

CITIZENSHIP FOR THE COMMON GOOD: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MARY RITTER BEARD (1876-1958)

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In its 1995 definition of social studies, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) explicitly identifies “citizenship for the common good” as the purpose of social studies education. The roots of this perspective can be traced to early twentieth-century educators. In their introduction to the seminal *1916 Report of the Committee on Social Studies* the authors declared that the “social studies of the American high school should have for their conscious and constant purpose the cultivation of good citizenship.”¹ Between then and now there has been general agreement concerning the centrality of this purpose for social studies education, but considerably less consensus regarding what terms such as *citizenship* and *democracy* mean, or about *how* citizenship can best be developed in an educational context.²

In an article on the founders of social studies, James L. Barth and S. Samuel Shermis suggest that one way to assess the multiple implications of these critical terms, in the past and today, is to study the work of foundational thinkers in social studies education who wrote about them.³ Margaret Smith Crocco takes this point a step further by arguing that we should not only examine the work of the so-called “great masters,” but also the contributions of individuals who worked outside of the structural boundaries of NCSS in influencing social education.⁴

This article examines the work of one such person, historian Mary Ritter Beard (1876-1958). A well known figure among women historians, Mary Beard has only recently been considered within the context of social studies education.⁵ Raised and educated in the Midwest, Beard married American historian Charles A. Beard in 1900 and became a leader in the American women’s suffrage movement. She advocated social and economic reforms for workers, co-authored several important history textbooks with her husband, wrote a number of groundbreaking books on women’s history, and worked tirelessly in the effort to develop women’s archives.

Mary Beard played no direct role in the structural development of social studies as a field, but she, more than anyone else of her generation, worked to bring women's history to American classrooms. What is less known is the fact that she also wrote and spoke extensively on the related topics of democracy, citizenship, and education. During the course of her life as scholar and activist, she developed a vision of civic agency that placed women of all classes at the center of community and national life. This woman-centered lens, employed at a time when many foundational social studies educators were grappling with notions of democracy and citizenship, makes her contribution to social education significant.

An historical analysis of Mary Beard's educational thought also raises important questions about the connection between women's history and citizenship. *American Citizenship* (1915), the first high school textbook that the Beards wrote, portrays civic life as dynamic and progressive. Students, they argued, should see themselves as "creative factors in social life" rather than "automatons moving in a world already finished."⁶ Beard, who believed that women had a special creative role to play in civic life, argued that early twentieth century women would be more likely to contribute to public life if they saw themselves as part of a long history of female activism.

Reflecting progressive themes of her day, many of Beard's arguments were typical of early twentieth-century reformers as well as of social reconstructionists in the 1930s. Like them, she argued that democracy should be a tool to achieve a just society in which marginalized groups are forgotten. What made Beard different was her decades-long focus on the role that women should play in fashioning such a democracy. She contended that the failure of early twentieth-century women to embrace their civic responsibilities, as well as their hard-won rights, was largely the result of their failed educations. She argued that education, rightly conceived, had the power to inspire higher levels of civic participation. From the 1920s through the 1940s, Beard engaged in a relentless attack on what she perceived to be a male-dominated curriculum in schools and colleges—a curriculum that failed to inspire civic engagement in women and that failed to prepare teachers to critique and change such a system. Whether or not Beard was right to believe that education, as she conceived it, could accomplish all that she envisioned, her arguments certainly go far in helping social studies educators to consider, in new ways, the familiar terms *democracy* and *citizenship*.

Establishing a Context

Mary Beard's views on democracy and citizenship developed within

the crucible of her own activism on behalf of labor and suffrage causes. Coming of age at the turn of the century, Beard found herself in the midst of a world that was economically and socially dynamic and intellectually vibrant. Both Beards fully immersed themselves in this world and became part of what Richard Hofstadter describes as, "the critical intelligentsia in the United States."⁷ These thinkers turned a critical and reform-minded eye to contemporary society.

In many respects, the first decade of the twentieth century was shaped by a sense of optimism. The country had survived much of the late nineteenth century economic turmoil brought on by industrialization and was looking forward. Innovations in technology had resulted in dramatic increases in agricultural and industrial production.⁸ Newly found cures and treatments for many diseases improved health conditions, and life expectancy was at an all-time high.⁹ As historian, John Milton Cooper, Jr. suggests, "Horizons often seemed unlimited in 1900 because-compared with all previous human experience-they were."¹⁰ Cooper is quick to point out, however, that these horizons extended much further for some Americans than others.

Wealth and privileges in the United States at this time remained highly inequitable. In 1890 the wealthiest 1 percent of families owned 51 percent of the real and personal property; the 44 percent of families at the bottom owned only 1.2 percent of all the property.¹¹ Poor families were forced to contend with child labor, industrial accidents, and deplorable living conditions. Political and social benefits were also unequally distributed in America. Though by rights slightly less than half of the adult population was eligible to vote, in reality far fewer actually did. Over 95 percent of American women could not vote.¹² Despite passage of the fifteenth amendment, few black men actually voted because of barriers established through the use of poll taxes, literacy tests, and limitations on registrations. Language barriers and a lack of familiarity with the system also made it difficult for newly arriving immigrants to become voting citizens.

Social and economic reform movements developed in response to these issues. Though reform efforts took on a variety of forms, they were often designed to end the abuses of monopolies, to institute municipal reforms, or to protect the principles of democratic government.¹³ Many social reformers, who were heirs of nineteenth century liberalism began to question the principles of a self guiding economy and to emphasize "positive as well as negative liberty, duties as well as rights."¹⁴ Taken collectively these reform movements have been viewed under the umbrella title of *progressivism*.¹⁵

Mary Beard's work as an activist in labor and suffrage causes and

later as a writer and educational reformer fits squarely under this umbrella. Women, she argued, should use their votes and their educations to promote the common good. Suffrage was to be a tool used by women to ensure the election of political leaders who would fight for economic fairness and social justice. She encouraged women and the institutions that educated them to reject the individualistic capitalism established by men in power and to work for democratic and economic reforms that would benefit all classes. This work would require women to view citizenship as a dynamic process in which to participate rather than something one could "achieve."

Beard's Vision of Democracy

As early as 1914, Mary and Charles Beard had defined the democratic ideal as "cooperation or union of effort for the common good."¹⁶ They described government's purpose as doing those things which individuals could not do alone and regulating "the doings of private persons in such a manner as to improve the general standard of life, labor, and education."¹⁷ The Great Depression in the 1930s further strengthened their belief in the need for appropriate government regulations.¹⁸

Mary Beard consistently linked her vision of democracy to social and economic conditions. Like George Counts and other social reconstructionists who wrote about democracy and schooling in the 1930s, Mary Beard connected democracy and democratic education with social class and called for schools and colleges to define democracy in these terms. In a 1937 speech to the AAUW Biennial Convention, Beard suggested that the challenge for educators was crystallizing into a struggle over two radically different notions of democracy. She described one as the "individualistic and ruthless competitive capitalistic democracy marching under the banner of laissez-faire" and the other as the "socializing democracy marching under the banner of humanism."¹⁹ She told her audience of women that they had a critical role to play in this struggle; a responsibility to bring a feminine perspective to the debate.

To Beard, university women faced an important question in the 1930s. After gaining access to formal education, how would they use it? Would they use it to compete in a "tooth and claw" man's world or would they use it to change the educational system from which they came? She argued that women should strengthen the "bonds of common life" and promote a democracy that protected all of its citizens.²⁰

From early in her adult life, Mary Beard opposed the goal of women gaining equality with men. Because she strongly objected to the way that men in power had fashioned democracy, emphasizing freedom to build personal success and not responsibility to the larger community, she con-

sidered gaining equality in such a system an unworthy goal. In short, she wanted women to set a new standard for democracy. Beard was especially concerned about how the push for equality, favored by most feminists, was manifesting itself in women's education.

Beginning in the 1920s, Beard criticized schools and colleges for failing to incorporate women's perspectives in curriculum, and she implored women to recognize this deficiency and to push for change. In an address to the American Association of University Women in 1933, Beard tried to convince women of the danger in striving for whatever men have. In developing this argument, she relied on tools from the newly developing field of cultural anthropology with its integrated approach to all human experiences.²¹ In this case, Beard focused on the integrated nature of education and the economy. In her speech, she argued that democratic education in America developed in conjunction with a bourgeois, capitalistic society. This society created "a school system designed to fit young people into its dominant scheme of things." Women, she said, were "intimately involved" in this process.²²

Beard argued that as women and girls adapted to the educational accompaniment of capitalism, they began to abandon the social value of education and to strive for equality with men in an increasingly individualistic system. She wrote,

Every new post won within the seats of learning that brought women nearer the highest post held by a man was cause for exultation ... There was intense gratification that women could compose just as rigid documents for their doctoral theses as the most sterile man ...²³

In their effort to gain equality, white feminists, who traced their roots to the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, rejoiced in a woman's ability to prove herself capable of a man's education without questioning the validity of that education. Beard put it this way,

Their conception of education was simple because it trailed men's; what was good enough for men was perfect for women. And the men's was simple because it relied instinctively on power, instead of reckoning rationally on the antithesis of power. Men believed in the perpetuity of rugged individualism, centering on "catch as catch can." Unfortunately, for them and for their adherents, by 1929 the catch seemed to have worked out and we began to hear about the Lost Generation.²⁴

In Beard's view, "reactionary" capitalism had "met its Waterloo" and it was time to recognize that its "shadowing bourgeois education" was failing.²⁵

In a speech given at a luncheon for Nebraska teachers,²⁶ Beard continued this attack on laissez-faire capitalism by insisting that education springs from and mirrors the larger culture²⁷ in which it is situated. In her

eyes, American culture, beginning in the 1870s, became dominated by a pernicious strain of social Darwinism.²⁸ American colleges began schooling their students in this competitive tradition, teaching them that it was acceptable for the “rich resources of this continent” to be “clutched and dug up and cut down and appropriated in the interests of the few” who were deemed “fit to survive.” Education, she believed was “mirroring culture in its stage of the rawest capitalism.”²⁹

Like other social reconstructionists, Beard suggested that schools must not lag behind in cultural change, tied to a tradition that no longer matched the changing economic reality. When women failed to offer a new vision for American culture and education, Beard blamed colleges and universities. Women graduates, she argued, lacked historical role models who could help them construct an alternative perspective on education. As far as they knew, women prior to the late nineteenth century had no educational opportunities, a point that Beard goes to great lengths to refute. “What we now have is the instruction of young men and women in the history of men—of men’s minds and manners,” she pointed out in 1935; “in not one college of this country—man’s woman’s or co-educational—is there any comprehensive treatment of women’s contributions to civilization and culture.”³⁰ Instead, she claims, the “tissue” of history “consists of threads instinctively selected from men’s activities in war, business, and politics, woven together according to a pattern of male prowess and power as conceived in the mind of man.”³¹ Despite the limited historical perspective offered to them, newly educated college women were reluctant to criticize the male-oriented institutions in which they had been educated.

In a 1937 speech for the Mount Holyoke Centenary, Mary Beard did not conceal her sarcasm in pointing out this reluctance. She suggested that women were expected to believe that education was an isolated body of knowledge created by men and long in their exclusive guardianship and that American women should be grateful that their country pioneered in giving them “equal access” to this body of knowledge. “It is not incumbent upon women,” she chides, “to criticize this education so lavishly opened to them now.” What Mary Beard most wanted women to understand was that they had a rich educational history of their own; that their foremothers left them a legacy of concern for the “common life” rather than for personal gain at all costs. The reconstruction of American education along less individualistic lines depended upon their ability to recognize this and to accept responsibility in continuing the legacy.³² In a 1935 article for *Independent Woman*, she wrote,

When the writer hears women today refer to themselves as ‘children’, as

'novices in the field of social and political affairs', ... it makes her sick to the bone. For these assertions betray such a lamentable ignorance of history and display such an inexcusable inferiority complex, such a break with tradition ... that her fear lest the women of today may prove, not inferior to men, but inferior to the women of the past mounts to a fever.³⁵

Much of the ignorance and the sense of inferiority displayed by women, Beard attributed to the negative impact of education, as it existed at that time.

As a result of her frustration with the status quo, Mary Beard, at every available speaking engagement during the 1930s, discussed the long and rich history of women's education.³⁴ Citing recent work in cultural anthropology, she began with prehistoric women whom she credited with creating the original human culture by "divorcing the human from the brute through their invention of industrial arts and the pursuit of them at the hearth." With her usual breadth, Beard discussed Greek and Roman women, and Christian women such as the seventh century Abbess of Whitby who educated both sexes in medieval Christian monasteries, nuns in a convent in Ripoli who issued eighty volumes of pre-Christian literature, and French salon women during the Enlightenment.

Beard also discussed, at length, the Japanese women who had been trained in feudal practices and Buddhist philosophy long before they began to get "catholic [sic] and protestant [sic] indoctrinations and classical economics" from the West.³⁵ She expressed her admiration for Japanese women when she wrote,

With high determination and steadfast courage, Japanese women who had been equally educated responded to the social crisis, brought on through aggressive Commodore Perry's naval coercion; they founded schools for native girls with a view to helping them make the transition from feudalism to commercialism as safely and sanely as possible. Buddhist women thus directed women's education in the reconstruction era of the 19th century in Japan.³⁶

Using Japanese women as an example, Beard hoped to demonstrate that the late nineteenth century western vision of schooling was a rather limited one.

Though Beard would never have suggested that women should have less opportunity than men to attend universities, she wanted college educated women to recognize that their educational history, as women, began long before the first American woman set foot in an institution of higher learning. Women outside of the academy had long been a force for education aimed at social progress. Beard actually first made this point before she earned a reputation as a public speaker at schools and colleges.

In *Women's Work in Municipalities*, published in 1915, Beard devoted the first chapter to an examination of all that women were currently

doing in the field of education. By 1915 Beard was already deeply interested in the power of women, university educated or not, to transform public schools. She credited women, working both individually and as part of women's clubs and educational associations, with developing programs in special education, vocational guidance, summer schooling, and delinquency counseling; campaigning for school libraries, gardens, playgrounds, and kindergarten programs; and establishing cleaner and more decorative schools.³⁷ To support these claims, she provides numerous specific examples of schools and individuals.³⁸

Mary Beard considered the historical record of women in education, both individually and collectively, to be quite impressive. It was a record of strength, courage, and perseverance in the face of few opportunities, and often, direct opposition. Women, she insisted, should learn the record, be proud of it, and connect to it. Their degree of willingness to accept this civic responsibility would measure the role that they could play in the reconstruction of education and of democratic society dedicated to ensuring the common good.

Active Citizenship

Mary Beard's vision of democracy as a means to ensure the protection of the common good as opposed to the protection of individual wealth and property shaped her view of citizenship. Beard's early articles for *The Woman Voter* presaged many of her views on citizenship, but one of the most direct statements of her beliefs came with the 1914 publication of *American Citizenship*. There were many civics textbooks on the market at that time, but the Beards wanted to provide an alternative perspective on American citizenship.

In the preface of their book, the Beards explain that existing texts typically fell into one of two categories.³⁹ Those in the first group tended to treat government as a "multitude of rules already well settled which, when committed to memory, are calculated to make good and wise citizens."⁴⁰ The second group of authors, the Beards believed, revolted too strongly against this tradition by "minimizing those concrete political and administrative processes by which social work of a public character is accomplished and emphasizing in civics private activities which are remote from official operations." The Beards hoped to write a textbook that explored the connections between what was considered public and private, and that recognized the complexity and dynamism of civic life. In fact, they chiefly criticized texts of the day from both groups for portraying civic life as static or settled; as a "machine" to be mastered rather than a "process" to be lived.⁴¹

The Beards were also critical of texts that viewed civics as nothing more than a community study designed to teach students the functions of street cleaners and local charities. In keeping with themes that Mary Beard had stressed in her *Woman Voter* articles, the Beards, in *American Citizenship*, contend that a community must be studied within the context of the social forces that have impact upon it. They explain, "Just as the mother cannot act intelligently in the home unless she knows about the play of outside force the home, so the citizen cannot act intelligently in the community unless he views it in its proper relation to the state and nation."⁴² The founders of social studies later confronted this question of "community civics" as well.

The Beards wanted to produce a textbook that was not written wholly from a masculine point of view. They make the point that civics concerns the whole community and that women comprised half of any given community at the time that their book was written, and more than half of the students in high school classrooms. They argue that,

Women are the mothers whom society holds largely responsible for the health and conduct of citizens; they are engaged in industries and professions of all kinds; they are taxpayers; they are subject to the laws; they suffer neglect from the government as do the men; and they are just as deeply interested in government - whether they vote or not.⁴³

Mary Beard believed that it was time for a civics textbook to be written that would be responsive to the needs of young women.

In *American Citizenship*, the Beards describe citizenship as a process in which an individual should accept his/her responsibility to improve conditions for all people. To Mary Beard what women citizens were able to "win from society" was of "secondary importance to what they give back in the way of benefits."⁴⁴ She made this point again in a series of articles that she wrote for *Independent Woman* in the 1930s. "A new trail into the future must be blazed by 1935's women," she claimed. "Imitateness of men is a brief, recent phase. Feminine energy and initiative have marked history." Beard refers to a new trail, but essentially she wanted women to return to what she considered their pre-industrial historic traditions.⁴⁵

Beard believed that if the only people who benefited from gains made by individual women were the women themselves, no one else would remain interested in a woman's movement. Was it enough for a woman to be a member of Congress if she did nothing to change the institution or the country? Was it enough to know that a "woman laborer was earning her wages on the same terms as a man in a tuberculosis-infected dump?"⁴⁶ Beard argued that in the early days of the woman's movement it was easy to talk about equality because there was "wild freedom to philosophize

about what women would accomplish when they got the chance.”⁴⁷ Having gained the franchise, access to higher education, and more employment opportunities, women were starting to get that chance. As citizens of a democracy, they had the responsibility to be a creative force. This responsibility was never greater than during the Great Depression. Writing in 1934, she states, “... up-to-date nation-planning, since 1929, has mainly concentrated on business operations. If it is to be designed for good living as well as business stability, it is high time that women began to enter the field of planning. So much of the responsibility for the good life or its failure is theirs.”⁴⁸

Beard further believed that ordinary women should play a leading role in this process. From her experiences living in England, working in the American suffrage movement, and traveling overseas, Beard had great faith in working-class women with little or no formal education. Mary and Charles Beard traveled to Japan in 1922-23 and to Yugoslavia in 1927.⁴⁹ Mary's experiences on these trips seemed to solidify what she had learned about working women at the turn-of-the-century in England. As Barbara Turoff points out, Beard was especially impressed with how Japanese women used the arts to foster social reform. More than twenty years after her visit to Japan, she wrote to a friend,

I used to go to labor meetings there frequently and sing with the men and women there, see their sensitive labor plays, listen to their own composed music which was sung to the lovely biwa, thrill over what seemed to me to be a hopeful drive against exploitation and headed toward a *civil-ization* in that land of esthetic tastes.⁵⁰

In the last years of her life when she wrote *The Making of Charles Beard* (1955), Mary Beard spent several pages of a short volume (thirty-five pages) talking about their trips to Japan and Yugoslavia and the impression that these trips made on them.⁵¹

Speaking of their experiences in Yugoslavia, Beard expresses the admiration they felt for the Montenegrins, a minority group in Yugoslavia. She writes that the,

Extraordinary ability they manifested to guard the soil from erosion by stone terraces, and to produce sheep, wool and food for their needs was ever afterwards a memory of human power to wrest necessities out of apparent impossibilities.⁵²

Mary Beard became convinced that in a crisis it was often the peasant who came up with creative solutions. In 1931, a *New York Herald-Tribune* writer who was covering a conference of business women where Beard spoke, quoted her as saying, “The greatest contributions of women to history had been made by those without college degrees, contributions

based on their humanitarian or imaginative qualities.”⁵³ “Mainly on the side-lines”, she says, “have stood the cheering theorists while the struggle for a livelihood in an industrial urban era has been waged by countless individuals and unnumbered masses impelled by necessity.” To count for something, Beard suggests, educated women needed to engage in civic life in ways that expanded public responsibility.⁵⁴

Women of all classes, educated or not, needed to see their foremothers as civic agents. Beard made this point in an address to an AAUW convention in 1937 when she declared, “what university women think they are in the twentieth century must depend in large measure, and perhaps entirely, on what university women think women have been in previous centuries.”⁵⁵ Mary Beard’s life’s work was intended to change how women perceived their past. She argued that every economic, political, and social structure of history had been partially built by women.⁵⁶ Knowing this, contemporary women would develop a historic consciousness and would see themselves as part of a long tradition of female agency.

Beard wrote and spoke publicly on this issue on countless occasions, but in a 1950 letter to her good friend Alice Lachmund, she, in a most direct and succinct way, connected history to citizenship. She wrote,

Being a “citizen” is a new thing for men and women alike - a modern democratic institution. It is my contention that women would be, at least might be, more creative as citizens if they knew their long history, as they do not-yet. Our women don’t even know about the roles of women in our country beginning with the first European settlements on our continent. Women have been too lost to their historic force by the dogma of woman’s subjection to men through the ages of the past. If that had been altogether true, how could women now have any talent for contributing importantly to democratic citizenship?⁵⁷

This belief that history could be a tool in fostering responsible citizenship and social change characterized the thinking of other New Historians of the early twentieth century and of many of the founders of social studies as well.

Connections to Early Social Studies

Mary Beard wrote her first co-authored book, *American Citizenship*, in 1914 and her first independently authored book, *Women’s Work in Municipalities*, in 1915. In 1916, the seminal *Report of the Committee on Social Studies of the National Education Association (NEA) on the Reorganization of Secondary Education* was issued. Beard’s most prolific years as a writer coincided with the development of the field of social studies. Though she was not directly involved in the structural organization of the field, her work spoke to many of the issues that were shaping

its development. Given the close ties that she and Charles had with many of the members of the 1916 Committee and with early members of NCSS, it is relatively certain that Mary Beard was familiar with social studies issues.

Beard, like the NCSS founders and other social studies proponents, was chiefly concerned with the purpose of education and how it might promote democracy (as she defined it) and active citizenship. Though she would later come to question the efficacy of education, at least as it was traditionally constructed, in dealing with society's problems, in 1916 Mary Beard, like the "founders" of social studies, believed in the power of education to confront the social problems brought on by urbanization, industrialization, and immigration. Barth and Shermis suggest that pervasive concern with social problems, so prevalent in the second decade of the twentieth century, led to "a 'crisis mentality' in which many perceived that the republic was in danger of drowning." In the face of this crisis, there was a growing sense that a "progressive revolution" in politics and in schools must somehow be part of the solution.⁵⁸

The hope was that a "new education", one that was less recitation-centered and more democratic, would train young people to be responsible citizens with the problem-solving skills needed to cope effectively with the massive social changes that had been ignored by traditional education. It seemed that a new curriculum construct like social studies might be just what was needed to fill in the gaps that existed in citizenship preparation.

It was with this in mind that the 1916 Report was issued. Michael Lybarger has suggested that the National Municipal League, an organization dedicated to urban reform, was closely connected to the 1916 Committee and saw in schools an important means of gaining acceptance for reform efforts.⁵⁹ Ten members of the Committee on the Social Studies were also members of the Municipal League; more than were members of the National Education Association. By tracing the early efforts at civic education launched by the National Municipal League, Lybarger was able to see the impact of League policies on the Committee, particularly as they related to administrative efforts and efficiency. Both Mary and Charles Beard worked closely with the National Municipal League and saw the same connections between education and reform as did the members of the Committee.

In their introduction, the authors of the 1916 Report declare that the "social studies of the American high school should have for their conscious and constant purpose the cultivation of good citizenship." The report defines "good" citizenship in terms of "social efficiency" and

“loyalty and obligation” to city, state, and nation.⁶⁰ When Mary and Charles Beard published *American Citizenship*, two years prior to the 1916 Report, they defined citizenship in terms of dynamic processes and the common good, but like the Committee they hoped that arming young people with a strong education in citizenship would make them more likely to participate in the process of reforming social problems.

Neither of the Beards served on the committee that issued the 1916 Social Studies Report. For those who did serve on the committee, however, the question of *how* best to structure curriculum to promote effective citizenship was not necessarily clear. According to James Shaver,

The question of whether social studies was to be an integrated curriculum focused on citizenship or to be a loosely connected group of subjects, some of which have direct and others inferred relationships to citizenship, was not addressed directly. The latter intent seems more likely.⁶¹

In many respects, this question has been at the center of social studies education ever since 1916. NCSS was formed in part to deal with the lack of clarity on this issue as well as with disagreements on a number of other matters, including scope and sequence, content for new courses like community civics, teacher certification, and cooperation between education and social science professors. The hope was that an organization designed to bring the interested parties together could help to deal with these conflicts.⁶²

From its beginning, however, NCSS has had difficulty coming to terms with how social studies curriculum should be organized and how citizenship education is best conducted. The organization has not been clear about whether the study of history and other social sciences is sufficient for citizenship education, or whether a curriculum structured around the concept of citizenship is needed. In discussing the underlying ambivalence that has challenged NCSS, Shaver writes

The issue spills over into assumptions about learning as well. Should instruction be based on the integrity of the disciplines, with a model of the well-read person in mind, as with a college or university course? Or should history and social sciences be taught in the context of understanding the role and challenges of citizenship in a democratic society?⁶³

If the curriculum framework is citizenship, social science and history content would be selected, organized, and taught based on the needs of democratic citizenship rather than being based on the scholarly conceptual frames of social scientists and historians.⁶⁴

The Beards favored a strong foundation in historical thinking as the most effective way to promote this citizenship. They defined history in broad and inclusive terms, making it possible to incorporate other social

sciences and contemporary issues. Nonetheless, they viewed historical understanding as central to civic identity and agency. Mary Beard did not enter directly into the NCSS debate, but it is likely that she would have preferred a social studies curriculum grounded in history and the social science disciplines. Like other New Historians, Mary Beard believed that history could and should inform contemporary problems. She did not, however, believe that citizenship education could be meaningful if students focused on contemporary issues with only a shallow understanding of the social sciences, and history in particular. In order to make sense of their world and ultimately to restructure it, students needed to study *long* history.⁶⁵

For Mary Beard, citizenship education was a serious issue. Like the social studies founders, she advocated civic involvement for students. Like the social reconstructionists within the social studies movement, she consistently maintained that education's purpose, first and foremost, was to prepare students to fight for a more just, humane, and democratic society.⁶⁶ Education with this end in mind, difficult and complex as it may be, was to be always encouraged. In recognizing this difficulty, she once said, "The preservation and development of this education is, then, no simple tea party for little women and little men."⁶⁷ For Beard, the kind of education that Americans pursued would be a reflection of how they viewed democracy, citizenship, and society.

NOTES

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6. Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *American Citizenship* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915), vi.
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8. N. I. Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919*

(New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), xviii.

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10. J. M. Cooper, Jr., *Pivotal Decades: The United States, 1900-1920* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990), 4.

11. Painter, xx.

12. Cooper, 5.

13. J. T. Koppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 7.

14. Ibid.

15. D. T. Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," *Reviews in American History* (December 1982): 113-32

16. Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *American Citizenship*, 6.

17. Ibid.

18. This is evident in their publication of *America in Midpassage* in 1939.

19. MRB, "University Women in the Twentieth Century," Beard Papers, DePauw University.

20. Ibid.

21. A. Lane, ed. *Mary Ritter Beard: A Sourcebook* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), 152.

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23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. This speech entitled "Education: Mirror of Culture" is located in rough draft form in the Beard Papers at DePauw University. It is undated, but the content suggests that it was written in the early 1930s.

27. Beard uses the term culture frequently in her writing and sometimes defines it in slightly different terms. In this context, she defines it as "the total matrix of society."

28. Mary R. Beard, "Education: Mirror of Culture," Beard Papers, DePauw University.

29. Ibid.

30. N. F. Cott, ed. *A Woman Making History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990), 15.

31. Mary R. Beard, "A Changing Political Economy as It Affects Women" 56-page syllabus published by the National Headquarters, American Association of University Women, 1934, 7, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

32. Mary R. Beard, "The Direction of Women's Education," Beard Papers, DePauw University.

33. Mary R. Beard, "Women and Social Crisis," *Independent Woman* 14, (January 1935): 8.

34. Beard's most detailed historical account of women's education can be

found in her Mt. Holyoke Speech, "The Direction of Women's Education," Beard Papers, DePauw University. She also devotes a chapter to women's work in education in her first book, *Women's Work in Municipalities* (1915).

35. Mary R. Beard, Mt. Holyoke Speech, Beard Papers, DePauw University.

36. Ibid.

37. Mary R. Beard, *Women's Work in Municipalities*, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1915), 1-44.

38. Some of the women who Beard mentions, such as Jane Addams, Lillian Wald, and Ella Flagg Young, are well known, but most were women who were unknown and uncredited. She does not note the race and class of the women she includes, but she does discuss poverty issues as they relate to education and cites the work of Frances Blascoer, a woman investigating the living conditions of black school children in New York City.

39. The Beards reviewed all of the most recent books on Civics in an extensive collection housed in the Library of Congress.

40. Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *American Citizenship*, v.

41. Ibid., Barth and Shermis also review several of the early Civics textbooks in their article, "Nineteenth Century Origins of the Social Studies Movement: Understanding the Continuity Between Older and Contemporary Civic and U.S. History Textbooks," *Theory and Research in Social Education* 8:3 (Fall 1980): 29-49. They conclude that the texts are all strikingly similar in appearance and design and that they tend to take a structure-function approach.

42. Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *American Citizenship*, vi.

43. Ibid.

44. Mary R. Beard, "After Equality-What?" *Independent Woman* IX (June 1930): 227.

45. Mary R. Beard, "Women and Social Crisis," 8.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Mary R. Beard, "Changing Political Economy," 55.

49. Charles Beard was invited to Tokyo in February of 1922 to conduct a series of seminars with universities and city officials on the modernization of municipal government and services. In 1927, he was invited by the American Yugoslav Society to visit the new country and analyze its administrative problems. Mary Beard was deeply affected by both of these trips.

50. Mary R. Beard to Majorie White, 1944, quoted in Turoff, 35.

51. Mary R. Beard, *The Making of Charles Beard*, 24-31.

52. Mary R. Beard, *The Making of Charles Beard*, 29.

53. Mabel Allan, "College Women Called 'Helpless' By Mrs. Beard," *New York Herald Tribune* (November 19, 1931).

54. Mary R. Beard, "After Equality," 227.

55. Mary R. Beard, "University Women in the Twentieth Century" address given to the American Association of University Women Biennial Convention in 1937, Beard Papers, DePauw University.

56. Mary R. Beard, "What Nobody Seems to Know About Women," NBC radio address broadcast given in June of 1950.

57. Mary R. Beard to Alice Lachmund, April 14, 1950, Beard Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

58. Barth and Shermis, "Founders of the Social Studies," 9.

59. M. Lybarger, "The Political Context of the Social Studies: Creating a Constituency for Municipal Reform," *Theory and Research in Social Education* 8:3 (Fall 1980): 1-23.

60. Nelson, "Reprint of 1916 Report," 9.

61. J. P. Shaver, "NCSS and Citizenship Education" in *NCSS in Retrospect*, O.L. Davis, ed. (Washington D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1996), 36.

62. Stephen J. Thornton, "NCSS: the Early Years" in *NCSS in Retrospect*, O.L. Davis, ed. (Washington D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1996), 3.

63. Shaver, 37.

64. Ibid.

65. Beard's use of the term long history refers to her belief that rich understanding only comes with study of multiple places and time periods. She developed the term in response to the tendency of many of her colleagues to begin women's history with the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848.

66. See *American Citizenship* (1914). At the end of the book the Beards include a number of research questions and activities. Many of the questions encourage the students to explore situations in their own communities and to report on them. Students are also encouraged to attend public meetings as which government officers speak.

67. Mary R. Beard, "The Direction of Women's Education," Beard Papers, DePauw University.