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Georgia, 1891-1932: A Narrative of Influences, Identity, and  
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PLACE, SPACE, AND GENDER AT THE STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, ATHENS,  
GEORGIA, 1891-1932: A NARRATIVE OF INFLUENCES, IDENTITY, AND DISRUPTION

by

LINDSEY SPRING

Under the direction of Lynee Lewis Gaillet, PhD

ABSTRACT

For this study I use archived materials to recover the Athens, Georgia, State Normal School and the rhetorical practices of its students and faculty to nuance rhetoric and composition's understanding of its past and present. While professionalizing themselves for the public role of teacher, the young Southern women and men of the State Normal School blurred traditional gender roles, cultivating an *ethos* and individuals a rhetorical agency. In this study I argue the rhetorical moves of State Normal School students disrupt dominate patriarchal histories of American rhetoric and composition that claim current-traditional rhetoric dominated the academic landscape of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Additionally, I argue the State Normal School and its students challenge the marginalization of normal schools, rhetorical education, and women's agency when normalites functioned as public speakers and public writers in the places and spaces of the State Normal School curriculum and extracurriculum. In this study I also consider the implications of attitude when conducting historical, and how

perspective and attitude in addition to positionality and academic lens color the research and writing process.

INDEX WORDS: normal school, The State Normal School, Athens, Georgia, rhetoric and composition, *ethos*, agency, archival research methods, current-traditional rhetoric, curriculum, extracurriculum

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by

LINDSEY SPRING

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2016

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2016

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GEORGIA, 1891-1932: A NARRATIVE OF INFLUENCES, IDENTITY, AND DISRUPTION

by

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December 2016

**DEDICATION**

This Dissertation is dedicated to the teachers and graduates of the State Normal School,  
Athens, Georgia, 1891 - 1932

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## PREFACE

Four years ago I became intrigued by two parenthetical notations in Susan Miller's *Textual Carnivals* that references a University of Georgia teacher named Miss Dumas. The first notation is found in chapter 2 "Rereading for Plot":

At the University of Washington the Freshman Composition faculty members were snappily separated from the others: "Associate Professor Lawson in charge," (At Georgia the only 1950-1951 course in writing "2xy composition," was listed under the supervision of "Miss Dumas and staff") (70).

The second reference to Miss Dumas comes in chapter 4 "The Sad Women in the Basement":

But the inference suggested by evidence of early huge composition courses, of few people hired to conduct their teaching, and of "leadership" in composition programs from one person over multitudes of students (like A.S. Hill at Harvard or of "Miss Dumas and the staff" at Georgia) is that a great deal of delivery from a very small (conceptual input was required of English departments from the outset (125).

Miss Dumas intrigued me for four reasons. First, being from Georgia and growing up in the Atlanta, which is only a short distance from Athens, Georgia and the University of Georgia, I was immediately interested by this Georgia woman. Second, Dumas is notable enough to be included in Miller's study but only notable enough to be included in two parenthetical references. Third, Miss Dumas must have played a role in composition instruction to be referenced by name and separated from the title of "staff." The fourth chapter's title added to my interest in locating Miss Dumas. Could she really be "a sad woman in a basement"? One year after reading *Textual Carnivals*, I took an archival research class, and heading to Athens to research Marie Dumas was a no brainer.

In the archives I located Marie Dumas as well as Carolyn Vance and Ellen Rhodes McWhorter, two other female faculty members of the University of Georgia English department. From archived materials, I found these women to be exactly how Susan Miller identified them,

disenfranchised and marginalized by a male dominated department. On a quest to remember these women and their marginalization, I committed to researching and writing an additional narrative of disenfranchisement. However, through the process of researching these women, I came across the State Normal School and a different kind of narrative. This narrative did not emphasize the marginalization of women and of rhetoric and writing but provided access to a narrative that featured women as rhetorical agents and rhetoric and writing as public practices for a variety of audiences. As I unraveled this new narrative and learned about the State Normal School as an institution and came to know its students through archived materials, my attention shifted. Instead of writing the narrative of women at the University of Georgia and echoing the claims of Susan Miller, and I began to research and write a State Normal School narrative, which I do not consider more informative but do consider different than the original narrative I set out to write. While both studies have implications for nuancing rhetoric and composition historiography, I locate at the State Normal School possibilities and implications for rhetoric and composition historiography that do not dwell on marginalization but that move beyond it.

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## 1 Introduction

We still do not know enough about the connections between college course work and the public and private examples of female rhetoric. We do know that the women's colleges were the scene of a continuing debate over whether they should offer the same subjects as the men's colleges or whether they should offer subjects specifically tailored for women.

*John C. Brereton*

The Origins of Composition Studies in American Colleges

We still, however, lack a full accounting of the diversity of women's educational experience in the era, particularly in the South, and particularly in state-supported institutions.

*David Gold and Catherin L. Hobbs*  
Educating the New Southern Woman

Although written almost twenty years apart, Brereton in 1995 and Gold and Hobbs in 2014, these scholars point to the gap that did and *still* does exist in the history of women's educational experiences at the turn of the twentieth century. To close this gap, more studies that center upon the rhetorical education of women should be conducted. In an effort to help close the gap and add to rhetoric and composition's historiographic landscape, I introduce the State Normal School in Athens, Georgia. Normal Schools, teacher training schools common nationwide during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, provide another institutional site for exploration and recovery of rhetorical education and women's education. This study considers where rhetoric and writing intersect with place, space, and gender at the State Normal School from 1894 until 1932 as well as how these intersecting elements create a unique rhetorical platform State Normal School women used to develop into public writers and rhetorical agents.

### 1.1 Research Questions and Study

This rhetorical study traces the history of the predominately female State Normal School of Athens, Georgia, analyzes the rhetorical education provided to students through the school's curriculum and extracurriculum, and considers the *ethos* and agency of female students. Central

to this study are the following questions: Where, when, and how do space, place, and gender intersect with writing and rhetoric? In what ways does this intersection implicate student *ethos* and agency? What do student voices communicate to their audience, and how do these voices construct and reflect the identity of the State Normal School student? How do my findings complicate rhetoric and composition history? Using these questions, I examine the State Normal School and explain how its disruption of master narratives and its students' rhetorical agency and public writing nuance rhetoric and composition historiography.

Throughout its development and up until its absorption by the University of Georgia, the State Normal School as an academic site kept reading, writing, and speaking as central curricular components regardless of educational track. Reading, writing, and speaking also heavily informed the State Normal School extracurriculum, which included two male debate clubs, two female literary societies, one coeducational literary society, a newspaper, a literary magazine, and an annual yearbook. Curriculum in this study references both the course of study and degree requirements of the State Normal School and the course of study for the English department and its rhetorical education. The State Normal School required of its students a four-year English curriculum configuration, which included rhetoric, composition, elocution, expression, and methods. What students learned in the classroom under the direction of the curriculum they applied in the extracurriculum when they read, wrote, and spoke, and the rhetorical activities of the extracurriculum paralleled the curriculum. The State Normal School curriculum and extracurriculum provided the platforms from which students acted as rhetors, making the State Normal School a worthy site of investigation for rhetoric and composition historiography. Curriculum and extracurriculum also function in this study as lenses through which to view and identify the State Normal School and its students.

Adding to the State Normal School's merit for the field of rhetoric and composition is the institution type, its student population, and its location. As an academic site, the State Normal School serves as an alternative site of recovery because of normal schools' all-too-often marginalization in the historiography of rhetoric and composition. Kathryn Fitzgerald in particular finds that normal schools are "a site that turns out to harbor rich intellectual, methodological, and political implications for composition's tradition" ("A Rediscovered Tradition" 225). When adding its other alternative factors such as a student population comprised of rural men and women and its location in the South to the State Normal School, it becomes a site even richer with its implications for rhetoric and composition historiography. Failing to investigate normal schools as fully as other sites of rhetorical education leaves the field with a missed opportunity for a most complete recovery of educational experiences and still with the gap Brereton and Gold and Hobbs reference. Adding the State Normal School narrative to rhetoric and composition historiography continues to nuance the field, giving a more inclusive and comprehensive account of the discipline's development in America and a better understanding of how the students at this school constructed their *ethos* and rhetorical agency and developed into public writers from their curricular and extracurricular rhetorical practices.

The State Normal School's history and histories of similar schools are important components in not only a more inclusive history of rhetoric and composition but also a more accurate history, which echoes David Gold: "we cannot make broad claims about rhetorical education without examining the diverse range of student bodies and institutions that participated in such education, including those previously underrepresented or neglected by earlier scholarship" (*Rhetoric* 7). Many studies are responding to gaps in rhetoric and composition historiography and adding to the canon of women's rhetorical experiences: women from



antiquity to the twentieth century surface in feminist rhetorical histories, giving a greater awareness of how, when, and where women spoke, wrote, and were silenced. From this awareness comes the recognition of the extent rhetoric and composition historiography neglects and marginalizes women's educational experiences as well as the variety of educational sites that and people who participated in the discipline's development.

Too often large Northern and Western universities and the elite schools of the Northeast dominate the historical studies of rhetoric and composition in America. Stemming from Kitzhaber's foundational and influential study *Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1850-1900*, which draws broad conclusions from only a selection of colleges, early rhetoric and composition historians such as Berlin, Russell, Crowley, and Miller draw their conclusions about the theories and pedagogies of rhetoric and composition from universities and elite colleges. While these studies argue for the legitimacy of rhetoric and composition as a field, they are institutional studies that provide master narratives with broad, generalized conclusions rooted in a hegemonic history that favors privileged white males. Even studies that seek to recover marginalized populations such as basic writers at Yale in Ritter's *Before Shaughnessy* and JoAnn Campbell's recovery of Seven Sister's colleges Wellesley, Mt. Holyoke, and Radcliffe, marginalize places and people because they center upon elite institutions of New England and prohibit a nuanced historiography of rhetoric and composition. Recent scholarship, however, seeks to break the narrow scope of the foundational master narratives and introduce a more inclusionary point of view that favors a variety of institutions, regions, people, races, and curriculums. In this vein of scholarship I begin to situate this study, which will "[challenge] the idea that the only way to study rhetorical education is to look at the American universities, and, more particularly, the Ivy

League universities, to how white, enfranchised men taught and learned rhetoric and writing” through its investigation the women of a Southern public normal school (Enoch 173-174).

To best write the narrative of the State Normal School and challenge paternalistic master narratives, I am using a microhistorical approach. In *Microhistories of Composition* Bruce McComiskey writes that microhistories are “critical of the grand historical abstractions, and they rely heavily on archival sources that reflect local knowledge and not abstract trends” (9). According to McComiskey, microhistories are “a methodological middle ground” best understood “as a negotiation of social history and cultural history” that engage in a dialectical conversation of “abstract” social history and “concrete” cultural history (16 -19). From this dialectical conversation, microhistories have the potential to expose “a case in history that is exceptional in the perspective of social history but may reveal a hidden normal from the perspective of cultural history” or what McComiskey terms an “exceptional normal” (21). The State Normal School is an exceptional normal and, thus, warrants a microhistorical approach to its recovery, which confronts, the abstract master narratives, expands them to include the rhetorical education, public writing, and civic identities of female students, and contributes to a more inclusive historiography of rhetoric and composition.

As part of this study, I look to sources that consider women’s education in the South as well as normal schools across the country for guidance. David Gold’s *Rhetoric in the Margins*, Kelley Ritter’s *To Know Her Own History*, and Katherine Hobbs and David Gold’s *Educating the New Southern Woman* examine women’s rhetorical education at public women’s colleges or normal schools in the South, a region commonly overlooked, underrepresented, and according to Gold and Hobbs often misrepresented. Rhetorically rich with information, these microhistories use local narratives of women’s rhetorical education sourced from archives and a variety of

primary materials in a dialectic conversation with master narratives to illuminate the larger history of rhetoric and composition. The dialectic conversations of these studies occur among rhetoric, writing, pedagogy, practice, people, and region provide a more complete historiography of rhetoric and composition. Each study serves as both an example and justification for my study of the State Normal School. *Local Histories* edited by Patricia Donahue and Gretchen Fletcher Moon and *From the Archives of Composition* edited by Lori Ostergaard and Henrietta Rix Wood afford this study a wealth of sources, which put rhetorical education at the State Normal School in conversation with the curriculums and extracurriculums of other normal schools across the country. The authors of both essay collections further the mission of third wave historiography and feminist rhetorical practices that work towards telling the stories of previously silenced schools, teachers, and students. Kathryn Fitzgerald, Beth Ann Rothermel, and Suzanne Bordelon and their research of normal schools contribute individual histories of normal schools but also inform the intersecting histories of rhetoric and composition and normal school development. I also rely heavily on Christine A. Ogren's *The American State Normal School*, a comprehensive history of normal schools that considers how gender, class, and vocation influence the historiography of education and Jergun Herbst's *And Sadly Teach*, a history of teacher education and its evolution in America. While each source contributes a different piece to the grounding of this study, a common thread weaves them together: histories of elite institutions do not capture the entirety of higher education's history, for they only tell one narrative. Like Gold, I believe "it is essential that our understanding of the past be as comprehensive as possible" (*Margins* 12). Therefore, with this study I join revisionist scholars and further their scholarly pursuits to make more inclusive, and therefore accurate, the history of rhetoric and composition as well as the history of higher education.

Other key scholars who guide and influence this project apply feminist rhetorical practices to investigations of marginalized populations and of marginalized rhetorical spaces but apply them outside the topic of normal schools. Scholarship from Cheryl Glenn, Andrea Lunsford, Nan Johnson, Jacqueline Jones Royster, Ann Ruggles Gere, Susan Kates, and Jessica Enoch help construct a more inclusive narrative of rhetoric and composition's history in America by "not [attempting] to redefine a 'new' rhetoric but rather to interrupt the seamless narrative usually told about the rhetorical tradition and to open up the possibility of multiple rhetorics" (Lunsford 6). Through challenging the existing narrative of rhetoric and composition, these women and their research not only invite but also encourage scholarship that values all who contribute to rhetoric and composition's development and the locations where these contributions occur.

## **1.2 Place, Space, and Gender**

Locations of rhetorical education are central to this study, and I use the term place to refer to the range of material and non-material places of the State Normal School. For this study, I agree with Christopher J. Keller and Christian R. Weisser in their editing collection *The Locations of Composition* when they write "places are 'tools' that provide the means for humans to undertake their 'projects'" (3), and I use this definition to situate my interpretation of campus, curricular, and extracurricular places. In its broadest and most literal sense, I associate place with the State Normal School campus itself. For almost four decades, the State Normal School served as a place of teacher education, and the school as a physical location developed reciprocally with the growing Georgia common school system. The demand for more Georgia teachers to further develop the common schools system resulted in additional State Normal School buildings and facilities, and because the State Normal School grew in size, more teachers graduated and the

common school system grew larger. The State Normal School as a material place correlates with the school's curriculum and extracurriculum, which I identify as non-material places. The brick and mortar academic buildings and classrooms provided places for rhetorical education, and as the school built more classroom buildings, the curriculum offered a wider variety of courses to a larger student body. Literary society and club meeting rooms, libraries, an auditorium, student publication meeting rooms and offices, and athletic fields served as gathering places for students to participate as rhetor and audience in the extracurriculum. In this study material places are not limited to campuses, buildings, and rooms, and I consider student writing a textual place since it also serves as a "tool" for undertaking projects. Copies of student writing become a material place in a similar way that campus, curricular, and extracurricular places do because all provide a location to undertake projects. This range of material places – campus, buildings, rooms, and student writing – are locations students inhabit physically with their bodies or with their discourse, and become using the words of Keller and Weisser "bounded areas endowing human meaning" (3). The ability to physically occupy a place, however, is just one way to identify a place. At the State Normal School, the curriculum and extracurriculum are intellectually inhabited non-material places that become just as real and endowed with human meaning as the campus, buildings, classrooms, and student writing. (Keller and Weisser 2-3). This range of places, which includes the material places physically inhabited and the non-material places intellectually inhabited by State Normal School students situate *where* and *when* the State Normal School and its students "[undertook] their 'projects'" (Keller and Wiesser 3). However, what happens during the undertaking of the projects, the purpose behind the projects, and the projects and their results all contribute to the constructed and claimed spaces within the school's material and non-material places.

Just as the term place grounds this study so does the term space, and I begin my understanding of space also using Keller and Weisser: “space is the outcome or product of place” (4). The State Normal School could not have any spaces if it did not first have places where the school and its students could engage in activity. Keller and Weisser term this activity “making room” (5). According to them, “spaces are activated by how humans make room for themselves” within a place (5). I see the State Normal School and its students making room for itself and themselves through how they claimed and constructed their identities and the rhetorical platforms through which they communicate these identities. For example, the State Normal School makes room for itself inside Athens by choosing to not construct gates and walls that would exclude the campus from the town and thereby identifying itself as part of the town. This creates a space for the school by identifying the school as part of Athens. State Normal School students also make room for themselves through the activity of making space and claiming this space. For instance, when State Normal School students use the material location of the yearbook as a rhetorical platform to argue for the State Normal School and common school education in Georgia, they are making room for themselves in the public sphere and working towards claiming this space. These examples of space extend outside of the State Normal School campus, but spaces also existed inside the boundaries of the State Normal School campus.

Roxanne Mountford writes that scholars “most often use ‘space’ metaphorically to describe the cultural landscape of laws, customs, and beliefs that form the geographies of our lives” (41). For the State Normal School, local, institutional, and student influences draw and redraw the school’s cultural landscape and its boundaries, creating spaces that shift and move in response to these influences, and space continually constructs and is constructed by the people, discourses, and ideologies local to the State Normal School. For this study space has a strong

connection to rhetoric in two ways: one, spaces have boundaries and those who construct them have the power to include or exclude, and two, it is within and because of these constructed boundaries that discourse is created, used, and understood. Space is used in this study to reference the “communicative events” associated with space (Mountford 42). I interpret place and space as correlative terms, and I often use them together to reference the tangible and intangible boundaries and meanings of the State Normal School. I interpret space to be a cultural and ideological extension of place that is created through activity rather than built or created with physical materials.

Keller and Weisser’s point that “places are located and relational” to other places, the State Normal School and its identity are informed by where its geographic location in Athens, Georgia. Geographic location becomes significant for this study, since the State Normal School’s position inside the South implicates the places and spaces of the school by influencing the habits and human activity and constructing boundaries that occur in material and non-material places and impacts the spaces. When and why Georgia established the State Normal School is a direct reflection of the South’s initiative to build its common school systems in the late nineteenth century. Ideological tension between the Old South and an industrializing, progressive South influence how the region defined itself, who it valued, and what it valued, implicating class, gender, and profession. Even choices students made in their curricular and extracurricular pursuits reflect their Southern location when they chose topics and literature local to their state and region. For example, senior graduation theses argue for adjustments in Georgia laws and educational policies, and both female literary societies, the Altorias and the Millies, chose to study Southern authors to better acquaint themselves with their region and its literature. I cannot

disconnect the State Normal School from Georgia and the South, for the school's location influences its habits and values as well as its gender ideology (Reynolds *Geographies*).

Place, space, and the South have implications for gender in this study since ideology and dominant voices of the public sphere cannot be removed when considering the locations of the State Normal School and its predominantly female study body. Nan Johnson in *Gender and Rhetorical Space* draws our attention to the "cultural program of gender politics that sought to control negotiations about the boundaries of rhetorical space as well as the debate about who was allowed to occupy it" in the nineteenth century (2). From her study, among others, we know that rhetorical spaces, those where language is used and power has the potential to be circumscribed, can be gendered. In the South just as Johnson asserts in her study boundaries were cast to include and exclude participants from public rhetorical spaces, and these boundaries marginalized women and limited their participation if not at times denied their access to the public sphere. The gendered political and cultural climate of the South, which controlled admission into public rhetorical spaces, influenced the State Normal School campus as well. Certain curricular and extracurricular spaces were gendered male or female. For example, men participated in debate societies whereas women participated in literary societies. However, the State Normal School like other normal schools across the country had its own cultural program of gender politics, which was more egalitarian than the public sphere of the general population (Gold), and created rhetorical platforms present in the places and spaces where women could develop their *ethos* and agency to become public figures and writers. State Normal School women's access to higher education at the State Normal School serves as a platform in and of itself, but within both the curriculum and extracurriculum women cultivated their *ethos* and agency. The curriculum trained women to speak from the classroom podium and craft written arguments which addressed



audiences outside of State Normal School students and faculty. Extracurricular literary societies, publications, and socialization offered many opportunities and options to practice for a public audience the rhetorical acts of speaking and reading aloud and publish for a school-wide and statewide audience.

### **1.3 Overview**

Chapter 1 focuses on the State Normal School as an institution. This chapter provides an institutional history from 1891 when Georgia legislature established the normal school in Athens, Georgia until its absorption by the University of Georgia in 1932. In this chapter I situate the history of the State Normal School within the broader history of higher education to draw attention to the marginalization of normal schools and the South. Location becomes a criterion for marginalization, but this chapter also addresses class, gender, and profession as criteria to illustrate the marginalization of normal schools and its students. I use this chapter to communicate the identity State Normal School developed based upon its mission and purpose of teacher training, its growth and development, and its location in Athens, the center of higher education in Georgia. In this chapter, I argue for the inclusion of the State Normal School in rhetoric and composition historiography.

Chapter 2 addresses the curriculum and rhetorical education at The State Normal School to trace when and how the curriculum disrupts the myth of rhetorical decline and the assumption that innovations only occurred at elite institutions. To introduce readers to the State Normal School curriculum, I review normal school curriculums. Following this review, I offer an analysis of State Normal School freshman rhetoric and sophomore theme-writing courses from 1909 until 1924, noting the shifts in their course descriptions. Although current-traditional rhetoric's correctness, textbooks, and modes influenced rhetoric and composition instruction, the

State Normal School curriculum also included pedagogical practices reflective of influences unique to normal schools. Its departure from current-traditional rhetoric from 1915 until 1922 disconnects the State Normal School from this dominant rhetorical theory and complicates master narratives that survey this same period of disciplinary development. A collection of senior thesis from the 1914, 1915, and 1916 graduating classes is also analyzed and supports the absence of current-traditional rhetoric with their argumentative essays. I use this investigation of the State Normal School curriculum and its disruption of myths and assumptions common in master narrative to continue to argue for the school's ability to nuance rhetoric and composition historiography.

Chapter 3 addresses the places and spaces of the extracurriculum. Outside of the classroom, State Normal School students formed and managed societies, debating societies, and student publications, which provided rhetorical platforms for public speaking and writing. In this chapter, I focus on the *ethos* and rhetorical agency State Normal School students constructed through extracurricular activities. I argue in this chapter the extracurricular places and spaces students claimed and created for themselves lessened the marginalization imposed by the traditional turn-of-the-century public sphere, allowing students to operate not from the margins, as they would have in the public sphere. Instead, State Normal School students operated as accepted and authoritative speakers and writers within the societies and clubs they elected to participate. A review of the extracurricular activities, the school's literary societies, student publications, clubs, and social events, and the speaking and writing that occurred in these places and spaces provides examples of student *ethos* and agency and notes the shifts in time, context, and relationships the State Normal School and its student experienced from the 1900s until 1932. With this chapter I use the student initiated cultivation of *ethos* and rhetorical agency to show

State Normal School students functioned as public figures in preparation for their participation in their future professional sphere.

Chapter 4 provides a deeper analysis of the collection of senior graduation thesis addressed in chapter 2. In these essays, State Normal School women emerge as civically minded and democratic voices through the written arguments they make advocating for a more egalitarian public sphere that better addresses the needs of disenfranchised populations such as women and rural, working class children. The act of students taking up these topics and addressing them with an authoritative voice as rhetorical agents supports revisionist claims that (Southern) women did indeed act as rhetors in the early twentieth century. This chapter adds to the disruption of reductive master narratives that omit women and their civic actions. The revisionist motive of locating women and investigating them from the attitude of what actions they took to make room for themselves and their point of view versus what actions they could not take or were not allow to take gives not only a more comprehensive rhetoric and composition historiography but a more positive narrative that complicates disenfranchisement and marginalization of women.

#### **1.4 Method, Methodology, and Framework**

Rhetorical recoveries of marginalized places and people often utilize archival research to find what has yet to be seen, and several edited collections as well as special edition journal issues build from this intersection of purpose and method. *Working in the Archives*, a collection of archival research methods essays edited by Alexis Ramsey, Wendy B. Sharer, Barbara L'Eplattenier, and Lisa S. Mastrangelo, supplies a guide for how to conduct archival research and features several scholars who use archival research to add what has been left out of rhetoric and composition development. *Beyond the Archives*, an essay collection edited by Gesa Kirsch

and Liz Rohan, addresses location and archival research, expanding the idea of when, where, and why archival research can be used. *Local Histories* and *From the Archives of Composition* give collections of essays on a wide variety of omitted narratives that are possible to share today because of archival research. Special editions of journals such as the September 2012 issue of *College Composition and Communication* and the November 2013 edition of *College English* serve as testaments to the growing interest in acknowledging research methods and methodologies. Uses of archival research and reflections of archival methods and methodologies are not limited to these essay collections and journal issues; however, that there is a place in the rhetoric and composition cannon for these publications to occupy legitimizes the method, methodology, and framework of my study.

To conduct this study I used archival research methods and methodology informed by the feminist operational framework of rhetorical practices set forth by Royster and Kirsch. Using this framework helps me “move beyond the core agenda of rescuing, recovering, and (re)inscribing women into the history of rhetoric to work that is more transformative for the field” (18). To do so I must

embrace a set of values and perspectives...that honors the particular traditions of the subjects of study, respects their communities, amplifies their voices, and clarifies their visions, thus bringing evidence of our rhetorical past more dynamically into the present and creating the potential...for a more dialectical and reciprocal intellectual engagement (Royster and Kirsch 14).

Keeping these words in mind and using Royster and Kirsch’s feminist framework of critical imagination, strategic contemplation, social circulation, and globalization facilitate a thoughtful, accurate, and respectful on-going investigation of the State Normal School. This mindset and framework also encourage me to “tack in” and “tack out” as I collect information, draft, and reflect throughout the process of becoming more aware of what is present but also what is not

present in the archives (Royster and Kirsch). Recognition of what is present or not present, reflection upon my recoveries, and connections made among the boundaries of place, space, and gender help me write a narrative which shows that “fair and accurate assessment[s] of historical studies of rhetorical women can be made” (Wu 94).

This study utilizes a variety of archived materials from the Hargrett Library of the University of Georgia. Two histories, one of the State Normal School written by State Normal School Professor Edward Sell and one of the University of Georgia until 1946 written by registrar Thomas Reed, provide general information regarding both institutions. Professor Sell’s is of greater interest to this study; however, Reed’s history references the State Normal School and has a section about the absorption of the State Normal School and its transition into the Coordinate College of the University of Georgia. Hargrett Library houses a handful of folders and boxes of personal documents from faculty and students. Correspondence, memos, institutional documents, grade books, scrap books, signature books, programs for significant events, notes, and documents of enough significance to save are spread among the personal collections associated with the State Normal School. Of particular interest are extracurriculum materials such as yearbooks and three collections of senior graduation theses from 1914 to 1916. Thankfully, there is a presence of the State Normal School in the archives and library; however, what materials are available reflect the often “partial and contingent nature of the archives” (Gold and Hobbs 13). In order to answer my research questions and accurately contextualize their answers, I used secondary sources to triangulate the primary sources I obtained from the archives. From the combination of primary sources and secondary sources I drew conclusions that strive to be as accurate as possible.

In addition to the materials I recovered, I acknowledge my voyeuristic presence as an archival researcher and remain aware of the responsibility I have to the State Normal School, its faculty, and its students. All people and their texts deserve to be treated ethically, respectfully, and sensitively (Royster, “Voice”). Therefore, it is essential that I am aware of the “the need to balance and consider issues of privacy” because when dealing with recovering persons, “what is key is the shift from seeing archive as *documents* to view the archives as *persons*” (McKee and Porter 69, 77, emphasis authors). Ethics is in the forefront of my mind and central to my *ethos* at all times during the research and writing process. I have a responsibility to tell this narrative with precision, so readers can see and remember the State Normal School and its students accurately.

Keeping an ethical frame of mind parallels a researcher’s recognition of her positionality and how positionality colors a researcher’s reading of the archive and its materials. A key piece of advice from experienced archival researchers, including many of the contributors of *Working in the Archives*, is the importance of recognizing and transparently addressing positionality and its effects on archival research, reading, and report. Jacqueline Jones Royster adds to *Working in the Archives* contributors claiming “[t]he imperative is to recognize that, by its very existence as a concept, *point of view* means that some things become visible while others are cast in shadow” (*Traces* 282). Just as Royster in *Traces of a Stream* “openly and proudly acknowledge[s] her identity” (14), I acknowledge my identity as a Southern, white female who is from Georgia, went to school in Georgia for English education, and teaches in Georgia. I also acknowledge that I share this identity with many of the State Normal School students. What separates me from them is a century – not a location, a profession, or a gender. On several occasions I have even wondered if I would have attended the State Normal School. My positionality connects me to the State Normal School and its students, and, therefore, I identify with it and them in a personal

way. In my readings of the State Normal School archived collections and their materials my positionality and point of view make visible a narrative that is particular to me and contributes to my bias: I believe the State Normal School along with its faculty and students constructively add to the growing cannon of historiography in rhetoric and composition. While I strived to keep an open mind in reviewing archival materials for this study, I cannot deny that my positionality guided my trajectory that found primarily positive examples of women's writing and rhetoric in the State Normal School archives, and I recognize that I am telling one version of the State Normal School narrative. Another researcher using his or her positionality and operating using his or her bias could interpret and communicate a different narrative.

This study is also influenced by the attitude with which I research and write, and I consider in this study the implications of perspective and attitude when conducting archival research. Although not separate from positionality, the attitude one brings to her research lens is a choice and one that determines not just what is valued but how it is valued. I made a conscious choice because of my positionality and connection to the State Normal School and its students to not overlook the marginalization of the State Normal School but not to dwell on it either. Instead of writing the State Normal School narrative as one of disenfranchisement, I choose to write it as a narrative full of actions and agency that communicates the State Normal School and its students as subjects that deserve our attention and the attention of rhetoric and composition historiography.

### **1.5 Implications**

Like Ritter, "I believe there can be a more intricate and nuanced definition and exploration of [women] within composition studies' history...one that is dependent upon local conditions and key individuals and one that highlights rather than glosses this history across institutional sites"

(7). I also believe it is not just people and gender that have the ability to nuance rhetoric and composition historiography. Places such as normal schools and spaces such as extracurriculums can also aid in a writing more inclusive history. The State Normal School, then, is a worthwhile site for a microhistorical study in the field of rhetoric and composition, for it provides a narrative rich with rhetoric, writing, place, space, and gender that yields a narrative of *ethos* and agency in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Furthermore, this feminist rhetorical study rooted in archival research has the potential to do more than work towards closing the gap of women's rhetorical education in rhetoric and composition historiography. It has the potential to initiate conversations towards a more inclusive and informative cross-disciplinary history that provides heuristics for future studies. Rhetoric and composition historiography can benefit from this ethical and honest recovery of State Normal School places, spaces, and people that have long been neglected and "can provide [a] fresh [perspective] on established definitions of who and what is worth rendering as history" (Wu 93).



## 2 Chapter 1: The State Normal School as an Academic Institution

Cheryl Glenn, in her introduction to *Rhetorical Education in America*, writes “rhetorical education promotes a culture and, in doing so, works to erase those cultures, languages, and traditions that are not those of the dominant class,” and for much of American history, obtaining a college education was an exclusive endeavor perpetuated by the promotion of the dominant white male culture and its implications for educational access (x). Historically, expectations and expenses limited access to wealthy sons of aristocrats, professionals, and planters who attended elite colleges and universities, which were primarily located in the Northeast but also found in the South and West. This narrative of exclusion that casts white, privileged males and their institutions as the leading characters is a well-known tale among histories of education and rhetoric and composition in America. Educational historians such as Frederick Rudolph in *The American College and University and Curriculum*, Laurence R. Vesey in *The Emergence of the American University*, and rhetoric and composition historians such as Albert Kitzhaber in *Rhetoric in American Colleges 1850 -1900*, James Berlin in *Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-American Colleges and Rhetoric and Reality*, and David Russell *Writing in the Academic Disciplines* write their histories primarily using students, faculty, and curriculums from elite colleges and universities and give readers studies at the institutional level. Susan Miller in *Textual Carnivals* and Sharon Crowley in *Composition in the University* draw their audiences’ attention towards rhetoric and composition’s marginalization as a discipline but continue to situate their studies at the institutional level. Even Robert Connors in *Composition-Rhetoric* locates his study at the institutional level. Although their purposes vary, these studies contribute to a master narrative that gives *one* version of history: that of the white, predominately male, and affluent institution. Recognizing the exclusion cast by the institutional (and patriarchal) lens of

master narratives, rhetoric and composition revisionist historians refocus the historiographic lens to work against the erasure of cultures, languages, and traditions and work towards a more comprehensive history of rhetoric and composition. With “revisionist motives” and a refocusing of the historiographical lens, I turn to the State Normal School. In this chapter, I give the history of women’s access to education, evaluate the feminization of the classroom and its adjustment of the private sphere, give a history of the State Normal School as a institution, and consider the State Normal School as a place and space using Jessica Enoch’s Burkean framework of identifactory rhetoric (Johnson 8).

This chapter joins a growing body of revisionist histories written by feminist historians of rhetoric and composition that addresses normal schools and Southern women’s education, but it adds to this vein of scholarship a coeducational southern normal school. Histories from scholars such as Kathryn Fitzgerald, Beth Ann Rothermel, and Suzanne Bordelon and edited collections like *Local Histories* by Patricia Donahue and Gretchen Flesher Moon and *In the Archives of Composition* by Lori Ostergaard and Henrietta Rix Wood inform us of women’s rhetorical education and practices at normal schools across the country. Histories of normal schools and rhetorical education become even more intricate and nuanced when these marginalized subjects, women and normal schools, are paired with a marginalized location, the South. David Gold and Katherine Hobbs in *Educating the New Southern Woman* as well as David Gold’s *Rhetoric in the Margins* and Kelley Ritter’s *To Know Her Own History* address Southern women’s education in their microhistories of women’s colleges and normal schools. Their studies overturn “negative portrayals of the anti-intellectual southern” woman and add to historiography narratives of female students and their teachers whose negotiations of local and national trends of rhetoric, writing, and femininity inside and outside of the classroom contributed to their rhetorical

authority as public writers and speakers. (Gold and Hobbs 5). Adding the State Normal School, a coeducational Southern normal school, further nuances feminist revisionist histories of women's education and of Southern women's education.

In this chapter I address women's access to education and then give a brief history of normal schools in an effort to situate the State Normal School within a broader context than what master narratives of rhetoric and composition provide. To trace the State Normal School's history I use a variety of archived materials published by the State Normal School including *Bulletins of the State Normal School*, *The Georgia University System Course Catalogs*, yearbooks, school histories, and informational pamphlets and reports. To consider more deeply the State Normal School as a place and space, I borrow from Jessica Enoch the framework of Kenneth Burke's identifiatory rhetoric, the belief that if interests are joined identification occurs between two people, places, or items, to connect the State Normal School campus to Rock College, an all male preparatory school, and to neighboring Athens institutions.

### **2.1 Women and Access to Higher Education and the Public Sphere**

Before covering the history of normal schools and the State Normal School, I must first address white women and their access to higher education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which Rudolph addresses as "the largest and most underprivileged of American minority groups" (244). As opposed to white men, education for white women was not granted easily and in most cases not equally. Victorian ideology imposed its influence on education, and women were granted or denied access to education based upon what subjects and skills were appropriate for the gendered roles women fulfilled in the home and the private sphere that governed it. While women could not access the education provided at elite male colleges during the nineteenth century and would not access it until well into the twentieth century, the landscape of higher

education gradually became more inclusive in the nineteenth century as women's colleges and vocational schools were added to the academic landscape (Cohen).

In the first half of the nineteenth century, American women experienced some historic firsts in regards to their access to education. Georgia Female College in Macon, Georgia, opened in 1836 as the first women's college in the country and offered "a curriculum and a degree program similar to that of a men's college" (Montgomery 23). The 1840s and 1850s brought more opportunities for women with the establishment of more women's colleges, bringing the total number to 39 by the end of the decade (Gold and Hobbs). In 1837 Oberlin College in Ohio admitted women, making it the first coeducational college in the country. The Morrill Act of 1862, which provided land-grants for universities in states and territories, helped the expanding West establish state universities that under the influence of the region's more progressive gender ideology were coeducational (Rudolph). Private normal schools were established as early as the 1820s, but the 1839 establishment of the first public all female normal school in Lexington, Massachusetts, ushered normal schools into the landscape of higher education (Herbst, Ogren). States established multiple normal schools during the nineteenth century, and as more normal schools were established, access to education for women grew. Despite having no access to elite male colleges and the limitations subjected by the mores of Victorian ideology, access to education in the first half of the nineteenth century expanded to include women and continued to expand after the Civil War.

Postbellum women's access to education continued to grow as American ideologies of gender, economics, education, race, and politics were reshaped while the nation rebuilt itself "upon the Reconstruction foundations of [a] socially responsible government" (Montgomery 1). The rate of these changes varied depending upon the local influences of each region, but in all

regions, public education at all levels was reformed and refigured. The common school system, or the public school system, became more developed and inclusive of rural populations and women in the years following the Civil War (Ogren). Schooling at the elementary level was more widespread, and the number of public coeducational secondary schools increased while the number of private single sex academies decreased (Ogren). This growing system of elementary and secondary schools graduated more Americans prepared for a college education, and women found themselves included in the educational expansion of the nineteenth century more so after the war than before the war. According to American education historian Synder, 21% of students enrolled in colleges or universities for the 1869 to 1870 school year were women. This number increased to 36% by the close of the nineteenth century. Not only did the growing common school system prepare more students for college and university education, it also correlated to the growing number of normal schools, which reached their height in the second half of the nineteenth century and primarily educated women. Though women's presence in higher education was not equal to men's, rising female enrollment numbers underscore their improved access to education and reflect the growing number of institutions that admitted women as students.

Nowhere in the country after the Civil War did the numbers of female colleges increase as quickly as they did in the North where private single sex education remained the preference. Established as separate institutions or counterparts to the elite male colleges, the North found itself home to Vassar College in 1860, Smith and Wellesley in 1875, the "Harvard Annex" in 1879 which later became Radcliffe, Bryn Mawr in 1885, Barnard in 1889, and Mount Holyoke which identified as a college in 1893. At these schools, women received an education if not equal certainly comparable to their neighbors, the prestigious men's colleges of the region. While these

women's colleges did add to the number of young women attending colleges and universities, they were also exclusive, granting access to wealthy women and marginalizing women outside of the Northeast or from rural areas. Single sex education was not the only option in the North, however, and in 1872 Cornell opened its doors to women and became coeducational. Change and progress after the Civil War granted Northern women greater access not only to higher education but also to a more egalitarian education. Ironically, access to higher education for women in the South, the regional home of the first women's college and the largest concentration of antebellum women's colleges, developed more slowly than women's access to education in the postbellum North (Gold and Hobbs).

The traditional ideal of Southern womanhood rooted in Victorian ideology limited southern women's access to education. For much of the nineteenth century, Southern women were classified as "Southern Belle," a female archetype who did not compete with men and did not work outside of the home (Gold and Hobbs, Montgomery). This identity limited not only women's access to education but also the establishment of women's schools. Before the Civil War, Southern women had few public school options but could attend private high schools, women's colleges, and finishing schools to continue their education. Gold and Hobbs claim these private institutions "intended to create value in young Southern women by serving as a marker of elite social status" (19). Similar to its effects in the North, the Civil War and its repercussions impacted the educational landscape of the South, and women's access to education increased as "new cultural mandates for women emerged, challenging antebellum concepts of gender identity" and the region's "new economic reality [created] a demand for" women's education (Gold and Hobbs 16, 19). Although slower than other regions, the South's perception of women eventually reflected a more democratic gender ideology, and state funded public post-secondary

schools for women opened across the region in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, granting Southern women a greater degree of access to education.

Regardless of region, embedded in women's access to education was their exclusion from the public sphere. Although women's education shifted away from ornamental curriculums, which focused upon the cultural standards and feminine ideals appropriate for the middle and upper class, most women's colleges did not offer the degree of specialization or professionalism found at men's colleges, which continued the reductive gender ideologies from the first half of the nineteenth century into its second half and the twentieth century. Even with the available opportunities to access higher education, women continued to be disconnected from the public sphere. According to Rudolph in *The American College and University*, women attended colleges and universities to become polished, educated wives and mothers, and to further women's rights. Professionally teaching was the most common option for women, and Rebecca Montgomery writes it "emerged as a compromise solution that allowed women to make public contributions without overtly challenging the notions of womanhood" (Montgomery 31). Thus, the professional places and spaces women were allowed to inhabit and construct were extensions of the home, gendered female, and considered private (Enoch "Women's Work"). The classroom, especially, became feminized after the common school reform that emphasized women as nurturers and suitable teachers. Although teaching replicated the work women did in the home or parlor, these professions did give women access to an expanded domain. Women who became teachers did not return from women's colleges to go back into the home and reprise traditional roles of gender ideology; instead, they left the home and attended to their professions. Even though the locations women inhabited professionally were extensions of the home and

decidedly feminine and therefore “private”, moving out of the house and into the schoolroom helped women move closer towards democratic access to the public sphere.

## **2.2 Normal Schools**

Normal schools were established in a completely different context than elite Northern colleges and Western universities (Fitzgerald): they were vocational schools for teacher training and became an extension of the common school system, which supported compulsory education by graduating men and women prepared to teach in elementary and high schools. Leaders of educational reform Horace Mann of Massachusetts and Henry Barnard of Connecticut, both secretaries of their states’ boards of education, believed normal schools would improve the common school system and served as key participants in the argument for better teacher training. Barnard and Mann established the first American normal school in July of 1839 in Lexington, Massachusetts, continuing the tradition of the north being the seat of educational reforms and innovations. In the 1840s and 1850s, normal school establishment spread throughout the North, and alongside westward expansion, normal schools developed in the Mid-West and West. By 1870, 18 out of 37 states had at least one normal school; in 1890, 35 out of 44 states and one territory had established a normal school for a total of 103; and in 1910 42 of 46 states and three territories had an established normal school, making the country’s total number of normal schools 180 (Ogren). Barnard and Mann located a need for teacher training, and the country responded with its support, which is evident from the growing number of normal schools across the country in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. In the second half of the nineteenth century, fifty percent of women seeking an advanced education attended normal schools compared to the twenty percent who attended private women’s colleges and the thirty percent who attended other schools (Rothermel). Despite their popularity among female – and



some male – students, normal schools were marginalized intuitions, and roots of their marginalization include the normal school’s purpose of teacher training and the predominately female student body this purpose attracted.

Normal schools not only had implications for teacher training and the common school system, but they also had implications for gender ideology and the boundaries of private and public spheres. Jessica Enoch asserts that the “moves made to place women in the classroom often alluded to and made use of the parallels between the space of the school and the space of home” (“Women’s Work” 285). These parallels feminized the once masculine place and space of the classroom and gendered the teaching profession. Once schools became feminized and an extension of the home, “women could enter the teaching profession and travel to the classroom without breaching the ideological or physical boundaries of their gendered sphere” (Enoch “Women’s Work” 285). While the classroom as an extension of the home and parlor did expand women’s private sphere, it did not change the public sphere’s marginalization of women and the locations they could occupy. Christine Ogren informs in her history of normal schools that

middle-class gender ideology told men to make their way in the public world... Teaching, especially of small children, was outside the public, male sphere because the school was seen as an extension of the family... The same social changes that pulled men out of the classroom suggested that women take their place, as middle-class mores defined females as nurturing, gentle, maternal, pious, and obedient. Prescriptive gender ideology limited women to the private sphere of domestic life and motherhood (11).

Women were not cast as the ideal teacher for their intelligence, ability, or command in the classroom but for their feminine qualities and ideals, and these qualities and ideals prevented women from occupying the public sphere of society, leaving normal schools, teaching, and classrooms marginalized in the hierarchy of America’s system of status and rank.

Normal schools were further marginalized because of their connection to rural communities and nontraditional students. Most normal schools were located in small towns throughout the nation to help alleviate geographical and economical factors that could prohibit access to education for rural students. Not only did locating normal schools in rural areas give rural men and women an affordable, local school to attend for advanced education, but also the location improved the quality of local common schools. Typical normal students came from farms and rural areas, entered normal school doors with little more than a common school education and limited worldly exposure, and were two to three years older than the traditional college or university student (Herbst, Ogren). Normal schools' association with rural, low socioeconomic students who were "far from society's elite or favored classes" marginalized normal schools, normalites, and the education received at these institutions (Ogren 65). Many faculty members were at one point state normal school students and, therefore, often from rural areas and families of lower socioeconomic status, adding to the marginalized status of normal schools. The normal schools' identity as a marginalized and therefore alternative educational site excluded them from the public sphere in a similar way gender ideology did.

Yet if a revisionist lens is used to evaluate the feminization of the classroom and its adjustment of the private sphere, the normal school narrative does not have to be a reductive one. On normal school campuses, normalites entered onto a campus where men and women did not occupy separate spheres and gender roles became blurred. According to Ogren

[a]t state normal schools, female and male students interacted freely and shared leadership in the public sphere, implicitly challenging Victorian gender norms for both sexes. As a result, many women students formed and acted upon a fundamental belief in autonomy for women, although they usually stopped short of identifying themselves as feminists (151).

The autonomy created on normal school campuses enabled a shift in gender ideology that contributed to inclusive versus exclusive rhetorical practices. Therefore, the rural, nontraditional, and majority female student bodies which contributed to normal schools' division from colleges, universities, and the male public sphere actually blurred gender boundaries and constructed the egalitarian places and spaces characteristic of normal schools. Thus, normal schools and their contribution to the extension of the private sphere is not a reductive narrative. Gendering the classroom gave women access to normal schools, and at normal schools women accessed the rhetorical opportunities to construct a public platforms that were not gendered. Furthermore, once women left normal schools instead of returning to the home and assuming their traditional role in the private, domestic sphere of womanhood, women entered into a classroom and a career that gave them financial stability and independence. Using s revisionist lens and acknowledging the narrative it provides shows that normal schools influenced a shift in ideologies of class and gender and that this shift is one of positivity and progress.

### **2.3 State Normal School History and Development**

The campus history of the State Normal School begins not in 1891 but in 1859 when the Trustees of the University of Georgia provided the land for a boys' academy (Sell). Rock College, as it came to be known because it was built from native rock, opened as a boys' preparatory high school for the University of Georgia (*Prospectus of the State Normal School*). The preparatory school offered both classrooms and housing to its male students and faculty, making it place of male education, socialization, and domicile. The Civil War ended school terms at Rock College, but following the war, injured Confederate veterans attended the school and sometime between 1866 and 1891 the agriculture school used the campus as an experiment farm (Gist). In 1891 when the Georgia state legislature agreed to “establish, organize, and

maintain a State Normal School as a branch to the University” the current Governor N.J.

Northern advocated for its location to be Rock College, and the general assembly agreed (*Report of Georgia State Normal School*).



**Figure 1 Rock College 1906**

The State Normal School first opened as a summer school with housing provided from 1892 to 1894 (Sell). July 11, 1892 was opening day to 112 students from 32 counties in Georgia for a seven-week session. Six faculty members, two of whom were women and one from the Harvard Annex, taught civics and Latin, English, geography and history, math, and pedagogy (*Prospectus of the State Normal School*). The following summer the State Normal School was open for six weeks starting July 5th to 116 students from 35 counties. For the summer of 1894, 175 students from 51 counties attended an eight-week session that was almost canceled due to lack of funding. Private donors including former Governor Gilmer, the Peabody fund, Athens City Council, and Clarke County assisted the school, and the only setback was a late start date of July 17th (*Report of the Georgia State Normal School*). During these summer sessions, attendance varied. Some students attended the full session whereas others attended a portion of

the summer, and some students attended as little as one or two weeks. To ensure adequate funding and keep the school open in these early years, teachers gave up a percentage of their salary to help financially support the school (*The Crystal* 1921). Despite variable funding in its initial years, the attendance and popularity of the State Normal School grew throughout the state, and the success of the summer sessions made way for a year-round normal school.

On April 17, 1895, known as Founder's Day, the State Normal School of Athens, Georgia, opened as a year round campus for the education of current Georgia teachers and Georgians who intended to become teachers. A year and half later on November 26, 1896, the State Normal School held its first graduation. On this day 19 diplomas for a two-year program were bestowed upon the first graduates of the State Normal School. To encourage year round enrollment, the State Normal School kept costs low for students who were mostly from rural areas. Tuition was free for in-state students; out of state students, however, paid a fifty-dollar fee to attend (*Prospectus of the State Normal School*). Common for normal schools, in-state students who attended for free were required to teach in the common school system for the same amount of time they attended the school. All students covered the cost of supplies as well as room and board (Sell).

As interest in the State Normal School and its program grew so did its campus and its course offerings. In 1901 a manual arts department and a domestic science department were added to the school; the State Normal School began to follow a more modern school calendar with longer session terms; and the State Normal School built its first library. The following year Winnie Davis Memorial Hall, the hallmark building of the State Normal School, was complete and offered more dormitory space for female students. The Muscogee Elementary Training School was also constructed during this same year. Three years later in 1904 the Smith building

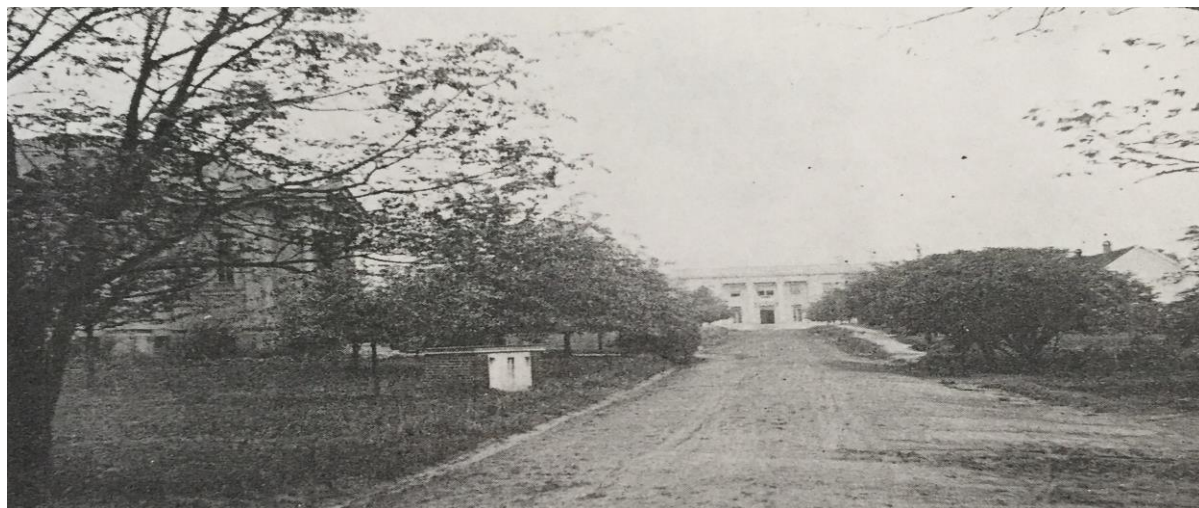
was constructed as a dining hall and facility for the domestic sciences. In only a decade since its first session, the State Normal School in Athens, Georgia, became a notable and growing site of education that provided a place for the state's teachers to improve their pedagogy and praxis. While normal schools all over the country were feeling the negative affects marginalization had on funding, the State Normal School's success solidified its educational place in Georgia and funding from private donors, Athens, and the State maintained and expanded the campus. With its success came a fifty-year development plan for the State Normal School's building arrangement and landscaping that made the campus "one of the most beautiful in the state" (Sell 37).



**Figure 2 Winnie Davis Memorial 1906**

In the following decade private funding financed additions and updates to the campus, but in 1916 generous state funds were also appropriated for campus expansion. An infirmary was built in 1907 and updated in 1916. In 1908 steam heating was added to two dormitories, and in 1910 the Andrew Carnegie Fund gave \$25,000 for a new library. To give seniors practice in the classroom, a one-room schoolhouse was built on campus in 1911. In support of the growth and development of the State Normal School, the state gave \$100,000 for building Miller Hall and Pound Auditorium. This money signified "that the state [was] at last beginning to realize the

importance of enlarging and equipping an institution that [was] training so many teachers for the common schools of the state” (Sell 38).



**Figure 3 Carnegie Library left and Pound Auditorium center 1921**

The State Normal School’s growth and development paralleled its growing numbers of students who sought a premiere school for teacher education and training in Georgia. In 1922, when Edward Sell wrote *The History of the State Normal School*, the total number of students to attend the State Normal School was 14, 957, and the total number of graduates to June 1922 was 1,930. For the following school year, Sell writes 1922-1923, 624 students were enrolled in the normal courses, 501 in the summer school, and 60 in the correspondence courses. These students came from a total of 118 counties across the state, which is significant since historically normal schools were intended to give educational opportunities to men and women local to the school’s site (Sell). Like other normal schools, though, more than half of State Normal School students were children of farmers. Of these students, 372 already had diplomas, 63 had a first grade license, 36 had a second grade license, and 76 had experience teaching (Sell).

The State Normal School of Athens in close to three decades transitioned itself from a small summer school to a thriving, notable normal school known across the state for its

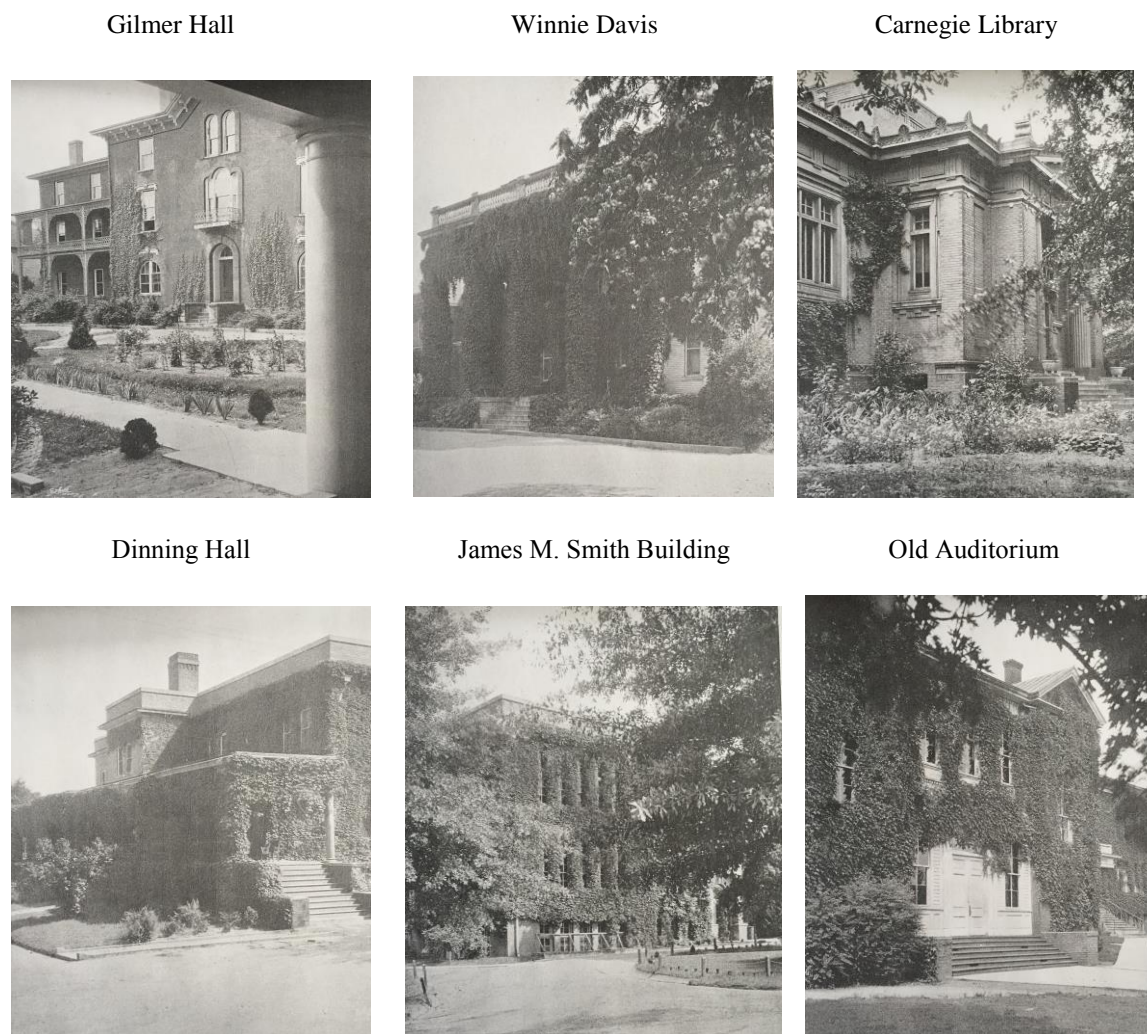
excellence, an accomplishment of which both faculty and students were proud. In the 1920 *Crystal*, the State Normal School's yearbook, the senior class historian writes "[a]nd yet moved by high purpose, the school, in its comparatively short life, has made a record of real progress and achievement, which a much older school might be proud to claim." Because of the State Normal School's success and status within the state, the University of Georgia trustees decided in 1923 to add two more years of work to the normal track, or teacher-training track, so the State Normal School could grant four-year bachelors degrees in addition to the two-year teaching certificate. As a part of this decision, the summer school became a formalized fourth quarter.

In 1928 the State Normal School followed the twentieth century trend to rename normal schools teachers college, which echoed the academic specialization movement, and changed its name to Georgia State Teachers College. As a teachers college, the school discontinued its certification program and only granted AB and BS degrees. As a college the school offered more specialized degree programs such as English, foreign language, mathematics, sciences, and history within its academic track and continued its industrial track in manual arts and home economics (*Course Catalog 1929-1930*). Although the State Normal School transitioned from normal school to college, the primary goal of the institution did not waiver: it continued to keep the education of teachers at its core.

Just four years later in 1932 the state renamed Georgia State Teachers College the Coordinate College of the University of Georgia, which was a result of Georgia's just minted Board of Regents consolidating its colleges and universities into one statewide system (Reed). This consolidation prompted the university's absorption of the Georgia State Teachers College, formerly the State Normal School, ending its identity as a place of teacher preparation for



Georgians, but beginning its identity as a place that offered equal university level education to women.



**Figure 4 Campus Buildings**

#### **2.4 State Normal School as a Place and Space**

Just like the State Normal School's campus history begins with Rock College, so does its identity as a place and a space. Rock College as a school for boys was a gendered place of classrooms and a curriculum only for boys. Following its purpose as a boy's preparatory school, the campus was repurposed two more times for all male student bodies. When Rock College became the State Normal School, the repurposing of the masculine place has implications for the identity the

feminized State Normal School, and the original purpose of the campus should not be overlooked when considering the identity of the State Normal School. To connect the masculine identity of Rock College and the feminine identity of the State Normal School, I apply the Burkean framework Jessica Enoch uses in “Claiming Access to Elite Curriculum” to draw material and non-material connections between Harvard and the Harvard Annex.

To enact this framework, Enoch draws from Burke’s *Rhetoric of Motives*: “A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is *identified* with B” (20, qtd. Enoch “Claiming” 788). According to Enoch, Burke’s theory of identification “defines identification as the rhetorical means through which a rhetor creates a commonality between herself and her audience” (“Claiming” 788). Creating this commonality allows a “vicarious share” between A and B, when “one party adopts the ... possession of another party as a way of connecting to the desired other”, which can be physical or atmospheric (Enoch “Claiming” 802). Enoch writes of the material association Harvard Annex women felt with the masculine Harvard when the Annex acquired the Fay House, a home adjacent to the Harvard Campus where the school’s song was penned. The Fay House, once a masculine place and space but in 1885 a feminine one, becomes rhetorically significant when Enoch applies Burke’s framework for identification through the vicarious share of the Fay House.

The vicarious share of Rock College and the State Normal School informs the identity of the State Normal School because it layers masculine and feminine material and social boundaries, connecting women and men in a shared location instead of separating them into the traditional gendered spheres they inhabiting off campus. The masculinity that remained a part of the campus even after the feminization brought on by the State Normal School helps us understand how and why the State Normal School was able to construct a flexible rhetorical

space that blurred the lines between private and public spheres. Both men and women attended the State Normal School when it first opened in 1892. At the State Normal School women were always the majority, but numbers were more equal between men and women in the school's summer sessions and early years. Although an institution that deserves recognition for educating and empowering Georgia women, the school's male population and its influence informed the identity the State Normal School cultivated in 1892 and continued to cultivate until the school's absorption by the University of Georgia. Male students entered campus from the public sphere not to enter into the private sphere but to continue their activities in the public sphere. Since normal school students, both male and female, lived, learned, and socialized together on the State Normal School campus, gendered spheres overlapped. The inclusive nature of the campus provided a non-material version of Burke's "vicarious share". From their experiences with their male peers, State Normal School women were exposed to the rhetorical practices of men. Nedra Reynolds in *Geographies of Writing* writes discourses are "'places' to be inhabited, not just something to pass through or try on," and female normalites inhabited the same places of male normalites' discourse and used these places as "tools" to use and create spaces where they functioned as public speakers and public writers. Thus, State Normal School women through a material and a non-material vicarious share identified with their male peers and used their commonalities to access and participate in rhetorical activities that took place in shared material, textual, and discourse places, which constructed inclusive and democratic spaces and blurred gendered boundaries.

The shared location of Athens between the State Normal School and other schools in the city also contributes to the State Normal School's identifiatory rhetoric. For a small city in a rural county, Athens, Georgia, functioned as the state's seat of education, making the state's

decision to locate the State Normal School in Athens significant. When Georgia established the State Normal School, Athens already housed the state agricultural school, the Lucy Cobb Institute, a premier women's finishing school, and the University of Georgia, which was just over two miles away. When situating the locational relationship between the State Normal School and the University of Georgia, we can look to Enoch's recovery of the Harvard Annex once more.

[The Harvard Annex] women reconstituted Harvard's campus and their exclusion from it by proclaiming the affective benefits of living in Cambridge. Claiming to be consubstantial with the 'spirit' of Harvard, these women were able to convince themselves that even though Harvard's physical campus might end at its gates, its intellectual atmosphere permeated the city of Cambridge, and because they resided in the city, they were exposed to this atmosphere and invigorated by it. ("Claiming Access" 802).

Although the University of Georgia did not physically neighbor the State Normal School campus, the "spirit" of the University of Georgia permeated the State Normal School's campus boundaries and contributed to the construction of its spaces and the activities that took place there. The university claimed an identity of power, intelligence, and masculinity; in essence, it embodied the public sphere. The State Normal School's proximity to the University of Georgia associated the feminine school and majority women study body with the university's spirit that pervaded Athens, helping women assume the masculine identity that diffused to the campus. Paired with the masculinity of Rock College and male normalites, the University of Georgia and its presence scaffold the construction of the blurred gender boundaries at the State Normal School.

The absorption of the University of Georgia's atmosphere by the State Normal School reflects the boundaries of the State Normal School, which were open ideologically and physically to Athens, Georgia. As an extension of the private domestic sphere, schools often

built barriers like walls to separate them from society and keep themselves private, and occupants of schools became privatized by association (Enoch “Women’s Work”). The Harvard Annex is just one example of the boundaries built between private sphere of education and the public world. Enoch writes that the Harvard Annex and its students consciously did not make their presence known but masked themselves behind the facade of the homes adjacent the Harvard campus that were repurposed as classrooms. The State Normal School and its students, however, did the opposite. No barriers were built to isolate the State Normal School campus from Athens, and the school and its students became a part of Athens, which welcomed the commerce brought by the school. In fact, the State Normal School was so integrated into its adjacent community and the landscape of Athens that the area became known as Normaltown, a title the area still carries to this day. Unlike the closed, privatized Harvard Annex that kept women occupying a privatized place despite their intellectual occupation of Harvard’s academic atmosphere, State Normal School positioned itself in Athens as a public place without boundaries, including itself as part of masculine Athens and its public sphere. The vicarious shares between the State Normal School and masculine locations paired with the school’s decision to not privatize itself with barriers and boundaries communicated the State Normal School’s identity as a place not next to or near by but in Athens and produced spaces where students blurred gender boundaries. The State Normal School and its female students, then, went beyond “trying on” the public sphere of masculinity and but “inhabited” its place in both physical and atmospheric ways that “made room” for themselves in the spaces they constructed and claimed (Reynolds 4, Keller and Weisser). Since the State Normal School did not privatize the range of material and non-material places and the spaces they produced, the State Normal School becomes significant to rhetoric and composition historiography for its disruption of

master narratives and its potential to help us remember and contextualize the past differently.

## **Conclusion**

That State Normal School serves as just one example of the many normal schools yet to be added to the historiography of rhetoric and composition, for I believe normal schools *do* provide a place of interest for rhetoric and composition historians. Beth Ann Rothermel in her study of Westfield Normal School, the second normal school in the country, writes

[t]o be sure, feminist historians of rhetoric have focused more often on sites where individual nineteenth-century women were empowered to speak out radically for women's rights or social reform. Yet the mission of the normal schools, to prepare women to speak from the teaching podium, also enabled women in ways worthy of consideration (37).

Expanding the places and their spaces where feminist historians locate female rhetors and their training to include normal schools disrupts master narratives and further directs our attention to sites that help rhetoric and composition scholars and scholarship access and study the rhetorical practices of women and rural students, which makes more comprehensive the history of rhetoric and composition. More so, including normal schools and using “revisionist motives” to include them give a researcher an institution and an approach to consider how dominant forces impose themselves on the marginalized but also how those in the margins push against dominant forces.

Feminist revisionist histories also encourage new ways of viewing and remembering marginalized physical places and rhetorical spaces that disrupt impressions left by patriarchal master narratives. The State Normal School, left out of rhetoric and composition scholarship until this study, and its male and female students provide a unique narrative for the field's historiography. At the State Normal School male and female students professionalized themselves for the feminized classroom on a campus masculinized by its history and location in Athens, Georgia. The layering of gendered spaces at the State Normal School and the

participation of both men and women in these spaces made the genders more equal, which is evident through students' rhetorical practices in the curriculum and extracurriculum.

### 3 Chapter 2: The State Normal School and Its Curriculum: Resisting the Myth of Disruption and Assumptions of Innovation

In his preface “Revisioning History” for *Rhetoric in the Margins*, David Gold claims “our knowledge has often been filtered through a myth of rhetorical decline, an assumption that innovation begins at elite institutions, and a too-strict adherence to an epistemological taxonomy that does not do full justice to the range of pedagogical practices in diverse institutions” (ix). This claim addresses the motivations of revisionist historians to refocus the historiographical lens by removing filters that narrow the sites and limit the scope of rhetorical education and to challenge master narratives and their version of rhetoric and composition history. In this chapter I refocus the rhetoric and composition historiographic lens to address all three elements of Gold’s claim using the State Normal School’s curriculum. This chapter extends the argument I make in chapter one: it is because the State Normal School is a normal school that it disrupts the myth of rhetorical decline and false assumptions of innovation too prominent in master narratives with its curriculum, which features innovative and progressive pedagogical practices informed by the purposes, theories, and students unique to normal schools.

Master narrative monographs and articles that consider the curricular histories of colleges and universities, communicate rhetoric’s decline at these educational sites. From these studies we know that rhetorical education during the nineteenth century shifted from an oral tradition to a written tradition: “Rhetoric entered the nineteenth-century as a central argumentative discipline, primarily oral and with a civic nexus. Rhetoric exited the nineteenth century as composition, a multimodal discipline, primarily written and with a personal, privatized nexus” (Connors 44). When first considering how, when, and why “the rich and complex world of rhetoric [is] replaced so quickly with composition,” scholars only looked to curriculums and pedagogical



practices as elite colleges, land-grant universities and situated rhetorical education within the boundaries of these institutions only (Brereton 17). Kitzhaber, Berlin, Connors, and Crowley survey rhetorical education at colleges and universities; Russell extends these studies at colleges and universities by investigating writing across academic disciplines; and Brereton collects documents and textbooks. While each scholar and study occupy their own space in the historiography of rhetoric and composition, these studies have in common a (re)telling of current-traditional rhetoric, or for Connors composition-rhetoric, popular in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Current-traditional rhetoric in this study refers to the narrow understanding of rhetoric in higher education that reduced writing to a mode that reports instead of interprets (Berlin) and a method of examination that systematized education and its students (Russell), becoming “static” (Connors 14). As the dominant rhetorical theory of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, current-tradition rhetoric confined students and their writing to a formulaic, positivistic process that removed a student’s *ethos*, prevented her from developing rhetorical agency, and valued a correct product above invention and learning. Master narratives primarily associate the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with this reductive rhetorical instruction and thus “filter” how rhetoric and composition remembers and views its past. Without moving outside of these histories to question and consider other sites, practices, and people of rhetorical education, this myth and its assumptions as well as a limited history of rhetorical education and its pedagogical practices will persist.

To disrupt the myth of rhetorical decline and assumptions made from master narratives, I move beyond the State Normal School as an institution and look to its curriculum to further nuance rhetoric and composition history. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, institutions were trying to figure out how to adjust to the changing rhetorical theory that was

once applied to oral tradition but now a written tradition. The State Normal School curriculum disrupts master narratives when its rhetoric and composition course descriptions indicate the courses did not consistently function under the theory of current-tradition rhetoric and used innovated pedagogical practices from theorist unique to normal schools. In this chapter I continue to argue for the inclusion of the State Normal School in rhetoric and composition historiography; address skepticism of normal schools that continue to marginalize them and their academic programs; analyze 1910s and 1920s curricular shifts in the freshman rhetoric course and the sophomore theme-writing course to overturn the myth of rhetorical decline and the assumptions that innovation only occurred at elite institutions; and use a collection of student essays to make evident the rhetoric and writing at the State Normal School. I use evidence from University of Georgia *Course Catalogs*, *Bulletins of the State Normal School*, and three collections of senior graduation thesis from 1914, 1915, and 1916 to support my claims.

### **3.1 Normal Schools and their Contested Curriculums**

A purpose of Fitzgerald's article "A Rediscovered Tradition," is to address revisionist historians' mission to "recuperate a tradition capable of legitimizing the field as a university discipline, yet also capable of grounding a contemporary democratic ethic radically different from the ethic of its elitist institutional origins" (224). In an effort to fulfill this mission, historians look to curriculums, which become one gatekeeper of rhetoric and composition's historiography. As a gatekeeper, curriculums become contested when documenting who and what contributed to the rhetorical education tradition and to what extent scholarship values the who and what of rhetoric and composition's past. Normal schools and their curriculums are even more contested than college and universities curriculums for three main reasons: One, since normal schools fulfilled the professional purpose of teacher training, their curriculums were vocational rather than the

liberal arts curriculums of colleges or the scientific, research based curriculums of universities. Two, normal school students did not receive a baccalaureate degree until normal schools became teachers colleges. Three, normal schools offered a hybrid curriculum and occupied what Patrice Gray titles the “‘middle margin’ between the public schools and higher education” (172). Since normal schools cannot be laterally identified with colleges and universities, attitudes towards to what degree rhetoric and composition history should value normal schools are divided. Historians have either altogether left out normal school curriculums and their rhetorical education, argue against curricular parallels between normal schools and colleges and universities, or advocate like Fitzgerald that normal school histories make rich contributions to historiography that challenge the myths and assumptions of patriarchal historical studies. Although valued by some rhetoric and composition historians, normal schools and their rhetorical education are not yet valued by all.

In his study of Tempe Normal School, Ryan Skinnel gives a recent example of historical scholarship that keeps normal schools and their curriculums in the margins of rhetoric and composition historiography. Since normal schools provided a distinct hybrid curriculum with a “professional, methodological focus” versus an academic focus, Skinnel argues “that despite parallels with other post-secondary intuitions, rhetorical education differed significantly at the normal because of institutional objects” and student population (15, 12). According to Skinnel, comparisons between normal schools and colleges and universities are incorrectly drawn and conclusions are misinterpreted because of these institutions’ significant differences, which “others” normal schools. Skinnel also generalizes normal schools, claiming the curricular characteristics common to normal schools created “relative uniformity among normal schools” (17). However, if normal school studies teach us anything, it is that no normal school fulfilled its

professional, methodological, and academic missions in the same way, disrupting Skinnel's generalizations of normal schools. Further, Skinnel uses *one* normal school located in an isolated area of Arizona as *the* example of a normal school to justify his generalizations and conclusions. Reading Skinnel's version of normal school rhetorical education does not challenge the idea that normal schools practiced innovative rhetorical pedagogy nor that normal schools set useful precedents for modern rhetorical curriculums. However, it erases the possibility for normal schools to contribute to the growing historiography of the field by negating that any pedagogy and theory unique to normal schools and parallel to colleges and universities exists. His article creates a space that (re)makes normal schools as a marginal site of education, but it also reflects the existing space in rhetoric and composition history that "others" normal schools and their rhetorical education.

What Skinnel overlooks in his perhaps quick conclusion of normal schools is Fitzgerald's underlying argument: the normal school rhetorical tradition *was* different, and from its differences, historians can investigate a rhetorical tradition and pedagogy that developed alongside – so paralleled – the rhetoric and composition instruction of colleges and universities. Normal schools looked to European theorists such as Johan Heinrich Pestalozzi, Friedrich Herbart, Friedrich Froebel, and Maria Montessori to inform their pedagogical practices and educate their students, and they selected theorists who informed and furthered the school's purpose of teacher training and professionalization (Gold). Fitzgerald, Rothermel, and Gold note Pestalozzi as most significant influence of innovative pedagogical practices since he claimed "[o]bservation and experience, self-activity and not textbooks were central to the pupil's learning process" (Rothermel "Work" 139). A normal school's purpose as a teacher's training school granted it exposure to theories and pedagogical practices different from those that influenced

colleges and universities. These influences differentiate normal school curriculums from curriculums at colleges and universities, but these differences *make* normal schools such dynamic and informative places and spaces for rhetoric and composition historiography and our understanding of America's rhetorical tradition, which most certainly existed outside of elite institutions that education only a fraction of Americans.

### **3.2 State Normal School Curriculum**

Fredrick Rudolph in *Curriculum* claims the curriculum is “an arena in which the dimensions of American culture have been measured . . . It has been one of those places where we have told ourselves who we are” (1). Curriculums, then, do much more than function as courses of study and degree requirements, which identify curriculums as places located and positioned based upon purpose and its requirements. They make room and create a space for a school and its students by defining and identifying an institution. From the outcomes of making room, the curriculum defines and identifies an institution; communicate and reflects the institution's mission; and include or exclude theories, pedagogical practices, and person. Curriculums become powerful places and spaces. For example, Skinnel bases his argument against connecting normal schools with colleges and universities using curricular differences for a reason: curriculums are significant. The State Normal School curriculum influenced and shaped the identity of the school by furthering its purpose and addressing the needs of a diverse student body. Taking this into consideration, investigating the ever changing and flexible State Normal School curriculum and tracing its development generates a better understanding of the school, its faculty, and its students.

The State Normal School curriculum developed within the intellectual tradition of current-traditional rhetoric, yet rhetorical education at the State Normal School functioned inside

of and outside of this rhetorical theory. Similar to normal schools across the nation, the State Normal School used a hybrid curriculum that combined secondary and post-secondary liberal arts education and vocational training to fulfill its purpose of preparing common school teachers for classroom instruction. Regional trends also impacted the State Normal School curriculum. At the end of the nineteenth century Gold and Hobbs state “the nation’s oratorical culture was waning but still extant, especially as part of the Southern feminine ideal, [southern women’s] curricula all began with rhetoric, elocution or expression, and writing composition in various disciplinary configurations” (4). The State Normal School is no exception. From its beginning, the curriculum emphasized all facets of rhetorical education, and the State Normal School adjusted its curricular configurations to meet its students’ needs, faculty expectations, and its professional purpose as well as responded to specialization and progressivism. These moments of curricular adjustments introduced pedagogical practices to the curriculum that disrupt the myth of rhetorical decline and false assumptions regarding where innovation occurred. To trace the development of rhetorical education at the State Normal School and highlight its innovations, I turn to *University of Georgia Course Catalogs* and *Bulletins of the State Normal School* for course descriptions.

The State Normal School’s curriculum was anything but static. The small summer school for teachers became a year round normal school and transitioned to a teachers college in only forty years. As the school evolved so did its curriculum, and its curricular shifts are embedded in its evolution. Understanding when curricular shifts occurred and what changed within the curriculum better situates the development of rhetorical education at the State Normal School, and before locating moments of disruption, I give an overview of the curriculum.

Turn-of-the-century trends in education, namely the emphasis of current-traditional rhetoric, were firmly in place when the State Normal School established itself as a summer school in 1892 and a year round school in 1895. During the 1892, 1893, and 1894 summer school sessions, which functioned as an institute for current teachers, students covered nine content areas for common school teachers, including English (Sell). The English course is described as the study of

easy language lessons developed from nature studies. The synthetic and analytical processes of language considered. Technical grammar and how to teach it. The art of composition writing. A review of English and American literature and writers (Sell 43).

Rhetorical education extended beyond the content area of English, and the primary methods course included instruction of methods “in reading and writing, as taught by the word, sentence, and phonetic methods” (Sell 43). The State Normal School as both an academic and professional institution required of its students reading, writing, and speaking, which Gold writes are the components of rhetorical education, but also learning how to teach reading, writing, and speaking (*Margins x*).

In 1895 when the State Normal School opened as a year round school, it was tasked with developing a multiple year vertical curriculum, which evolved throughout the tenure of the State Normal School. From 1895 until 1904 the curriculum outlined a three-year course of study, which included the same subjects as the summer school sessions: theory and practice, English, geography, mathematics, primary methods, kindergarten, vocal music, psychology and drawing (Sell). These early years established courses under the focus of rhetoric and composition as consistent components of the State Normal School curriculum. Faculty minutes from the February 25, 1896 meeting note the faculty’s agreement that “In English: Grammar and Reading [are] to be completed the first year, and Rhetoric and Literature the second year, [and] spelling

and composition to run through the entire [curriculum]” (“Faculty Minutes, 1896 -1898”). These early teachers set a precedence for the significance of English, and since its establishment, the State Normal School required an English course each year of the academic track.

As the State Normal School became more established and the faculty grew, the curriculum expanded, and in 1904 the freshman year curriculum, “which consisted of subjects usually taught in the third or fourth year of the high school,” became a preparatory year for the three-year diploma course (Sell 46). Students without a high school diploma would enter the State Normal School as freshman; students with Georgia issued teaching certificate or a high school diploma from a university accredited high school would enter into the first year of the three-year diploma course to begin a two-year liberal arts curriculum followed by one year of review and methods training (*Course Catalog* 1904). This new trajectory marks a departure from the typical normal school curriculum. Normal schools traditionally offered only two years of post-secondary education that focused upon methods and professional training (Ogren). Offering two years of post-secondary liberal arts education and one year of methods and professional training separates the State Normal School from other normal schools of its time and closer identifies it to liberal arts colleges. In 1911, however, the State Normal School began to phase out the three-year diploma course in favor of a four-year hybrid curriculum, and the curriculum changed annually as the State Normal School phased in versions of a four-year curriculum that worked to balance secondary and post secondary liberal arts courses with methods and professional courses. Layered on top of institutional changes and influences were also national trends, leaving the State Normal School with much to negotiate when trying to develop a curriculum and ultimately an identity.



Much of the school's early curriculum affirms the reductive rhetoric characteristic of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. However, by 1914 the State Normal School's new four-year curricular structure was in place, and curricular innovations surfaced: normalites completed liberal arts coursework in the first and second years, and the third and fourth years continued with liberal arts courses but added professional courses in methods, theory, and pedagogy. After 1914, the State Normal School had two distinguished tracks: academic and industrial. These distinct tracks responded to the rise of manual and industrial arts at normal schools and the academic trend of specialization and utilitarian education. Regardless of chosen track, students were required to take an English course each year, and rhetorical education remained a cornerstone of the curriculum. Normalites studied rhetoric and grammar in the first year, composition in the second year, expression and elocution in the junior year, and expression and methods in the senior year. Every year included a literature course. While course titles and requirements shifted, an emphasis on rhetorical education remained consistent at the State Normal School. Offering four years of curriculum provided a larger curricular space, and by the early-to-mid 1910s State Normal School students could access a curriculum with secondary, post-secondary, and professional courses.

The State Normal School saw two more large curricular developments in 1925 when it disseminated diplomas for the first time and in 1928 when it became a teaching college by name. Starting in 1925 degree seeking students would complete an additional two years of coursework after completing the four-year hybrid curriculum to earn an A.B. or B.S. in education. This six-year curriculum covered the last two years of secondary school and four years of post-secondary school, identifying the State Normal School with liberal arts colleges more than with normal schools. Several State Normal School normalites stayed the additional two years for a degree, but

some transferred to the University of Georgia, which since 1918 admitted women who had successfully completed their first two years of post-secondary education as juniors. The last shift in curriculum for the State Normal School took place in 1928 when the school changed its name to Georgia State Teachers College. As a liberal arts college, the State Normal School dropped its hybrid curriculum, only accepted students with high school diplomas, and offered four years of post-secondary liberal arts and professional courses.

### **3.3 Disrupting the Myth of Rhetorical Decline**

The 1910s and early 1920s stand out as significant decades for understanding when and in what ways the State Normal School disrupts the myth of rhetorical decline and assumptions that innovation only occurred at elite schools. State Normal School rhetoric, writing, and literature course descriptions changed frequently as did the pedagogical approaches to these courses, and at times descriptions shifted between prescriptive and progress pedagogies. Within these shifts are curricular moments that break from mechanistic, modes driven, and positivistic rhetoric and theme-writing courses and that reflect innovative pedagogical practices of experience, self-activity, and textbook free instruction linked to Pestalozzi.

Master narratives note a dominant influence of current-traditional rhetoric, the emphasis of modes of discourse, correction over content, positivism, and textbooks, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Berlin *Rhetoric and Reality*; Connors). The State Normal School curriculum inhabits this rhetorical theory periodically but not consistently, which is where its disruption of master narratives begins. Freshman students at the State Normal School began their rhetorical education with a “Rhetoric” course, which consisted mostly of grammar and review. In 1909 when the freshman course served as a preparatory year for the three-year diploma course, students studied “the general principles of oral and written composition, a special study of

narration and description, and constant practice in theme-writing” (*Course Catalog*, 1909 33).

This course description reflects a less prescriptive identity of freshman English, especially when read next to the 1911 freshman English course description. The 1911 freshman took a much more rote class studying “the mechanical features of composition . . . Punctuation, Diction, Sentence, Paragraphs, and Letter-writing” (*Course Catalog*, 1911 28). Additionally, a similar shift occurred in the descriptions of the sophomore English theme-writing class: “the nature of thought and the objective in review will determine the form of expression,” the requirement of one monthly theme, and no required textbook. Similarities to the 1909 sophomore composition course description are nowhere to be found in the 1911 sophomore composition course description: “work in Rhetoric consists in a study of the principles of Narration, Description, Exposition, and Argument, and the application of these in one written theme a week,” which required Webster’s English for Secondary Schools (*Course Catalog*, 1909 33; *Course Catalog*, 1910 28). These changes occurred when the State Normal School moved from a three-year curriculum to a four-year curriculum and become significant for this study when considering the implications these changes have for the State Normal School’s identity. Its four-year curriculum identified the State Normal School with other four-year schools, which were not normal schools but colleges and universities, and its 1911 freshman and sophomore English courses identify the curriculum with the current-traditional rhetoric typical of colleges and universities. 1911 does not disrupt the myth of rhetorical decline or assumptions of innovation; however, noting where the State Normal School located itself in 1911 highlights how significantly the curricular changes made to freshman rhetoric and sophomore composition courses in the following years of 1910s complicate rhetoric and composition historiography.

Course descriptions from the 1910s communicate in what years the State Normal School freshman rhetoric course departed from the influence of current-traditional rhetoric and when the course reflected the influence of Pestalozzi and a more organic approach to instruction. For the first half of the 1910s, State Normal School freshman rhetoric continued as the study of mechanics, highlighting a commitment to correct usage typical of current-traditional rhetoric. However, the rhetoric course and its description take a progressive turn starting in 1915:

Rhetoric: In the class Rhetoric is studied in its relation to literary forms. The different qualities of style, the figures of speech, and the peculiarities of the various kinds of prose and poetry are studied. The rhetoric lessons are closely related the lessons in literature (*Bulletin* 1915 -1916 40).

Although connected to literature, a common anchor that legitimized rhetoric within English departments for the majority of the twentieth century, the State Normal School and its English faculty's approach to rhetoric began to fall outside the rubric of current-traditional rhetoric. Freshman rhetoric existed outside of this rubric even more the following year.

Rhetoric: The purpose of this course is to train the student to a better power of expression and a more intelligent enjoyment of literature. Combined with rhetorical theory, there will be much practice in composition. The emphasis will be placed upon the development in each student of an easy style which preserves individuality while compelling the writer to conform to good usage" (*Bulletin* 1916 -1917 41).

For this course, Genung and Hanson's *Outlines of Composition and Rhetoric* was required and the 1916-1917 Course Catalog states students studied "the word, the sentence, the paragraph, and the composition as a whole from the standpoint, first of correctness, second of effectiveness." Yet, the "emphasis" of "practice" and "development in each student of an easy style which preserves individuality" communicate this course was not strictly governed by the concepts of current-traditional rhetoric even though it may have included some similarities to the rhetorical theory. The 1916-1917 rhetoric course description also shares some similarities with Pestalozzi's

theories of education since emphasis is placed upon the student and her self-activity. From these descriptions, clear curricular evidence supports the State Normal School's disruption of the myth of rhetorical decline and its assumptions since the State Normal School freshman rhetoric courses functioned – to various degrees—outside of the confines of current-traditional rhetoric. Furthermore, when the school stepped outside of current-traditional rhetoric, new pedagogical approaches developed. In the middle years of the 1910s, the State Normal School freshman rhetoric course took a turn in its pedagogical practices that disrupt traces of myth and false assumptions master narratives communicate.

Similar to the curricular shifts of freshman rhetoric, the sophomore theme-writing course experiences curricular shifts significant for understanding rhetorical education at the State Normal School and its potential to complicate master narratives. Like freshman rhetoric, the theme-writing course description did not change from 1911 until the 1915-1916 school year:

Theme: A theme will be chosen once a week from the studies of literature and written upon. These essays will be discussed and criticized in class, particular attention being paid to the cultivation of a correct and original style in each student (Bulletin 41).

Although the description does not reference how the papers will be discussed or who will conduct the criticism of them, this course description reveals the State Normal School not only recognized writing as a process but also as a community act that does not isolate writer from audience. Both concepts were innovative for their time and place. The following year, 1916-1917, the course description communicated less innovation and but continued to move away from current-traditional rhetoric. For this course sophomore students used Loumer's *The Study and Practice of Writing English* for instruction in theme-writing, which is describe as

One day a week will be given to a study of the text and the oral exercises suggested in the text. The second day will be devoted either to the writing of a theme or to its criticism and correction. Original work in all forms of composition

will be required. Much of the work will be based on the studies in literature (Course Catalog 1916-1917).

However, two years later in 1918 the theme course took a progressive turn and had a completely different description.

No textbook will be used in this course. Once a week a lesson will be given in the writing of themes. The instructions will be based upon the errors made by the students in their oral and written compositions. Selected topic will be assigned and the students required to collect, arrange, outline, and discuss the material bearing upon these topics. Helpful suggestions and criticisms will be given as needed. Each student will be required to do original work and to develop an original style (Course Catalog 1918-1919).

Instead of a textbook, handbook, or workbook guiding and making reductive writing instruction (Connors), the teacher, who was trained in pedagogy and responsive to student needs, guided the class through self-activity to produce original work, a Pestalozzian pedagogical practice (Fitzgerald, Rothermel, Gold). Although the description has an undertone of prescription and positivism, it reveals flexibility. Instead of the teacher correcting themes, the teacher responded to them in a “helpful” manner and teaching is not communicated as being mechanistic or remedial. The description also depicts students and teachers as agents of the writing process, a concept current-traditional rhetoric did not acknowledge. In less than a decade the State Normal School developed a writing pedagogy that was not divorced from theory but was not solely influenced by dominant and reductive rhetorical theories of the nineteenth and twentieth century, which disrupts the myth of rhetorical decline and the assumptions that only elite schools are responsible for pedagogical innovations.

After the 1916-1917 school year and for the rest of the decade, the State Normal School continued freshman rhetoric, and *The Course Catalog* and *Bulletin of the State Normal School* course description for freshman rhetoric did not change until 1922 when the State Normal School introduced its six-year curriculum. In 1922 freshman English remained the first year of study but

became equivalent to the junior year of high school, which helps explain why the course description slides backwards towards current-traditional rhetoric and remediation. Its description states “Rhetoric and Classics: The course consists of a study of the principles of rhetoric and composition with frequent practical exercises in theme writing, and of a careful study of the classics” (Bulletin 1922-1923 34). The following year, 1923-1924, the wording of the course changed but its purpose remained much the same: “Rhetoric and English Literature: A study of the principles of rhetoric and composition with frequent exercise in theme writing, and a careful study of the classics” (Bulletin 31). A reduced rhetoric also occurred in the sophomore theme-writing course. The 1922-1923 sophomore “Literature and Theme-Writing course description outlines a “study of the history of English literature and some of its greatest works” and does not make any reference to writing or theme requirements (*Bulletin 34*). The 1923-1924 “Literature and Theme-Writing Course” description references themes but communicates the course used writing as a tool for literature instruction:

A study of the history of English literature, accompanied by a critical study of the masterpieces of some of the leading authors; theme-writing will be studied and practiced, the themes being based upon the studies in literature” (Bulletin 31).

After 1924, course descriptions are not printed in either the *Course Catalog* or the *Bulletin of the State Normal School*. Asserted by Rudolph and addressed earlier in this chapter, curriculums are linked to institutional identity. When the State Normal School began its transition to a liberal arts teachers college in the early 1920s, its curriculum changed to align with liberal arts colleges. As a teachers college the unique normal school influences that disrupted the limitations of current-traditional rhetoric and initiated innovations in pedagogical practices no longer informed the curriculum, and rhetorical education slipped back under the influences the reductive rhetorical practices common to colleges and universities.

### 3.4 State Normal School Curriculum and Student Voices

Despite the State Normal School's shift back to a reductive rhetoric, the curriculum houses several years of disruption. One example of innovative pedagogical practices within these years of disruption and its curricular shifts are three collections of senior graduations theses. These essays, written by the majority female graduating classes of 1914, 1915, and 1916, challenge the claim that early twentieth-century writing instruction was divorced from rhetoric and highlight women's rhetorical education. Although course descriptions do not reference the graduation thesis, course titles indicate language and writing were emphasized in the last year of English study at the State Normal School: what was in 1911 an advance grammar course for seniors to review mechanics and correctness before entering the common school classroom became an advanced rhetoric and writing course in 1914. From reading 1914, 1915, and 1916 collections of essays bound and kept in the archived State Normal School materials, it is evident that students had a sophisticated rhetorical awareness and a deep understanding of their selected topic: essays reflect audience awareness in tone, style, and language; topics are relevant to each individual author; and each composition has a clear purpose. The mechanistic, formulaic essays historians assert were typical of early twentieth century current traditional rhetoric instruction are not found in the selected essays of State Normal School seniors.

A common trend among this collection of essays is for the author to directly address or question her audience. Making this personal connection breaks from the formulaic, impersonal tone common to compositions under the influence of current-traditional rhetoric. Bertha Smith in her 1914 essay writes "All this is good; but listener, that is not the only side" and later in the same page poses the rhetorical question "With their dull, weary eyes lifted upward they plead, plead with their mother state, and how does she answer?" (1). Also in 1914 Myrtle Wallace



directly addresses her audience: “The accomplishment of this end should be the aim of our education. To realize this aim we must unite the cultural phase of education with the practical” (4). Mattie Barrett, a 1915 graduate, questions her audience, writing “The can be done effortlessly by the use of the voice, for is not the voice the medium of one soul to another?” and classmate Erin Carroll questions her audience as well: “How are we to know what the child is best fitted for?” (4, 3). Directly addressing the audience communicates a relationship between author and reader, which is a rhetorical practice outside the scope of current-traditional rhetoric.

Using exclamation points and adding emphasis with quotation marks are rhetorical moves made by students in their essays that also move student-writers away from the tactics of current-traditional rhetoric. Jeanette Wallace, a 1914 graduate, emphasizes in her conclusion the extent of her argument with “Just think what effect it would have on not only the community, but the country at large!” (6). Another 1914 writer, Bertha Smith, begins a sentence with “Ah!” to add emphasis to her claim: “Ah! Although [Georgia] doubles her fund and builds colleges, she is not yet aroused to the needs of the children of the poor” (1-2). In her 1916 essay, Nanalyne Brown exclaims “The former woman makes a demand for her “rights” Rights! Why doesn’t she realize that she is being drowned in the sea of her rights?” (1). These rhetorical moves separate these papers and the student-writers from the rote, mechanistic current-traditional rhetoric typical of the mid 1910s.

State Normal School women also assert themselves squarely as the author of their essay or include themselves in their essay using first person pronouns instead of assuming a third person point of view. Erin Carroll in 1915 opens her essay with “I would have it so that...” to assert the claim she makes in her essay and continues to use the pronoun I throughout her essay

(1). Adding her voice to the voice of her audience, Nanalyne Brown writes “We can no more separate the sexes and say that this, or any other, is a woman problem, than we can separate light from the sun” (1). Browns 1916 classmate Evalyn McNeil addresses a general audience of women, appealing to them with “It rests upon us, as women of today, to show the world that ideal womanhood was not an attainment of the past only” (7). Claiming and communicating their ideas, State Normal School authors position themselves not as positivistic writers but as rhetorical agents.

The collections of graduation thesis provide evidence that the State Normal School curriculum disrupts myths of rhetorical decline and assumptions regarding innovation at the post-secondary level since student writing falls outside the dictates of current-traditional rhetoric. Unlike current-traditional rhetoric, these essays are not objective. Writers do “not reproduce reality” or write as an objective observer, two characteristics James Berlin locates in the theory of current-traditional rhetoric. (*Rhetoric and Reality* 7-8). Additionally, the essays make arguments rather than communicate positivistic conclusions in an expository essay, and in these essays writers craft a strong *ethos*, address their audience, and reflect their agency with the rhetorical moves they utilize. Unlike what Gold claims is the “epistemologically compromised” current-traditional rhetoric that “stifled student’s political participation, perpetuated class inequities, erased or supplanted student home voices, and was found dull by students and instructors,” these examples of student writing at the State Normal School show students as political participants who acknowledge class and gender issues using engaging, authoritative voices that were anything but dull (3).

### 3.5 Conclusion

In her introduction to *Local Histories* Gretchen Flesher Moon writes

Local histories of composition test our theories about the influence of popular textbooks, innovative teachers, dominant pedagogies, and landmark curricular reforms. They challenge the dominant narrative of composition history, located in primarily elite research institutions, disrupting its apparent simplicity as the myth of origin and proposing along it a complicated and discontinuous array of alternative histories. (12)

From even its earliest years, the State Normal School's curriculum challenges historiography's claim that elite schools and current-traditional rhetoric dominated rhetorical education. Although its student body, purpose, and influences may have been different from colleges and universities, marginalizing to the point of dismissing and "othering" the State Normal School, and normal schools in general, removes the opportunity for alternative theories and pedagogies of writing instruction to inform the collective history of rhetoric and composition in American education and to challenge dominant histories. Rhetoric and composition historiography would be at a disadvantage if it dismissed the State Normal School curricular narrative and narratives like it, for its disruptions are what nuance and make more comprehensive rhetoric and composition historiography. Furthermore, acknowledging and adding these disruptions to historiography adjusts the contexts under which we see and remember rhetoric and composition and its development as a discipline. Instead of remembering this era as a time when rhetorical education sat stagnantly suppressed by a reductive rhetoric, the State Norma School and its curricular narrative reveal a new context and a different way of viewing the discipline's curricular past.

#### 4 Chapter 3: Crafting *Ethos* and Developing Student Agency: The State Normal School Extracurriculum

Scholarship of American college and university curriculums points to the clear connection between the curriculum and the extracurriculum: the latter is an extension of the former (Rudolph, Russell). Their relationship functions as a linear, cause and effect transaction but also as a recursive, complex relationship when the extracurriculum “on occasion anticipated and guided the formal curriculum” (Rudolph *Curriculum* 11). Regardless of whether the extracurriculum supports the curriculum or paves the way for new ideas, methods, and courses in the classroom, the extracurriculum should not be overlooked as a place and space of collegiate life and learning, which Rudolph communicates in his study of American college and university curriculums. According to Rudolph, the extracurricular student activities at nineteenth-century and twentieth-century schools, which included literary societies, student publications, academic clubs, and athletics, provided students training for their future professional and civic lives that the classroom did not provide, an assertion echoed by historians of normal schools as well as rhetoric and composition (Ogren, Russell, Berlin, Gold, Gold and Hobbs, Ritter).

Unlike the confines of the classroom, the State Normal School extracurriculum offered overlapping and intersecting physical places and student constructed spaces where participants extended knowledge gleaned from the classroom and practiced the rhetorical behaviors of the professional and public spheres they would join upon graduation. Thus, the extracurriculum provided students multiple opportunities for male and female normalites to speak, write, and socialize together as peers and future teachers. Despite being marginalized by class, profession, and gender in the public sphere outside of the campus boundaries, State Normal School students claimed a location where individuals constructed an *ethos* and became authoritative speakers and writers. All activities of the State Normal School extracurriculum but especially the writing

composed from public platforms support Anne Ruggles Gere's claim that "writing development occurs outside of formal education" (1082). Using a variety of archived sources, I trace the rhetorical activity of students in the multiple places and spaces of the State Normal School extracurriculum to establish it as a location where student *ethos* and agency developed. I also assert that through their extracurricular activity, male and female students emerge as public speakers and public writers who addressed audiences of their peers, teachers, and in some cases the state of Georgia. Essentially, in the State Normal School extracurriculum, students' *ethos* and rhetorical agency counter claims that intellectual, public participation was absent from normal schools and not constructed by women, which further supports my claim that the State Normal School narrative nuances rhetoric and composition historiography.

Literary societies, student publications, and clubs make up the majority of the State Normal School extracurriculum, and archived materials associated with these organizations inform this chapter. University of Georgia *Course Catalogs*, *Bulletins of the State Normal School*, and State Normal School yearbooks document the histories of State Normal School male, female, and coeducational literary societies. Student writing is located in copies of the school's newspaper, *The Normal Light*, the literary magazine, *The Reflex*, which are few in the archives, and the copies of the State Normal School yearbooks, which provide the largest sample of student extracurricular writing. The State Normal School archival materials, however, hold an incomplete collection of yearbooks, and from the years of its publication, 1905-1932, years 1909-1913, 1915, 1918, and 1925 are missing. A handful of performance programs and two scrapbooks from personal collections of State Normal School graduates also inform this study of the State Normal School extracurriculum.

#### 4.1 State Normal School Extracurriculum and *Ethos*

According to Nedra Reynolds, *ethos* is strongly connected to a public since the appeal requires more than just habit and credibility but an audience, context, and setting to be constructed. Furthermore, as we are reminded by Kathleen J. Ryan, Nancy Myers, and Rebecca Jones in their introduction to *Rethinking Ethos*, *ethos* construction is “relative to time, contexts, and different relationships” and “emerges from [an] ecology of forces” (2, 1). In this chapter, I use *ethos* in reference to the identity normalites constructed for themselves as well as the identity their audience imposed upon them. To understand the *ethos* of State Normal School students, we must confront a truth of the turn-of-the-twentieth-century public sphere: it was not a location of equality. During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the State Normal School student existed outside of the ideal criterion for the dominant public, which did not value students’ rural backgrounds or hold the teaching profession in high esteem (Ogren, Herbst). As for female normalites, their gender pushed them even farther from the center of the male dominant public, which has potential implications for how the State Normal School woman constructed her *ethos* and how her audience constructed her *ethos*. Yet, I find that it is because of the public’s marginalization of the State Normal School students that the extracurriculum and the *ethos* students demonstrated when they locate themselves inside of it becomes significant. Within the extracurriculum’s physical and textual places, State Normal School students constructed inclusive spaces where their activities crafted a student *ethos* different from the *ethos* or identity imposed upon students by the public sphere. Their campus *ethos* that functioned within the campus’s blurred gender boundaries provided students with an agency, or rhetorical authority, to be public speakers and public writers. From the extracurricular platform of the State Normal School, students did not become the marginalized rhetor negotiating their *ethos* from the

outside in hopes of moving inward; instead, they negotiated their *ethos* and gained authority within the spaces they helped shape.

Within the State Normal School extracurriculum, I find opportunities afforded to rural and female students which prompted them to explore, practice, and develop the social, cultural, and professional rhetorical habits necessary for public participation after graduation without the burdens imposed by marginalization within the public sphere. The State Normal School's extracurriculum advanced its rural and female student population and fostered the acquisition of knowledge and behaviors required of public sphere occupancy. Like other normal schools, the extracurriculum at the State Normal School provided physical places and constructed spaces for students to further develop and practice the facilities expected of teachers, who functioned as rhetors in the classroom (*Gold Margins*). The extracurriculum extended the opportunities for students to prepare for their future and to practice the rhetorical skills required of teachers from a position of authority since State Normal School extracurricular places and spaces were comprised of teachers. Operating without the burden of marginalization and as the dominant population of their extracurricular platform, State Normal School students extended the lessons learned in the classroom and developed a professional *ethos* and agency useful not only for their futures in classrooms but also the public at large since the rhetorical skills gleaned in the extracurriculum were transferable to their post-normal school public life.

Mitigating the marginalization of socioeconomic background and professional pursuits in the extracurriculum affected all State Normal School students; working toward removing gender marginalization imposed by Victorian ideology at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century impacted the majority female student body. Since the State Normal School served as a teacher training professional school, it was only natural that women made up the majority of the student body

and its extracurriculum since teaching in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was one of the few professions acceptable for women. However, since the State Normal School was coeducational, its female normalites wrote and spoke to an audience of women and men. Female and male normalites participated in the extracurriculum and by doing so blurred the traditional gender roles that existed in the public sphere of life outside of the normal school

#### **4.2 State Normal School Extracurriculum**

Russell writes “students in the old curriculum devoted much of their time and energy to the extracurriculum and found it more satisfying overall than their classroom studies, to judge by their reminiscences” (49). I can say the same for State Normal School students since the majority of keepsakes housed in the personal collections of State Normal School alumni are from extracurricular activities. Playbills, photographs, yearbook copies, and literacy societies pamphlets, not papers, notes, or textbooks dominate the materials of these personal collections, signaling to me that the extracurriculum occupied a large portion of student life at the State Normal School. Each different location, literary societies, student publications, clubs, and social gatherings, constructed an *ethos* particular to the location’s place and space and the students who inhabited it. For example, male participants of literary societies constructed an *ethos* unique to the societies’ places and constructed spaces. This *ethos* is different from the *ethos* female students constructed while inhabiting the places and spaces of the female literary societies. The *ethos* crafted from the male literary societies and the *ethos* crafted from the female literary societies are also different from the *ethos* crafted from coeducational places and spaces within the extracurriculum. Layering these *ethos* together reflects the “variety and plurality of *ethos*” at the State Normal School, which evolved as time, contexts, and relationships changed among the multiple places and spaces of the extracurriculum (Ryan, Myers, and Jones 3). The different



*ethos* contributed to the students' rhetorical agency, what I claim as the ability and to what extent students were able to act and make decisions, in the variety places and spaces the State Normal School extracurriculum provided. I use *ethos* and agency together in this chapter to reference the relationship between student identity and student actions and decisions.

#### 4.2.1 *State Normal School Literary Societies*

Russell tells us that in the extracurriculum, especially in literary societies, students developed “powers of expression” and found a “creative and socially relevant outlet for speaking and writing skills they were exercising in a less satisfying way in the curriculum” (*Curriculum* 45). The State Normal School is no exception. Its literary societies exposed “provincial” normal students to the cultural world of the middle class and “further[ed] the goals of the academic curriculum by focusing consistently on refining their members’ styles of expression and composition”, which benefited the State Normal School normalites in their future social and professional spheres (Ogren 111). Five literary societies claimed the State Normal School in Athens as home. Throughout the State Normal School’s history, the number of literary societies fluctuated, which is a reflection not of student interest but the make up of the student body. As the school grew, more societies were added, and as male enrollment declined and eventually ended so did the male literary societies. At the literary societies’ peek, the school housed two male societies, two female societies, and one coeducational society that also included faculty members.

Like literary societies at colleges, universities, and other normal schools, the literary societies at the State Normal School centered upon debating, lectures, discussions, literature, acting, and music and usually subscribed to regional and Victorian gender ideology: men would debate and women would read (Ogren, Connors). Yet, single sex societies did not keep male and

female students from interacting. Public debates, lectures, plays, and readings attracted a heterogeneous audience of male and female students. At the State Normal School, the extracurricular platform and the audience it created “put both men and women students in the public spotlight. The notion of a separate female sphere was absent as all students took the stage” (Ogren 167).

In the State Normal School’s earliest years, women participated together in The Girls’ Literary Society. By 1906, the literary society was so popular among State Normal School women that the current school president called for there to be two societies: the Altorias and the Millies (Sell). While both clubs included a social element, developing an interest in literature, debates, lectures, and plays as well as developing principles of good womanhood guided the societies and their members. The early societies did not have a faculty sponsor, but as the school and the societies developed further, each society adopted at least one faculty sponsor who generally came from the English or expression department, furthering the purpose for literary and public speaking improvement.

The Altoria Literary Society, named by President Branson from the word *altior* meaning higher, did indeed set high social and cultural standards for the organization and its members. According to the State Normal School *Course Catalog* 1912-1913, in seven years the society’s “high standards for literary and social culture” resulted in a beautiful organization room, in a library, and in reaching the status of “a permanent and necessary organization in the school” (61). Altoria women prioritized the study of Southern authors, believing that few Southerners recognized the South’s contribution to literature but also read works of Dickens, Scott, Eliot, and Thackeray and discussed topics such as Parliamentary Law (*Levana* 1907, *Levana* 1908). The tradition of literature appreciation remained constant for the Altorias, which is evident from the

Altorias program published in the 1928 *Crystal*. During the 1927-1928 school year, Altorias extended their literary knowledge through the study of the Browning, Dickens, American humorists, American literature, song and nature. Altorias also engaged in a joint program debate with the Millies in April of 1928 that considered if “the prohibition amendment [had] been a success from a legal standpoint”. Altorias debated the affirmative, Millies the negative. Altorias’ commitment to exposing themselves to great literature and art and improving their public speaking skills through debate and acting helped these State Normal School women achieve an ideal state of womanhood that cast a woman as an intellectual. It is from this same space that the Millies constructed their *ethos* and agency within the public location of the extracurriculum.

The Mildred Rutherford Literary Society was named after Mrs. Rutherford, a female rhetor who represented “the ideals highest and best in Southern womanhood” (*Crystal 1930*). Members of this society sought “the cultivation of the literary sense, betterment of social life of the school, and the cementing of friendships into strong usefulness in the future” (*Course Catalog, 1912-1913 62*). In addition to upholding the ideals of Southern womanhood, the Millies – their nickname – committed themselves to the study of great literature. Like the Altorias, the Millies studied Southern literature. The 1906 - 1907 school year followed the theme “The South as Told in Song and Story”, and during the fall semester of 1907, the society studied Georgia authors. In the spring of 1908, the society looked outside of the South and studied works by Irving, Longfellow, Lowell, Emerson, Hawthorne, Holmes, and Cooper (*Levana 1907, Levana 1908*). The Millies as well as the Altorias garnered wide spread attention from State Normal School students and the state of Georgia. For many years, the majority of State Normal School women participated in one of the two societies, and in 1929 the Georgia Federation of Women’s Clubs federated both literary societies (*Crystal 1930*).

State Normal School men participated in their own literary society, The Young Men's Lyceum, which began in 1896 with the purpose to develop the art of expression. After eight years and with a more developed persona, the group voted to change its name to better reflect its belief in democratic management and their respect for Thomas Jefferson. In 1904 The Jeffersonian Debating Society replaced the Young Men's Lyceum, and by 1905 the society grew to such a degree that every male student was a member, a point of pride for the society (*Levana* 1905). Their commitment to developing the art of expression did not waiver and was made evident in their 1905 *Levana* page which states "all knowledge is of little use to anyone unless he has the ability to express what he knows to others". The Jeffersonian Society was not all work and no play, however. While it did center upon intellectual training and the skills of public speaking, which fostered extensive reading skills and connected members to great literature, the young Jeffersonian men were not without a sense of humor and included in their series of public debates one "chiefly for fun and humor" (*Levana* 1908). Society membership and the interest of its members to regularly practice the art of debate and public speaking caused in the fall of 1906 freshman boys, frustrated with the lack of time to debate and speak publically, to form the Freshman Debating Society (*Levana* 1908). Members of this society debated with Jeffersonians and kept the art of expression at its core, communicating with this choice the value students placed in the study and practice of rhetorical education.

In addition to its literary societies, normalites added to their study and practice of rhetorical education through their participation in The Saturday Night Round Table, a student run group that began in 1896 with a gathering of six after Saturday night supper (Sell). In 1903 President Branson recognized the value of this gathering and made it a requirement for all students, who were divided into groups of equal numbers (*Levana* 1906). This group sought to find recreation

in the “power” of telling “the best stories to be found in our literature” (*Course Catalog* 1912-1913 62) as well as increase “knowledge, love, and enjoyment of good literature” (*Levana* 1907). Stories as well as current events were discussed, and songs often were sung. In addition to students, faculty participated as advisors, making the Saturday Night Round Table a campus-wide affair. According to the 1916 *Crystal*, “The Round Table is the oldest organization of its kind in the United States”.

This gathering provided students more than entertainment, however. Through the act of reading and speaking publically, male and female normalites interacted within a public platform that improved their connection to the world and literature. While this club was not genderless, the act of men and women speaking aloud for an audience of male and female peers and faculty members helped students prepare for their future career as teachers and their entrance into the cultural sphere of the middle class. For women especially the participation in this public sphere introduced them as readers, performers, and peers to their fellow male normalites, giving them an *ethos* and rhetorical agency not awarded to them within their literary societies. And participate they did. The 1907 *Levana* features a photograph of fourteen speakers; four of them are male and ten of them are female. The inclusive nature of normal schools and the loose gender boundaries characteristic of normal schools are reflected in the formation and success of The Saturday Night Round table.

From negotiating these audiences and the different social and cultural contexts among loosely gendered boundaries, I locate an *ethos* and rhetorical agency particular to the State Normal School and unique among college, university, and normal school campuses. Regardless of which society or societies State Normal School students elected to join, all organizations focused on habits of culture necessary for life after school in the public sphere. Single gender

literary societies and the coeducational Saturday Night Round Table gave students multiple opportunities to act as rhetors in the extracurriculum and to do so for a variety of audiences. These opportunities separate the State Normal School from single gender institutional and give rhetoric and composition historiography a location from which to access coeducational rhetorical acts.

#### 4.2.2 *Student Publications*

In her study of normal schools, Ogren surveys the variety of student publications such as newspapers, magazines, and yearbooks. The publications include “essays, reviews, short stories, and poems with both serious and frivolous themes, and news of alumni achievements and campus events – especially doings of the literary societies” (Ogren 113). The State Normal School’s students published a newspaper, the *Normal Light*, from 1916 to 1932 that covered campus and local Athens events, updating students with the “goings on” of the area and a monthly literature magazine, *Reflex*, from 1924 to 1932 (*Crystal 1929, 1932*). Both publications provided State Normal School students with the opportunities to write for a public audience and developed *ethos* and rhetorical agency as public writer. Yet, I find the most significant of the extracurricular outlets at the State Normal School to be the annual yearbook published from 1905 to 1932, for in this textual place, students most assertively communicate their *ethos* and apply their agency to not only address the audience of the State Normal School but also the public sphere of Athens and Georgia.

The publication of a yearbook began in 1905. As a class, the 1905 seniors wrote, edited, and published for themselves, their fellow State Normal School classmates, the State Normal School faculty, and Athens residents a memory book to commemorate their commencement. Every year after 1905 and until the University of Georgia absorbed the State Normal School in

1933, students published a yearbook. First, students titled the book *Levana*. In 1912 the book changed to *Algo*, and in 1916 the third and final name, *Crystal*, served as the yearbook's title. Traditionally, a group of seniors led by a student editor-in-chief were responsible for the yearbook, but in 1929, the editorial group for the yearbook represented all grades at the school.

Nedra Reynolds claims “writers construct and establish *ethos* when they say explicitly ‘where they are coming from’” (“Ethos” 332), and the editors of the State Normal School yearbooks established their *ethos* through communicate to their audience a purpose of the yearbook. Since the first yearbook in 1905, the predominately female senior classes used the entire yearbook to serve as an argument made to a male-dominated state audience to argue for an improved educational system. This argument is made first on the second page of the 1905 *Levana*. “Greetings” in large artfully written capital letters tops the 1905 *Levana* page that communicates the yearbook's audience and argument. Greeted on the page are the State Normal School trustees, faculty, graduates, and the patriots of Georgia. To the Georgia patriots, the editors write

With the hope that they will promptly join the Trustees, Faculty, and the Graduates in a sweet conspiracy for better things for the children of the State – better school houses, better equipments, longer terms, better salaries, better supervision; for school libraries, elementary agriculture and nature study, manual arts and handicrafts, domestic arts and sciences; for a study in the schools of the things the children need in life they are to live: remembering what we want in the life of the State tomorrow we much put into the schools today.

In 1906 the second *Levana* volume continues to argue for improved common school education and the necessity of the State Normal School for this improvement. Its editors assert

Since it takes years of preparation to make a healer of the body should not one who undertakes the training of mind, soul and body be even better prepared than the physician? The future of our great country depends upon

the education of the children, and their education depends on well-trained teachers.

Both excerpts clearly convey the argument the senior annual staff intended to make through the publication and distribution of their yearbook: the state must recognize teacher training as a necessity for the betterment of the state and continue to support the State Normal School. Student voices such as these become less pronounced after the first and second volumes, but traces of a general audience outside of the State Normal School student body and faculty surface in subsequent yearbook volumes. For example, in the 1914 annual, senior Bertha Smith directly addressed the audience as “reader” charging him or her to “look into the faces” of the graduates, for “if you could do that, you will indeed feel that our history will play a part in the history of our state”. In their yearbooks, State Normal School seniors make overt statements to their audience, reflecting a keen and persistent sense of audience awareness that reflects their *ethos* and rhetorical agency.

When students published the first volume of the *Crystal* – an annual rather than a senior book – in 1916, they continued the tradition of addressing a statewide audience versus a State Normal School student, and the yearbooks continued to create a space in the “betweens” of student and audience (Reynolds). Although the annual represented the entire student body after 1916 instead of serving as a physical representation of the seniors’ transition from campus life to public life, the students continued to keep their audience in mind and wrote of the 1917 *Crystal* that their efforts were “successful enough to meet with approval and win your sympathy for our idea.” Similar statements seeking the approval of a general audience and using second person pronouns like “you” or “your” appear in forewords of several *Crystal* volumes after 1917, exhibiting editors consistent interest in reaching a broad audience located inside of and outside of campus boundaries. The 1924 *Crystal* lists this audience as “students, faculty, and friends of the



State Normal School.” Demonstrating that its audience encompasses State Normal School students and faculty and the people of Athens, the 1921 *Crystal* included a three-page section with pictures titled “Places of Interest In and Around Athens”. The section provided a history of Athens and information about popular landmarks. Consistent declarations of the normalites’ authority as State Normal School students and members of the Athens community made within the yearbook to an audience that extended beyond campus borders and into the city and state exemplifies the *ethos* Reynolds writes “occurs in the ‘betweens’ (LeFevre) as writers struggle to identify their own positions at the intersections of various communities and attempt to establish authority for themselves and their claims” (“Ethos” 333).

In the opening pages of the yearbook, State Normal School editors do more than communicate audience awareness and an argument and further communicate their *ethos* and reflect their agency when they identify an additional position and purpose of their yearbook. The 1905 *Levana* “Editorial” best communicates this ownership:

The students of the School have long felt the need of an Annual, but not until the year “1905” have they made an effort to publish one... This volume, coming from the student body as it does, is intended to give the people of Georgia a true insight into our life at the Normal School.

The third annual also makes a direct claim of student ownership with an unapologetic tone that communicates student *ethos* and agency: “It is customary to publish Annuals, and it is usual for the editors to apologize for their issuance. This year, however, with no apology to offer, we send *Levana* forth for speak for itself.” Each yearbook is an artifact, which represents the students and their voices, and a place and space where students communicate the *ethos* and rhetorical agency they constructed at the State Normal School and as public writers.

The yearbooks reflect the mission and purpose of the Normal School as a teacher training school, and students use their *ethos* as student teachers to describe or reflect upon their teacher training and its practices. Several pieces describe the teaching activities of the practice school. In “A Day in the Practice School” in the 1905 *Levana*, Mary Frank Thomas states “When we as Seniors ponder the first years of our school life here, we cannot realized how we every existed before we entered the blessed realm, the Practice School...In a most subtle way it cultivates our every emotion.” Also in 1905 the *Levana* included a version of “Dewey’s Pedagogic Creed as revised by the Senior; Edited by N.T. Beall.” In the creed, Beall outlines four articles: “What Education Is; What the School Is; The Nature of the Child; and The School and Social Progress.” These sections offer insight into how State Normal School seniors approached the criteria of teaching. “Lesson Plans vs. Teaching” in the 1906 *Levana* makes the observation “that lesson-plan making is harder than teaching” since students have to anticipate the needs of each student when writing her plans. Later volumes of the annual continue to keep teaching and its practice as themes of the yearbook. In the 1914 annual the practice school and rural school sections open the yearbook and precede even the senior class section, which is the class who published the yearbook. The placement of these sections is a testament to the significance of these places where students applied what they learned at the State Normal School. The narratives, plays, and poems that fall under the category of teaching and teacher training did more than offer a public platform for students to express themselves; they supported the argument their annual made and expressed their professional views. The *ethos* students constructed as teachers fueled their rhetorical agency and the arguments students through the yearbook made.

Select pieces of student yearbook writing reveal student awareness of the “ambiguity” of teaching as a profession and the peripheral status of teaching within the public sphere, and these

pieces contribute to the annuals argument (Ogren). “Everybody’s Paid But Teacher” in the 1906 *Levana* addresses the tangible inequities between teacher and other occupations but touches upon intangible inequities of the teaching and how its valued, an ambiguity of teaching that proves to be timeless.

Everybody’s paid but Teacher,  
Carpenter, mason, and clerk;  
Everybody’s paid but Teacher,  
She gets nothing but work.

Everybody’d paid but Teacher,  
Paid with a scowl or a smile;  
Everybody’s paid but Teacher,  
Whose work is not worth while.

Everybody’s paid but Teacher,  
Seeking her pay above;  
Everybody’s paid but Teacher,  
Living on ethereal love.

Everybody’s paid but Teacher,  
Everybody gives her praise;  
Everybody says she’s a wonder,  
But nobody offers her a “raise.”

The anonymous student poet makes a clear claim in her poem that furthers the yearbook’s argument of supporting teacher training and points to the marginal status of teachers.

“The Teacher and The Community” in the 1907 *Levana* also touches upon the marginalization of the teacher and points out the lack of reciprocity between teacher and community. The anonymous author writes teachers

[have] one side of the question pretty well solved – the relation of teacher to the community. The other side of the question, the relation of the community to the teacher, has received so little attention that what I shall say on the phase of it will be original.

State Normal School student writers – who for these more controversial pieces remain anonymous – use the yearbooks, a public platform available to them, to express their thoughts regarding their future profession and to contribute to the argument made by the yearbooks.

*Ethos* and agency in the yearbooks are not limited to student writing that works to legitimize the State Normal School, its students, and teacher training. Student writing that reflects the relationships created among classmates also depict student *ethos* and agency. In many volumes seniors elected to include descriptions, sayings, or quotes for each senior, reflecting each graduate's contribution to campus life and the senior class. Captions for 1908 seniors feature a representative drawing, a signature, and a short description of the student. Descriptions reference the senior's personality or a teaching experience, but all are humorous with a tongue 'n'cheek tone. The descriptions for the Edwards sisters give an example of each type. Elise Edwards caption captures her personality:

Elise was born very young, and she hasn't recovered from it yet. But it takes these demure little creatures to startle the world. You never would believe it, but she is a full-fledged flirt. We all had to put on mourning when this fatal discovery was made.

Ola Edwards recounts a practice school experience:

The sleety blizzard almost put an end to Ola's February first-grade teaching. For several days she had no pupils; during the next few days there were two or three present; finally she had more than she could manage.

Captions for seniors in the 1914 *Algo* are much shorter – a common phrase comes to the right of the student's yearbook picture. The yearbook does not make clear the significance of the phrase, but from reading through the picture portion of the senior section, the phrases must be a common saying of the student or a phrase that identifies the personality of the student. "Slow and steady

wins the race,” “Off with the old love, on with the new,” “Let me have audience for a word or two,” “The best is yet to be,” and “She is like a summer rose, making everything and everybody about her glad” are used to describe 1914 seniors. The 1923 *Crystal* lists each senior and includes for her an ambition, talent, hobby, fault, and destination. All categories have a range of answers, and while some reference teaching, many present these women as much more multifaceted. For example, Irene Deason’s ambition is “to play tennis”; talent is “crawling in windows”; hobby is “collecting athletic dues”; fault is “procrastinating”; and destination is “furniture store.” Her sister Tommie’s descriptions are much different. Tommie’s ambition is “to beat Irene”; her talent is “shooting flies”; her hobby is “haunting the practice school”; her fault is “believing in ghosts”; and her destination is “Egyptian mummy excavator.” Using these categories not only reflects the *ethos* of the student but also the *ethos* and agency of the yearbook editors who chose to include this section in the yearbook. Whether a saying or a description of personality, these comments establish the *ethos* of the senior but also establish the *ethos* and agency of the editors for choosing to include a caption for each senior.

Early yearbook volumes included hefty literary sections of student writing; however, as the State Normal School acquired more extracurricular options for publishing student writing, the yearbook literary section transitioned into a student written joke section, which continued to depict student *ethos* and agency albeit in a slightly different way and for a slightly different purpose than in other yearbook sections and volumes. These playful inclusions reflect the students’ senses of humor and the “gentle parody of the faculty” and the school typical of normal school yearbooks (Rothermel “A Home” 139). Jokes sections also make suggestions for how and when students used their *ethos* and agency as publishers to refigure the power structure: students published the yearbook and had the power to relocate themselves at the top of a refigured

hierarchy. Jokes made by students about teachers disrupted the teacher-student dichotomy typical of classrooms and served as an avenue for students to express frustrations or provide commentary for their experiences at the State Normal School in a constructive but indirect way. Yet, I find the jokes reflect the extent to which students and faculty created positive relationships at the State Normal School, and I read many of the jokes not as critical or malicious but playful and teasing. For example, the 1923 *Crystal* dedication to Carolyn Vance states

Because you have been a friend and advisor to us, because you are a zealous worker for the upbuilding of our institution, and because you will always, by force of your personality, influence others toward worthy achievements in life, we, the senior class of 1923, dedicate our annual. Accept it not so much as a mark of respect from students to teacher, but as a gift of love from friends to friend.

In the jokes section of the 1923 yearbook, Vance is referenced in the jokes section. The oratory teacher, Vance in the joke “inquired after Lonnie if she had finished some voice exercises in oratory: ‘That’s good, Lonnie. Why in the world didn’t you try out for the Glee Club?’/ Lonnie (timidly) ‘I did.’” Yearbooks before and after 1923 also include Vance in jokes. I read her inclusion in the jokes section not as a “making fun” or as a “critique” but as a way to equalize student and teacher using humor, which students were able to accomplish using their *ethos* and agency.

The publication of the annuals also contributed to the construction of *ethos* and agency for State Normal School students, especially female students who year after year greatly outnumbered male yearbook staff members. For this reason, I center my conclusions of the *ethos* construction from the annuals’ preparation and publication upon its significant communication of female normalites’ agency at the State Normal School. According to Ogren the extracurriculum afforded normal schools a “social world in which women played a visible and active role... [and] share[d] leadership responsibilities in campus life” (173). At the State Normal School female

students did more than share the leadership responsibilities of the yearbook production and publication, but they dominated it. Every year a female student served as Editor-in-Chief, and every year female students made up the majority of the yearbook staff. In this public space that served a public, statewide audience, women did not function as marginalized female but functioned as leaders of the school who curated the annual artifact for the school year. Instead of assimilating into a dominant (male) group, female students of the coeducational State Normal School created and controlled place and space they shared with male students. In the extracurriculum the State Normal School students, especially its female students, “claimed the public platform...for their own use” (Rothermel “A Home” 152). Thus, at the State Normal School, women not just accessed a public platform but created it through the yearbook and other publications, exemplifying their *ethos* and agency.

#### **4.3 Clubs, Activities, and Socializing**

The locations of State Normal School’s extracurriculum extended beyond the reading, writing, and speaking of literary societies and student publications. Clubs, activities, and social outings helped male and female students perform in public ways and develop relationship that crossed gendered boundaries and served as another opportunity for students to develop *ethos* and agency in the extracurriculum. At normal schools around the country Ogren claims physical activity “had a social component and put women in the spotlight” and “increased women’s visibility in the public sphere” (Ogren 168, 173). Although females did not compete against males, athletic competitions drew a coeducational crowd, and women “performed” athletically in front of men, blurring the ideals and gender boundaries of current social mores. Clubs such as the Georgia Club or county clubs grouped students not by gender but by interest in their state and by their county. Even social outings such as picnics and excursions on campus or in town provided

socialization and exploration of friendly and romantic relationships between male and female students the classroom did not facilitate. Scrapbooks of State Normal School students attest to coeducational socialization, and scrapbook pages feature photographs of female and male students at various locations on campus and scenic shots of Athens, Georgia, proving that students left campus to explore Athens and its surrounding area. Blurring gender roles in these sports, clubs, and social activities support the *ethos* and agency developed in other areas of the extracurriculum. Since *ethos* is socially constructed and the result of the relationship between the agent, the position from which the agent communicates, and the agent's audience (Reynolds; Bordelon; Ryan, Myers, and Jones), the low stakes and casual social platform of these extracurricular activities construct *ethos* and agency in different but significant ways from other locations within the extracurriculum.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The extracurriculum proved to be a place and space for State Normal School students to develop an *ethos* and an agency, which they did so through rhetorical decisions and actions informed by their identity. The State Normal School student used the student-directed extracurriculum to “[take] charge of their own education” and “[enhance] their emotional commitment to the field” of teaching in ways they could not in the curriculum (Rudolph *Curriculum* 98; Ogren 149). Furthermore, their rhetorical practices and publications connected students with their peers and faculty but also the greater public of Georgia, which not only prepared the student teachers for their future professional role but also the individual for the activities of the public sphere. Thus, the extracurriculum serves as a lens through which to view the identity of State Normal School students and their actions but also as a platform from which students connected and communicated with a public audience. The extracurriculum is also a pivotal component of how



we remember the State Normal School and contextualize it within its past and our present. Going outside of typical contexts, like the curriculum and like elite institutions, prompts the (re)view of rhetoric and composition history, which can help us see differently and remember differently – in this case student writing and women’s writing – to work towards a more historically accurate understanding of writing and public practices.

## 5 Chapter 4: Female and Feminist Voices: Student Writing and Activist Rhetoric

Jacqueline Jones Royster asserts that “as users of language, we construct ways of being, seeing, and doing in recognition of the materiality of the world around us and of who and how we are in our sundry relationships to it” (284). Language not only reflects how we construct our physical and rhetorical present and our identity but also how we understand the relationships between and around our present and our identity. For State Normal School students, their material reality included the campus and its curricular and extracurricular spaces. The curricular and extracurricular emphases of reading, writing, and speaking through the study of literature, rhetoric, composition, and elocution paired with topical issues of gender and education shaped the physical and rhetorical world of the students and created a democratic and civic campus climate. Their world and its climate generated discourse that constructed student identity yet also generated a student identity that constructed this discourse. Taking into account Royster’s assertion and the reciprocal relationship among location, identity, and language becomes especially significant when interpreting and analyzing the State Normal School and its students’ writing. Reading student writing in this way does more than help me “get to know” the State Normal School and its students but helps me view more deeply and rhetorically where students were and who students were.

While the State Normal School offered a platform for male voices, specifically Southern males marginalized by their socioeconomic class and profession, its acceptance and encouragement of female voices made this platform a notable place and space for the turn-of-the-century South and its women. In this chapter I focus upon the female students of the State Normal School from 1914 to 1916 and note in three sets of graduation theses a civic and democratic turn in essays that argue topics of gender and education within the ideological and

political spheres of Georgia. This civic turn, I believe, correlates with the physical and rhetorical materiality of the State Normal School and the agency and ethos students achieved as normalites. According to Fitzgerald, student writing becomes a “cultural product...of intense efforts of the schools to socialize students according to certain cultural standards” (“Revisited” 118).

Therefore, student writing can be interpreted as a cultural product that offers a representation of the school’s ideology, attitude, and cultural climate. Reading State Normal School and its student essays in this way presents a campus cultural climate that contrasts the State Normal School with previously drawn conclusions of places of higher education and their gendered rhetorical spaces. Gold reminds us that places of higher education for women have been criticized “for creating gendered rhetorical spaces that limited women’s opportunities for self-expression and for “[discouraging] women’s public speaking and political participation” (“Eve” 177). Traditionally, academic prose that fell under the categories of exposition and argument was coded male and resulted in the erasure of women since these genres were not in the domain of the woman’s voice (Fitzgerald). However, the State Normal School and its culture did not gender the domain of argument and did not silence the arguments of its female students, giving them the power to become democratic and civic rhetors through their writing. Although lingering Victorian ideology left women writing these arguments for class, the act of women making civic arguments is rhetorically significant for State Normal School students’ time and place.

### **5.1 State Normal School Collection of Graduation Theses, 1914-1916**

Hargrett Library holds three sets of papers from the graduating seniors of 1914, 1915, and 1916; these papers are referenced in Chapter 2. Each set contains a selection of thesis papers: 38 from 1914, 26 from 1915, and 15 from 1916. The sets are leather bound with a typed table of contents listing the titles and authors of each essay, which are arranged alphabetically by the author’s last

name. In all three collections, only one male essay is included; every other essay is by a female writer. Neither set of essays gives a description of the assignment itself or explains why the particular papers in the collections were selected. The papers in the collection could just as well be the best representation of that year's senior class as they could be the entire collection of essays submitted that year. Comparing the number of selected essay to the number of graduates, though, does reflect the percentage of student essays select if the State Normal School did in fact require the essay of every graduate. In 1914, 108 women and 4 men graduated for a total of 112. The thirty-eight papers from this class represent a third of the graduating class. The following year, the State Normal School graduated 66 women and 6 men for a total of 72. The twenty-six papers also represent about a third of the class. The collection of essays from 1916 is representative of 87 female graduates and one male graduate for a total of 88 seniors. The fifteen essays from this graduating class are representative of only a fifth of the senior class. Although no information documents what criteria were used to select essays, the quality of the essays chosen and the variety of topics they cover prompt me to conclude essays were chosen based upon their merit and to serve as a sampling of the range of essay topics.

Each essay in the collection shares enough commonalities that even without an assignment, I can deduce some requirements and locate in certain essays a departure from the standards of current traditional rhetoric, which I addressed in chapter two, but also should be reviewed in this deeper analysis of the essays. The essays are six to seven pages in length, and several students quote outside sources as they make and support the claims of their essay. Each essay is typed, double-spaced, generally free of grammatical errors, and includes a cover page. During the middle 1910s when these essays were written, the State Normal School found itself in the midst of some complex curriculum shifts that move rhetoric and composition courses out of

the tenants of current traditional rhetoric – textbook driven, emphasis of modes, correction over content, and positivism (Berlin *Rhetoric and Reality*; Connors)– to a curriculum that more closely resembles a more rhetorical approach to composition instruction, which emphasizes the ethos of the author and acknowledges the audience as an important component of the writing process. Although the essays follow the conventional forms and formats associated with current traditional rhetoric, several women make sophisticated rhetorical moves when they break rules of grammar and directly address their audience of peers, teachers, and the public, reflecting the curricular shift that was taking place around them. Much like the State Normal School student herself, the organization and language of these papers exist within the tension created by opposing traditional and progressive ideologies that were both influential during the early twentieth century South. It is from this place of tension that the civic rhetoric these essays exude becomes even more interesting to me and for the historiography of rhetoric and composition.

Before I address the papers themselves and the student voices they share, it is important to consider that “rhetoric always inscribes the relation of language to power at a particular moment” and that the particular historical and locational contexts within which these student essays were written impacts their “effective literacy... the level of literacy that enables the user to act to effect change in her own life and in society (Glenn *Unspoken* 1; Hobbs 1). First, State Normal School students wrote these essays during the early years of World War I when Julie Garbus writes “women moved away from Victorian ‘service’ ideals and developed more social-scientific ways of seeing the world” (88). State Normal School student essays address women’s work and women’s place, a topic that Gold and Hobbs note “moved into the southern public realm” after the Civil War and that Montgomery asserts became more visible and valued through the rise Georgia women’s clubs at the turn of the century (4). The essays themselves also serve

as evidence to support Garbus, Gold, Hobbs, and Montgomery. Through a written medium and in a classroom forum, the act itself of making an argument moved these women away from the Victorian ideals of womanhood as do the essay topics themselves, which address the world outside of the home and tackle inequity and social barriers. The presence of activism in the papers reflects the shifting from a Victorian old South to a progressive new South; however, the deep roots of Victorian ideology were by no means removed from the region and lingered even as the South moved its ideology forward. Second, the state of Georgia during the 1900s and 1910s heard many arguments for educational reform. Georgia clubwomen spent the early part of the twentieth century arguing for a more egalitarian education system for “women and the rural and urban poor” in an effort to “distribute public resources in a more equitable manner” across the state (Montgomery 16). Clubwomen addressed education reform among countryside, mountain, and working-class communities, locating inequities for women and the poor within these groups (Montgomery). Statewide arguments addressing access to education permeated the boundaries of the State Normal School campus, and several students take up these arguments in their civically minded and democratic essays. Although a lingering Victorian ideology may have limited the students’ power to speak their arguments, State Normal School students did have enough power from the campus’s cultural climate to write their arguments in an effort to enact change.

## **5.2 Student Voices**

Each collection of essays addresses a variety of topics, and while themes and topics are seen across the collections, topics and their popularity vary from year to year. In their essays State Normal School students select topics under academic focuses of literature, language, and history: “Southern Literature”, “Great Women of History and Literature”, “Macbeth – Lord and Lady”,

“Dickens’s Plea for Childhood”, “The Power of the Spoken Word”, “The Causes of the European War”, “The English Comedy”, and “A Sketch of Southern Literature, with Its Distinct Characteristics” are all student essay titles. Students also selected topics under industrial focuses of home economics, domestic science, sanitation, and rural life, and the collection of essays includes student writing with titles such as “Agricultural Education”, “The Socializing Influence of Home Economics”, “Extension Work in Home Economics”, “Plumbing of Country Homes”, and “Industrial Education in Rural Schools.” Students wrote essays addressing labor and policy, and topics such as child labor laws, immigration, westward expansion, the Panama Canal, and the Monroe Doctrine are common in each set of student papers. While each essay serves as an example of student writing and holds implications for understanding student voices at the State Normal School and more broadly during the early twentieth century, in this analysis I focus my attention upon the student essays that best demonstrate characteristics of a civic rhetoric and State Normal School students as civic rhetors.

State Normal School students craft civic arguments in their essays that address gender and the politics that surround these topics. These samples of student writing highlight the tension present in Georgia and the South, especially the indefinite “place” of women, the family, and the child. In their writing some female students toe the line of outright feminism when they consider and argue for the “woman’s place” in society, yet others affirm Victorian ideals of womanhood. At normal schools, Ogren finds female normalites “absorbed an expansive vision of women’s capabilities. They tended, however, to stop short of full support for women’s rights,” which is evident in State Normal School essays that consider gender (Ogren 175).

In 1915 Beryl Cadwell wrote “Great Women of History and Literature” and in it surveys women who she finds influential for their actions during times of war or for their written words

and uses them as examples for the ideals of womanhood. She begins her essay with two historical women she identifies as heroines. Cadwell begins her essay with Florence Nightingale and her service during the Crimean War and classifies Nightingale as a hero because she “did more and dared more than any English soldier” (2). After Florence Nightingale, Cadwell writes about Joan of Arc, claiming that “[i]n the history of the world since the dawn of time is no other character so remarkable” (3). Cadwell lists “leading an army to battle, storming a fort, or planning a campaign” as heroic actions conducted by Joan of Arc (3). In her final example of female heroism during times of war, Cadwell turns to European women experiencing first hand the traumas of World War I. Once Cadwell covers these female war heroines and their actions, she turns to influential women who have done great things with their written words. Beryl Cadwell writes “[m]uch have we learned and great is the influence of the woman who has done great things on the battlefield, but the ones who have influence us most are those that in their quiet way have sent out wonderful messages in their writings” (4). Cadwell praises Elizabeth Barrett Browning for her “genius, character, and position” as well as love of art and humanity and George Elliot for her “passages of strength and beauty” (4, 5). On the final page of her essay, Cadwell connects these heroic women of war and page to her personal concept of ideal womanhood which centers upon “habits of self-reliance, intellectual toil, industrious employment of natural gifts, benevolent labors for others, and spiritual self-culture” (6). Cadwell in her essay surveys notable historical women and uses their actions as examples to contextualize her concept of ideal womanhood.

Nellie Kate Williams, a 1916 graduate, also addressed gender in her essay “The Twentieth-Century Woman.” In her essay, Williams traces the elevation of women throughout history. She begins first with “ancient civilizations in which women played a conspicuous part”



(1). Williams contrasts ancient Egypt and its matriarchal society with the patriarchal societies of ancient Greece and ancient Rome. Her essay moves from antiquity to the early Americas, contrasting the English and colonial placement of women in the home with the pioneer conditions of the New World that treated women “with altogether different regard and consideration” (2). In her essay Williams locates a shift in women’s “elevation” in the eighteenth century, which she claims is “the seed-time of modern ideas” and when women began to break from old ideals of womanhood (3). Once Williams traces women’s elevation throughout history, she writes of the increased opportunities and power twentieth-century women have in relation to women of the past. She follows this claim with examples of twentieth-century women and their accomplishments. Selma Lagerlöf, a Nobel prize winner, club women, Jane Addams and Ellen G. Starr of the Hull House, and women soldiers receive Williams’s praise for their accomplishments and the women’s power they exemplify. Power and twentieth-century women’s ability to exercise this power, Williams asserts, differentiate the twentieth-century woman from her predecessors and elevate them to a public status more equal to men than ever before.

Evalyn McNeil addresses gender in her essay 1916 “Woman’s Place in the World of Today” by commenting on the “narrowed scope of women’s work” in the twentieth century (4). Like Williams, McNeil begins with a history of women. Instead of citing specific civilizations, societies, or women, however, McNeil traces the scope of women’s work and its decline throughout history. At first “man and woman labored side by side,” but as time evolved, women’s domain became smaller and smaller, reduced from the home and garden to eventually just the home (1). McNeil asserts that “today” in the twentieth century a woman’s domain becomes even further reduced since industrialism and its inventions complete tasks formerly

expected of women. For example, instead of weaving cloth and sewing clothing, manufactures make “every kind of garment,” and instead of baking bread and canning vegetables, grocers delivers these items to the home (3-4). Even the expanded common school system reducing the time a woman spends raising her children. With this time, McNeil states, comes the ability to enter into “new fields of labor” such as “business houses, post offices, hospitals, courts, schools, and colleges” and “[fill] these places with credit to herself, and benefit to society” (4-5). Yet, McNeil goes on to argue that although women have options outside of the home, her most important role remains as mother and home-maker, a conclusion guided by McNeil’s commitment to the ideals of womanhood. McNeil’s argument demonstrates the challenge many early twentieth-century women faced as they attempted to situate ideal womanhood into the modern twentieth-century landscape and its impact on women’s scope and identity.

Fellow 1916 graduate, Nanalyne Brown, references this challenge in her essay titled “The Woman of Today” and begins her essay with a strong point of view: “To designate some of the social and economic conditions that need adjusting, ‘the woman problem’ is even more obnoxious and incorrect than to call the War between the States a civil war” (1). In her essay she goes on to claim that “the woman problem” is not whether a women should locate herself in the home or in the workforce but how modern twentieth-century women are to situate and position themselves in a society that is still guided by nineteenth-century gender ideals. To address this problem, Brown suggests that a woman’s “mission” is “to make a home in whatever place she finds herself” (4). She continues “[w]herever there is something that is concretely personal and human, there is woman’s world” (4). Brown ends her essay encouraging women to take advantage of her ability to “extend her radiance of love beyond [the domestic world’s] boundaries on all sides” (4). She asserts that when women expand their boundaries and situate

themselves within the places these expanded boundaries create, women will obtain the progress and power associated with men, reach equality across economic, social, and educational planes, and alleviate “the woman problem.”

I also classify student essays that address education, labor, and the politics that surround these topics as civic. Ogren claims of the “rich opportunities for intellectual and professional development” typical of normal school, and in their essays that address education and politics, State Normal School students support her claim (175). Essays under the focus of education argue in favor of stricter compulsory education laws and the unity of Georgia’s system of education as well as against current child labor laws and the current status of rural education in Georgia. In these essays State Normal School students move beyond theory and pedagogy taught in the classroom and engage deeply with ethical and political circumstances that surround education and the welfare of Georgia children. Yet, similar to the degree in which State Normal School students support feminism, students do not make their claims regarding education and labor without acknowledging that more time at school results in less time at home, which alters the relationships among family members. Regardless of the claims and the degree to which arguments support traditional or progressive ideals, State Normal School students can be read today as civic participants in these papers that make arguments which revolve around equal education for all Georgia residents.

Carolyn Vance in 1914 wrote “The Needs of Now-A-Day Civilians,” an essay that addresses shifts in society and its impact on the role of teacher in modern society. She begins her essay expounding upon the relationship between individual and society, writing that they are “strong correlated” (1). She then claims the modern “growing spirit of individualism... makes all institutions of civilization unstable, especially the home life” and connects the spirit of

individualism to “our democratic government, the development of industry, and our modern education” (1). The shift towards individualism Vance asserts draws society’s focus to the individual rather than the family and includes women and children in the workforce. With fewer women remaining in the home and the family as a unit losing its status, Vance claims schools are responsible for the “betterment of humankind” since “civilization has its hopes nestled in its womanhood” (5). She ends her essay advocating teaching fulfills not only the ideals of womanhood but the “due responsibility of service, which we owe our nation” (6). Of the essays in the collection, Vance’s thesis is the most disorganized and convoluted. She crafts a disjointed argument that begins with the claim that the individual not the family is the building block of modern society but ends advocating for the significance of teaching since the teacher and school replaced the mother and home. However, ultimately, this essay advocates for teaching and the significant role teachers play in modern society.

Jeanette Wallace, a 1914 graduate, in her essay “Compulsory Education” argues for stricter compulsory education laws to protect the welfare of poor urban and rural Georgia children. She supports her argument by writing

these children half-starved, half-clothed, hardly old enough to leave theie [sic] mother, and yet working all day long. Some do not even stop at night, they are so anxious for an education they attend a school. Then why not push compulsory attendance laws so these children can get away from these horrible places? (2).

In addition to the protection of child welfare, Wallace supports her argument stating stricter compulsory education laws would strengthen the family since children could teach illiterate parents and older siblings. Furthermore, she also claims stricter compulsory education laws would address illiteracy rates throughout the state, which are among the lowest in the country (5). Throughout her argument, she stresses the role of government in passing and enforcing compulsory education laws to protect children and

proposes at minimum the state require children from ages eight to twelve attend school for a four or five month school term (4). Wallace makes her argument under her belief that improved education would lead to a better life for individuals and stronger communities within Georgia.

In “The Bitter Cry of Georgia’s Children,” Bertha Smith, also a 1914 graduate, advocates for rural, poor, and disenfranchised Georgia children. Not only do these children suffer from a lack of education, but also they suffer from unsanitary home and work lives. Smith traces the cycle poor education and poor home life perpetuates, and she argues that if the rural, poor are not educated, the cycle will continue generation after generation. A way to end this cycle is to address child labor laws in an effort to get children out the factories and off the field and into the schools, for Smith believes “one word is the key to the situation, one word solves the great problem – education” (7). After this point, Smith inserts a secondary argument: Georgia must train teachers. She states these teachers should not be “girls who have just finished the seventh grade” but men and women “who have been trained for their work” (7). Throughout her essay, Bertha Smith argues for the betterment of Georgia’s children, which will ultimately help “Georgia take the place rightfully hers among the states of the Union” instead of casting it aside due to is poorly education men, women, and children.

Unity in education was a popular topic among normal school students, and Myrtle Wallace addressed unity in her 1914 essay “The Unification of Cultural and Practical Education.” Wallace associates cultural education with academic, liberal arts education, and practical education with vocational education. In her essay that promotes the joining of the two, she focuses her argument around two central claims. First, she writes “no

system of education can be conducive to harmonious development, except the universal – the education that provides for all types of people. Any other system would produce castes of classes wholly out of sympathy with one another” (2). Second she claims that separate education produces a man or woman without a comprehensive background. For her an educated person with no vocational skills is as dangerous to society as a person with vocation skills but no education. According to Wallace, “[e]ducation should be as wide and as varied as are the interests and capabilities of humanity and should provide for every phase of human nature” (3). Therefore she argues that academic and vocational schools must unify in order to offer a variety of courses that can address the many interests of students and many needs of society.

Erin Carroll in 1915 also takes up the argument for unification in her essay titled “Unity in Education.” In her essay she introduces and explains the many reasons why vocational schools and academic school should become one. First she states “[s]eparate schools can never be so good as larger ones with many courses, ministering to a variety of people” (2). Second she writes “[s]eparate schools will tend to peasantize the farmers” (3). Finally she claims “[t]o educate the children of different classes separately is to prevent that natural flow of individualism from one profession into another” (3). For these reasons, Carroll believes schools should unify, and in making this argument, she joins the argument for equal education taking place across the state, region and nation. According to Carroll schools should provide “training for citizenship” for all classes and for men and women, and this training can be best accomplished in a school which unifies academic and vocational education (6).

### 5.2.1 *Gender in Student Writing*

Among the essays that consider gender, the theme of “today” and its relationship to women’s identity and location in society are central. Titles such as “The Woman of Today” by Nanalyne Brown (1916) and “A Woman’s Place in the World Today” by Evalyn McNeil (1916) communicate this theme upfront to the audience. While not every “today” essay title proves to be so overt in its communication of theme, the essays classified under the theme of “today” have in common that State Normal School women were aware of their location within a society negotiating between the Victorian ideology of the past and the progressive ideology of the present, and it is this shift between ideologies which made it possible for women to remold and claim a place and space. To assert this point, Nellie Kate Williams in “Twentieth Century Woman” (1916) traces the accomplishments of notable twentieth century women who hold jobs in industrial and professional careers fill the pages of the her essay. Beryl Cadwell (1915) also traces the accomplishment of notable women including Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Elliot, Frances E. Willard, Florence Nightingale, and Joan of Arc writing

[t]hey all teach the same great lessons of life to young women of today; namely that to be happy and useful they must not look upon themselves as dolls, but as human beings, whose destiny hinges on the high or low purposes for which they live – on habits of self-reliance, intellectual toil, industrious employment of their natural gifts, benevolent labors for others, and spiritual self-culture (6).

Williams, Brown, McNeil, and Cadwell make clear through their essays women rightfully occupied a place in their “today”, which included locations in the expanding professional and social parameters newly available to women in the 1910s.

Also in her essay, Williams joins the “feminist movement of modern times” by making two civic and democratic claims: one, women have achieved a place in the public world of “today” through their accomplishments, and two, women’s accomplishments earn them the

power to claim this place (2). Williams communicates that women can do and are doing more than teaching, sewing, and domestic sciences since the doors to industrial and professional careers were now opened to them, declaring “American women are no longer weak, ignorant, and dependent” (3). Without these stigmas, Williams asserts a woman has the authority to claim her place in society: “perhaps no other age could afford the greater opportunity for the exercise of woman’s power than the present” (7). Essays evaluating women and their place in society take on a feminist tone to advocate for women’s twentieth century accomplishments and argue for a more egalitarian understanding of women’s potential and place within society.

Nanalyne Brown and Evalyn McNeil continue to consider gender in their essays when they argue for a democratic public sphere and women’s potential to occupy this rhetorical space. Brown claims in her introduction “that we can no more separate the sexes and say that this or any other is a women problem, than we can separate light from sun” (1). She further negates gendering places and spaces when she continues with “it is undeniably true that woman can successfully cope with man in business. Business is not a man’s world – business has no sex” (1). Reconstructing a genderless professional sphere grants women access to the public, and McNeil extends Brown’s civic argument. After historically tracing when, why, and how women occupy the private sphere, Evalyn McNeil asserts women not just deserve but desire a place in the public sphere: “woman will not be content with a passive life... There are many fields open to us women, and these fields are teeming with possibility” (4). Brown also predicts in her essay a public sphere that is equal between men and woman not just in places and spaces of work and education but also politics. “The evolution of society will bring women into political equality with men, just as it has brought them into industrial and intellectual equality” (7). Student Erin Carroll makes similar claims but directs her attention to equal higher education of the sexes. She



contends “in coeducational universities the women should have the same provision made for their needs as has been made for the needs of men” (6). These essays place women’s status in conversation with men’s status to illustrate inequity and argue towards minimizing the gap between genders and encouraging women to break free of the domestic world she historically inhabited and join the public world she can rightfully and should equally claim.

During the early decades of the twentieth century, the tension of old and new located in the South made tangible that the region was still backlit by nineteenth-century ideology. Student essays considering gender place the 1910s women in the midst of this tension. Brown observes that 1910s woman “is given a twentieth century education, and is expected to have nineteenth century ideals” (2). Women had the exposure through education to a life outside of the home, but the expectations of women still rooted in Victorian ideology limited their choices. Brown states “the unhappiness of women is from one of two causes: a desire to leave home and get work, or a desire to leave work and get a home” (1). With this binary confining women and their choices, it is not surprising that State Normal School women were conflicted when it comes to settling into one space or the other – the modern concept of “having it all” was not available to these women. This conflict is clear in McNeil’s essay. On the one hand she persuasively argues for women’s place in the public, but on the other she asserts the most appropriate place for the woman was in the home: “Woman may do worthy work in the realms of art, science, and industry, but her first and most important place is in the home” (5).

The home and its status becomes a theme among State Normal School thesis papers that address gender. Instead of viewing the home reductively, State Normal School women advocate for the work done in the home in their writing. Their words ascribe value to the “woman’s work” of the home. Kate Williams (1916) argues that it is “time to dignify the work of house-

keeping...[and] demand its acknowledgement from the world” (6). Her argument advocates for the renegotiation of the boundaries confining “woman’s work.” Williams is not the only student who addresses the location of home in a new way. Nanalyne Brown writes “[w]oman’s place is not primarily in the home. It is her mission to make a home in whatever place she finds herself. Wherever there is something that is concretely personal and human, there is woman’s world” (4). Although the home like space Brown claims women construct mirrors the private space of the physical home and genders the space of woman’s world, the act of reconstructing a rhetorical space permitted women to access new spaces. While many gates were still kept by men, drawing new boundaries and creating new spaces in a closer proximity to the male dominated public sphere furthered women’s progress and access in the 1910s.

Throughout this project, I use Ogren’s history of normal schools to both inform and support my claims about the State Normal School. However, here I make a departure from her claims and conclusions. According to Ogren, gender was an “issue unlikely to be addressed in the formal normal-school curriculum but very present in the schools and society...Not surprisingly, student societies and publication considered all sorts of philosophical questions about the relative treatment of the sexes” (146). While Ogren’s claim accurately depicts the treatment of gender in the extracurriculum, these State Normal School graduation theses provide a different narrative for the consideration of gender within the curriculum. Despite their confliction, State Normal School women do address gender in their essays and use elements of civic rhetoric to acknowledge gender, identify where gender disenfranchises women, and argue for a more egalitarian public sphere.

### 5.2.2 *Education and Teaching in Student Writing*

Arguments State Normal School students used to write about gender formed a reciprocal relationship between the use of language and the construction of identity, and I find like Rothermel the same process between language and identity when students wrote about their future profession: in the essays that center upon topics involving education, female normalites “were writing themselves into their identities as teachers just as their identities were being written by discourses around them” (“A Home” 135). Writing about education, professionalized State Normal School students and moved them beyond methods of teacher training to methodologies involving progressive and democratic theories of education. Through the arguments made by students addressing educational issues such as education’s role in American democracy, unification in schools, and educating marginalized populations, the State Normal School female writer emerges as an intellectual and professional woman with an civic ethos.

Each student essay that addresses education argues for its significance in American life and democracy. This notion is especially evident when Bertha Smith (1914) states “the corner stones of democracy must be education and enlightenment” (6). Although sweeping, this statement reflects a common sentiment among State Normal School student writers in this category: education encompasses much more than learned skills but impacts how people live and interact with the world around them. Myrtle Wallace (1914) furthers this claim when she writes an education “produce[s] men and women trained to live, not merely to make a living” (3). Like the students who viewed gender through the kariotic lens of the present, Erin Carroll (1915) uses the backdrop of the early twentieth century to argue for the significance of education within American society. Carroll asserts “we are living in an age which recognizes that the highest purpose in education is to be ready to live – real education is active, not passive” (4). Although

neither student connects her present to the past, their words illustrate the relationship between education and access to an active life within democracy, a concept associated with education, society, and politics since antiquity. Embedded in their arguments are sophisticated, rhetorical observations of the relationship between education and access, which depict these women as reflective pedagogues and the State Normal School as a place where conclusions such as these took place.

State Normal School students were able to connect education to democracy from their understanding that education was both practical and cultural. According to State Normal School senior women, separating these aspects of education would further the class system of Georgia. Rooted in this connection and their understanding of it are student arguments for the unification of liberal culture curricula and industrial curricula in schools. Erin Carroll clearly states this claim early on in her essay when she asserts the goal of the school system should be “few schools with many courses, not many schools with few courses” (1), and Myrtle Wallace makes this claim even more precise: “our trade and industrial schools should not be operated apart from those of the more cultural and liberal type” (5). State Normal School students believed exposure to curriculums of liberal arts and industrial arts would keep classes from being educated separately and differently. For Carroll

[t]o educate the children of classes separately is to prevent that natural flow of individuals from one profession to another which is in every way desirable, both for public and private welfare...the individual has a right to an education that is broader than the narrow environment in which he was born (3).

Additionally, State Normal School students consider student development in their arguments for unification. A unified curriculum attended to the full development of the Georgia child since it integrated a curriculum with course offerings “as wide and varied as are the interests and capacities of humanity and should provide for every phase of human nature” (M. Wallace 3).

Therefore, unification became the best means to “train mind and heart as well as hand” according to State Normal School students (M. Wallace 4). In short, State Normal School seniors who addressed education in their graduation theses agreed with Myrtle Wallace: “no system of education can be conducive to harmonious development, except the universal – the education that provides for all people” and “[a]ny other system would produce cases of classes wholly out of the sympathy with on another” (2). For State Normal School students, unified education translated to a more democratic school system that provided equal access to education for all Georgia children, regardless of sex, class, or socio-economic status.

State Normal School students were acutely aware of the connections among geographic locations in the state, laws, and literacy rates, and they communicate this awareness when they make arguments for the improved education of rural and poor Georgia children. Jeanette Wallace (1914) draws attention to “the appalling amount of illiteracy” when she states “every year over ten thousand boys and girls pass beyond the school age in Georgia totally illiterate” (3). The majority of these children are found in rural farming areas in the southern half of the state and the rural mountain region in north Georgia, which were coincidentally the poorest areas of the state (Montgomery). Among the theses that address education, State Normal School students recognized the state’s neglect and draw attention to this neglect in support of their argument for improved access to education. For example, Bessie Smith remarks “the state has not yet aroused to the needs of the children of the poor” (2). To enact change, these women recognized they needed to involve the state and its laws into their arguments for better education for Georgia’s marginalized youth. In advocating for education for all, State Normal School women addressed the child labor law in their essays, using the argument of compulsory education against current child labor laws. Smith’s “Bitter Cry of Georgia’s Children” addresses this theme throughout,

claiming the current child labor law is “in itself a disgrace” (4). According to this law, children as young as twelve could enter into the workforce of Georgia and work up to ten hours a day (Smith). Poor families more often took advantage of this law, and instead of attending school and continuing their education, adolescent men and women from poor families by force or by choice worked to provide for their family or themselves. State Normal School students connected the child labor law to illiteracy rates and argued intensely for compulsory education to be required for more than five years in Georgia. Adjusting the child labor law and extending the term of compulsory education served as cornerstones of State Normal School students’ claim that Georgia must improve access to education for its rural and poor children, an improvement their civic arguments assert will increase literacy across the state and advance the lives of marginalized children.

The themes addressed in the above essays reflect a complex argument of many working parts. Criteria such as class, funding, curriculum, location, laws, and familial circumstances all contribute to the larger issue of access to education, which impact who can and cannot enter the public sphere as well as the extent to which a person participates within the public sphere. Arguing for and about education, then, becomes an argument about politics, not education, and the act of making this argument is what I find most significant in the essays addressing education. Men traditionally used the textual and oratorical genre of argument (Fitzgerald, Connors). However, the State Normal School women’s use of this genre associated them with men and the public sphere, which blurred gender boundaries and identified these women writers with male practices. Through the process of writing their essays, State Normal School women constructed themselves as argumentative rhetor to further developed their professional ethos and prepare for the public sphere. Moreover, students wrote not only civic rhetoric when the

advocated for the disenfranchised populations of Georgia children but also wrote themselves as civic rhetors, which ascribed an identity to these women that extended beyond the State Normal School to the public sphere of Georgia.

### **5.3 State Normal School Curriculum and Senior Graduating Thesis**

The State Normal School curriculum emphasized rural school reform, which supported a statewide argument made by Georgia's clubwomen, and created a platform from which seniors could make their arguments for educational reform. Rebecca Montgomery asserts Georgia clubwomen approached social and educational reform "by expanding their work at the local level" and addressed rural schools and the long inequity between rural and urban education (61). Their rural school reform work furthered their ultimate goal "to transform the 'community of men' into a 'community of families' transcending the limitations of male-centered localism," and their work for rural school reform "attempted to effect political change by gathering grassroots support in favor of a new relationship between family, community, and government" (Montgomery 61, 62). The State Normal School joined in these reform efforts and addressed the rural school problem through the establishment of a practice rural school on its campus in 1911 that simulated a typical country school (Sell). The 1915 *Bulletin of the State Normal School* addressed rural school reform in a section titled "The Rural School Problem". It states

Modern educational thought has centered about the city school; social and economic forces have developed the city more rapidly than the country to the city, thereby retarding the growth of the country school and country life in general.

It is our purpose with a model building and modern equipment to help in adjusting the rural school to the agricultural and domestic life of the country; to demonstrate ways in which a rural school may be the social center of community life; to adjust the course of study to rural condition and interest; to study the problem of the consolidation of schools, and to show what may be done by one teacher in carrying out a practical course of study (34).

With the rural school problem being a significant concern of the State Normal School, the large number of essays that select a topic under rural school reform, such as child labor, compulsory education, the family and women's place in it, industrial and vocational education, and unity in education, poses no surprise to me. State Normal School women, as we see from their words in their essays, were passionate, thoughtful women invested in their role as a woman and as a future teacher. As women, they were invested in the dynamics of the family and home, and as future teachers, they were invested in the care and education of Georgia's children. In their essays, State Normal School women identify with these roles and use them to make their arguments as well as join their school and Georgia clubwomen as civic participants in education reform.

The collections of student graduation theses also highlight the potential of a dialogic relationship between the curriculum and student writing/student voices at the State Normal School, and situating these essays in the curricular shifts of the 1910s reveals the potential for this dialogic relationship. In 1914 State Normal School seniors took a methods course titled English Grammar and Literature for Common Schools, which was a different course from the previous year's course title Literature and Themes. No essays from 1913 seniors are held in the archives, and although "Theme" is in the 1913 course title, the course description does not indicate a graduation thesis assignment. Figuring the 1914 graduation assignment was a requirement could be a way the State Normal School retained composition as part of the senior year curriculum since the course title dropped the term theme in 1914. However, based upon the archival evidence available, this conclusion is only speculative. The senior English course changed its title and criteria again in 1915, and curriculum materials indicate seniors took an advanced grammar and writing course, which focused upon "elements of composition [and] the different forms practiced during the latter part of the year", which reflects content similar to 1913



(*Bulletin of the State Normal School* 37). The 1915 course description does not reference a graduation thesis, nor does the 1916 course description, which outlines a literature course not an advanced grammar and composition class. After 1916, seniors took literature courses until 1921 when first semester seniors took advanced theme writing, and the only reference to a require thesis for graduation is in the description of a senior English course: “advanced theme writing becomes necessary in order to help seniors in the preparation of the thesis required of them for graduation” (*State Normal School Bulletin* 39). This “back and forth” in the curriculum between 1913 and 1916 becomes curious when inserting the collection of graduation thesis, which show State Normal School seniors were able to formulate, organize, and articulate arguments that demonstrate a command of the English language and a rhetorical awareness of author and audience. Is it possible that students (and their writing) informed the curricular decisions for senior level English? Although speculative, I find it hard to overlook the potential reciprocal relationship between student writing and curricular changes.

Students and their writing have the potential for a dialogic relationship with the curriculum from two deductions I am able to make: one, State Normal School faculty responded to student needs, and two, the changing identity of the school in general during the 1910s and what means were necessary to meet the expectations of the identity of academic advancement. Either way the presence of the 1914, 1915, and 1916 collections of graduation thesis point to the significance of these three year, which correlate with the years in the 1910s when the curriculum experiences annual adjustments in its curriculum as the State Normal School worked to solidify its identity and the educational purpose that identity dictated, which implicated the course expectations and requirements.

## 5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have analyzed a collection of State Normal School graduation theses to reveal the civic writing practices of female seniors from 1914 to 1916 and use their voices to gain a better understanding of the State Normal School students and the school itself. Additionally, I highlight the themes of gender and education in student writing to more deeply understand how State Normal School students reciprocally constructed language and identity. To accomplish this I used Royster and Kirsch's "*robust inquiry strategies*" of their operational framework for feminist rhetorical practices and Susan Kates's criteria for civic rhetoric. Doing so helps me further connect the places and spaces of the State Normal School with the female students who served as active campus and curricular participants and expose the shifting public and political dynamics taking place on and off the State Normal School campus. Analyzing student writing and the State Normal School in these ways helps me support and maintain my claim that the State Normal School and its students are valuable additions to rhetoric and composition historiography.

David Gold claims: "to engage with student voices to move beyond what has been written about these voices but to hear what these voices have to say for themselves" ("Eve" 179). These State Normal School voices have much to say about themselves, the State Normal School itself, and rhetoric and writing in American higher education during the early twentieth century. Furthermore, their voices and way they say also give us a lens to use when interpreting our present – one hundred years have passed since the last collection of letters, but women and educators are making similar if not some of the same claims. Thus State Normal School student voices bring us to the past and to the present, which prompts us to think across time and space

and initiates the process of seeing differently and remembering differently not only the State Normal School and its students but also early twentieth-century women and their writing.

## 6 Conclusion: It's an Attitude

To dismiss the state normal school as not ‘much of a college’ is to sell it short, for it was not only ‘an instrument of great good,’ but also a revolutionary institution of higher education.

Christine A. Ogren  
*The American State Normal School*

Ogren ends the introduction to her historical survey of normal schools with the above sentence.

“Not much of a college” is seen again as a subheading in Ryan Skinnel’s article

“Institutionalizing Normal: Rethinking Composition’s Precedence in Normal Schools” that seeks

to disrupt connections revisionist scholars of rhetoric and composition make between normal

schools and colleges and universities and to contest claims concerning normal schools’

contribution to the history of rhetoric and composition. I begin my conclusion with the uses of

this statement to illustrate a secondary motivation of this project: the implications of perspective

and attitude when (re)focusing the historiographic lens. “Not much of a college” takes on two

different meanings depending on how it is used. Ogren uses the phrase to underscore how it

limits the normal school and its impact. Skinnel, however, uses Ogren’s phrase to circumscribe

normal schools, making them a “lesser” institution. When I chose to refocus the historiographic

lens for this project, I also had to choose with what perspective I approached the refocusing of

this lens. Is the State Normal School going to be “not much of a college” as Ogren sees it or as

Skinnel does?

Archival researchers acknowledge their positionality – the background and personal experiences they innately bring to their research – and its contribution to the research process.

Authors of chapters in the edited collections *Working in the Archives*, *Local Histories*, and *In the*

*Archives of Composition* reference positionality’s significance throughout. Positionality and

perspective work together during the researching and writing process, but I do not believe they

are one in the same. Positionality without a doubt influences the perspective a researcher uses, but I see positionality and perspective contributing to the research and writing process differently. All researcher-writers come to the archives with their positionality in place, but each researcher-writer has the ability to choose from what perspective or with what attitude she will use to approach her topic. This perspective and its attitude can be generated from multiple factors, but for me and this project, I am addressing a positive versus a negative attitude and the two perspectives these attitudes produce – simple, limited, and dichotomous, yes, but terms I stand behind. My positionality as a white female middle-class Georgia teacher quickly and easily connected me to the State Normal School women, their profession, and their democratic point of view, and without a doubt my positionality influenced my interest in the State Normal School and continue to influence how I make sense of its archived materials. However, just like Ogren and Skinnel, I had the choice to either push against the marginalization imposed upon the State Normal School or to affirm the school's marginalization. Both narratives present themselves through archived materials, but I made the conscious choice to use a positive perspective and attitude to approach the State Normal School by pushing against its marginalization.

The narrative of the State Normal School appeals to me because it disrupts reductive patriarchal histories and is a positive story of female voices and rhetorical actions that contributes to the nuancing of rhetoric and composition historiography. The State Normal School proves itself as an “instrument of greater good,” and its women were bold, confident, and modern; they were the new Southern women (Ogren). Although the narrative of marginalization is one of merit, it is one that has been told. So in choosing to research the State Normal School and choosing to use this study to disrupt master narratives, I also choose to disrupt titles such as Jurgen Herbst's *And Sadly Teach*, Sharon Crowley's chapter title “Rhetoric Slaves and Lesser

Men”, and Susan Miller’s chapter title “Sad Women in Basement” that affirm marginalization and become quite frankly “sad” stories. We know about these “sad women.” We in fact have labeled them, called them, and referred to them as “sad women.” When I chose to disrupt “sad” narratives and to use a positive perspective and attitude, I found the State Normal School and its women, who are anything but sad.

My perspective and attitude as much as my positionality shaped this study. Archival researchers note the significance of positionality, yet the perspective and attitude that work with positionality are rarely acknowledged, reflected upon, or discussed. Why? Since as researchers and writers we have the ability to choose our perspective and attitude, I claim thinking more deeply about the perspective and attitude we choose will initiated fruitful conversation among researchers and writers inside the archives but also outside of them.

I do not approach this claim with naivety or rose-colored glasses, and I recognize that at first glance my claim could be interpreted as idyllic and even skewed. Rhetoric and composition history as well as history more generally are full of hardships and obstacles that made it difficult for those disenfranchised by gender, class, race, religion, and profession to participate not just equally with dominant groups but even at all – the State Normal School and its narrative attest to this. I also acknowledge rhetoric and composition as a discipline has been marginalized within academia throughout its history and is still working from the margins inward, continually competing with and being measured against literature as the dominate concentration of English. Yet, when it came time to outline this project and determine what its contribution would be to the field, I have to recognize how quickly I realized I did not want to spend my time viewing rhetorical education and its voices as the dominant public sphere viewed them – I would have literately felt like a sad woman! Instead, I actively chose to research the State Normal School and

view it in the margins as is was, for in it I saw the potential for a narrative that disrupts marginalization versus affirms it, making the State Normal School narrative a positive one that does not hinge on “sad”.

Perspective and attitude also influence how we contextualize and remember rhetoric and composition history and the participants of it. Rhetoric and composition historians have choices as researchers. These choices do not mean that we overlook narratives of hardship and exclusion. Rhetoric and composition historians have an ethical responsibility to accurately portray how the discipline developed theoretically and pedagogically in America as well as the teachers and students who participated in its development. However, adding positive narratives that disrupt marginalization nuances rhetoric and composition history and helps us in the present contextualize and remember the past with greater accuracy. Master narratives for too long gave the impression that valuable examples of rhetorical agency and practices are limited to certain spheres, certain schools, and certain people. Yet, from the contributions of revisionist historians, rhetoric and composition is able to see its past differently and therefore can begin to remember it differently since revisionist histories bring to our attention the many contexts that fall outside of dominant places and spaces of rhetoric and writing. The more versions of rhetoric and composition history we add and the more contexts that are brought to our attention, the more we complicate but also clarify rhetoric and composition history. Using a positive perspective and attitude to go the margins and find in them their possibilities and potential will help rhetoric and composition accomplish the feat of accuracy and clarity, which is what I seek to do with this project and encourage for future rhetoric and composition archival and historiographic studies.

To make more accurate rhetoric and composition historiography it must become more comprehensive and more inclusive of all places, spaces, and voices. I hope to encourage more

microhistories of normal schools and use this study to support the claims of Kelley Ritter and Suzanne Bordelon: Normal schools are “grossly overlooked in our collective histories of women’s education specifically, and women’s education generally” and are “an important yet understudied site in history of rhetoric and composition” (Ritter 24; Bordelon “Teachers Do” 153). Using the State Normal School in Athens, Georgia, as my subject of study supports Ritter and Bordelon’s, and I believe additional normal school studies will do the same

That State Normal School narrative is a narrative of women’s education and rhetorical agency. More archival research projects and microhistories of rhetorical education at normal schools have the potential to introduce more narratives of women’s education and rhetorical agency, which are needed for a more accurate and comprehensive history of rhetoric and composition. We still know too little about women; this gap in rhetoric and composition historiography continues to exist. The State Normal School narrative addresses this gap and uses the gap to remap rhetoric and composition historiography. However, it does not come without its limitation. This study’s narrative tells of white, rural women and their education. While legitimizing white, rural women’s education and including them in rhetoric and composition history is necessary, focusing on this population excludes women of color. Studies of African American normal schools and the teacher training of Latina/o Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans would expand our understanding of the past by providing narratives outside of the dominant white population and its voice. Adding the schools and most importantly the voices of women including those outside of the white population and putting the schools and voices in conversation with established histories has great potential for helping us see and remember not just differently but more accurately.



Locating more studies in the South also will nuance rhetoric and composition historiography and will make it more accurate and comprehensive. Places Reynolds reminds us are “layered...with histories, stories, and memories” and the South is home to a variety of communities with unique histories, voices, and perspectives. This study considered marginalization of Georgia’s rural, agricultural population, but other southern states have unique narratives for this same population and the normal schools that educated them. Additionally, the South’s narrative varies by more than state but by its subregions. For example, normal schools in Appalachia have great potential to further nuance not just rhetoric and composition historiography but Appalachian historiography as well.

Since this is a study of teachers, it is only fitting that I address how this study can inform us as teachers of rhetoric and writing. First, the innovative pedagogical practices at the State Normal School were made possible through going outside of the typical taxonomies and theories of American education. Thinking globally in a geographic sense but also a disciplinary sense has the potential to enrich our classrooms and our practices. Geographically, it is very easy as an instructor to think institutionally and locally – it’s easy to go to the next office or to the most recent publication to source new ideas for our courses and new practices for our instruction. However, all over the world teachers teach rhetoric and writing, and adding their theories and practices to the American classroom will enrich it. Furthermore, the plurality of backgrounds and experiences present in the American classroom would also benefit from a global awareness of rhetoric and writing influences and instructions. Disciplinarily, looking at pedagogical theories and practices from contents outside of rhetoric and composition, can inform and improve our instructional methods. What works well in one discipline to foster learning, comprehension, independence, and agency could be replicated or adapted for the rhetoric and

composition classroom. Limiting our influences and ideas will only limit our instruction and what we can accomplish with it.

The State Normal School narrative also attests to the significance of school communities and of the relationship between student and teacher. In *Rhetoric in the Margins*, David Gold claims “[p]erhaps our most effectively pedagogical strategy may simply be closer contact with our students’ lives” (155). More than just a school, the State Normal School was a community, and I believe its sense of community not only encouraged but also made possible the development of student *ethos* and agency. State Normal School teachers involved themselves in more than the academic pursuits of their students, and the students responded positively to the relationships and friendships they developed with their teacher, which yearbook dedications and joke sections confirm. We can do this today in our own classrooms and with our own students by getting to know them, learning their interests, and listening to their stories. Working towards facilitating deeper and better relationships with our students can do more than help students improve as speakers and writers; it can establish a classroom community and enrich the classroom experience for both student and teacher just as it did at the State Normal School.

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