This Cover of the 1907 Indiana State Normal School Catalog has a female graduate holding the school pennant. The map of the state with the image of the school covering most of the state shows the growing importance of the school. The athletic equipment on the bottom of the page suggests women’s interest and participation in sports.
CHAPTER TWO

“Social Forces in the Communities in which they Live:”
1900-1916

“Teachers should be fitted to be social forces in the communities in which they live “

Normal Herald, February 1904

Part I: The Progressive Era at ISNS

In the summer of 1900, Indiana Normal School celebrated its 25th anniversary to coincide with its annual commencement ceremonies. The biggest “and most brilliant” event in the history of the institution was celebrated with a Jubilee Week of festivities with prominent speakers, including Pennsylvania Governor William Stone, Attorney General and Indiana native, John P. Elkin, and many of the former principals. Its many events were attended by almost half of the 1,000 alumni who had graduated from the school since its beginning.

A high point of the “long, delightful reunion,” was the unveiling of a life-sized portrait of Jane E. Leonard, the “only one of the persons then connected with the institution, who has maintained an unbroken record of service.” The portrait, painted by a Pittsburgh artist, was commissioned by donations from devoted alumni who she had taught, mentored, and inspired over the years.¹

Distinguished speakers on this and later anniversaries would recognize that Leonard’s impact on the development of the school had been enormous and

¹ Indiana Progress, July 4, 1900
unequaled by any other, male or female. They would also comment upon her lifelong dedication to the moral, intellectual, and cultural enrichment of generations of students, and the manner in which she was able to forge a school community which included not only present students, but alumni as well. In addition to her work with students, former principals would also applaud her ever wise counsel. Leonard would continue to guide and mentor students, faculty and administrators for almost two more decades, and continue to play a leading role in developing educators for the Progressive Era.

**Progressive Era**

Beginning in 1890 and spanning three decades until the 1920’s, the Progressive Era was a heady time when concerned men and women armed with professional training in the new social sciences focused their efforts on overcoming the ills that infected government, business, industry, education, health, and even family life. Women played a vital role in this movement which some argued was an extension of women’s work of guardians of the family.

During this period, women were attending high schools, normal schools, college and universities in even larger numbers than they had before. Their increasing educational attainment was opening up more opportunities in paid occupations outside the
home resulting in greater economic and social independence for the new generation of women. The feminization of the teaching profession was more pronounced than ever; by 1920, 80% of teachers were female, though they still lagged behind male teachers in salary. In addition to their longtime numerical dominance in classroom teaching, women were working their way in larger numbers into supervisory positions as principals and superintendents in local schools. Some women were finding opportunities in teaching and administration in women’s colleges and normal schools or flooding into new female friendly professions.

Particularly noteworthy were employment opportunities for women in the offices of the expanding industries of the period. This new setting offered better hours and conditions than traditionally female occupations, and more prestige and independence, for the so-called “business girls.” Some things had not changed though, because they were still paid less than men in similar positions and had limited opportunities for advancement.

Educated women could also find work in some of the new professional occupations opened to those with specialized training, including female dominated professions such as social work, public health, or librarianship. Recognizing that marriage was likely to limit their abilities to follow a career, women with degrees were delaying or even rejecting marriage in favor of at least a period of meaningful paid employment.

Some educated women who opted for marriage, still responded to the progressive call for the improvement of society. Through women’s clubs and other associations, women effectively worked for a variety of reforms including improved education, pure food and drugs, protective legislation for children and female industrial workers, and improvement of the corrupt political system. Individual women and organizations such as the Women’s Christian Temperance Union linked protection of the home with political activity and were more vocal than ever in calling for the vote for women to allow them to more powerfully impact such issues.
ISNS, contributed to the times by offering what they termed “progressive” programs of study and a school environment rich in opportunities for intellectual, social, and cultural development. In spite of the focus on teaching, their graduates, predominately female, were prepared to take up a variety of careers and encouraged to become active citizens and to participate in the many reforms of the day.

**Town and Gown**

In the first decades of the 20th century the nation was experiencing what sometimes seemed like dizzying change and Indiana, Pennsylvania, was no exception. The coal industry was booming, land was being purchased by coal companies and property values were soaring. The population increased as workers and their families flocked to the mining towns that were being founded by coal companies across the region. A new railroad (the Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh) and a trolley line were built to facilitate transportation to and from the town. The development impacted the once quiet campus. New coal roads were built near its boundaries and freight trains moved across the western field. New houses were springing up on the periphery of campus to replace what had been flowery fields.

The importance of the school to the town, and the importance of the female students to the school, is suggested by the inclusion of normal school female students in the 1903 Indiana Centennial celebration. As a *Normal Herald* writer reported “perhaps the most unique and attractive feature of the whole centennial occasion was that contributed by the Normal School. “
During these festivities three hundred and twelve female Normal students dressed in red, white, or blue and arranged themselves on an elevated stand in front of the courthouse, to represent the American flag, and for over two hours they “entertained the throng of thousands gathered around them with songs and yells.”

Life in the normal school also developed in the first two decades of the new century. Its enrollment dramatically increased from 759 in 1900, to a high point of 1283 in 1912-13. The number of faculty also increased and course offerings diversified to keep pace with the demands of public schools and the changing workplace. Faculty members became an important part of the communities’ social, religious, and intellectual life, actively participating in and sometimes founding churches, associations and literary societies. The student population, of young women and men eating in local restaurants, shopping in local stores, and when their numbers exceeded dormitory spaces, boarding in the community, added to the economic prosperity of the community.

Steady increases in enrollment and the diversification of curricular programs, requiring new learning spaces, saw the campus

Leonard Hall.
bursting at the seams by the beginning of century. The need for additional space for teaching was evident to all. In 1903, a new recitation hall with twenty-four large classrooms was built between Wilson and Sutton Hall and named in honor of its longest serving instructor and administrator, Jane Leonard.

Other construction was necessitated in 1906, when a fire destroyed the men’s dormitory and a new one had to be built to replace it. This was completed by January of 1907, but the real problem for the school was in housing the female students who were coming to Indiana in increasingly large numbers.

Why did female students choose Indiana? There were many reasons why the school would have been attractive to them. A Pennsylvania law passed early in the century covered the tuition for students who pledged to teach for at least two years after graduation, making it an attractive alternative to colleges, particularly for those with limited economic means. Young women interested in developing intellectually and socially and finding meaningful work outside the household for at least some portion of their lives, would have been drawn to the school with its focus on careers in education, its reputation for quality, and its rich cultural life and progressive programs.

For those with parents who worried about allowing their daughters to enter co-
educational schools, the school also had a reputation of guarding the physical and moral health of its female students. For whatever reasons, the school continued to be blessed with more and more female students. The following statistics show an increase in the total number of students in these years, but particularly in the female student body.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students Male</th>
<th>Students Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>1009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 1909, the female student population had exceeded the school’s capacity to house them, even in university run cottages that had been acquired to house earlier overflow. In that year, 40 women were housed in private residences in the community. Others were unable to attend because their parents refused to allow them to attend if they could not stay in school supervised housing.

Construction of housing for female students followed. In 1910, an annex was added to the girls’ dormitory and the dining hall which eased things somewhat. By 1914 and 1915 still more additions were made to the girl’s dormitory to house more female students.

The abundance of female students may not have been exactly what those who ran the school desired. While all normal schools attracted female students, Indiana had the largest percentage of female students of all of the state’s normals. When Principal James Ament reported to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1915, he recorded the recent construction of dormitories for female students, but informed them that this trend would not continue as “There is a feeling on the part of the Trustees of the school that we shall not provide additional room in the near future for girls, because, it is in our opinion, the school has all the girls it can well take care of.”

http://www.archive.org/stream/reportofsuperint1915comm#page/392/mode/2up