was very different from that at Mt. Vernon farm. Johnson boarded with her half-brother John and his wife Sadie. Both in their early thirties, they were the parents of two small sons.[10] The family seemed to suffer chronically from want of money, and the sum paid by Christopher Johnson for his daughter's board was welcomed. Later Adelaide's youngest brother Charles would also come to St. Louis. John Johnson borrowed a considerable amount of money from his father, and it is possible that he repaid some of the money by boarding his half-sister and brother.[11]

Although her brother John was evidently difficult to get along with, Adelaide formed a lasting friendship with her sister-in-law Sadie. The older woman admired Adelaide's confidence and ability to deal with the challenges of life. Sadie was unsure of her own abilities, and failed to find happiness as John's wife. Occupied with his own troubles, John Johnson drank too much and showed little warmth for his family.[12]

Adelaide blossomed in St. Louis. In 1878 she changed her name

from Adaline to Adalaide, a more artistic and dignified name suitable for an artist who was becoming more confident.[13] Johnson continued to do well in her studies, particularly in woodcarving. Her wood boxes, bookracks, and other decorative pieces were greatly admired, and her patrons sometimes sent her encouraging notes of praise.[14]

Her studies, however, did not occupy all of Johnson's time or attention. In St. Louis she fell in love, first with an unemployed attorney named Vines Welles. Later, much to his distress, she asked him to stop writing and calling, probably because she had fallen in love with someone else, a young man named Henry Whitney who was an erstwhile businessman and government worker. He confessed when they met that he had no job and no prospects.[15]

Christopher Johnson may have suspected such things when he wrote his daughter, attempting to retain his influence over her:

> I cannot help thinking that the all-seeing eye has marked you out for something great in his kingdom. Believe and read often the Sermon on the Mount and receive it and walk by it and now I commend you to God and this word of his grace which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified. Please keep this letter read it often and meet us in heaven.[16]

Johnson must have been touched by this impassioned letter from her aging father to whom she felt a special bond. What use she made of his advice is unknown, but as he commanded, she kept his letter.

In 1879 Johnson finished her studies at the St. Louis School of Design and moved to Chicago.[17] Her brother Charles had left St. Louis the previous year to attend Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, and there was little in St. Louis to hold her except Henry Whitney. Before she left, Johnson and Whitney became secretly engaged.[18]

In Chicago Johnson might have been expected to begin teaching or to secure employment in a commercial art firm. Instead, she opened a decorative arts studio in partnership with another artist, Ida Morgan. The business opened in October of 1880. Morgan had taught candle decoration in St. Louis, studied porcelain painting in Europe, and attended the Royal School of Art Needlework at South Kensington in England. Morgan taught embroidery in the new business, Johnson taught woodcarving, and they both gave painting lessons.[19]

It is difficult to determine how successful the business of "Misses Morgan and Johnson, Decorative Artists" was. There is evidence that Johnson, who also gave lessons at the Chicago Decorative Arts Association, was forced to supplement her income by doing sewing. She had been an expert seamstress since her youth, and although reluctant to support herself in this manner, the skill was one that she was able to fall back upon again and again during difficult financial times.[20]

At about this time Johnson's sister Elizabeth came to Chicago, and the two sisters apparently lived together. Elizabeth's vocal talent showed promise, and she hoped for a singing career. The Johnson women combined their talents at least once. They presented an "evening of readings" during which Adelaide gave readings including "A Brakeman Goes to Church" and "How 'Ruby' Played." Elizabeth sang "Ring the Bell Softly" and "Beautiful Isle of the Sea."[21]

During the spring Christopher Johnson's health became a matter of serious concern. Adelaide, who had always been close to her father, was distraught when she received word that his life was imperiled. Cancelling an engagement with a friend, she wrote a note which revealed her

distress. "Received a telegram in the night," she wrote. "My Father is dying. Am almost distracted. Do not know where I can go on account of the strain."[22] Christopher Johnson did not die. His health improved, although he did not make a complete recovery. He was shaken enough by the incident, however, to write his will.[23] The next family crisis would not be a result of his health, but of his daughter Adelaide's.

Johnson's fall down the elevator shaft on 17 January 1882 was a major turning point in her life. The accident itself was an almost freak occurance. Johnson, by her own account, used the elevator every day and was familiar with both the building and the working of the elevator. It is possible that if she had been less familiar she would have been more attentive and thereby escaped the fall. Upon entering the Central Music Hall one did not immediately see the elevator, but instead had to turn a short distance inside the door toward the elevator, which was located to the side. The elevator, therefore, was in direct view for only a few steps before it was reached, and a person hurrying toward it would not have long to notice something out of the ordinary. The metal grate (which normally covered the opening to the shaft when the cage was not on the ground floor) provided a sense of security that there had been no previous reason to question. It is unclear whether the error was mechanical or human. The unfortunate result, however, was a serious injury which Johnson later tried to both ignore and deny, but which apparently affected her until the end of her life.[24]

Attorneys for the Central Music Hall tried to persuade Johnson to settle for small amounts of money, but she refused. The final settlement was $15,000, enough to enable her to fulfill her dream of studying

in Europe even after meeting the expenses of a long recuperation.[25] The settlement was not unduly large; Johnson's injuries were both painful and to some extent permanent. After her fractured hip had healed, her leg was left three and one-half inches shorter than the other. Johnson's physician sent her to have a shoe with a built-up sole made to enable her to walk normally. Reluctantly, Johnson went to the shop and ordered the shoe. When it was ready she returned to get it, but was so revolted by "the sight of the hideous thing" that she paid for it and left the store without taking it with her. She was determined to solve the problem in another way.[26]

Henry Whitney maintained his devotion to Johnson, and by the end of June she was apparently sufficiently recovered to consider taking a trip with him. Her allusion to this in a letter to her parents brought a swift reply from Christopher Johnson, who was not too ill to give his daughter moral instruction:

> Our Dear Addie.
>
> Your welcome letter . . . received this morning. You say Mr. Whitney is to be in Chicago on . . . his way East and a hint that you might go with him. We have no objections to that provided you were first married. Otherwise we think it indiscreet and would say no, emphatically. From all I have heard I think Mr. Whitney a Gentleman, and if he suited you would have no other objection.[27]

Christopher Johnson's concern for his older daughter did not diminish that which he had for the younger one:

> Lizzie, write soon and answer these questions . . . what you are doing in music and other things . . . .[28]

After commenting on other family matters, the concerned father concluded the letter; then he added a postscript:

> If you go off, what will Lizzie do, Addie?[29]

No evidence suggests whether or not Johnson took her father's advice or whether she went to New York with Whitney. They did not, however, marry.

Johnson was unable to continue her work at the decorative arts firm after her injury, and it was closed. Her financial circumstances were understandably difficult until she received the settlement, although she received some help when a benefit concert was held in her behalf in 1882. The concert was given in the Central Music Hall, the same building where her accident had occured.[30]

By October of 1882 Johnson's parents had returned to Plymouth from Galesburg, where they had evidently gone to obtain medical treatment for Christopher Johnson. He was not recovered from his illness.

> My Dear Daughter Sarah Adaline
>
> Your letter came, but I was quite unwell and did not answer till now. Please excuse me. I am some better now I think it is hope against hope as to a full recovery and your ma is not better than when you left home. I am not able to do anything <u>even to milk</u>.
>
> . . . I will state my health specifically to you. Present it to your doctor and if he charges you I will make all right with you. Maybe he can suggest something that will cure me. I have no attendant doctor now. I take some quieting medicine at night. I can walk about, have a good appetite and sound liver and lungs, only short breathing if I exercise much, especially after eating or setting or sleeping. I bloat in my feet and legs and sometimes in my chest. My heart beats hard at times and will not bear pressure especially at nightfall. <u>Smothering</u>.
>
> Enough of this. Pray for us . . . .[31]

He continued in a familiar vein that may give insight into Johnson's great self confidence:

> Our Beloved, in many respects we are proud of you and God grant that you may be an honor to him. I cannot help thinking that the all-seeing eye has marked you out for something great in his Kingdom . . . .

> Post us as to your trial, and we will inform you as to ourselves . . . Many things are changing. Be you also ready. Be courageous—watch and pray.
>
> Pa.
>
> Love every one. Bros. and Sisters. Love hides a multitude of faults.[32]

A month later Christopher Johnson was dead, and he was buried in the Plymouth cemetery near the graves of John Hendrickson and his two young children.

Although of limited means, Christopher Johnson had nevertheless accumulated a modest estate that enabled him to give financial assistance to his children when they needed it. Most of them had taken advantage of their father's financial help, which was in the form of loans rather than outright gifts. The stern patriarch of the family had carefully kept an account book in which he recorded amounts loaned to his children. His will provided some small bequests, the organ to Elizabeth, his sword to John. Then, in his just and inexorable way, he called the accounts of his children due:

> . . . and my book account between myself and my children at this time of settlement is to be the guide in settlement, and each one to have their proportion of the estate after deducting what they have received according to my book. And I further state and enjoin that this my will, shall be faithfully executed, and if any heir male or female shall undertake to alter or break this testament, it shall be sufficient cause to disinherit them of all I give them down to the smallest sum that the law will allow them.[33]

By June of 1883 Johnson had received her settlement from the Central Music Hall and left for Europe. It was the first of more than thirty voyages across the ocean that she would make.[34] Johnson traveled with the Bischoff family from South Carolina—a mother, son, and daughter. The group traveled throughout England and Scotland

during the summer, and then settled in Dresden in the fall where Johnson and Essie, the daughter, studied painting.[35]

Henry Whitney and Johnson continued to correspond, but Johnson was occupied with her study, and Whitney soon realized that she wished to end their engagement. He apparently wrote her asking her to return to the United States. Johnson replied that she would not be a "living sacrifice." Her response is significant, for it is the first evidence of her determination not to sacrifice her art for a personal relationship. Their engagement dissolved, Whitney and Johnson continued to correspond, and he later described her as the "purest and wisest woman in the world."[36]

Early in 1884 Johnson left the Bischoff family and traveled to Rome with an Englishwoman she had met in Dresden.[37] In Rome Johnson began to study Italian and painting, and for a year she searched for a suitable teacher of sculpture. Although American sculptors had flocked to Italy for study during the first half of the nineteenth century, during the last half they went more to Paris than to Rome. The earlier group, influenced by the grandeur of antiquity, became neoclassicist as well as naturalist, but their work was sometimes criticized as not reflecting their American culture. Some thought American sculpture improved as a result of the later French influence.[38] Although Paris became the new center of study for modern sculpture, Rome still had the prestige of tradition, and Johnson found the master under whom she wished to study there in 1885.[39]

By Johnson's own account, she had visited studio after studio in Rome, looking for the one she had visualized in her mind. Finally

she passed one day through an archway leading into a large studio where she saw a great sculpture. She realized at once that the creator of that statue was the master for whom she was seeking. The piece was The Genius of Franklin, a figure which represented the sculptor Guilio Monteverde's idea of Benjamin Franklin's discovery of electricity. Johnson was told that the great Monteverde took no pupils and that her idea of becoming his student was absurd. Displaying her stubborn determination, however, she secured a letter of introduction and waited for weeks for him to receive her.[40] Johnson felt Monteverde was as influential in Italy as Rodin was in France. An honorary Roman Senator, he had been awarded the Legion of Honor. Although he had done some allegorical works, Monteverde was primarily noted for his historical portraits, of which The Genius of Franklin, Edward Jenner Innoculating His Infant Son with Smallpox Vaccine, and Monument to Victor Emmanuel were the most famous.[41]

Wearing a white artist's robe and a blue velvet cap, Monteverde received Johnson cordially. Somehow this earnest, intelligent woman won his sympathy and he accepted her as his student. In her excitement she forgot to ask about the cost of his instruction. When she later broached the subject, he refused payment, insulted that she would think a price could be put on his services. Her dream come true, Johnson would study in Monteverd's studio off and on for eleven years. She later claimed to be his only student, but other sculptors may also have studied with him, possibly at an earlier time.[42] During a year when Monteverde was out of the capital, Johnson studied with another respected sculptor, Fabi Altini, with whom she continued to correspond

after her return to the U.S.[43]

In Rome Johnson quickly became a member of the community of artists. She met Moses Ezekiel, Chauncey Ives, William Storey, and Franklin Simmons. She was welcomed into the community of women sculptors that Henry James called the "White Marmorean Flock." Living in a congenial atmosphere, the women shared a social life that included dinner parties, amateur theatricals, balls, and musicals. A part of their weekly activities included visits from prospective patrons who read about the studios of the Flock in guidebooks that were published in Rome. These guidebooks gave the addresses of individual sculptors and painters, describing the artists and their current projects. Tourists on their "Grand Tour" would often stop in the studios and order a piece then on display or have their portrait modeled. The many travel books that were written during the period described the artistic colony as well as the lifestyle, ideas, and opinions of the artists. Nathaniel Hawthorne, who observed that the artists "keep each other warm by the presence of so many of them" wrote a novel about the White Marmorean Flock called The Marble Faun. Johnson became close friends with Luella Vaeney, a portrait sculptor who worked in a different style.[44]

Although Johnson spent a great deal of time in Rome, she often returned to the States, as she did late in 1885. One of the first things she did upon her arrival was to visit the physician who had treated her after her fall down the elevator shaft. He greeted her saying, "Hello, little girl, you had to come to it, didn't you?" "Come to what?" she replied, not misunderstanding. "To the high-soled shoe." According to Johnson, by the time she returned to Chicago her legs

were again the same length. This had been achieved, she claimed, by the practices advocated by Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science, and Johnson's own determination. She believed that she could accomplish almost anything by the force of her will, even, as she wrote, "rearranging her anatomy." But unlike a Christian Scientist, she had also sought medical advice. She asked a physician what caused the injured leg to be shorter than the other, and he told her it was due to the contraction of the fasciculus, slender bundles of anatomical fibers. She was encouraged. "If they can contract, they can expand," she said, and was determined that they would.[45]

Although it is no longer possible to know the exact extent of Johnson's injuries or to what degree she was able to overcome them, it was not compatible with her nature to accept a physical affliction. She made a point of exercise and physical fitness for the remainder of her long life, and did not complain of the injury. One student of Johnson's career, however, has suggested that the sculptor's recovery was less remarkable than she claimed, maintaining that an examination of Johnson's clothing collection at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. contradicts the claim that Johnson was able to return her legs to the same length.[46] Certainly the long, flowing gowns that Johnson preferred to the fashion of her day would be helpful in concealing such a handicap.

Johnson stayed in Chicago for a year, where she began working on portrait busts.[47] An artist's first commission is the most difficult to secure, for experience and reputation are perhaps more important for artists than for any other professional. Johnson's brother Charles, who was a student at Knox College in Galesburg, was able to persuade the

president of the college, Newton Bateman, to sit for her. Bateman, however, did not offer a commission. It was common for young artists to do portraits of prominent individuals without renumeration as a method of establishing themselves in their profession. Hopefully either the sitter or his admirers would eventually pay for the work. Johnson modeled the portrait in clay, the first step in the process of portrait sculpture, but efforts to raise the funds to pay to put the bust into marble did not succeed, and Johnson's first portrait survives only in plaster.[48]

In 1886 Johnson established herself in Washington, D.C., which she called her "city beautiful." In Washington she worked at the annual meeting of the National Woman's Suffrage Association (NWSA), where she met a Chicago suffrage leader, Mary Logan. Logan's husband was a Civil War hero, and Johnson agreed to return to Chicago to model busts of both General and Mrs. Logan. In the fall of 1887 Johnson went to Rome to have the busts put into marble. When she returned to Chicago with the completed busts, Mary Logan claimed that she had not commissioned the busts, but had understood they were Johnson's own "venture." By this time General Logan had died, and although Mary Logan was pleased with the busts, she said she could not afford to pay for them.[49] The busts therefore became Johnson's financial responsibility, a situation that caused her considerable distress.

Johnson's method of producing a portrait bust was similar to that of other members of the Rome artistic community; and it was a long and costly process. First the likeness is modeled in clay. This is the most "artistic" step, and a number of sittings are necessary for the

artist to complete the clay model. It must be kept moist and pliable, and cannot be left alone for a long period of time. Because clay cracks easily, the next step is to make a plaster cast, and this cast is used as a model for the actual carving. If the statue is to be of bronze or other metal, the plaster cast is simply used to make a mold into which the molten metal is poured. Johnson, however, worked only in marble, which must be laboriously carved from a single block. The actually carving was usually done by artisans—workmen who would first rough out the marble, then bring the likeness almost to completion under the supervision of the artist. Often the piece was personally finished by the sculptor, but sometimes they need not touch it at all. Many of the American sculptors were capable carvers, and Johnson, a petite woman sometimes described as "frail," wielded a four-pound mallet all day while finishing a sculpture. She attributed the necessary strength to God. [50]

Although the sculpture could be put into marble in New York, Johnson always insisted on having it done in Italy, where the finest Carrara marble and Italian artisans could be had. Added to the cost of the marble and the wages of the workmen was the studio rental, Johnson's own travel expenses and the cost of shipping. Her distress at Mary Logan's refusing to pay for the busts was understandable as she had incurred considerable expense in producing the busts, money which she probably had to borrow.

Johnson considered sueing Logan, and contacted Mrs. Edward Roby, president of the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic about testifying in a prospective trial. Mrs. Roby replied that she had heard Mrs.

Logan commission the busts and would so testify, but hoped it would not be necessary since she believed Logan was distraught over the loss of her husband and had only forgot. Johnson, who probably did not have a strong case since no contract had been signed, dropped the matter. Mary Logan eventually offered Johnson four hundred dollars for her own portrait.[51] The affair was a valuable lesson in business, and Johnson thereafter attempted to secure signed contracts for her commissions, but she seemed nevertheless plagued with similar misunderstandings throughout her career.

During 1886, Johnson made her first clay model of Susan B. Anthony. Johnson was then living in Washington with Ellen Sheldon, who was recording secretary of the NWSA. The women became close friends, and Johnson was soon doing work for the organization. As a result, Johnson modeled the first bust of Susan B. Anthony ever made.[52] Pleased, Anthony presented Johnson with the first two volumes of The History of Woman's Suffrage when the clay model was completed. The model was well-received when it was put on display at NWSA headquarters. Johnson was disturbed, however, when one of the viewers remarked that Anthony was missing her glasses. Johnson believed that if the bust were properly done the glasses would not be missed.[53]

Johnson put the Anthony bust into marble in Italy in late 1887, bringing it back to the U.S. when she returned to attend a convention of the International Council of Women. Her bad luck continued; when the bust was unpacked it proved to be hopelessly shattered.[54]

By this time it had been decided that the Anthony bust should be displayed at the Columbian Exposition planned for 1892. Even though

the famous male sculptor Lorado Taft had also been commissioned to execute a bust of Anthony for the exposition, Johnson was challenged, and Anthony agreed to sit for Johnson again. The exposition would provide an important forum for Johnson's work, allowing her to exhibit her art with that of the country's best established artists. The recognition and contacts that the exhibition would bring would be valuable to any artist's career, but particularly so to a young artist seeking her first professional recognition.

NOTES

[1]Ann Lyman Henderson, "Adelaide Johnson: Issues of Professionalism for a Woman Artist" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1981), p. 17.

[2]Ibid., p. 59; Lorado Taft, The History of American Sculpture (New York: Macmillan, 1903), p. 5.

[3]Henderson, pp. 17-18.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Henderson, p. 20; National Sculptor Society of New York, Contemporary American Sculpture (San Francisco: National Sculptor Society, 1929), p. 173; "Women Who Count," Clipping, no attribution, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

[8]Henderson, p. 21.

[9]Ibid., pp. 21-22.

[10]Sadie Johnson to Adelaide Johnson, 2 Nov. 1887, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[11]Hancock County, Illinois, Will Records; Adelaide Johnson, "Charles Lincoln Johnson: Standard Bearer for the New Time," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; Charles L. Johnson to Edward Caldwell, 17 Apr. 1941, Archives, Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois.

[12]Sadie Johnson to Adelaide Johnson, 3 Feb. 1888 and 16 Aug. 1888, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[13]Barbara Sicherman et.al., Notable American Women: The Modern Period (Cambridge, Mass.: Belkhap Press, 1980), p. 380.

[14]Correspondence File, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[15]Henderson, pp. 113-14.

[16]Christopher W. Johnson to Adelaide Johnson, n.d., Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[17]"World Noted Genius Visits Plymouth Friends," Tri-County Scribe, 29 Sept. 1925.

[18]Charles L. Johnson to Edward Caldwell, 17 Apr. 1941; Henderson, p. 114.

[19]Henderson, p. 22.

[20]"She Trusts to the Occult." Clipping, no attribution, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[21]Program, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[22]Adelaide Johnson to Ida [Morgan?] 20 Mar. 1881, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[23]Hancock County, Illinois, Will Records.

[24]Adelaide Johnson, "The Story of the Lengthening of My Leg," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[25]Henderson, p. 23.

[26]Adelaide Johnson, "The Story of the Lengthening of My Leg."

[27]Christopher W. Johnson to Adelaide Johnson, 29 Jun. 1881, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Program, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[31]Christopher W. Johnson to Adelaide Johnson, 25 Oct. 1882, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Hancock County, Illinois, Probate Records; Rosemont Cemetery tombstone.

[34]Adelaide Johnson, "Biographical Sketch," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; Clara Erskine Clement, Women in the Fine Arts (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1904), p. 380.

[35]Henderson, p. 23; Albert Ten Eyck Gardner, American Sculpture (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1965), p. 68.

[36]Henderson, p. 115.

[37]Henderson, p. 24; Adelaide Johnson, Undated note, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[38]Taft, p. 9; Wayne Craven, Sculpture in America (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), pp. 268-69 and p. 312; Loring Holmes Dodd, The Golden Age of American Sculpture (Boston: Chapman & Grimes (Mt. Vernon Press, 1936), pp. 11-12.

[39]"World Noted Genius Visits Plymouth Friends;" Henderson, p. 24.

[40]"World Noted Genius Visits Plymouth Friends."

[41]Henderson, p. 25.

[42]"World Noted Genius Visits Plymouth Friends;" Adelaide Johnson, "Monteverde," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; Gardner, p. 68; Sichman, p. 380.

[43]John Hallwas, "Famous Sculptor From Plymouth," Macomb Journal 7 Nov. 1982; National Sculptor Society, p. 173; Adelaide Johnson, Undated note, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[44]Henderson, pp. 27-28 and 44; Vassar College Art Gallery, The White, Marmorean Flock: Nineteenth Century American Women Neoclassical Sculptors (Poughkeepsie, New York: Merchants Press, 1972), no pagination.

[45]Adelaide Johnson, "The Story of the Lengthening of My Leg."

[46]Henderson, p. 59.

[47]Clement, p. 380.

[48]Henderson, p. 153.

[49]Ibid., p. 155.

[50]Clipping, n.d., Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; Vassar College Art Gallery.

[51]Mrs. Edward Roby to Adelaide Johnson, 9 Jun. 1891, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; Henderson, p. 155.

[52]Adelaide Johnson, "Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[53]Henderson, p. 30.

[54]Ibid; Adelaide Johnson, Untitled Manuscript, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

CHAPTER IV

THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION

Held in 1851, the Great Exhibition in London began an era of international expositions that lasted into the next century. Intended to show "the state of 'civilization' as reflected in the fine arts and industrial technology," the international fairs received little attention in the United States until after the huge success achieved by the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876.[1] Americans regarded the high standards set by the Paris Exposition of 1889, which produced the Eiffel Tower, as a challenge; and plans began for the Columbian Exposition of 1892, to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the New World.[2]

When the United States Congress convened in December of 1889, one of its primary concerns was the World Fair Bill which would underwrite the Columbian Exposition. Congress found itself deluged with petitions, memorials, and resolutions pertaining to the fair; among them was a petition presented by suffragist Susan B. Anthony. Bearing one hundred and eleven signatures, it requested that women be included in the fair's Board of Managers to insure representation of women's contributions to the "industrial, artistic, intellectual, and religious progress of the nation."[3]

Competition for the site of the fair was brisk among the major cities, with New York, Washington D.C., St. Louis, and Chicago leading

contenders for the honor. Congress finally chose Chicago, which disgruntled losers complained was called "the windy city" not because of its weather, but because its promoters had talked so much about their ability to put on the biggest exposition the world had ever seen.[4]

The fair, as provided by Congress, was governed by the World's Columbian Commission, which would deal with national affairs and foreign governments, and the Chicago /Fair/ Corporation, which would actually put the fair together. An amendment to the fair bill provided for a Board of Lady Managers; but neither the size of the board nor its duties were specified. Anthony and the other women who had worked for a place on the board were angry; they had requested representation on the governing board, not a separate one. Furthermore, they thought the title "Lady Managers" was ridiculous and suggested that they were only "useless ornaments." They were, nevertheless, determined to make the best of the situation.[5]

To make matters more difficult, two different groups of women were vying for control of the Board of Lady Managers. The Women's Department, or Auxiliary, represented "establishment" women, wives of prominent men and daughters of wealthy families. These women wished to use their influence to establish a separate "women's building" at the fair in which to display women's "industries," emphasizing their handiwork and philanthropic activities. Their policy, in so far as they had one, was of general reform.

Competing with the Women's Department for the opportunity to make their influence felt at the fair was a suffragist group called The Isabella Association. Most of the Isabellas were professional women;

and while they also wanted a woman's building, they were opposed to segregating women's work, but wanted it displayed on its own merit alongside that of men.[6]

The Commission appointed women from both groups to the Board of Lady Managers. Two women were appointed from each state and territory and eight at large—a total of one hundred and seventeen. The women elected Bertha Palmer, the gifted and personable wife of Chicago businessman Potter Palmer, as their president. Potter Palmer, having sold his department store to Marshall Field, was devoting his time to his hotel and new position as second vice-president of the Chicago Corporation.[7]

In Chicago, Jackson Park was chosen as the site of the fair. It was an underdeveloped stretch of swamps and sandbars with scarcely a tree to its name, but it was spacious, convenient to the center of the city, and it bordered Lake Michigan, which offered potential for an artistic setting that the architects and landscape artists could not resist.[8]

The remarkable result was known as "The White City" because of the light, classically styled exhibition halls that surrounded and stretched beyond a formal basin, whose waters looked to the developers only a little less blue than the Aegean Sea.[9] The Palace of Fine Arts was perhaps the most admired building at the exposition. Acclaimed as a "veritable reincarnation of the genius of ancient Greek art," and called "the greatest achievement since the Parthenon" by sculptor Augustus Saint Gaudens, it was, unlike the temples of Greece, constructed of wood and steel plastered over with staff, a mixture of

plaster and hemp that looks like granite.[10] Less ecstatic observers noted that the chosen style of architecture had nothing at all to do with the city of Chicago; and Henry Adams, the aristocratic American historian, sniffed that "classical standards . . . leaped directly from Cornith and Syracuse and Venice . . . over the heads of London and New York" to Chicago where they were "a stage decoration . . . all show."[11]

Nevertheless, enthusiasm for the White City was plentiful in Chicago, and the Board of Lady Managers had soon made the decision to sponsor a woman's pavilion. Believing that the work should be that of women in every possible way, a competition was held to select a woman architect. Competition requirements specified that all entries should be from professionals in architecture, of which there were few in 1892. There were only six weeks between the announcement of the competition to the deadline for submitting sketches and credentials, but the competition closed with thirteen entries. First prize went to Sophia Hayden, a graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In her early twenties, Hayden had designed a Renaissance Museum of Fine Arts for her master's thesis upon which her design of the Woman's Building was closely modeled.

The judges chose Hayden's design at least partly because "with its balconies, loggias, and vases for flowers, it was the lightest and gayest in its general aspect, and consequently best adapted for a joyous and festive occasion."[13] Variously described as Classic or Italian Renaissance, the architect insisted that it was "strictly speaking, neither."[14]

Bertha Palmer called the Woman's Building the "Ladies lovely

child," but for its architect, it proved a difficult one. Almost immediately modifications became necessary because demands for space necessitated a larger building. Third story rooms and two wings were added. Hayden left Chicago during the actual construction, but returned when the building was nearly completed. At this point she was confronted with the various and abundent materials being donated from all over the country for the ornamentation of the building. Hayden also saw for the first time sculptures which had been commissioned for the building by the Lady Managers, as well as the avalanche of marble columns, carved balustrades, window grills, and other "impedimenta" which was arriving almost daily. Hayden, becoming anxious about the appearance the building would finally make, expressed an interest in undertaking the interior decoration, but Bertha Palmer chose instead an older and, as she explained, more experienced decorator.[15]

Sophia Hayden continued to struggle with the task of trying to find proper use for all of the things which the Lady Managers were soliciting. She had returned to Chicago in December; sometime during the early summer Hayden went into the office of Daniel Burnham, Chief of Construction of the fair, and had a "severe breakdown." Mr. Burnham tactfully refrained from making any comment other than that he believed Miss Hayden would end her days "locked away in an attic." Instead she voluntarily went to a rest home, suffering from "melancholia." The affair inspired a spirited debate in the American Architect about the "wisdom of women entering this especial profession." Recovered sufficiently by July to attend a reception given by the Lady Managers in her honor, Sophia Hayden married the following year.

Although she lived until 1953, Hayden never commented publically about her experiences with the Woman's Building, and she apparently never designed another building.[16]

Exhibits for the Woman's Building were a problem for the Lady Managers. Bertha Palmer worked tirelessly at bringing high-quality exhibits to the building, her efforts revealing her personal interest in art. The Fine Arts Building posed a difficult problem. It drew upon the work of both sexes, and nobody disputed the fact that by far the most, and admittedly the most highly-acclaimed, artists were men. Some of the more accomplished women artists, like Harriet Hosmer and Anne Whitney, did not want their work segregated from that of men. The managers of the Fine Arts Building were actively seeking superior art, and their consistent success would result in lower standards in the Woman's Building. In a kind of acquiescence, one faction of the Board of Lady Managers wanted to display applied, rather than fine art in the Woman's Building.[17]

Still smarting from the decision that women's work would be displayed separately from that of men, the Isabellas launched a determined campaign to keep the quality of the work at a high level and to avoid displays of "drapery and bedspreads." Unwilling for Columbus to have all the glory of the Exposition, the Isabellas independently contracted the sculptor Harriet Hosmer to produce a statue of their namesake, Queen Isabella of Spain, for the fair. The Isabellas saw her "as a woman who had pawned her jewels to help Columbus, who had spent thirty years as a head of state, and cared for her subjects with great compassion." Their cause was made difficult by others who

reminded them that Isabella was also "a religious bigot, a fanatic, the founder of the Inquisition, and a ruler who had usurped her niece's throne, and drained her people through cruel taxation." Believing that nobody is perfect, the Isabellas stood firm and waited for Hosmer to complete the statue.[18]

Far from Chicago, Adelaide Johnson was also engaged in work bound for the fair. The years between 1887 and 1893 had been a time of personal and professional struggle for her, and Johnson's efforts to get recognition for her art were continually frustrated by her difficult financial circumstances. She had attempted to supplement her income by selling art pieces for a Rome dealer on a commission basis, but her sales were not sufficient to alleviate her financial distress.[19] She had even considered resuming work as a decorative artist.[20]

Johnson's sister-in-law Sadie tried to reassure her. Charles, Sadie reminded Johnson, was doing well in Chicago. Sadie insisted "he is going to make a fortune and says he will help you and Lizzie so you can do your work."[21] Sadie, however, had troubles of her own. "I have been down to the lowest depths of dispair," she wrote, "oh, the suffering your brother has caused me . . . if I had a small percentage of the faculty of overcoming obstacles that you have what a woman I might be."[22] Sadie was not too distraught, however, to heap praise upon her husband's sister. "Do you remember saying to me, 'I do not expect to reach the point I have aimed for before I am forty-five?' At the rate you are traveling now, what must be the height of your ambition?"[23] Clearly Sadie's husband John could provide no help to his sister.

Although Adelaide's financial situation might be precarious, her self-possession and aura of quiet competency never were. Sadie had looked to her for support since their days in St. Louis.

> On my left arm . . . a lump is growing . . . will you help me drive it away . . . also would you lay out a course of reading /for me/ . . . oh, this terrible want of money . . . a man with money to invest does not like to trust a man of intemperate habits.[24]

Although Sadie's distress seemed never to ease, Adelaide gave her as much sympathy and support as she could. It was all she could do, as she had her own financial difficulties. Finally Johnson began teaching to supplement her income.

Having long been a student of the occult philosopher Francios Delsarte, Johnson began giving private evening classes. She also taught the Delsarte class two evenings a week at Mount Vernon Seminary, for which she was paid fifteen dollars,[26] but still found it necessary to borrow regularly from her brother Charles.[27]

Her income became more stable when, through the influence of her congressman, Johnson was appointed as a computer, or clerk, in the U.S. Census Office. Beginning work in August of 1889, her salary was $720 per year.[28] In March of 1890 Johnson was promoted to the position of copiest, but her government career was threatened when she asked for a leave of absence to do volunteer work at an annual suffrage meeting. She finally received the leave, but in July of 1891 she was demoted and her salary correspondingly decreased.[29] The following month she lost her job in what was called a necessary reduction of the work force.[30]

Undaunted, Johnson tried to supplement her income in other ways. She sought employment as a lecturer, and compiled a prospectus which

offered lectures on topics including "Art, Priceless for Record and Inspiration," "All Seasons in the Eternal City," "Our Women Pioneers," "Bacon to Shakespeare," and "My Life in a Haunted House."[31] She also promoted a European tour, advertising herself as a chaperone for young ladies and an experienced companion to novice travelers. There is no evidence that the tour ever materialized.[32]

Despite her various attempts to stablize her income, Johnson continued to work on her sculpture and maintained a high level of productivity. During the suffrage convention of 1891 when she took the leave of absence from the Census Office, Johnson modeled Susan B. Anthony's portrait for the third time. Things went well, Johnson calling Anthony "a perfect sitter."[33] Anthony was packed and ready to leave when it was discovered that someone had disturbed the wet cloths on the clay model and ruined its nose. Anthony immediately sent away the porter and driver who were waiting and resumed sitting for almost another week—all "with never a fidget for release."[34]

Johnson received two other commissions in July of 1891, one for a bust of Ruth Carr Denison, and the other for Dr. Caroline Winslow. Little is known of Denison, but Winslow was a Washington homeopathic physician, a practicioner who treats disease with small doses of a remedy that would produce the disease in healthy persons. Johnson admired Winslow, who was possible the first female physician in Washington, and who shared her interest in spiritualism. Winslow was also a leader in the Social Purity and Moral Education Society and edited a newspaper called The Alpha which called for sexual and moral enlightenment and advocated legislation which would mandate castration for

males guilty of "unquestionable degeneracy." Winslow commissioned her own portrait, and Johnson began work on the busts immediately.[35]

When Anthony viewed the portrait that Johnson had done of her she asked, "How can I go to /the Columbian Exposition/ without Mrs. Stanton?" referring to the invaluable theoretician of the woman's movement and her comrade for many years. Arrangements were soon made for Johnson to model a portrait of Elizabeth Cady Stanton.[36]

Anthony invited Stanton to spend the month of September 1891 in her house in Rochester, New York,[37] and Stanton pledged to devote all her time there to the sittings.[38] Anthony assigned a room in an adjoining house to Johnson and Stanton, and for nearly a month Johnson worked four or five hours a day on the model. After breakfast Johnson and Stanton began, and when she had completed her household chores, Anthony joined them, bringing the morning paper and the day's first delivery of mail. While the work proceeded the women discussed the news of the day. Johnson's subjects were always free to move about during the "sittings," and Stanton took advantage of the time to work on an address which she was to deliver to Congress.[39]

When Stanton, who was seventy-seven, found herself getting sleepy, Johnson arranged for a series of short naps. Stanton recalled, "When she saw the crisis coming she would say, "I will work now for a time on the ear, the nose, or the hair, as you must be wide awake when I am trying to catch the expression." Stanton "rewarded her for her patience and indulgence by summoning up, when awake, the most intelligent and radiant expression that I could command." Each woman admired the other, and the sittings went well.[40]

Between sessions Anthony and Stanton worked on their petition to the president of Rochester University about admitting females;[41] and after Stanton had gone to bed, which was usually early, Anthony and Johnson often took long walks which they spent deep in conversation.[42]

When the model was completed, Johnson prepared to depart for Italy with the models of Anthony, Stanton, Mott, and Winslow to put them into marble.[43] Shortly before her departure she received a disturbing letter from Sadie:

> I am in great distress for money . . . the only article I have left of any value is that 'white crepe shawl.' I have been offered $25—if you or Lizzie want it to keep in the family you may have it for $20. I wish I could give it to you. Have sold everything, even the chains made of my first watch chain that my babies wore . . . .[44]

Johnson, who kept in close touch with her sister-in-law, lacked the financial resources to relieve Sadie's difficulties. She tried, however, to provide emotional support, and Sadie's next letter indicates that Adelaide may have been able to instill some confidence into her sister-in-law. Sadie wrote that she had made the decision to leave her husband and attempt to live an independent life. She would stay with him a while longer, however, apparently because he was ill, probably from excessive drinking.

> I can never be what I feel and know I am capable of being while I am his wife . . . I shall apply for position as housekeeper.[45]

Despite these family difficulties, Johnson felt she must not delay her departure for Italy. Having learned from prior experience, she was determined not to leave before she had a contract for the work she was about to do. The portraits of Anthony, Stanton, and Mott were

intended for display at the Columbian Exposition, which by now had been delayed until 1893, but it was necessary to find a way to pay for them. Anthony could not afford to commission the busts, and Johnson could not afford to donate them. The solution decided upon was a Bust Fund Committee which would raise the $3,000 that Anthony and Johnson had agreed upon as the price. Johnson helped with the fundraising, personally writing five hundred letters. Donations were, however, disappointing, partly because some suffrage groups thought Anthony was not a strong enough advocate of prohibition. Finally $1,000 was raised.[46] Johnson found it difficult to work out the specifics of the contract with the Bust Committee because the individual members were fearful of becoming personally liable for the costs. The contract that was finally signed on 23 February 1892 specified that the $1,000 already raised would be paid to Johnson immediately, another $1,000 would be paid as soon as it was raised, the final $1,000 when the busts were delivered. Apparently to reassure the Committee, Johnson called the contract, which targeting the busts for the Exposition, then to the Capitol Building in Washington, "non-binding."[47]

Johnson finally departed Washington for Italy with the models. After thirteen days aboard ship, she arrived in Rome; and without checking the address, took a studio at 13 San Basilio.[48] Superstitious about numbers, Johnson was getting nervous. Her fears were realized when she entered her studio one day to find the plaster bust of Anthony on the floor, although no one had been in the studio since her departure some hours before. The bust was in pieces, but it fortunately proved to be repairable.[49]

Progress on the busts suffered a number of discouraging setbacks. When the Anthony bust was nearly completed, Harriet Hosmer dropped by Johnson's studio and suggested some changes. Hosmer, who was born in 1830, was one of the earliest American female sculptors, and she had encountered considerable opposition to her career. Sculpture was considered an unladylike occupation because it involved physical labor, learning human anatomy, dissecting corpses, and drawing from the nude.[50] Fortunately, personal wealth enabled Hosmer to pursue her art anyway, and it eventually became financially rewarding. Fifty copies of her statue of Puck sitting on a toadstool were sold for one thousand dollars each, and the original was purchased by the Prince of Wales. An emancipated woman who wore men's clothing and worked in baggy Zouave trousers, Hosmer had been "summoned from her retirement and seclusion in London" to make the statue of Isabella for the Columbian Exposition, and had taken her place in the White Marmorean Flock in Rome.[51]

Johnson had great respect for Hosmer's work:

> The woman pioneer of my profession . . . was a kind of fairy godmother to me . . . .[52]

When Hosmer suggested that making Anthony's hair a little heavier would give the effect of color, Johnson immediately agreed.[53] She abandoned the bust and began anew. Work progressed for some weeks with what Johnson called "the usual amount of unusual experiences," and when the second bust was nearly finished a flaw was discovered in the marble. Again the bust was abandoned and a new one started.[54] Within a few days a similar flaw was found in the face of the bust of Lucretia Mott and like the other two, it was abandoned for a new beginning.[55]

Despite all this misfortune, the busts were somehow finished. Johnson had them crated and made ready to be picked up by the ship that the U.S. government was sending to the port of Livorno for transport to Chicago. She then sailed for America. Unknown to her, however, the date of collection had been set up six weeks, and she was horrified upon her arrival in the States to learn that her busts were still in Italy. Quickly, she made arrangements to have them shipped to New York at her own expense, at a cost she found "very oppressive."[56]

When the busts finally arrived in Chicago it was July, two months after the fair opened, and there was more trouble to come. The busts were delivered to the Woman's Building in the "White City" together with three marble pedestals which Johnson had intended to be sent to Washington. Fair authorities prepared to display the busts on the pedestals that had arrived with them, although pedestals had been provided for work by other artists. Johnson protested to the manager of the building, who held firm. When Johnson refused to allow her pedestals to be used, she was told that her busts would then be placed upon the shelves upstairs. Johnson stayed calm, but her determination was "as firm as the eternal hills." She also refused permission for the busts to be placed "upstairs on the shelves." The situation was tense.[57]

The busts, not yet unpacked, were put into a side room while Johnson went into action. Almost immediately she secured a letter of introduction to Halsey Ives, Director of the Fine Arts Palace, and within a few hours she submitted an application for admission

to the Fine Arts Building for her busts. Told that the jury which made approvals for display had been disbanded, Johnson proceeded to secure the necessary permits for moving the busts while the jury was being reconvened. While hurrying through the Administration Building to complete her mission, she stepped into an open trapdoor "which had escaped her observation" and broke three ribs. Feeling the incident "called for a pause," Johnson allowed a friend to assist her home.[58]

The following day Johnson received word that her busts had been accepted for display in the Fine Arts Palace and also that they were already on exhibit in the Gallery of Honor of the Woman's Building.[59] Without mentioning the pedestals again, Johnson later wrote that the officials of the Woman's Building had done exactly what she wanted by hurriedly putting her portraits on display when it appeared that the Fine Arts Palace might snatch them away.[60]

Sophia Hayden's Woman's Building was both a critical and a popular success at the fair. The main feature of the building was a large exhibition hall on the ground floor sixty-five by one hundred twenty feet, around which were grouped smaller rooms. This large center court was called the Court of Honor, and in its center was a fountain by the sculptor Ann Whitney, flanked by palms. At the four corners of the area stood Johnson's four busts. Please with the choice location given her portraits, Johnson said, "No one can enter the building from either of the four entrances without seeing the first thing the four eminent women . . . ."[61]

The busts were well received, and although Anthony's bust attracted the most attention, all four were admired. May Wright

Sewall, founder of the International Council of Women, told Johnson that the busts of "Lucretia Mott and Susan B. Anthony are the best . . . I think. Mrs. Stanton does not seem to me so good, but her excessive fat would, I know, make it very difficult to model her portrait."[62] Johnson said that Lorado Taft told her that her bust of Anthony was better than his own.[63]

Although they arrived late and were displayed only after much difficulty, Johnson was able to display her portraits to advantage at the Columbian Exposition. Presented in the Court of Honor with the most prestigious work in the Woman's Building, the exhibition provided Johnson with her first international recognition and validated her as a professional artist.

For Johnson the Exposition had additional significance. It was the largest single exhibition of art by American female artists in the nineteenth century. In 1904 she addressed the International Women's Congress in Berlin. The time was past, she said, when women artists were "looked upon with curiosity, classed and perhaps indulged as freaks." Perhaps thinking also of her own career she added, "The great impetus in the United States of America that ushered so many women into active work as professionals in the plastic forms of art came with the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893."[64]

NOTES

[1]Jeanne Madeline Weimann, The Fair Women (Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1981), p. 1.

[2]Ibid., p. 21.

[3]Ibid., pp. 31-37.

[4]Ibid., p. 35.

[5]Ibid.; Bessie Louise Pierce, A History of Chicago, vol. 3: The Rise of a Modern City 1871-1893 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 502.

[6]Ibid., pp. 39-42.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Pierce, p. 503.

[9]Ibid., p. 504.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Weimann, p. vii.

[12]Ibid., p. 148.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid., p. 150.

[15]Ibid., pp. 155-75.

[16]Ibid., pp. 175-80.

[17]Ibid., pp. 279-81.

[18]Ibid., p. 39 and p. 285.

[19]Correspondence File, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[20]Ann Lyman Henderson, "Adelaide Johnson: Issues of Professionalism for a Woman Artist" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1981), p. 155.

[21]Sadie Johnson to Adelaide Johnson, 2 Nov. 1887, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[22]Sadie Johnson to Adelaide Johnson, 3 Feb. 1888, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[23]Sadie Johnson to Adelaide Johnson, 16 Aug. 1888, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[24]Sadie Johnson to Adelaide Johnson, 4 Oct. 1888, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[25]Henderson, p. 156.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid., pp. 157-58.

[28]Census Office to Adelaide Johnson, 15 Aug. 1889, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[29]Document, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; Superintendent of Census Office to Adelaide Johnson, 13 Jul. 1891, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[30]Superintendent of Census Office to Adelaide Johnson, 14 Aug. 1891, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; Henderson, p. 157.

[31]Henderson, p. 158.

[32]Henderson, p. 158; Brochure, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[33]Adelaide Johnson, "Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Henderson, p. 34 and p. 158.

[36]Adelaide Johnson, "Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony."

[37]Katharine Anthony, Susan B. Anthony: Her Personal History and Her Era (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954), p. 408.

[38]Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Adelaide Johnson, 26 Jun. 1891, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[39]Adelaide Johnson, "Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony."

[40]Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More (New York: European, 1898), pp. 443-34.

[41]Anthony, p. 408.

[42]Adelaide Johnson, "Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony."

[43]Anthony, p. 408.

[44]Sadie Johnson to Adelaide Johnson, 5 Jan. 1892, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[45]Sadie Johnson to Adelaide Johnson, 12 Jan. 1892, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[46]Adelaide Johnson, "Story of the Busts," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[47]Henderson, p. 160.

[48]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 13 Mar. 1892, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[49]Adelaide Johnson, "Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony."

[50]Wayne Craven, Sculpture in America (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), p. 326.

[51]Weimann, pp. 39-40.

[52]Ibid., p. 283; Adelaide Johnson, "Harriet Hosmer," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[53]Adelaide Johnson, "Harriet Hosmer."

[54]Adelaide Johnson, "Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony."

[55]Weimann, p. 291.

[56]Ibid., pp. 291-92.

[57]Weimann, p. 292; Adelaide Johnson, Untitled MS, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress, p. 14; Henderson, p. 58.

[58]Weimann, pp. 292-93; Adelaide Johnson, Untitled MS, p. 14; Henderson, p. 58.

[59]Amey Starkweather to Adelaide Johnson, 18 Jul. 1893; Chief, Department of Fine Arts, World's Columbian Exposition to Adelaide Johnson, 18 Jul. 1893.

[60]Weimann, p. 293.

[61]Ibid.

[62]May Wright Sewall to Adelaide Johnson, 15 Nov. 1893, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[63]Henderson, p. 165.

[64]Weimann, p. 597; Henderson, p. 15.

CHAPTER V

FEMINISM AND SEXUALITY

Nineteenth century American feminism was rooted in the woman's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York in 1848. Colonial women had many duties and few rights, and married women had almost no rights at all. They could not sign contracts, and had no title to their own earnings, property, or children. Next to law, the most potent force keeping women subordinate was religion, which found them inferior in mind and body as well as responsible for original sin.[1] Early cries of protest came from women like Anne Hutchinson of Boston, who dared to think that women could have a voice in church affairs, and Abigail Adams, who pleaded with her husband John to "remember the ladies."[2]

Many of the early feminists came from the gentle Quaker sect where women enjoyed more equality than in other groups and could even enter the ministry. It was the soft-spoken Quaker Lucretia Mott who, thinking the time had come for public discussion and protest of woman's situation, conceived the Seneca Falls convention along with her friend Elizabeth Cady Stanton.[3]

The convention was a greater success than its organizers had imagined, and produced a written document called the Declaration of Principles, based upon the U.S. Declaration of Independence. The real achievement of the convention, however, was much greater. Women who rebelled against their circumstances knew they were no longer alone.

They might join the fledgling woman's rights movement or ignore it, but regardless of which path they chose, they could not remain unaffected by it.[4]

Significant changes came slowly. Elizabeth Blackwell, to whom both illness and medicine were repugnant, vowed to study medicine in rebellion to the meaningless life of ease to which she seemed destined. After applying to twenty-nine schools, she was finally accepted by Geneva College only because the issue was submitted to a vote of the male students, who thought she would be an interesting "diversion." Though her education was painful and humiliating, Blackwell finally won over many of her fellow students with her "unassailable dignity," and graduated at the head of her class in 1849. She still, however, could find no place where she was permitted to practice medicine, so she went to Europe for additional training.[5]

The situation was not much improved in 1875 when Anna Howard Shaw entered Boston University to study for an advanced ministerial degree. Denied dormitory facilities as well as food service and other amenities provided to male students, she lived for weeks at a time on milk and crackers, and once conducted a week-long revival sustained by nothing more than a box of crackers. When the church where she held the successful revival told her they could not afford to pay her any money, she was saved from hunger only when the grateful relative of a boy she had converted presented her with five dollars.[6]

A "domestic revolution" began about 1865 that began to free wealthier women from the drugery of housework. Gas lighting, domestic plumbing, canning, improvements in stoves, and the sewing machine all

helped to give women time for other pursuits. More women began entering the labor force as well as institutions of higher learning, and there were token entrances into the professions.[7]

Although most of the early leaders in the woman's rights movement were abolitionists and temperance advocates, the movement soon evolved into a suffrage movement, as the vote was seen as the most important step in the achievement of social equality. In 1890 two smaller suffrage organizations merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), which became a powerful lobbying force.[8]

The first president of NAWSA was Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Born in 1815, Stanton had received an excellent education for a woman of her time. Her father was an attorney who nurtured her sense of social justice. Stanton watched women consult with her father about husbands who squandered their wives' earnings and property. He had to tell them that they had no legal redress. In case of separation or divorce, they did not even have a right to the guardianship of their own children.[9]

In 1840 Stanton married Henry Stanton, a staunch abolitionist who shared her views of women's rights. Their seven children made many demands on her time, but the family was able to afford servants to care for household matters while Stanton was away on speaking tours or sequestered with her writing.[10] She proved to be the most gifted theoretician of the nineteenth century woman's movement.

As Stanton became older her interest shifted from suffrage to the liberalization of divorce laws and the responsibilities of

religion for woman's inferior position. In 1892 Stanton retired as president of the NAWSA and was replaced by Susan B. Anthony.[11]

Anthony was a relative latecomer to the suffrage movement. Born in Rochester, New York, in 1820, she was a Quaker and a teacher when she first petitioned the New York legislature for reforms beneficial to women. Anthony, who never married, soon made women's rights her life work.[12]

The woman suffrage movement had no official ideology on marriage or motherhood. Its unifying factor was commitment to woman suffrage, and beyond that basic principle individual members held every conceivable view, every philosophical position.[13] One of the main arguments used against the suffragists was that they would destroy the home. They countered by pointing out that some members of the movement were committed to home and family, while others saw economic independence to be their goal. None were interested in abolishing the home. A counterargument by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a spokesperson for the movement, maintained that suffrage would not abolish the home, but that it would remain a place to "live, love, rest, and play," and that economic independence would finally make the "sex relation pure."[14] While they were not opposed to motherhood, many suffragists objected to it as a duty, insisting upon the right of their children to be "healthy, fed, clothed, educated, and to have an excellent father."[15]

Adelaide Johnson's feminism was almost certainly influenced by the ideas of Mary Foote Henderson during the years that Johnson was a student at the St. Louis School of Design. Whether or not she had

feminist ideas in her youth, they would have been compatible with the concepts of independence and self-sufficiency that Johnson admired in her parents. Her decision to pursue a career in art may be interpreted in terms of an emerging feminism, as well as her departure from St. Louis in spite of her relationship with Henry Whitney. Johnson clearly avoided a commitment to Whitney which would have compromised her career plans.

Already commited to feminist ideas, Johnson's introduction into the fellowship of the NAWSA by Ellen Sheldon marked the beginning of a long association with leaders of the woman's movement. Johnson described her entry into that sisterhood:

> . . . my entry was as natural and as inalienable as that of a babe born to a family, and my position became that of an intimate, if not a conspicuous, member of that wonderful family of Reformers who assembled annually, in convention at Washington, to plead for the ballot for Women.[16]

Johnson was "inconspicuous" because she saw her role in the woman's movement not as a speaker or writer, although she did both those things, but as the sculptor of that movement—the woman who would memorialize the leaders in marble. It was with wholehearted belief that she described Mott, Stanton, and Anthony as

> The three great destiny characters of the world, whose spiritual import and historical significance transcend that of all others of any country of any age.[17]

In her militant feminism, Johnson thought of the woman's movement as a revolution—one different from any that had preceded it.

> /The woman's revolution/ involved half of humanity against the most subtle and deeply entrenched tyranny within creation—the tyranny of sex.[18]

If a militant feminist could have a successful family life,

as did Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Carrie Chapman Catt (to name but two), could she also vigorously pursue a career? There was evidence that family responsibilities and a career were incompatible. Women of the late nineteenth century did not, for the most part, attempt to combine them. Of all the women who earned doctoral degrees between 1877 and 1924, only twenty-five per cent ever married; and as late as 1924 only about twelve per cent of all professional women were married.[19]

Artists often considered their difficulty in combining career and marriage to be even more difficult than other professionals, and this included male artists. Sir Joshua Reynolds said in the late eighteenth century that familial responsibilities were incompatible with an artist's commitment to his work, and Reynold's success surely precluded his statement referring to economic hardship. Even more difficult was the lot of female artists, who were expected to shoulder the most time-consuming of family responsibilities, including the bearing and rearing of children. In the nineteenth century, motherhood was more or less inevitable to married women, and while male artists usually married, female artists did not. Those who did marry often found their careers altered or ended; and those who managed to successfully combine marriage and an artistic career were usually married to persons within their profession.[20]

Jane Addams never married, nor did Gertrude Stein. Only one of the female sculptors of the White Marmorean Flock, which included Margaret Foley, Louise Lander, Emma Stebbins, Edmonia Lewis, Anne Whitney, Florence Freeman, Blanche Nevin, or Harriet Hosmer ever married. Hos-

mer said that she could not be both wife and artist, and that she wanted to devote herself to art,[21] although she waged "an eternal feud with the consolidating knot."[22] The painter Rosa Bonheur, who was born in 1822, said she would never marry, that she could not work if she did, and that she would take no man's name because she had made her own famous.[23]

The only member of the White Marmorean Flock to marry was Vinnie Ream Hoxie. Hoxie was the first woman sculptor to receive a commission from the United States government. She was fifteen at the time, and although some said she received the commission only because of the inordinate amount of time she spent with General Grant, her statue of Lincoln was a success. Hoxie gave up her career when she married and became a mother, although her statue entitled The West was exhibited at the Columbian Exposition. Late in her life Hoxie resumed her career and received another government commission, but she died before she was able to complete it.[25]

Because of the restrictions that society placed upon them, most of the women who chose to forgo marriage for their careers poured all their energies, perhaps including sexual energy, into their work.[26] Few of Adelaide Johnson's friends expected her to marry. Johnson's early professional association with the White Marmorean Flock put her in the company of unmarried professionals, as did her later association with the leaders of the woman's movement. While the rank and file of the NAWSA were married women, the leadership, probably because they were professional women, usually were not.[27]

Adelaide Johnson met Alexander Frederick Jenkins in November

of 1894 when he attended a series of lectures she gave on the philosophy of Francois Delsarte. Jenkins was an Englishman who had been in the States long enough to have spent nine months in meditation and study on an Arizona ranch. He was twenty-three and unemployed, but he and Johnson soon found that they shared interests in theosophy, Christian Science, vegetarianism, and the occult.[28]

Johnson and Jenkins soon became mutually infatuated, although neither of them knew at the beginning of their relationship if it would be romantic or platonic.[29] "[It] is not decided," Johnson wrote in her diary, "whether he is to be . . . my sweetheart child or my love to be true . . . ."[30] Jenkins' letters show that he was equally unsure about the direction their friendship would take.[31] Johnson's diary reveals that this uncertainty continued throughout the summer:

> [Today was] spent in sweet communion with my sweetheart child who beatifully grows more beautiful all the time. I bless heaven for his precious love and devotion.[32]
>
> Mr. J[enkins] has read to me today from Washington Irving's Sketch Book.[33]
>
> [Today was] spent quietly at home. Mr. Heath came and occupied Mr. J[enkins] for over three hours much to his distress as he longed to be with me.[34]
>
> Last night at midnight my beloved J[enkins] left me after a visit of one week and four days which has mystified me even more than ever . . . our relation not yet decided whether he is my sweetheart child or my love to be true to God . . . .[35]

Late in 1895 Johnson and Jenkins decided to marry, but kept their intentions secret.

The wedding date was chosen to coincide with the annual meeting of the NAWSA in Washington so that Susan B. Anthony could attend.[36] Although the couple's means were limited, they managed to make their

wedding a major social event. A week before their marriage Jenkins legally changed his last name to Johnson as "the tribute that love pays to genius."[37]

Johnson invited a small group of friends to her studio for a "white evening." Told to "wear their whitest robes and bring their sacred benedictions," the guests gathered and chatted, waiting for the beginning of the "programme" to which they had been invited. The "white nest," as Johnson called her home/studio, was draped in snowy cheesecloth, and the cushions and chairs were covered in white. White flowers decorated the tables, and on one side of the room a satin ribbon marked out a sort of "chancel" containing a white sofa filled with white pillows. Busts of General Logan, Mrs. Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, and Dr. Winslow completed the setting.[38]

At nine o'clock a poetry reading ended with the last stanza accompanied by the wedding chorus from Lohengrin. Adelaide's brother, Charles Johnson, entered the room with Rev. Cora L. V. Richmond and Mr. Richmond. They were followed by Johnson and Jenkins, both attired in white. Johnson had made her own pearl-embroidered satin gown as well as Jenkins wool suit and satin vest and Rev. Richmond's robe.[39] The couple vowed to be "sustaining, strengthening, uplifting in joy and sorrow, and to fulfill the duties of faithful husband and wife in a ceremony that Rev. Richmond performed "by inspiration."[40]

The guests, The Women's Tribune reported, were "slow to recover from their complete astonishment."[41] Susan B. Anthony was the first to react, and she expressed her pleasure, exclaiming that the ceremony was the "most beautiful she had ever witnessed." She insisted

that the papers print it in full.[42]

The wedding captured the imagination of the press, which both hailed it as the union of a "new man" and a "new woman," and ridiculed it. One paper called Jenkins a "new woman's man." Caricatures of him wearing a bridal veil appeared in some papers, and a play entitled Too Much Johnson, which satirized their relationship, ran in Chicago.[43]

The marriage began with financial difficulties. Although he gave his occupation as "mercantist" on the marriage license, Jenkins was actually working as a window dresser and designer in New York, and Johnson had received only two small commissions in the two years preceding her marriage.[44] Jenkins returned to New York shortly after their marriage, and Johnson stayed in Washington. She was working on portraits of Marion Skidmore, a suffragist and spiritualist, and of Ernest Cory, a young boy. When the busts were completed Johnson joined her husband in New York for three months, the longest time they were ever to live together.[45]

In New York Johnson completed the book she had been writing about Francois Delsarte. She may have considered giving up her art career for writing. Jenkins did all the housework, and Johnson told friends he would not even allow her in the kitchen. They agreed that her work was more important than the dreary household duties that Johnson had lamented as her mother's lot.[46]

There is little doubt that they were deeply in love. In April Johnson wrote in her diary:

> . . . my love came late at midnight and O! what rapture doth his wonderful presence bring.[47]

> his gentleness and love fill the days with joy and light.[48]

Their marital status was novel in 1896, but it was not totally without precedent. In 1855 Lucy Stone, an early leader in the woman's movement, married Henry B. Blackwell. She kept her own name and, although they maintained separate residences, their marriage was a successful one which produced a daughter, Alice Stone Blackwell, who later became another important leader for woman's rights.[49] At a time when many professional women chose not to marry, Johnson had typically looked for a different solution. Jenkins was willing to embark upon an untried path, so their marriage was at least innovative and adaptive if not strictly experimental.

During the summer of 1896 Johnson gave an interview in which she said, "We may decide, at some future time to have children and enter into a life together on the material plane." From this statement one writer has concluded that Johnson may have been a member of the Voluntary Motherhood movement. Supported by many suffragists and moral reformers as well as advocates of free love, the Voluntary Motherhood movement was a curious mixture of traditional and progressive views. "As they welcomed a decline of patriarchal power in the family and recognized the female sex drive, they were equally concerned with the disintegration of family life and what they preceived as moral and sexual laxity.. They fought the dissemination and use of contraceptive devices, which disassociate sex from reproduction, as an attack on the family. They therefore advised periodic or permanent abstinence, agreed upon by the couple, or decided upon solely by the women."[50]

While it is possible that Johnson and Jenkins may have considered theirs a "marriage of chastity," it seems more likely that

their sexual life was a conventional one. Johnson's diary refers to his "divine kisses," and by July, a month before she told a reporter that she and Jenkins might, "at some future time . . . have children," she suspected that she was pregnant.[51] The pregnancy was probably not unplanned, for Johnson had said in another interview:

> Marriage should never be entered upon as a individual caprice . . . motherhood and fatherhood should be prepared for as an occupation . . . else is but a state in common with the animals . . . without dignity.[52]

The press continued to be fascinated by the couple for years, but while Johnson gave many interviews, Jenkins apparently gave none. The difference in their ages was one aspect of the marriage that she was often questioned about; one report of their marriage accurately stated that Johnson was twelve years older than her husband. Perhaps tired of the repeated questioning, Johnson moved from defense to offense on the question in September:

> The newspapers have represented him /Jenkins/ as being ten and even twelve years my senior, an absurd and untrue statement. We never either of us tell our age, as we reckon not by years, but by growth, but Mr. Johnson looks twenty years younger than he is. He has the appearance of immortal youth, but it is his pure soul shining through its environment.[53]

Although they kept Johnson's pregnancy a secret from the press, Jenkins and Johnson were overjoyed about it, despite their difficult financial circumstances. Johnson dreamed nightly that "the little coming one . . . now so silent, may be a truly great soul with some holy mission," and Jenkins wrote to her of the "pulsing of our sweet hope—what a joy it is." Nevertheless, Johnson's friend Helen Sumner wondered if she really wanted the child because she made no preparations for its arrival. Johnson was sick early in her pregnancy,

then she visited Sumner in Washington, her family in Chicago, then joined Jenkins for two weeks. In August he found employment, as a window dresser again, in upstate New York. Johnson spent some time alone in their apartment in New York.[54]

In December, while Johnson was again visiting Sumner, she suffered a miscarriage.[55] She was grief-stricken, although the physician told her the child was "imperfect." Separated, Johnson and Jenkins seem to have been estranged rather than united by their sorrow. Johnson turned to her work for solace and decided that she needed to be alone in order to work.[56] This was managed with little difficulty as Jenkins was traveling a great deal in search of financial backers for the "Marine Torch," an underwater gas light that he had invented.[57] Johnson also traveled a great deal in her search for commissions and in executing sittings. The first year of their marriage they were together only sixteen weeks.[58]

Johnson missed her husband and continued to care for him, but their correspondence reveals their growing estrangement:

> Beloved One . . . Have you made any plans for the spring or summer? Are you coming East? . . . I wonder if we might not combine for a few weeks now to our mutual benefit? . . . With love always and tender thoughts, Your friend Adelaide Johnson[59]

Throughout the next several years, they managed to be together only infrequently. Jenkins was preoccupied with business affairs and was working hard to establish himself in business. Johnson was also working hard. In 1896 she completed the bust of Marion Skidmore, and during the next few years she did models of Cora Richmond, John Hutchinson, Isabelle Beecher Hooker, Harold Duncan, M. A. K. Tuker, and May Wright Sewall.[60]

Their continued separation began to put a serious strain on their marriage as Jenkins became distraught with loneliness and pleaded with Johnson to join him.

> I am weary and sick with waiting and hunger and suffering. Help me, come soon.
>
> If my hopes and voice can call and the power is thine to come, I beg you to <u>come now</u> hither. I have need of thee. I want, I pray for thee.
>
> Do come to me and bring yourself and know my yearnings, longings and aspirations and let the treasure of our hearts be opened . . . do come to me, Beloved, love me, reach out to spheres with me.[61]

At least part of the reason that their separations continued for so long was their financial difficulties, which seemed not to ease. Johnson tried to help Jenkins in his efforts to find backers for the Marine Torch, but the influential friends and government officials she spoke to on his behalf were not interested. In 1900 Johnson was in Rome and Jenkins in London. He urged her to join him for Christmas, but she was reluctant to spend their savings, and reminded him that if an emergency should occur they would have to borrow money from friends, a thought she found distasteful.[62] Whenever he had any income, Jenkins sent her money, although Johnson did not do the same when she received a commission. She was, in fact, shocked when upon one occasion he cashed a check that had come in her absence and kept fifty dollars of it for his own expenses.[63]

In 1900 Jenkins wrote her that he was "spiritually starving so that my body is often a burden."[64] He began using the name Jenkins again. Johnson's friend Sumner urged her to "give him love and appreciation," but Johnson could not forsake the demands of her art for her

relationship with Jenkins.[65] In 1904 he asked for a divorce:

> Beloved One
>
> This is a business letter. Will you excuse it as such and what it is. I have been wondering about the future, and as we cannot hope, in view of our experiences, that our married life will ever be resumed on this plane . . . though we will meet again elsewhere--it seems to me right that our separation should be legalized. I have been ever true and chaste in memory to you, and have long secretly wished that I should leave this world after I could succeed for you, but I have learned I have my life to live and my nature craves companionship, which it may sometime find, will you therefore cooperate with me to this end?
>
> . . . Forgive me dear, I cannot write when the past comes upon me, but lets bless it for the best it gave and we will always be tender and loving unto each other.
>
> Always tenderly
> Alexander[66]

Johnson suspected that he had already found the companionship that he craved, but she made no response to his request, and he repeated it. In 1906 she tried to obtain a divorce in Connecticut, but a commission took her to Italy before the six-month residency requirement was completed.[67]

In 1907 she agreed to go to Baltimore where Jenkins was and attempt a reconcilation although he admitted that he had met another woman. Johnson was hurt by his admission, but wrote in her diary that she was "arranging for the beginning again of our life together as soon as it is possible . . . to make a center where my program and his business may both be pursued to advantage, which is impossible for the present.[68]

The reconcilation lasted only a week. Johnson wrote, "He is determined to have me relinquish everything as though it were nothing . . . as to whether I shall be squeezed into his little shell or he cast it aside and rise into a larger sphere . . . .[69]

Johnson had few practical reasons to stay married. It seemed likely that Jenkins was involved with other women, Johnson's menopause two years after her miscarriage precluded her having children, Jenkins was able to contribute little to her financial support, and he made regular demands on her time that she saw as impediments to her work as an artist. For Jenkins' part, he obviously was most taxed by their frequent and lengthy separations, although he should have forseen the problem. Whether or not they practiced "chastity in marriage," their nearly constant separation effectively produced such a state.[70]

Johnson consulted New York astrologist John Hazelrigg about the most favorable time for a divorce. Hazelrigg's reply was addressed to Jenkins. "Your Saturn afflicts the place of her Sun and Venus," the astrologist wrote, and advised that they wait until the following year to divorce.[71] Jenkins insisted that they not wait, however, and they were divorced in 1907. Johnson was bitter and hurt, even though she acknowledged that Jenkins was not entirely at fault. "Possibly my methods have not been the tenderest, though my heart was," she wrote.[72]

Jenkins accepted Johnson's feminism, but he was unhappy living alone. Johnson accepted her husband's earnings, but did not feel compelled to share hers with him. The problems of the marriage, however, went deeper and seem to be based upon the conflict between her art and the traditional expectations of a woman's responsibilities in marriage, which neither Jenkins nor Johnson had completely rejected.

Some women artists substituted friendship with another woman for marriage; others, like Gertrude Stein, chose overt homosexuality.

The careers of most women artists who chose to marry were stultified as they deferred to their husband's careers. The sculptor Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney continued her career after marriage, but it was a "difficult one."[73]

As writer Anne Henderson observed of Johnson's marriage, "As in other aspects of her life, Johnson refused not to try the impossible."[74] Too committed to her work to willingly abandon it for any reason, Johnson fully realized the difficulties of combining it with marriage, as the subject was a common one in the world of female artists. Yet Johnson had the same need for companionship, for love, and for sexual fulfillment as any woman. Some artists use artistic expression itself to fulfill these needs,[75] but Johnson's solution was an innovative marriage. Both Johnson and Jenkins clearly intended their marriage to be a prototype from the beginning. Despite the fact that their romantic ardor gave them unrealistic optimism, theirs was a brave experiment.

They doubtlessly realized at the announcement of their marriage that apart from the support of their friends, the artistic community, and a few progressive thinkers, their marriage would be held to ridicule. Jenkins was particularly vulnerable. While earlier feminists like Lucy Stone had married without taking their husband's names, no man of record had ever taken the name of his wife.

Jenkins, and particularly Johnson, must have also considered the changes that parenthood could bring to their lives. Although they appear to have planned the event and both seemed genuinely joyful when they thought they might become parents, both surely realized that their elation would be countered by practical obstacles and problems to

surmount. Johnson considered writing as a career during the weeks she spent with Jenkins in New York soon after their marriage. The book that she wrote was apparently never printed, although a number of her articles were published in various publications. She was soon again busy with her art, and there is no evidence that she again considered leaving it when she was a prospective parent.

Patricia Spacks, in a book entitled The Female Imagination, postulates that a primary reason for people becoming artists is their need for love. She quotes novelist Honore Balzac, "to be celebrated and to be loved, that is happiness!"[76] If Adelaide Johnson looked for happiness and love through her art, she also looked for it in the more traditional liaison with Alexander Jenkins. When her attempt to do the "impossible," to combine art with marriage, failed she scarcely had to consider the choice she would make. Johnson felt that her work was a higher deity to which she owed allegiance, and when it proved incompatible with love, a delightfully compelling lesser god, she did what she felt she must. She was hardly able to conceal her disappointment that Jenkins could not subordinate his desires as well as she. There is no doubt that Johnson was deeply hurt by the divorce. For years she noted Jenkins' birthday and their wedding date in her diary, and often she decorated her studio with flowers on these occasions. When she was in London, Johnson visited Jenkins' mother, whom she called "little mother." Jenkins married again twice, marriages that Johnson called "unholy alliances."[77] Years later Johnson still dreamed of Jenkins. In one dream "little mother" told Johnson that she and Jenkins would marry again. Johnson "would not notice" Jenkins' wife,

who was also in the dream, but did comment that their three-year-old child was "colorless and uninteresting."[78]

Throughout her life, Adelaide Johnson's personal needs and feelings were subordinated to her art, for which she sacrificed love, sexual expression, and financial security.

NOTES

[1]Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States (New York: Atheneum, 1971), pp. 7-8.

[2]Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[3]Ibid., pp. 72-74.

[4]Ibid., p. 77.

[5]Ibid., p. 115.

[6]Ibid., pp. 119-20.

[7]Ibid., p. 179.

[8]Ibid., p. 220.

[9]Ibid., pp. 72-73.

[10]Ibid., p. 73.

[11]Ibid., p. 220.

[12]Ibid., pp. 84-85.

[13]Aileen S. Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. vii.

[14]Ibid., pp. 96-100.

[15]Ibid., pp. 117-18.

[16]Adelaide Johnson, "Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ann Lyman Henderson, "Adelaide Johnson: Issues of Professionalism for a Woman Artist" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1981), p. 135.

[20]Ibid., p. 113; Jeanne Madeline Weimann, The Fair Women (Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1981), p. 284.

[21]Henderson, p. 137.

[22]Weiman, p. 285.

[23]Ibid., p. 282.

[24]Ibid., p. 162.

[25]Henderson, p. 138; Weiman, p. 162, p. 283, and p. 288.

[26]Henderson, p. 139.

[27]Kraditor, p. 281.

[28]Henderson, p. 116.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 15 Apr. 1895, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[31]Henderson, p. 116.

[32]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 8 Jul. 1895, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[33]Ibid., 11 Jul. 1895.

[34]Ibid., 14 Jul. 1895.

[35]Ibid., 15 Jul. 1895.

[36]Henderson, p. 120.

[37]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 1 Jan. 1896, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; "She Trusts to the Occult," Clipping, no attribution, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[38]"Had a White Evening," no attribution, property of Virginia Metzger, Plymouth, Ill.; Clara Bewick Colby, "The Marriage of Adelaide Johnson," The Woman's Tribune, 1 Feb. 1896; Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 29 Feb. 1896, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[39]Henderson, p. 121; Colby.

[40]Colby.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Henderson, p. 120.

[44]Ibid., pp. 121-22.

[45]Ibid., p. 122.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 18 Apt. 1896, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Flexner, p. 70, p. 220, and p. 304.

[50]Henderson, p. 123.

[51]Ibid., p. 124.

[52]Clipping, no attribution, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[53]"She Trusts to the Occult."

[54]Henderson, p. 124.

[55]Ibid., p. 125; Meta Grace Keebler, interview at Washington, D.C., 16 Apr. 1984.

[56]Henderson, pp. 125-26.

[57]Alexander F. Jenkins to Margaret E. Johnson, 4 Jun. 1900, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[58]Henderson, pp. 125-26.

[59]Ibid., p. 126.

[60]Ibid., pp. 167-68.

[61]Ibid., p. 126.

[62]Ibid., p. 127.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Ibid., p. 128.

[65]Ibid.

[66]Ibid., p. 129.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Ibid., p. 130.

[69]Ibid., p. 131.

[70]Ibid.

[71]John Hazelrigg to Alexander F. Jenkins, n.d., Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[72]Henderson, p. 132.

[73]Ibid., pp. 137-39.

[74]Ibid., p. 225.

[75]Patricia Meyer Spacks, The Female Imagination (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), pp. 166-69.

[76]Ibid., p. 169.

[77]Henderson, p. 133; Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 29 Apr. 1912, 29 Apr. 1926, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[78]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 22 Sept. 1929, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

CHAPTER VI

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

It does not belabor the obvious to say that Adelaide Johnson's art was influenced by her training. Knowing she had to overcome her unprestigious design school training, Johnson rightly believed that European instruction would help her to secure professional artistic status. Her study in Rome and her association with the White Marmorean Flock identified her with the neoclassical movement, although her sculpture is not strictly neoclassical. Johnson's friends and mentors in the Rome art world were nearly a generation older than she.[1] Most contemporary American artists, such as Frederick MacMonnies, Augustus Saint Gaudens, and Olin Levi Warner were studying in Paris, which had replaced Rome as the European center for the study of sculpture. Critics complained that the Rome school was too imitative, so American art won praise owing to the French influence.[2]

Johnson disliked most of the modern sculpture of her day, probably because of her training and the influence that the neoclassicists had upon her. Unlike the sculptor Daniel French, who began his studies in Rome and later turned to the French style, Johnson never accepted the French influence. She disliked Impressionism because she believed an impression should be the beginning of an artistic expression, not its end; and she regarded Cubism as "incoherent mumblings." Johnson

referred to the Lincoln Memorial as "our mediocrity;" and of the leaders in modern sculpture, she admired none except Rodin, who garnered only her partial approval.[3]

For Johnson, art was a universal language which recorded human achievement.[4] While other members of the Marmorean Flock sculpted mostly figures from ancient history and mythology, Johnson chose, like the ancient Greeks, to model the heroic figures of her own day.

Although most of her sitters expressed a desire to be portrayed "just as I am," Johnson thought that realism was too limited because it portrayed a person at only one moment in time, and the portrait could therefore be dominated by some mannerism which would overshadow more important traits. She said, "The portrait that is a masterpiece . . . will represent the past, present, and future of a subject." Johnson created composite likenesses. She was less interested in capturing a physical likeness than in recreating first character, then expression. As her career progressed, Johnson's characterizations became increasingly "ideal," which by her definition meant the "recognition, selection, combination, harmonization and domination of worthy inherent tendencies and elements." Johnson's aim was to convey character; she judged a portrait successful if it achieved "livingness" and created the "presence" of the sitter.[5] She willingly sacrificed likeness for beauty and beauty for character.[6] During the time the naturalist John Burroughs was sitting for Johnson she dispaired of "tapping any spiritual understanding" in him. Burroughs, however, was pleased with the portrait. "Sculptors have modeled me, painters have in all mediums painted me," he said, "and they have <u>all</u> pictured the little old farmer, but

where is the man who wrote the books." Burroughs thought Johnson's portrait captured the sophisticated, urbane aspect of his personality that other artists had missed.[7]

Johnson preferred to model from life, feeling that likenesses made from photographs lacked personality, or what she called the "living spirit."[8] However, she made several portraits, including those of Lucretia Mott and John Logan, after their deaths by using photographs. Johnson preferred to become well-acquainted with her sitters and to model the likeness in the home of the subjects over a period of time during which she studied their character and personality.[9]

Johnson's busts of Anthony, Stanton, and Mott were displayed regularly at suffrage meetings and ceremonies,[10] and the busts of Stanton, Anthony, Caroline Winslow, and a recently completed bust of Isabelle Beecher Hooker were displayed at the World's Fair in 1903.[11] After the Columbian Exposition, where an official of the Corcoran Gallery viewed her work, her busts were often on display there. Johnson's art was also exhibited at the International Women's Conference in Italy and at the same conference held in Berlin in 1904.[12]

During her career Johnson produced more than seventy portrait busts.[13] She had each bust photographed, and kept careful journals of the sittings. Often she wrote a brief biography of her subject. While the extent of her work precludes a detailed examination of each piece, three examples—Hiram Thomas, Maria Whiting, and The Woman's Movement—will provide an introduction to her work.

Johnson modeled the bust of Reverend Hiram Thomas in 1892, the year she returned to Chicago to model a portrait of her brother Charles.[14]

She was introduced to Thomas by her friend Jean Cook. Thomas, a popular and unorthodox minister, had been censured by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1878 for substituting the moral influence theory for vicarious atonement, and for confessing that he was not certain that after-death punishment was eternal.[15] While he believed the Scriptures were inspired, he could not accept the verbal theory of Scriptural inspiration. In 1880 the church requested his resignation and Thomas refused, insisting upon a trial. In 1881 he was expelled from the ministry and the church, and immediately became minister of "The People's Church of Chicago," housed in Hooley's Theater.[16] Johnson admired Thomas, who was also a spiritualist, and agreed to model his portrait. Both Thomas and his wife were pleased with the clay model, and Thomas commissioned the portrait in marble, paying a small amount down and pledging the rest.[17]

Jean Cook planned a grand reception to display the model and begin to raise money to pay for the marble, but the day before the reception Thomas announced in a sermon that he was a Socialist, and his church practically disintegrated. Thomas was unable to pay the balance he owed on the contract, and although Cook was able to collect a few hundred dollars from his remaining friends, the amount was insufficient. Then Thomas died. His wife wrote, "I intend to have that bust. I like it, I love it, and I care not who speaks or what is said."[18] Eventually she was able to raise enough money to purchase the bust, and in 1907 donated it to the Chicago Historical Society.[19]

The most outstanding feature of the Thomas bust is the deep facial planes, which define the face in terms of light and shadow. The

likeness is more impressionistic than realistic.[20] The hair and mustache of the Thomas bust are worth notice. Although her busts are mostly of women, Johnson's portraits of men are quite successful and show particularly fine treatment of the hair.[21]

The first portrait that Johnson modeled was that of Newton Bateman, president of Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois from 1874 to 1892.[22] Johnson's brother Charles attended Knox, site of the fifth Lincoln-Douglas debate,[23] and secured Bateman's agreement to sit for his sister. Maria Whiting was principal of the Knox Seminary, a school for girls associated with the college, for fifteen years. Whiting admired the Bateman bust, which a local newspaper praised as "a noble work of art,"[24] and commissioned her own portrait. Johnson took a studio in Galesburg to model Whiting in January of 1894.[25] More cautious as a result of the Logan misunderstanding, she secured a written contract in which Whiting agreed to pay $800 for the bust—$200 when the clay model was completed, another $200 soon after, and the balance when the bust was delivered. Soon after completion of the model Maria Whiting died.[26] Johnson delayed having the model put into marble, waiting for the second $200 to be paid from the estate before work began. Communications between Johnson and Julia Tryon, administrator of the Whiting estate, suffered because Tryon was blind and her correspondence was handled by her daughter. Other bills had to be paid first, Johnson was told, money was slow coming into the estate, and payment was delayed. Johnson's contract gave her two years to deliver the bust, and as the deadline approached, she had still not received the second $200, and so asked Tryon for a one-year extension. Tryon

agreed, unaware that she was not by law entitled to grant an extension. Johnson was then technically in default of the contract, and the affair finally ended in a lawsuit. Charles Johnson, who had taken a degree in law at Columbia University in 1889,[27] was determined to justify his sister's claim for $600.[28] Johnson's first claim against the estate was disallowed. Her second, filed in appellate court, stated, "Artists, while they may find their paths strewn with flowers, do not often find them strewn with gold."[29]

Johnson felt the estate was in default because the second $200 of the pledge was never paid, and the estate thought Johnson was in default because she had not produced the bust in the amount of time stipulated.[30] Despite Johnson's attempt to secure an effective contract, the wording was vague and left the verdict a matter of interpretation.

Charles Johnson had to advance his sister travel money in order for her to attend the proceedings.[31] The appellate court decided that Johnson was entitled to at least $200, and that she would be entitled to the entire $600 if the bust was completed before the beginning of a new trial. Rejecting an offer to settle out of court for a lesser amount, Johnson went to Italy to have the bust put into marble.[32] It was completed in 1899, but an "exasperating delay in the custom house" nearly prevented her meeting the deadline. The bust arrived in Galesburg on the morning the trial was to begin. Mrs. Tryon accepted delivery, and Johnson was awarded the $600.[33]

Today the bust of Maria Whiting sits in the office of the president of Knox College.[34] The portrait shows "a greater commitment

to realism than any of the artist's later works."[35] The subject is, for example, clothed in contemporary dress. In her earlier work, Johnson sometimes had difficulty in handling the termination line of a bust, and some end awkwardly, the arms seemingly cut off a few inches below the shoulder.[36] Johnson solved this problem in the Whiting bust with the drapery which forms a graceful line around Whiting's shoulders. By her own criteria of success, the bust should reflect the achievement of the individual rather than a realistic representation of how the individual looked at a particular moment in time. Whether or not Maria Whiting employed the same criteria, she was doubtlessly pleased with the portrait, as evidenced by her giving Johnson a commission to put the clay model into marble.

The culmination of Adelaide Johnson's artistic career was not a single portrait, but the monument to the woman's movement that she made in 1920. Alice Paul of the National Woman's Party gave Johnson the commission in April of that year to commemorate the passage of the woman's suffrage amendment. Johnson went to Rome to model new versions of the Mott, Stanton, and Anthony busts which are more ideal and less realistic than the earlier ones. The Mott bust has more movement and the drapery is more graceful than the earlier portrait, and the tie under the chin is removed. Johnson also made improvements in the drapery of the Stanton bust, but the hair is sometimes criticised as being heavy and lifeless—criticisms also made of the original. The large sausage-like curls in which Stanton wore her hair made a soft representation difficult. Johnson modified the Anthony bust by reducing the chin and cheek line, achieving a more feminine appearance.[37]

Paul specified that the portraits in the monument be "of heroic size and on one pedestal." Johnson considered three busts on a single pedestal, but abandoned this plan; when she arrived in Carrara she ordered a single eight ton block of marble. When it was delivered she studied it to "find the angels within." Due to a miscalculation in the size of the marble, the busts had to be reduced from heroic to just larger than life size.[38]

Johnson worked in Italy on the new portraits for the woman's monument, for which she thought Mott symbolized the spiritual aspect, Stanton the intellectual, and Anthony the vital. As she was developing her own ideas for the monument, Johnson was deluged with suggestions from members of the National Woman's Party. Some members were offended by Stanton's turn away from the suffrage cause in her later years and did not want her portrait made a part of the work. Others wanted a different treatment of Stanton's hair, and some wanted her portrayed at a younger age. At Paul's request, Johnson sent photographs of the still unfinished monument to Washington in September. Paul's response requested that Stanton and Anthony be made thinner and that Anthony's bosom be reduced in size. This criticism stung Johnson. "Ye Gods, ignorant fools," she scrawled across Paul's letter.[39] In October Johnson offered to allow the National Woman's Party to withdraw from the contract, but they refused, leaving her to complete the monument as she would.[40]

February 21, 1921, the day <u>The Woman's Movement</u> was presented in Washington, was the apex of Johnson's career. Amid the elaborate ceremony and celebration of a major victory in the struggle for woman's

rights was Adelaide Johnson's greatest recognition as a professional artist. She was acclaimed and feted.[41] Appropriately, Johnson's greatest public recognition came for the work that she regarded most highly herself. "This monument was not made for entertainment, but as an immortal record of the mightiest thing in the evolution of humanity that has taken place since the dawn of mind in the brute, for the revolution embodied in the woman movement represents the potentiality if not yet the dawn of ethics in the human race."[42]

Johnson attempted to use the composition of The Woman's Movement to "tell the story."[43] Mott is in the least conspicuous position, and her figure is smaller than the others. Stanton and Anthony are presented more prominently, the Anthony bust somewhat larger and higher than Stanton. Behind these figures is a roughly-cut mass of marble that may be seen to represent all the unidentified, unheralded persons who have, or will, work for woman's rights--a kind of unknown soldier of the woman's movement. The entire monument has an unfinished appearance because Johnson felt the woman's movement was unfinished. "A feminist, not merely a suffragist," Johnson believed that the attainment of suffrage was only one battle in the course of a long war for equality for women.[44]

The Woman's Movement is one of only two works that Johnson completed that are not portrait busts. The other is a sculpture entitled Mother: A Study which has apparently disappeared. The Woman's Movement is difficult to categorize. It is not strictly speaking a group sculpture, because the portraits are presented as separate individuals, none of them touch or gaze at another, and the figures do not appear

to occupy the same time or space.[45]

Despite exhibition and acclaim on two continents, Johnson's art did not bring her financial security. Throughout her life money worries plagued her. Johnson's first bust, that of Newton Bateman, was done without a commission as a means of establishing the reputation of the artist. She was evidently mistaken in believing that she had commissions for the busts of Mary and John Logan, and settled for much less than her original price. Her early busts of Susan B. Anthony were evidently also done without commissions. Johnson's first commissioned bust may have been that of Dr. Caroline Winslow in 1891.[46]

Later in her career, Johnson often had commissions that were difficult to collect, as in the case of Hiram Thomas. The suffrage organization which gave her the commissions for Mott, Stanton, and Anthony agreed to pay $1,000 each for the three busts, but then had difficulty in raising the necessary money, and the payment was long delayed.[47] In the cases of Maria Whiting and Isabelle Hooker, litigation delayed payment.[48]

In 1898 the cost of completing a marble bust, exclusive of expenses relating to the sitting, such as studio rental and traveling costs, was about $280. Johnson usually contracted a portrait bust for between $800 and $1,200, but did not always receive the entire amount.[49] She usually required $200 to be paid when the work began, and an additional payment bringing the total paid to one-half of the contracted price when the model was completed. The balance was payable upon delivery of the bust.[50] Full payment for every bust she modeled would have produced career earnings of over $70,000, but she actually

received less. A wide discrepancy apparently existed between the prices paid to male sculptors of the period and that paid to women. Although Johnson, who repeatedly refused to negotiate prices for her work, was paid much less than most contemporary male artists, her fees compare favorably with those of other woman sculptors.[51]

Critical evaluation of Johnson's work is hard to come by. Charles E. Fairman, art curator of the U.S. Capitol, wrote of The Woman's Movement "the composition is not . . . easily understood."[52] Although the sculptor Lorado Taft did not mention her in his 1903 book entitled The History of American Sculpture, he reportedly told Johnson, "Your bust of Miss Anthony is better than mine. I have tried to make her real, but you have made her not only real, but ideal."[53] If she was not a female Michelangelo, Johnson liked to point out there had been only one male Michelangelo.

The most important point to be made of Johnson's work is that it is political art. While other sculptors of her day produced portraits of prominent people able to afford the indulgence of immortalization in marble, heroes of ancient history, or allegorical works of mythology, almost every one of Johnson's works are of people whom she believed had through their achievements aided humanity. Most of these people were feminists, like Anthony and Stanton, but some were leaders in education like Newton Bateman, or liberal religious thinkers like Hiram Thomas. The political statement made by Johnson's art is in her selection of public figures that should be held in esteem for the inspiration and guidance of future generations.[54]

Johnson's political statements had a financial cost. By so

limiting her work, she effectively excluded herself from more lucrative work available to other artists. The causes which she supported: feminism, education, and liberal religion, were led by middle-class people who were often without the means of offering her commissions, and when she did receive commissions, her patrons often found themselves unable to pay. Furthermore, Johnson's idealism was such that she often did uncommissioned portraits of people whom she admired. She completed, for example, nine different portraits of Susan B. Anthony.[55]

Johnson also, by defining herself politically, excluded herself from the patronage of those who did not share her political beliefs. Women like Harriet Hosmer and Vinnie Reams Hoxie also called themselves feminists, but they did not define their art in terms of their feminism. Both spurned the Woman's Building at the Columbian Exposition in favor of having their work displayed alongside that of men in the Fine Arts Building. Johnson also identified herself with controversial religious figures like Hiram Thomas, whose own church bitterly split over his positions, further limiting her potential clientele.

Because Johnson was above everything else a feminist, her "supreme aspiration" was to create a gallery of eminent women in which her portraits of them could be displayed.[56] Significantly, this goal surpassed her own desire for artistic recognition and financial compensation, both of which she felt deserving. Johnson was perhaps not the first political artist, nor certainly the last, but she can be considered a pioneer, like her beloved Anthony, a pioneer American political artist. Struggling to overcome the obstacles of background and sex, she willingly further limited her opportunities for artistic

success by defining and limiting herself politically. That she did so knowingly speaks to her sensitivity; that she did so willingly speaks to her character; that hardship did not compromise her resolution speaks to the firmness of her commitment.

NOTES

[1]Ann Lyman Henderson, "Adelaide Johnson: Issues of Professionalism for a Woman Artist" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1981), p. 72.

[2]Lorado Taft, The History of American Sculpture (New York: Macmillan, 1903), p. 9; Loring Holmes Dodd, The Golden Age of American Sculpture (Boston: Chapman & Grimes, Mt. Vernon Press, 1936), p. 12; Wayne Craven, Sculpture in America (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968) p. 419.

[3]Henderson, pp. 98-99.

[4]Jean B. Cook Smith, "Life in Marble—Speech in Silence," The New American Woman, June 1917.

[5]Henderson, pp. 73-76; Adelaide Johnson, "The Making of a Portrait, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress."

[6]Henderson, p. 106.

[7]Adelaide Johnson, "John Burroughs," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[8]Adelaide Johnson, "T. K. Huntley Sittings," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[9]Henderson, p. 74.

[10]Susan B. Anthony to Adelaide Johnson, 12 Sept. 1895, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[11]"Ella Wheeler Wilcox in an Artist's Gallery of American Immortals," New York Evening Journal, 3 May 1905.

[12]Mary Knoblauch, "Woman on a Pedestal is Only a Figure of Speech," Chicago Tribune, 9 Nov. 1974; Curator, Corcoran Gallery to Adelaide Johnson, 13 Oct. 1898, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[13]Henderson, p. 222.

[14]Ibid., p. 164.

[15]The moral influence theory and the vicarious atonement theory

are attempts in Christian thought to make sense of the death of Jesus Christ. Both are rooted in medieval theology through the persons of Abelard and Anselm. Anselm argued for vicarious atonement. He believed human sin to be an offence to God requiring atonement. Man, however, can never pay back, or atone for his sin, but the death of Christ constitutes a payment for human offence which can never be exhausted.

Abelard argued for the moral influence theory. He thought the death of Christ was a powerful example of His love which would move people to be moral. The Anglican Church adopted and adapted the vicarious atonement theory, and when Methodism emerged from Anglicanism, it retained the vicarious atonement theory.

(For this interpretation of the vicarious atonement and moral influence theories, I am indebted to Chris Smith, Garrett Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois.)

[16]Bessie Louise Pierce, A History of Chicago, vol. 3, The Rise of a Modern City 1871-1893 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), pp. 432-33.

[17]Henderson, p. 164.

[18]Vandelia Thomas to Mrs. Cook, Jan. 1904, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 14 Nov. 1892, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[19]Henderson, p. 165.

[20]Ibid., pp. 85-86.

[21]Ibid., p. 88.

[22]Martha Farnham Webster, Seventy-Five Significant Years: The Story of Knox College 1837-1912 (Galesburg, Ill.: Wagoner Printing, 1912), p. 127.

[23]Ibid., p. 74.

[24]Clipping, no attribution, Maria Whiting Papers, Knox College Archives, Galesburg, Ill.; Webster, p. 86.

[25]Henderson, p. 257.

[26]Charles L. Johnson to Lorado Taft, 15 Feb. 1898, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[27]The Centennial Directory of Knox People, Galesburg, Ill.: 1 Nov. 1936.

[28]Abstract of Record, Appellate Court of Illinois, Second District, May term 1898, Adelaide Johnson, Appellant, Julia W. Tryon, Administratrix of the Estate of Maria H. Whiting, Whiting Papers, Knox College Archives.

[29]Brief and Argument for Appellant, Appellate Court of Illinois, May term 1898, Adelaide Johnson, Appellant, Julia W. Tryon, Administratrix of the Estate of Maria H. Whiting, Whiting Papers, Knox College Archives.

[30]Statement on Behalf of Appellee, Appellate Court of Illinois, May term 1898, Adelaide Johnson Appellant, Julia W. Tryon, Administratrix of the Estate of Maria H. Whiting, Whiting Papers, Knox College Archives.

[31]Charles L. Johnson to Adelaide Johnson, 14 Feb. 1898, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[32]Arnold & Gale to Charles L. Johnson, 9 Sept. 1898, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[33]Clipping, no attribution, Maria Whiting Papers, Knox College Archives.

[34]Lynn Harlan to James H. Lawton, 14 May 1984, Collection of the author.

[35]Henderson, p. 82.

[36]Ibid., p. 86.

[37]Ibid., pp. 91-92.

[38]Ibid., p. 92.

[39]Adelaide Johnson, "Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony," Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; Henderson, pp. 92-93.

[40]Henderson, pp. 93-94.

[41]"Welcome by Millions Awaits Woman with Suffrage Statue," Evening Telegram, 19 Jan. 1921; "Suffrage Memorial Reaches Washington," no attribution, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; Program, National Convention of National Woman's Party, 15-18 Feb. 1921, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[42]Adelaide Johnson, "The Import of the Woman Movement," Equal Rights, 10 Mar. 1934.

[43]Henderson, p. 94.

[44]Ibid., pp. 95-96; "Adelaide Johnson, "Import of the Woman's Movement."

[45]Henderson, pp. 95-96 and p. 248.

[46]Ibid., pp. 153-58.

[47]NAWSA Bulletin, 18 Jan. 1897; Emma M. Gillett to Adelaide Johnson, 12 Mar. 1894, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[48]Edward Beecher Hooker to Adelaide Johnson, 11 Mar. 1907, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; Henderson, p. 169.

[49]Brief and Argument for Appellant; Isabella Hooker Contract, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; Susan B. Anthony to Adelaide Johnson, 4 Mar. 1895, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[50]Document, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[51]Henderson, pp. 191-92.

[52]Charles E. Fairman, Art and Artists of the Capitol of the United States of America (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1927), p. 386.

[53]Clara Erskine Clement, Women in the Fine Arts (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1904), p. 380.

[54]Henderson, p. 53.

[55]Ibid., pp. 234-38.

[56]"Ella Wheeler Wilcox in an Artist's Gallery of American Immortals;" Helen Buchalter, The Washington Daily News, 12 Jul. 1935, p. 4a.

CHAPTER VII

LATER YEARS

At the age of 61, with her years of artistic production nearly at an end, Adelaide Johnson saw The Woman's Movement go on display in the U.S. Capitol in Washington. She completed only two more busts after The Woman's Movement, Arthur Waite in 1924 and Dr. James L. Hughes in 1929, both excellent portraits.[1] Johnson's work ceased after 1929 because she received no commissions and could no longer afford to finance the work herself. She hoped to secure a commission for a bust of Clara Barton in 1932, but failed to do so;[2] and she envisioned a design for an "Arising, Arisen Woman," possibly intended to be an outdoor sculpture. But again, lack of a patron to commission the work doomed it.[3] Portrait sculpture is a luxury item, and fewer private commissions were available during the depression years.

One last professional success remained for Johnson. In 1936 the U.S. government issued a three-cent commemorative stamp on the sixteenth anniversary of the seventeenth amendment, which granted women suffrage. The stamp featured Johnson's bust of Susan B. Anthony.[4] Because of its popularity, the Post Office kept the stamp in print for nine years, although the usual limit is one.[5] The first to bear the work of a living artist, the stamp enjoyed the largest sale of any commemorative stamp yet issued excepting the George Washington sesquicentennial stamp.[6] Because of the stamp, Johnson again enjoyed the attention of the press, and she was grateful

for the recognition of her work. When relatives from Illinois sent her a mounted stamp asking for her autograph she was both gracious and delighted.[7]

As her commissions became less frequent, Johnson devoted more of her time to feminist causes, becoming more militant as the years passed. From her first affiliation with the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), through its merger in 1890 with the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), a more conservative group, Johnson acquired affiliation with the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), which moved closer to the position of the AWSA and became more conservative.[8] In 1892, NAWSA commissioned the busts of Mott, Stanton, and Anthony. Anthony's militancy was the attribute that Johnson most admired, and the move of the NAWSA to a less militant stance was not one that Johnson welcomed. Disagreement over the placement of Anthony's bust added to the disenchantment, and Johnson became somewhat estranged from the NAWSA after 1904.[9]

Johnson was an early member of the National Woman's Party, a group founded in 1913 by feminists who believed a more radical offensive was necessary in order to win enfranchisement.[10] Led by Alice Paul, the group staged parades, chained themselves to the gates of the president's house, and went to jail for their cause. This militancy appealed to Johnson, who had marched in London with Crystabel and Emmaline Pankhurst, the indefatigable leaders of the militant British suffragists.[11]

The National Woman's Party began to picket President Woodrow Wilson, whom they believed to be indifferent, if not opposed, to

woman suffrage. They regarded his support as pivotal. The women were arrested and jailed, where they protested bad conditions and brutality with hunger strikes. When they were force fed, they became martyrs to the cause.[12]

In March of 1919 Wilson made a speech the National Woman's Party thought rang false, and they organized a protest. "We will get right in front of the Opera House, and Mrs. Adelaide Johnson will hold the torch that burns the president's words about liberty and democracy," one said. The protest degenerated into a melee in which there was roughness and "more vigor than necessary" by police. The headline in the next day's World reveals the women's lack of support. "Suffragette Mob Fights Police and Heroes; Six are Arrested," it read. Johnson was not one of the six.[13]

She was, nevertheless, actively involved with the National Woman's Party during the 1920s and 1930s, centering both her social and political activities around it.[14] Johnson continued to write for publications such as Equal Rights and The Suffragist, and often spoke to feminist groups.[15]

The Anthony Amendment, as the suffrage amendment was called, was introduced in Congress every year beginning in 1868.[16] Johnson was one of the few members of the old National Woman Suffrage Association still alive when the amendment was finally passed in 1920. Anthony, Stanton, and Stone were all dead, and Johnson's elation was tempered by her realization that much more remained to be won.

She found it frustrating to witness the conservative swing that took place in the early 1920s. Reaction damaged much progressive legislation, including that of woman's rights, and the woman's movement

almost disappeared after 1923. The conservative swing encompassed women as well as men, and in 1924 the newly-enfranchised women cast only about thirty-five percent of the vote. Those who did vote did so about like men.[17] Johnson's position did not change, but she lacked an actively militant organization to work through, and she was increasingly limited by advancing years. She still occasionally had the opportunity to speak to the press, and at the age of 87 she expressed her opinion of woman's situation in the Washington Daily News:

> Today's woman is just a little toddler going around doing man's will. She was cast into subjugation on the day of creation, and—no matter what they say—she's never risen out of it.[18]

The spirit of independence and self-sufficiency that Christopher Johnson bequeathed to his daughter added to the burdens of her later years. Although she made a point of "not being concerned with money," poverty was a threat throughout her life.[19] She found it nearly impossible to accept money she had not earned, but her commissions were both too infrequent and too imperfectly honored to assure her a steady or adequate income. She often thought that her situation as a "renowned" artist was preposterously inconsistent with her pennilessness. Dining with wealthy friends in New York one night she recalled taking her place "as naturally as though a millionairess, while actually without car fare, why, oh why."[20]

Johnson's financial difficulties had begun early. In 1895, two years after her successful presentation at the Columbian Exposition, she was still supplementing her income by taking in sewing.[21] The following year she vowed, "Sewing old rags for the last time. It does not pay me."[22] Johnson's diaries, which she kept faithfully for fifty

years, carefully record her monthly finances. Every amount received from relatives or friends she entered as loans, and made repayment when her situation permitted. In 1895 Johnson earned from $10 to $50 per month from her Delsarte classes, and about $5 per month from sewing. Jenkins was also contributing to her support, his contributions noted in her diary as "accepted as a loan." Elizabeth (probably either Johnson's sister Elizabeth or her niece Romola Elizabeth) sent Johnson $20 to $30 per month. This amount was inadequate because Johnson's expenses were high.

Priding herself on her ability to live on a small amount of money, Johnson could eat practically nothing and endure unheated quarters; but she felt she must live in a house that provided an appropriate setting for her art. She moved to Holt Mansion in Washington in 1894. After her marriage to Jenkins, Johnson continued to live there while Jenkins, who sent his wife a weekly allowance, stayed in tiny apartments in New York.[23] In 1903 Johnson left Holt and moved to New York City, where she rented another large home.[24] At about this same time Johnson's brother Charles began sending her $100 per month to defray her expenses, and she may also have received help from her friend Helen Sumner.[25]

Nevertheless, Johnson had trouble making ends meet. Concerned with financial problems and her faltering marriage, she looked for comfort as the new year began in 1906:

> Good morning new_year, and welcome, whatever thou dost hold for me, for since I am with God what er thou dost bring cannot harm one . . . Dear Lord may I be unceasingly conscious that thou art with one and sometimes see thy face. This is my prayer. Now face the coming . . . .[26]

Charles increased his support to $250 per month.[27] Then, without warning, his checks stopped coming. Although panic stricken, Johnson was reluctant to contact him. Finally, when she owed two month's rent, she wrote him.[28] His reply said only that it was impossible for him to spare her any more money or to explain.[29] Devestated by the loss of income and finding that she had "no source on earth to turn to,"[30] Johnson was in "anguish as to ways and means."[32] "Every gift in the cloud is for the moment hidden from me, but it is there and through the maze I shall keep gazing in that direction."[31]

Johnson moved to "Billy Hardy's place," a residential hotel where she was able to find quarters for $20 per month. "How extraordinary it seems to be here under these conditions," she wrote in her diary, "I wonder how long and what next."[32] No longer having a place to display her portrait busts, she had them put into storage.

Johnson and her brother became estranged over the incident. He later tried to heal the rift, but she was angry, less because he had discontinued her support, she said, than because he had done so without notice that would have allowed her to reduce her expenditures. The two months that she waited for the money to come increased her financial difficulty, and she found his explanation inadequate. Only years later did Johnson learn that Charles had suffered a complete financial, and possibly emotional, collapse, and that he was too shaken to tell her.[33]

Johnson still did not know the truth of her brother's financial problems when she visited her mother at his home in Evanston, Illinois. Sister and brother barely spoke during the visit, but he told her that she would always have a home with his family. She was insulted at his

invitation "to be a dependent," but the offer was probably the best his means would allow. Charles Johnson never made a complete financial recovery.[34] The rift continued for some years, and when her brother sent her a check for $50 at Christmas in 1907, Johnson returned it to him. Johnson calculated the amount of money she had received from her brother, wishing to repay his "loan" as soon as possible. Repayment, however, was out of the question; she had to borrow from others just to meet expenses.

When she settled the Thomas and Hooker accounts, Johnson immediately rented another large house in which she placed her "white children," which she was now able to remove from storage.[35] Her hopes were raised when she met Alva Belmont, a wealthy woman who appreciated Johnson's work. Belmont eventually bought the busts of Mott, Stanton, and Anthony for $2,100, a reduced price that gave Johnson "indigestion that one of the richest women in the world should get my immortal children three for the price of one."[36] Belmont, however, was Johnson's first wealthy patron, and she may have reduced her price in the hope of gaining regular patronage.[37]

Eventually Belmont gave Johnson a commission for a bust of herself. The sittings were held at Belmont's home on Long Island, where Belmont treated Johnson as an inferior. Quartered with the servants and pointedly excluded from a luncheon party, Johnson consoled herself with the thought that "when all the names [at the party] are forgotten in the ages to come, mine may be in some immortal way yet inscribed." She received $1,000 for the portrait.[38]

About this time Johnson first began to consider destroying her

marble busts. She was living in a large, expensive house in New York because she felt it provided the necessary setting for the portraits. She had, however, no commissions, and could not regularly afford food and heat. Johnson began to dream about destroying her work so that it would not later be "sold for fortunes while I go down in misery."[39] The busts were temporarily saved by the appearance of James Post.

Post was a wealthy New York businessman with a reputation for private charity. His initial benefit to Adelaide Johnson was to lend her $5,000, which she soon repaid owing to the sale of inherited land.[40] But a month after her repayment, Johnson again asked him for money, and by 1915 he was sending her $500 per month. She was grateful for Post's assistance until on one of his visits to her home, he suddenly kissed her. As she protested, he put his hand on her breast. Although she felt an "onslaught of physical emotion," she asked him to leave. Then she dropped into prayer, "as defense and protection." Johnson was fifty-seven. She did not want a lover, but a patron for her art. She was, however, amused that she still evoked such emotions in a man.[41]

In order to solve her financial problems, Johnson wanted an annuity or a house in New York. She believed that she had earned the right to a guaranteed income. In her mind there was a significant difference between an annuity, which would imply recognition of her artistic achievement, and charity, which meant failure.[42] This fierce pride made it difficult for Johnson's friends to help her. She would accept money only as a loan, preferably secured by one or more of her portrait busts; and she spent it to maintain her large house or to purchase art supplies rather than for food.[43]

Post rejected Johnson's request for an annuity as too expensive, but he continued to send her money regularly. During the early years of the first world war, he gave her more than $3,500. His position as chairman of the Sugan Committee for National Defense afforded him frequent opportunities to visit her.[44]

In 1918 Post tried to persuade Johnson to leave her large home and take a small apartment, and to find a job to alleviate her financial distress. Johnson, who could accept no solution which denied her status as a professional artist, communicated her dismay. Post explained to her that he had no interest in art, but provided her assistance for humanitarian reasons, and could do no more than he was doing. Johnson, however, believed his response was due to her rejection of his sexual advances.[45]

In great need of support for her work, Johnson was delighted by the commission Alice Paul offered on behalf of the National Woman's Party. Although Johnson agreed to a price too low to bring her financial benefit, the chance to work again nurtured her artistically.[46]

Buoyed by the commission for The Woman's Movement, Johnson remained committed to her idea of a Gallery of Eminent Women, and it seemed in 1926 that her dream might come true. With money provided by James Post, Johnson purchased a house at 230 Maryland NE in Washington. "That it is mortgaged to the last dollar matters not," she wrote.[47] Keeping her living quarters on the upper floor, Johnson turned the building into a studio-museum.[48] Tastefully decorated in shades of gray, white, and blue, Johnson sewed the floor to ceiling gauze draperies herself and furnished the room sparingly with low, carved Italian

chairs upholstered in royal blue velour.[49] White marble pedestals expertly displayed her portrait busts. Johnson needed only a benefactor to assume the maintainance of her house and "white children" for it to become a shrine.

A benefactor did not appear, and during the 1930s Johnson's income dwindled to almost nothing. Without commissions to execute or feminist causes to champion, she began to put her personal papers in order. She drafted new versions of her articles and biographies, and tried without success to sell her busts.[50] When the newspaper reporters came, as they still occasionally did, Johnson welcomed the public exposure, always living up to the image she had of herself. In 1934 a newspaper described her as living "destitute in a temple of art."[51] The story continued that Johnson, in her seventies but looking much younger

> carries herself with youthful majesty and her gentle voice has a young, vibrant quality; she is full of ideas and her hands are still graceful, expressive as they were years ago . . . she has no money, but she is not poor in spirit.[52]

Johnson was indeed destitute. In 1939, at the age of eighty, she was faced with eviction from her house for failure to pay taxes and interest on the mortgage. Again the newspapers came; and this time they found her gas had been turned off. For heat she depended upon coal brought in little bags by a taxi driver who used to work in her garden.[53] Rather than store her portraits again, Johnson vowed to destroy them, still believing they would be sold for large sums after her death. True to her word, the artist began destroying her "white children" with a sledge hammer.

When the reporters came again they found the bust of Lucretia

Mott was missing the nose; Stanton's curls were hacked away; and the founder of the D.A.R. was missing her head. Other busts were chipped and disfigured--ruined. The temperature inside the house was forty-five degrees.[54] Johnson said she would stop the destruction only if someone bought back her home and endowed her for life.[55] Demonstrating that she truly was not lacking in spirit, she added, "I am a beaten woman, but I am not defeated."[56]

Publicity over the incident elicited a generous response from friends and sympathizers. Representative Sol Bloom of New York, who estimated the value of The Woman's Movement at $100,000,[57] had a special fondness for Johnson. He raised $2,000 and convinced the new owner of 230 Maryland to take the money as rent.[58] Possession of the house was returned to Johnson, and the heat was turned on. She was furious. "Relief, welfare and need are words that are not in my vocabulary," she said.[59] The newspapers liked this feisty woman.

> It's been 53 years since she had to consult a doctor and everybody who knows her knows she's strong and spry as a girl. And just as capable of doing as good work as she ever was. But work now? After what has happened?
>
> "I could but I won't," said Mrs. Johnson, sputtering.
>
> Well, anyhow she still has the house she loves so much.
>
> "I feel as if I were handcuffed to a corpse," she declared.
>
> And how about selling some of her sculptures?
>
> "Of course I haven't sold any of them. And I won't sell any of them. All the ones that were worth selling are ruined."
>
> People didn't understand, she rages, nobody made them understand the kind of person she really is and has been, the beauty of her art and that she wasn't just a little old woman in a tough spot.[60]

The National Woman's Party began paying her rent,[61] but

Johnson's circumstances were still difficult. Two years later the gas company came again to take out her meter. In her diary she wrote, "Alas! Alas!"[62] By 1944 Johnson was living on $44 per month that she received from the Board of Public Welfare, usually supplemented by $10 from Elizabeth.[63]

Johnson's dignity remained undiminished. A relative who visited her often during the late 1930s and early 1940s remembers being entertained "with all the grace and dignity of a queen entertaining her prime minister." She served him soda crackers on delicate plates, and managed to use one tea bag for the both of them and still give the impression of being a great lady. Her busts were proudly displayed in her studio, some of them in profile to hide their disfigurement.[64]

In 1947 Johnson faced another crisis. She was 88, and the National Woman's Party was no longer able to pay her rent.[65] The Board of Public Welfare wanted to put her in St. Elizabeth's, a hospital for the mentally ill that was also used as a repository for unwanted persons.[66]

Meta Grace Keebler had first met Johnson in 1928 when Keebler was touring Washington as the recipient of a national prize for humanitarianism.[67] In 1947 Keebler was living in Washington, a member of the National Woman's Party, and a friend of Johnson. Keebler and her husband William invited Johnson to their home. Their intention was for her to come for a visit before she went to St. Elizabeth's, but Johnson interpreted the offer as one for a permanent home. Soon the Keeblers had grown so fond of Johnson, and she of them, that there was no question of Johnson's leaving. Her possessions, including her

portrait busts, were stored in the Keebler's basement, and their "mi ma," as they called her, became a part of their family. Johnson, grateful for their affection and care, called them her "little white angels."[68]

Johnson took comfort in her new-found security, but she did not fall into idleness. Typically, she refused to relinquish her dream of a Gallery of Eminent Women, and she began trying to raise money to repurchase her studio-home at 230 Maryland. Demonstrating ingenious skill in getting publicity for her efforts, Johnson publically celebrated her 100th birthday in 1947, when she was 88. Traveling extensively with the Keeblers, she appeared on the television program "We the People," and on "Strike It Rich," where she won $500 and attracted contribution pledges of an additional $2,500.[69]

Johnson's years of public speaking stood her in good stead. Asked before a radio interview show if she was nervous, she replied, "Nervous? Oh, no, I'm not nervous—ever."[70] She could come up with a snappy answer to almost any question. Christian Science? "One day I was out walking and my leg was paining me. Suddenly I said, 'Get thee hence, Satan' to the pain—and 'c'mon leg, get along and take your place.' It did." Vegetarianism? "I haven't eaten any dead animals since 1883." Age? "I've never been young and I've never been old." Longevity? "I am afraid I may live forever. I don't want to—I'm tired."[71] Johnson claimed to have known Abraham Lincoln and Rousseau, presumably she meant Henri. In 1952 she was featured in an advertisement for American Airlines in which she claimed to be 105.[72] The same year her birthday was celebrated in the Capitol rotunda near <u>The Woman's</u>

Movement. She was presented with one hundred orchids and words of esteem from Dr. Ernest Cory, whose portrait she had made in 1895, and Representative Wickersham of Oklahoma, who made efforts to help Johnson through Congressional action.[73]

William and Meta Grace Keebler were instrumental in securing Wickersham's support, and he introduced legislation into Congress in 1950, 1951, and 1953 that would pay Johnson $25,000 for The Woman's Movement.[74] Johnson thought the price was reasonable. "Three million dollars was put in the monument to Jefferson," she said, "and he didn't even approve of women's freedom."[75] The bills would also have provided for the purchase of 230 Maryland, a commission for a marble portrait of Johnson, and maintenance of The Woman's Movement. None of the bills passed the Senate or House. Alice Paul opposed them because she thought the original contract had been fulfilled, and it is possible that she was in part responsible for their defeat.[76] The house at 230 Maryland was torn down and replaced by an apartment building.

In July of 1955 Johnson suffered a stroke and was taken to D.C. General Hospital where she rallied briefly, then died on 11 November 1955. She was buried in the Congressional Cemetery in a plot purchased by the Christ Episcopal Church.[77] Although her obituaries, one of which hailed her as a "famed sculptress and oldtime suffragette," listed her age as 108, she was 96.[78] A more fitting tribute appeared in The Washington Daily News twenty years earlier:

> Of such courage the woman's movement flourished, and this little* pioneer still shows in the face of tremendous adversity the spirit that advanced woman's position so much in the last 100 years.[79]
>
> *Johnson objected to the word "little."

NOTES

[1]Ann Lyman Henderson, "Adelaide Johnson: Issues of Professionalism for a Woman Artist" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1981), pp. 91-92 and pp. 388-91.

[2]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 28 Jun. 1932, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[3]Ibid., 10 Sept. 1933.

[4]"Susan Brownell Anthony," DAR Magazine, Feb. 1937; Evanston Daily News, n.d., Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[5]Adelaide Johnson Sculptress--A Tribute, n.d., n.p., Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; "Materials for Use in Observation of Susan B. Anthony Day," Los Angeles City School District, Division of Instruction and Curriculum, Feb. 1940.

[6]Adelaide Johnson Sculptress--A Tribute.

[7]Adelaide Johnson to Bluford and Hazel Jackson, 9 Oct. 1936, property of Bluford and Hazel Jackson, Macomb, Illinois.

[8]Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States (New York: Atheneum, 1971), p. 220.

[9]Sicherman, Barbara et. al., Notable American Women: The Modern Period (Cambridge, Mass.: Belkhap Press, 1980), p. 381; Barbara Sinclair Deckard, The Women's Movement: Political, Socioeconomic, and Psychological Issues (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 282.

[10]Inez Haynes Irwin, The Story of Alice Paul and the National Women's Party (Fairfax, Va.: Denlinger's, 1977), p. 19.

[11]New York Evening Mail, 5 Jan. 1915.

[12]Deckard, pp. 294-95.

[13]"Suffragette Mob Fights Police and Heroes; Six are Arrested," The World, 5 Mar. 1919.

[14]Henderson, p. 218.

[15]Sicherman, p. 381.

[16]Deckard, p. 279.

[17]Ibid., pp. 304-5.

[18]"Woman Does Man's Will," Washington Daily News, 27 Sept. 1946.

[19]"She Trusts to the Occult," no attribution, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[20]Henderson, p. 185.

[21]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 1895, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[22]Ibid., 29 Apt. 1896.

[23]Henderson, p. 168.

[24]Ibid., pp. 171-72.

[25]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 1906, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress; Henderson, p. 172.

[26]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 1 Jan. 1906, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[27]Henderson, p. 174.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Charles L. Johnson to Adelaide Johnson, 6 Jan. 1906, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[30]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 9 Jan. 1906, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[31]Ibid., 1 Feb. 1906.

[32]Ibid., 17 Mar. 1906.

[33]Henderson, p. 174.

[34]Ibid., p. 175.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., p. 176.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid., pp. 176-77.

[39]Ibid., p. 177.

[40]Ibid., p. 178.

[41]Ibid., pp. 179-80.

[42]Ibid., p. 183.

[43]Ibid., p. 186.

[44]Ibid., p. 180.

[45]Ibid., pp. 180-81.

[46]Ibid., p. 182.

[47]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 22 Apt. 1926, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[48]James Jackson to Sidney, 2 Jul. 1979, property of Bluford and Hazel Jackson, Macomb, Illinois.

[49]Helen Buchalter, The Washington Daily News, 12 Jul. 1935, p. 4A.

[50]Henderson, p. 218.

[51]Buchalter, p. 4A.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Newsweek, 27 Nov. 1939.

[54]"Famed Sculptress Smashes Works in Poverty Protest," no attribution, property of Bluford and Hazel Jackson, Macomb, Illinois.

[55]"No Home, No Art Asserts Sculptress," Washington Star, 13 Nov. 1939.

[56]Times Herald, 14 Nov. 1939.

[57]New York Times, 11 Nov. 1955.

[58]Henderson, pp. 219-20.

[59]Washington Evening Star, 14 Nov. 1939.

[60]Martha Strayer, "Sculptress Doing Better, Thank You," Washington Daily News, 30 Nov. 1939.

[61]Henderson, p. 220.

[62]Adelaide Johnson, Diary, 17 May 1941, Adelaide Johnson Collection, Library of Congress.

[63]Ibid., 1944.

[64]James Jackson to Sidney, 2 Jul. 1979.

[65]Henderson, p. 220.

[66]Interview with Meta Grace Keebler, Washington D.C., 16 Apr. 1984.

[67]Mary Knoblauch, "Woman on a Pedestal Is Only a Figure of Speech," Chicago Tribune, 9 Nov. 1974, Sect. 1, p. 17.

[68]Keebler interview.

[69]Tri-County Scribe, 3 Jan. 1952.

[70]"Radio Holds No Fear for Miss Johnson," Washington Post, 5 Apr. 1950.

[71]"Woman Does Man's Will."

[72]Clipping, no attribution, property of Bluford and Hazel Jackson, Macomb, Illinois.

[73]"Adelaide Johnson, Sculptress, Feted on 105th Anniversary," Tri-County Scribe, n.d.

[74]Henderson, p. 220.

[75]Times Herald, 16 Nov. 1939.

[76]Henderson, p. 221.

[77]Ibid.

[78]Time, 21 Nov. 1955.

[79]Washington Daily News, 12 Jul. 1935.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMATION

No less a pioneer than her father, Adelaide Johnson was equally unafraid to take an untried path or stake an unproved claim. While Christopher Johnson tried his hand at panning for gold and town building, his daughter chose a broader and more subtle frontier. She went armed not with a miner's pick, but a sculptor's mallet.

Females realize at an early age that their prerogatives are different from those of males, and while most nineteenth century women accepted the limitations of their society, a few did not. If that century produced a plethora of obedient Victorian women, it also produced Isadora Duncan, Beatrice Webb, and Annie Oakley. One might wonder where Adelaide Johnson found a role model to inspire her on Mt. Vernon farm in rural west central Illinois. If, in fact, no feminists or artists came to buy butter churned on the back porch of the Johnson cabin or hitched a wagon ride to town on Sunday, Adelaide Johnson had only to look to her parents for models of independence, self-sufficiency, and faith in one's own ability to overcome obstacles.

Johnson's early inclinations must have provoked questions within her similar to those which plagued the British socialist and writer Beatrice Webb, who was born the year before Johnson. "Why should a mortal be born with so much courage and patience in the pursuit of

the ideal," Webb asked, "and with such a beggerly allowance of power wherewith to do it."[1] Unlike Johnson, Webb was born to high social position and wealth in one of the most highly civilized countries in the world; but her situation, and her limited prerogatives, were strikingly similar to Johnson's.

In a provocative book titled The Feminine Imagination, Patricia Spacks discusses woman's conflicting needs for love and freedom.[2] While these needs are not peculiar to the female sex, the conflict between them is. Women typically receive love through their families, by marrying and mothering, living selfless lives of service, for which they receive praise and revered devotion. In exchange for this love, women give up their freedom—freedom to develop their personalities, their potentialities, and their aspirations. To attempt to have both love and freedom is a twentieth century idea; nineteenth century women were convinced of the futility of such an attempt. Though it was not always a conscious choice, most women chose the security of convention and love over the solitary uncertainty of freedom, a frightening prospect unless one was possessed of an adventurous spirit and sustained by a sure self-confidence.

Adelaide Johnson was one nineteenth century woman who chose to place her need for freedom ahead of her need for love. Her choice is first apparent in 1875, when she decided to become an artist. This very choosing, according to Spack's analysis, was an act of freedom, a rejection of her Victorian female existence by "refusing to accept the given conditions of live as definitive,"[3] an attitude with which Christopher and Margaret Johnson would hardly have disagreed. At

sixteen, Johnson probably did not realize the forfeit she had made. Later in St. Louis, her world expanding with breathtaking speed, Johnson fell in love. She may only then have become aware of the conflict between love and freedom. Johnson's art was the means by which she found freedom. More than a career, it was also a lifestyle and an attitude toward living. Her early successes in woodcarving were encouraging, but Johnson knew she needed more training and a wider experience to develop her potential as an artist. She was a few years older and more conscious of the choice she was making when she relinquished the love of Henry Whitney, and later of Alexander Jenkins, for freedom to pursue her art. Johnson's love for Jenkins was sincere, but she was finally forced to choose between him and her career. The choice was a painful one, and her distress at losing him lasted throughout her life. In her old age she told a relative that Jenkins had begged her to marry him again a few years before his death, a confidence that may reveal more about her emotions than actual events.[4]

Johnson's failed relationship with Jenkins convinced her that neither marriage nor a romantic affair were possible for her, and she avoided all other liaisons, including the one with James Post.

In many ways Johnson appears to have sublimated her sexuality for long periods of time. She apparently had no serious romances during the long period between her breakup with Whitney and the beginning of her relationship with Jenkins, or after her divorce. Although she was sexually attracted to James Post, she never considered a romantic relationwhip with him.

At the same time, her clothing, some of which is preserved in

the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., appears to refute the idea of a repressed sexuality. Johnson designed and sewed her own clothing, even to the lace and buttons. Made of exotic fabrics including velvet and satin, her gowns complemented her diminutive figure in a way that has been described as "coquettish" and "titillating." For her "official portrait," taken about 1896, Johnson wore a camisole, hardly typical Victorian outerwear.[5]

Although Johnson's sexuality is not overtly expressed in her art, Patricia Spacks suggests that by offering herself as an artistic product, an artist also offers herself as a sexual being.[6] The artist then vicariously experiences love by watching her art evoke an emotional response.

Through her feminist activities, Johnson developed associations and friendships with other women that brought her love without compromising her freedom. She also belonged to a large number of organizations which provided her with comradeship; and she maintained warm relationships with family members, including relatives near her birthplace in Plymouth. Although she visited there only twice after her departure in 1875, Johnson maintained these ties through correspondence. An inveterate letter writer, the record she kept of her correspondence shows that she wrote an average of fifty letters a month.

Rejecting traditional means of receiving love, Johnson accepted substitutes such as platonic love, comradeship, affiliation, and the vicarious love experienced by the artist. Her need for love was always subordinated to her art, and her art was always subordinated to her feminism, for through her feminism she achieved freedom.

But as Patricia Spacks points out, "freedom is only a word, its implications always contradicted by reality, and the idea of a free woman is as illusory as that of a free society."[7] The freedom that Johnson attained was a limited and conventional one, because while she rejected the traditional female role, she accepted its more subtle definition. Career opportunities were limited for the nineteenth century woman, and the arguments that women used to gain admittance to the world of men nearly always centered on some aspect of traditional roles and notions of humanitarianism, an expansion of typical feminine roles. Women, for example, argued for admittance into medicine because of their supposed natural nurturing and ministering instincts, and in the name of propriety. Social workers, librarians, and teachers sought careers in the name of "social progress."[7] Only a male could guiltlessly pursue a career for his own personal advancement.

By devoting her work to political art, to the immortalization of people she thought worthy of guiding future generations, Johnson made her work humanitarian, and therefore socially acceptable. She was no Isadora Duncan, and she eschewed the narcissistic lifestyle which was a characteristic of the avant-garde dancer.

Johnson's adulation of her "blessed three," Mott, Stanton, and Anthony, exemplifies her own conventional search for freedom. These women had also sought to be free and to broaden their prerogatives, but they chose to do it within "the system" rather than outside the fabric of society.

Like an artist, like her "blessed three," and like the early pioneers, Adelaide Johnson refused to "accept the domination of external

circumstance.[10] In this refusal, she became herself a pioneer—as a political artist, and as a self-defining woman. In return she relinquished financial security and the conventional feminine means of receiving love. She did so not without regret, but because she found no alternative acceptable.

On viewing The Woman's Movement, the poet Edna St. Vincent Millay was moved to write a verse which she titled The Pioneers. The poem is a tribute to Mott, Stanton, and Anthony, but it is an equally fitting eulogy for Adelaide Johnson:

> Upon this marble bust that is not I
> Lay the round, formal wreath that is not fame;
> But in the forum of my silenced cry
> Root ye the living tree whose sap is flame.
> I, that was proud and valiant, am no more;
> Save as a dream that wanders wide and late,
> Save as a wind that rattles the stout door,
> Troubling the ashes in the sheltered grate.
> The stone will perish; I shall be twice dust.
> Only my standard on a taken hill
> Can cheat the mildew and the red-brown rust
> And make immortal my adventurous will.
> Even now the silk is tugging at the staff;
> Take up the song, forget the epitaph.[11]

NOTES

[1]Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie, eds., The Diary of Beatrice Webb, vol. 1, 1873-1892 (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1982), p. 121.

[2]This discussion is heavily indebted to chapter eight, "Free Women," in Patricia Meyer Spacks, The Female Imagination (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975).

[3]Ibid., p. 159.

[4]James Jackson to Sidney, 2 Jul. 1979, property of Bluford and Hazel Jackson, Macomb, Ill.

[5]Meta Grace Keebler to Shirley Burton, 26 Feb. 1985; Ann Lyman Henderson, "Adelaide Johnson: Issues of Professionalism for a Woman Artist (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1981), p. 144.

[6]Spacks, p. 166.

[7]Ibid., p. 309.

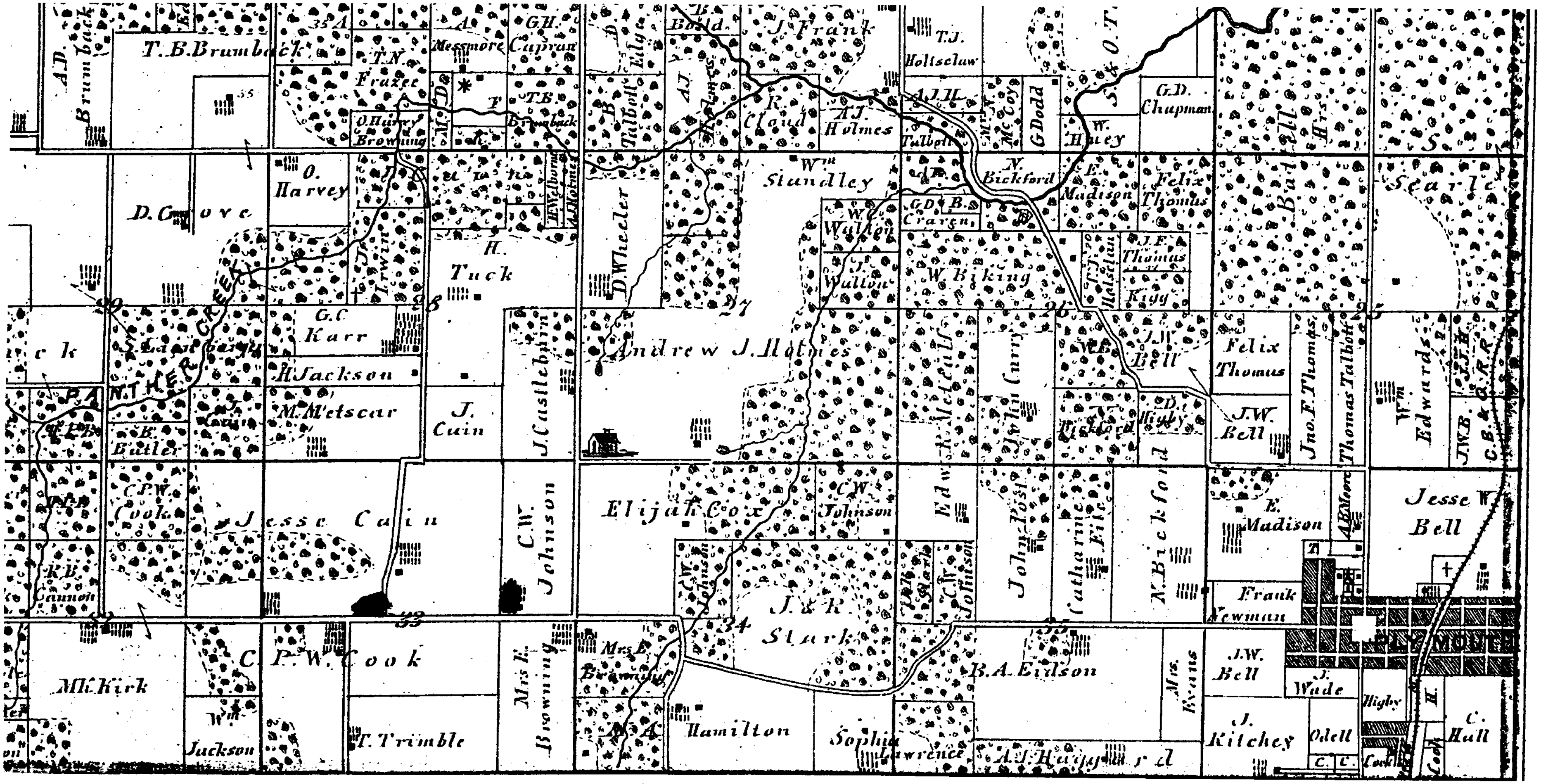
[8]Henderson, pp. 224-25.

[9]Spacks, p. 316.

[10]Ibid., p. 163.

[11]Edna St. Vincent Millay, Buck in the Snow and Other Poems (New York: Harper Bros., 1928), p. 66.

APPENDIX



Home of Christopher Johnson family ■ School District #197, Cain School, known as Monkey Hill"

Map from Charles A. Gilchrist, An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Hancock County, Illinois. Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1874.

Adelaide Johnson's "official portrait," Circa 1896.

Maria Whiting, 1894
Collection of Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois

Reverend Miram Thomas, 1900
Collection of the Chicago Historical Society

PORTRAIT MONUMENT TO LUCRETIA MOTT ELIZABETH CADY STANTON AND SUSAN B ANTHONY

Adelaide Johnson, sculptress

The Woman's Movement, 1920
Located in the U.S. Capitol, Washington

SOURCES CONSULTED

Manuscript Collections

Jackson Collection. Private collection of Bluford and Hazel Jackson, Macomb, Illinois.

Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois. Archives. Maria Whiting Papers.

Library of Congress. Manuscript Division. Adelaide Johnson Collection.

Articles

Buchalter, Helen. Washington Daily News. 12 July 1935.

Colby, Clara Bewick. Woman's Tribune. 1 February 1896.

"Ella Wheeler Wilcox in an Artist's Gallery of American Immortals." New York Evening Journal. 3 May 1905.

"Had a 'White Evening.'" No attribution. /1896/ Property of Virginia Metzger, Plymouth, Illinois.

Hallwas, John. "Famous Sculptor From Plymouth." Macomb Journal. 7 November 1982.

Howard, Clinton N., ed. Progress. December 1939.

Knoblauch, Mary. "Woman on a Pedestal is Only a Figure of Speech." Chicago Tribune. 9 November 1974.

"Milwaukee Woman Visits Father's Birthplace Here." Tri-County Scribe. 23 October 1952.

"No Home, No Art Asserts Sculptress." Washington Star. 13 November 1939.

"Radio Holds No Fear for Miss Johnson." Washington Post. 5 April 1950.

Smith, Jean B. Cook. "Life in Marble--Speech in Silence." New American Woman. June 1917.

Strayer, Martha. "Sculptress Doing Better, Thank You." Washington Daily News. 30 November 1939.

"Suffragist Spells Beauty to Sculptor." Washington Post. 13 September 1939.

"Susan Brownell Anthony." DAR Magazine. February 1937.

"World Noted Genius Visits Plymouth Friends." Tri-County Scribe. 29 September 1925.

Books

Anthony, Katharine. Susan B. Anthony: Her Personal History and Her Era. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1954.

Bates, Minnie Montanye and Mayhugh, Geraldine Hemp. McDonough County, Illinois 1850 Federal Census. Owensboro, Kentucky: McDowell, 1981.

Board of Supervisors, Hancock County, Illinois. History of Hancock County, Illinois. Carthage, Illinois: Journal Printing, 1968.

Chapman, Ruth L. et. al. 1850 Census of Schuyler County, Illinois. n.p.: Schuyler-Brown Historical and Genealogical Society, n.d.

Clement, Clara Erskine. Women in the Fine Arts. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1904.

Conrad, Susan Phinney. Perish the Thought: Intellectual Women in Romantic America, 1830-1860. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Coolidge, Olivia. Women's Rights: The Suffrage Movement in America 1848-1920. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1967.

Craven, Wayne. Sculpture in America. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968.

Deckard, Barbara Sinclair. The Woman's Movement: Political, Socioeconomic, and Psychological Issues. New York: Harper & Row, 1979.

Dodd, Loring Holmes. The Golden Age of American Sculpture. Boston: Chapman & Grimes, Mt. Vernon Press, 1936.

Elliott, Maud Howe, ed. Art and Handicraft in the Woman's Building of the World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1894.

Fairman, Charles E. Art and Artists of the Capitol of the United States of America. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1927.

Flexner, Eleanor. Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States. New York: Atheneum, 1971.

Fry, Smith D. Fry's Patriotic Story of the Capitol. n.p.: Smith D. Fry, 1912.

Gardner, Albert Ten Eyck. American Sculpture. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1965.

Grierson, Francis. The Valley of Shadows. New York: John Lane, 1913.

Hallwas, John E. Thomas Gregg: Early Illinois Journalist and Author. Macomb, Illinois: Western Illinois Monograph Series, 1983.

Hallwas, John E. Western Illinois Heritage. Macomb, Illinois: Illinois Heritage Press, 1983.

Hancock County Historical Society. Historic Sites and Structures of Hancock County, Illinois. Carthage, Illinois: Journal Printing, 1979.

Harper, Ida Husted. Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony. New York: Arno & the New York Times, 1969.

Irwin, Inez Haynes. The Story of Alice Paul and the National Women's Party. Fairfax, Virginia: Denlingers, 1977.

Johnson, Charles Beneulyn. Illinois in the Fifties. Champaign, Illinois: Flanigan-Pearson, 1918.

Kraditor, Aileen S. The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.

MacKenzie, Norman and Jeanne, eds. The Diary of Beatrice Webb. Vol. 1: 1873-1892. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belkhap Press, 1982.

McSpadden, J. Walker. Famous Sculptors of America. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1924.

Millay, Edna St. Vincent. Buck in the Snow and Other Poems. New York: Harper Brothers, 1928.

National Sculptor Society of New York. Contemporary American Sculpture. San Francisco: National Sculptor Society, 1929.

Pease, Theodore Calvin. The Story of Illinois. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925.

Pierce, Bessie Louise. A History of Chicago. Vol 3: The Rise of a Modern City 1871-1893. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957.

Record of the Centenary of Knox College and Galesburg. Galesburg, Illinois: Published by the College, 1938.

Scofield, Charles J. History of Hancock County. Vol. II. Chicago: Munsell, 1921.

Sicherman, Barbara et. al. Notable American Women: The Modern Period.

Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belkhap Press, 1980.

Spacks, Patricia Meyer. The Female Imagination. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975.

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. Eighty Years and More. New York: European, 1898.

Taft, Lorado. The History of American Sculpture. New York: Macmillan, 1903.

Vassar College Art Gallery. The White, Marmorean Flock: Nineteenth Century American Women Neoclassical Sculptors. Poughkeepsie, New York: Merchants Press, 1972.

Webster, Martha Farnham. Seventy-Five Significant Years: The Story of Knox College 1837-1912. Galesburg, Illinois: Wagoner, 1912.

Weimann, Jeanne Madeline. The Fair Women. Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1981.

Young, E. H. A History of Round Prairie and Plymouth 1831-1875. Chicago: Geo. J. Titus, 1876.

Interviews

Beadles, Wayne. Plymouth, Illinois. Interview, 2 June 1984.

Jackson, Bluford. Macomb, Illinois. Interview, 7 June 1984.

Jackson, Hazel. Macomb, Illinois. Interview, 7 June 1984.

Keebler, Meta Grace. Washington, D.C. Interviews 13, 15, & 16 April 1984.

Unpublished Works

Davey, Martha. "A History of Plymouth." Graduation Theme, Plymouth High School, 1913.

Godfrey, K. W. "Causes of Mormon Non-Mormon Conflict in Hancock County, Illinois." Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1967.

Henderson, Ann Lyman. "Adelaide Johnson: Issues of Professionalism for a Woman Artist." Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1981.

Public Documents

Cook County, Illinois. Superior Court. "Adelaide Johnson vs. Central

Music Hall Co." Declaration. (1882).

Hancock County, Illinois. Land Records. Vols. 72, 80, 89.

Hancock County, Illinois. Marriage Index. Vol. 3.

Hancock County, Illinois. Probate Records, Boxes 37, 126.

Knox County, Illinois. Appellate Court. "Adelaide Johnson vs. Julia W. Tryon, Administratrix." Abstract of Record. (1898).

Knox County, Illinois. Appellate Court. "Adelaide Johnson vs. Julia W. Tryon, Administratrix." Brief and Argument for Appellant. (1898).

Knox County, Illinois. Appellate Court. "Adelaide Johnson vs. Julia W. Tryon, Administratrix." Statement on Behalf of Appellee. (1898).

U.S. Congress. House. A Bill to Provide for National Recognition of Adelaide Johnson, the Sculptor of The Women's Movement and for Other Purposes. H.R. 192, 83rd Congress, 1st session, January 3, 1953.

U.S. Congress. House. A Bill to Provide for National Recognition of Adelaide Johnson, the Sculptor of The Women's Movement and for Other Purposes. H.R. 193, 83rd Congress, 1st session, January 3, 1953.

U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Population. Hancock County, St. Mary's Township.

U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Population. Hancock County, St. Mary's Township.

U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Agriculture. Hancock County, St. Mary's Township.

U.S. Government Printing Office. Compilation of Works of Art and Other Objects in the United States Capitol. Washington, 1965.