

## Making Men: The Culture of Masculinity at La Crosse State Normal School, 1909-1920

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*The library is quiet, there's no loitering in the halls, We hear no trampling feet or the old bugle calls. Attendance has been lowered and no khaki now we see. So as we sign we say "Farewell" to our good old S.A.T.'s.*<sup>1</sup>

In 1914 Hugh Downey was an average La Crosse State Normal School (LCSNS) student, and a stoic male role model for the other men on the university's campus. Downey's first appearance in the 1914 yearbook was in the third junior class photograph. It presents the viewer with an average looking man sitting in front of his peers, but in reality this man was far from average (see Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> As a member of the LCSNS's eight-man basketball team, Downey helped lead them to become the champions of the Northern Inter-Normal Conference of Wisconsin (see Fig. 2).<sup>3</sup> Handicapped with his light weight, Downey was accredited with always being filled with grit and stamina. His smooth work and quick dodging also always kept his guards guessing.<sup>4</sup>

Downey also played an active role in the LCSNS's pride and joy, the football team. As captain-elect and quarterback, Downey was no slacker (see Fig. 3).<sup>5</sup> As an essential member of the La Crosse Eleven, Downey could do it all. He tackled, returned punts, and even was responsible for leading the team to victory on several occasions. Downey was also known to once in a while 'plunge thru the center' and score a point or two for himself.<sup>6</sup>

The 1913-1914 football season ended with two wins, two ties, and two loses, but Downey was not upset. He was instead reported having many expectations of the new physical education course offered at LCSNS to mold the new rookies into hardened men for the next football season.<sup>7</sup>

Downey epitomized LCSNS's institutional masculinity. The physical education course that Downey was referring to was created during the 1913-1914 school year, and was the first course offered under the direction of Sputh, the new director of physical education at LCSNS.<sup>8</sup> Sputh's appointment to this position was due to the School Board's decision in 1912, which stated that LCSNS was required to have a faculty member specifically devoted to teaching masculinity within the physical culture.<sup>9</sup> In fact much credit had been given to Professor Sputh for working the men on the basketball team hard, and molding them into the greatest basketball team LCSNS ever had.<sup>10</sup> Downey was one of the twenty-two men and women that had enrolled in Sputh's new class. In a photograph of the 1913-1914 physical education class, Downey is a prominent member of the foreground, and is posing in the photograph in the embrace of a fellow male student (see Fig. 4 and 5).

Some might read Downey as the object of affection in this photograph, and would be perplexed with this image because it reflects a different masculinity than we are used to today. This photograph does suggest that there were many ways of being manly at LCSNS. This means that not just competitive, domineering, and aggressive masculinity (that's popular today) was accepted at the institution, but also emotive and intimate masculinity as well.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> David O. Coate, ed., *The Racquet Yearbook*, (La Crosse, WI: LCSNS, 1919), 48.

<sup>2</sup> David O. Coate, ed., *The Racquet Yearbook*, (La Crosse, WI: LCSNS, 1914), 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 104.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 105.

<sup>5</sup> *The Racquet Newspaper*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Dec. 19, 1913), 19.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 17-18.

<sup>7</sup> *The Racquet Yearbook*, (1914), 103.

<sup>8</sup> Gordon Harry Bahr, *A Brief History of the Division of Physical Education at Wisconsin State College, La Crosse (1913-1953)* (La Crosse: Wisconsin State College, 1958), 35.

<sup>9</sup> Bahr, 28.

<sup>10</sup> *The Racquet Yearbook*, (1914), 105.

<sup>11</sup> *The Racquet Yearbook*, (1914), 60.

So can a modern historian interpret a photograph of two men hugging as an indication of changes in what it meant to be a man at that time? Truthfully no, people place too many cultural perceptions and interpretations inaccurately on interactions that were not interpreted that way at all in the past. Instead these images enrich and broaden our view of masculinity, but they also complicate us with their suggestions of homosocial (same-gender) friendships and intimacy. Far from suggesting that LCSNS in the 1910s was rife with homoeroticism, they do suggest that our ideas of proper masculinity differed from those that the picture suggests.

Since the doors to the LCSNS (today's University of Wisconsin La Crosse [UWL]) first opened in 1909, its mission was to not only prepare future teachers, but to also present – through its courses of study, extracurricular activities, and publications – specific gender roles that its students in turn would subsequently project onto the communities where they served as teachers. While most of the students at Normal schools were typically women, the LCSNS's small cadre of males – who would later become school administrators and in that capacity serve as model citizens in small rural communities – would ultimately make masculinity a more substantive category of analysis given the centrality of masculinity to the reproduction of structures of power.<sup>12</sup> This project will analyze how the LCSNS emerged as an institutional role model for masculinity during its first ten years (1909-1920). Cultural representations (photographs, fictional narratives, sporting events, and particularly those associated with the Student Army Training Corps [SATC]) in which men and others represented, constructed, and explored their masculine identity in relationship to that of women. It is significant that they explored the meaning of masculinity at a time when, across the country, women were expanding their role in the public sphere with activities such as the suffrage movement. The role that the faculty at LCSNS played in articulating new definitions of masculinity that helped to create a remarkably emotive masculinity, unlike the hyper-masculine (or macho-man) pattern and behavior evident today at UWL is also studied.<sup>13</sup> Analyzing these manifestations of masculinity, and particularly those involved in the SATC, creates a better grasp of understanding of the *mentalité*, or the mental structures of the time. And consequently, to better ascertain whether the masculinity that LCSNS taught reflected or diverged from similar trends nationwide by reflecting the masculinity of the LCSNS against one of the largest moral and physical reformers of the Progressive Era, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).

The YMCA's influence on masculinity in early La Crosse history is not to be underestimated since there has been an active YMCA chapter in La Crosse since 1883 promising to “promote the mental, moral, social, and physical good of the young men” in La Crosse and its vicinity.<sup>14</sup> To understand why these influences were so important to men's masculinity, one must first acknowledge the existence of these elaborate social constructs. Their existence proves that gender has a history, and is able to be asked such questions about its formation, who controls it, and how has it endured and changed.<sup>15</sup>

Social theorists like Michel Foucault and Anthony Giddens asked these questions, and their ideas' form our understanding of how social institutions like the YMCA and the LCSNS influenced men's subjectivity.

One of Foucault's greatest ideas was self-identity (also sometimes called subjectivity), which he was constructed through social interactions at specific times and places.<sup>16</sup> Giddens based his theories on *self-identity* and *modernity* on Foucault's work. Modernity, as Giddens defined it, was a post-traditional society, or more simply put, a society that is free from having traditions influence its agencies, beliefs, and institutions.<sup>17</sup> In his analysis of self-identity in the post-traditional world, Giddens saw that a person establishes their self-identity through the use of institutions, like marriage, or a social contract to a government. As a result of this relationship, the institutions using *hegemony* apply self-identity, like a label, to a person.<sup>18</sup> Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci was the theorist who

<sup>12</sup> Juan Pedro Viqueira Albán, *Propriety and Permissiveness in Bourbon Mexico* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1999), intro, *in passim*. In the first year of the LCSNS there was about 35 men and 200 women enrolled, so the male to female ratio was about one male for every six females.

<sup>13</sup> The research will focus on what types of activities, classes, clubs, or sports did the faculty members take part of, what was their role in the club, etc. Was it leadership, or was to act like a model citizen? How and what did they teach in their classes, was it biased, or was it reactionary?

<sup>14</sup> Mss 23, *La Crosse YMCA Papers (1883-1980)*, Box 1, Folder 1, La Crosse, Wisconsin. Hereafter referred to as *La Crosse Y Papers*.

<sup>15</sup> Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 254.

<sup>16</sup> H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 208-226.

<sup>17</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Chicago: Stanford University Press, 1991), intro, *in passim*.

<sup>18</sup> Giddens, 11.

created the term hegemony, and he defined it as the educated elites dominant ideology that is used to control the actions of the subordinate classes.<sup>19</sup>

The LCSNS campus and the city of La Crosse are excellent examples of Giddens's modern society. Both the men living in the city, and the men on the campus, looked to institutions like the LCSNS and the YMCA to help protect and maintain their male identity. Such institutes, according to gender theorist Judith Butler, established practices that facilitate the performance of gender. Accordingly it is how the institutions make you believe how you should act, and not the way you were born that defines your gender.<sup>20</sup>

An example of the proper man that LCSNS and the YMCA promoted is found in the annual Student Handbooks. The Men's League of the LCSNS personally sponsored and dedicated 1917-1918 handbook, this role was later given to the members of the student YMCA organization (see Fig. 6).<sup>21</sup> Each manual contains printed within it covert tidbits of what a model man should do, and how he should act. Even the advertisements included on each page of the handbook promoted the image of what was expected out of a model man (see Fig.7). This suggests that men were concerned with self-presentation and sought to cultivate a particular perception from others, but before any dominant educational institutions could open in La Crosse for a handbook to be printed, the city had to first prove itself as a cultural urban center.

Before the impact of the LCSNS, the city of La Crosse had a good half-century of steady growth in both population and wealth (see Fig. 8). Initially founded as an Indian trading post, La Crosse quickly became a gateway for westward expansion because of its railway connections and strategic location on the Mississippi and Black Rivers.<sup>22</sup> Sawmills and logging camps rapidly spread on the sides of the Black River, and the logging industry quickly pushed for a large fleet of steamboats to be built and a multitude of saloons to be opened for the laborers to reinvest their hard-earned money back into the city (see Fig. 9). Gradually the sawmills died away, and around 1906 the city of La Crosse was forced to turn to other industries to provide a livelihood to its populace. Breweries replaced the lumber industry, and seemed to have a good following of the citizens regardless of whether the clergy approved or not.<sup>23</sup>

In the city of La Crosse there was general uneasiness about the over abundance of young men, who were already out-numbering the women, starting to flock to the urban city looking for work and a good time.<sup>24</sup> With the power of the churches waning, the city needed some additional assistance to make sure all the men would become moral members of society, and good husbands and providers. The LCSNS was the cure for their ills.

Until the LCSNS opened in 1909, the city of La Crosse had collected its primary and secondary educators from the other seven Normal schools spread throughout the state. Even with that many Normal schools the readily available supply of teachers was still short, and thus La Crosse – the fifth largest city in Wisconsin by 1909 – came to an impasse and it needed its own normal school. The teachers trained at the school would subsequently spread the local institutional ideology throughout the rural areas, and allow the city to develop its own sense of regional identity. This particular ideology taught men to need the company of emotional men, and to aspire to give emotional consolation back to other men to help maintain their self-identity. The long-awaited Normal school that finally opened its doors four years after it had been envisioned, was personally led by the former Indiana school superintendent, Fassett Allen Cotton, and a small cadre of professors who were prepared to turn the local men into soldiers of the nation (see Fig 10).

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<sup>19</sup> Dominic Strinati, *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995), 165. A prime example of the subordinate classes that Gramsci is referring to is the worker class.

<sup>20</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 25. “There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender;... identity is performatively constituted by the very **expressions** that are said to be its results.”

<sup>21</sup> Men's League of L.C.N.S., *Students Hand-Book: 1917-1918*, Box 1, Area Research Center, Murphy Library, The University of Wisconsin at La Crosse, 1.

<sup>22</sup> George R. Gilkey, *The First Seventy Years: A History of the University of Wisconsin La Crosse, 1909-1979* (La Crosse: The University of Wisconsin La Crosse Foundation, 1981), 7.

<sup>23</sup> Gilkey, 8. The local clergy disapproved of the bars being occupied on Sundays during church service, thus providing another example of La Crosse developing into a post-traditional society thru ignoring religious tradition.

<sup>24</sup> Consul Willshire Butterfield, *History of La Crosse County Wisconsin* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 252. In 1875 if all five wards of the city of La Crosse were added together the number of registered men was 5431, and the number of registered women was 5180.

The entire LCSNS campus initially filled one building until the campus was later expanded in 1920 with the opening of, what was later dedicated Wittich Hall, the new physical education building (see Fig. 11).<sup>25</sup> The LCSNS expected to start its first school year with over 300 students; President Cotton pleaded to the community to prepare room and board for the expected influx.<sup>26</sup> The local La Crosse chapter of the YMCA was one of the places expected to house the new students. This moral agency would reach out to the young men, who away from their hometown, preachers, and families, were believed to be the most susceptible to bad influences in a saloon-ridden industrial town like La Crosse, where young men's virtue was imperiled.<sup>27</sup>

Originally the YMCA was intended to be a place of spiritual refuge in the city, and the YMCA accomplished this with Bible studies and prayer circles, but they did not stop there.<sup>28</sup> The YMCA also provided early employment bureaus and housing registers because they believed that a stable situation and respectable housing were necessary to lay the foundation for a life of high spiritual and moral standards. The earliest YMCAs were essentially Christian support groups, and they provided not only intellectual nurturing and useful assistance, but also allowed young men to form intimate homosocial emotional and affective bonds with other young men who were in a similarly precarious situation.<sup>29</sup>

During the Progressive Era, in its drive to be more useful to young men, but also out of a necessity to build a more stable membership basis, the YMCA embarked on an ambitious physical and sex education program. The YMCA sought to build the whole man, to forge a Christian "super man" who would be morally clean and physically fit in order to face the perils of the modern age. They coined the term "scientific man-making" to describe their strategy of moral and physical reform which used the body-building techniques of the German, Swedish, and American physical culture movements, and then simplified them to make them accessible for every man.<sup>30</sup>

Inside of the ambitious sex education program the YMCA embarked on, they echoed scientific beliefs at the time. As a result the YMCA became terrified of what physical and mental damage that would be done to a man and his progeny if he masturbated. They also believed that men were born with a limited number of seeds, and that onanism only led to the wasting of this precious commodity. The YMCA came up with several good advertisements to make men feel guilty for pleasuring themselves. An example would be "The Control of the Train, The Engineer is responsible for the passengers behind him, and the youth is responsible for the generations to follow, for the sake of his future children he should develop self-control." The additional symbolism of the big, long train as a simple phallic device allowed the YMCA to be more subtle in their anti-masturbation campaign (see Fig. 12).

In 1909 President William Howard Taft, while on a campaign tour, stopped in La Crosse to dedicate a new YMCA building to help the already established chapter open its doors and its heart to the new male students of the LCSNS (see Fig. 13). This was a very rare honor at the time, and was quite important because during the early LCSNS years before there was a male dorm, the YMCA was used to room young men.<sup>31</sup> After only two months since the opening of the LCSNS, 29 out of the 38 available male dormitory rooms at the YMCA were occupied. The men occupying these rooms at the YMCA in La Crosse during the early 1910s were promoted to be more emotive, and freely share their feelings between each other. The creation of this men only sphere provided a more moral setting to free men from exhausting all of their energy lusting after women, and instead distract them with physical activities with other men. As members of this men-only club, the local YMCA men were all issued membership

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<sup>25</sup> Gilkey, 30.

<sup>26</sup> Gilkey, 15.

<sup>27</sup> La Crosse Y Papers, Mss 23, Box 1, Folder 1. During his dedication speech to the new YMCA building in La Crosse, President Taft was recorded testifying about the advantages of having a strong YMCA in a community to help turn strangers, who are away from the influence of home, into valuable members of society

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Winter, *Making Men, Making Class: The YMCA and Workingmen, 1877-1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1.

<sup>29</sup> John Donald Gustav-Wrathall, *Take The Young Stranger By The Hand: Same Sex Relationships and the YMCA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 2.

<sup>30</sup> Gustav, 5.

<sup>31</sup> La Crosse Y Papers, Mss 23, Box 1, Folder 5. In the YMCA Meeting Minutes of 1916-1932, a special meeting was held on 10 Sept. 1918, where "President F.A. Cotton of the LCSNS, Regent C.S. Van Auken, and Prof. J.A. Fairchild appeared before the meeting with reference to the use of the Association building as barracks for the SATC. After a discussion that was favorable, the house committee (James, Trane, and Langden) were authorized to meet with the Normal School people and effect an arrangement to care for the students. A resolution calling for the payments of all dues by Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> to secure cash reduction was passed." La Crosse Y Papers, Mss 23, Box 1, Folder 1. The third and fourth floors of the new building contained dormitories for men, who only had to pay the basic twelve dollars annual membership to rent a room.

cards with the basic YMCA guidelines written on the back. Most of the rules were simple, easy to follow bylaws (see Fig. 14), with the exception of rule number six which stated that any member was allowed to feel free to make their rooms their headquarters to meet their “young gentlemen friends,” for any purpose consistent with the YMCA’s distinctive work for young men (see Fig. 15).<sup>32</sup> This statement shows the YMCA’s total support for men to create these relationships right here in La Crosse. They expected men to bond and spend time with each other, and as a result the local La Crosse men became more accustomed to be more open with each other and themselves. Unknowingly the YMCA may have opened up spaces for exploration of same-sex attraction – I am not saying the YMCA encouraged homosexuality, but if one was so inclined, the YMCA presented a place where they could engage in such liaisons safely.

The YMCA was by far not the only institution that believed in making men through physical and moral education, and distracting them from sex and masturbation. As the head of the school until his resignation in 1924, President Cotton believed that education should provide male students with both mental and physical development.<sup>33</sup> Cotton also believed in a distinction that should be drawn between physical education and athletics, because physical education should not be viewed as a competition between men, but instead it should be seen more as individual development and growth.<sup>34</sup> Three other realms of instruction that Cotton believed crucial to a man’s education were: direct and indirect instruction in morals, music education, and art education. Specific morals that Cotton expected men to be taught at LCSNS were: sex education, social manners and amenities, the virtues of silence and order in the classroom, and sanitary practices.<sup>35</sup> In 1910, LCSNS published a bulletin that echoed Cotton’s statements, and supported his views on balance in a man’s education (like between having men participate in plays and games, rhythmical and dancing exercises, and practice personal and public hygiene).<sup>36</sup> Cotton believed that if men were educated about their bodies, they would be less likely to be curious about sex and masturbation, thus promoting a strategy slightly different than the YMCA’s education of the vices of masturbation. As a result of expressing his beliefs and values, Cotton laid the foundation of UWL’s progressive General Education Program today.<sup>37</sup>

Carl Sputh, the school’s first director of physical education, believed in similar ideas about physical education. Sputh caused a minor uproar when he gave a speech about sex hygiene to the Parent-Teacher’s Association, and as a result Sputh’s “medical school language” caused several ladies to walk out and it even moved one listener to observe that the “unnecessarily daring treatment of a subject which centuries of civilization have cloaked in modesty” will put the cause of the teaching of sex hygiene back five years in La Crosse. One unhappy mother even cited *Good Housekeeping* as an authority in the field.<sup>38</sup> Amidst the controversy the *La Crosse Tribune*, the local paper, came to the defense of President Cotton, and supported his right to teach sex education and have faith in the faculty members he personally chose.

Within the first two years of the LCSNS’s existence the student body, and willing faculty members, organized several extracurricular class activities; both the student newspaper and yearbook. The first student organization was a men’s debate team called the Eclectic Club, which first appeared in the fall of 1909, and allowed an open forum for men to discuss topics with each other.<sup>39</sup> Also during the first two years the Athletic Association, Oratorical Association, Girl’s Glee Club, the *Racquet* newspaper and yearbook, and a YWCA chapter were founded (see Fig. 16). President Cotton even founded and coached the men’s baseball team during the first school year (see Fig. 17).<sup>40</sup>

<sup>32</sup> La Crosse Y Papers, Mss 23, Box 1, Folder 1.

<sup>33</sup> Gilkey, 23; and in a bulletin issued in 1910 is a summary of what the LCSNS believed to be the core necessities to make a strong body, “*To make the body a strong, efficient working instrument, capable of expressing the mind or thought the human body must possess strength, health, vitality, control of muscle by nerve and will, and the power to conserve energy in order to express ideals.*” – La Crosse State Normal School, *Bulletin of the State Normal School* (La Crosse, 1910), 41-42. Quoted from Bahr, 25-26.

<sup>34</sup> Gilkey, 25.

<sup>35</sup> Gilkey, 25.

<sup>36</sup> Bahr, 26.

<sup>37</sup> Bahr, 28.

<sup>38</sup> Gilkey, 31; *La Crosse Tribune*, 7 Jul. 1909; 16 Jul. 1909; 22 Jul. 1909; 3 Aug. 1909; and 20 Aug. 1909. The unhappy mother cited the magazine *Good Housekeeping* which the newspaper said read as, “*Little by little, with the flavor of the flowers and the music of the bees, mother can lead the sensitive mind by a pretty pathway into the realm of knowledge.*” See: *La Crosse Tribune*, 10 Dec. 1909.

<sup>39</sup> *The Racquet Yearbook*, (1910), 24.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 24-34 ; Bahr, 35-37. During Prof. Sputh’s first year at the LCSNS he organized the Physical Education Club. Panel discussions, talks by faculty members, and musical performances were the highlights of

In an effort to support LCSNS's avant-garde physical culture and mental views, the local La Crosse YMCA advertised to the community that they were an available alternative location. Where on any given day of the year, any man interested could find a sanctuary, who would not exclude him for belief, condition, circumstances, or make him feel subject to charity.<sup>41</sup>

During the First World War the physical culture of the LCSNS became even more important to develop the identity of the man. It was the man's responsibility to help with the war effort, and the best effort he could put forth was to participate in military service, a public sphere until recent history that was specifically a men-only organization. A man could also, in place of doing military service, make contributions to other organizations like the Red Cross or the YMCA. Unfortunately any man who dedicated his time to non-military organizations emasculated himself, for a strong woman could and did work for both organizations. At LCSNS, President Cotton organized the faculty members behind the war movement, and the President's wife took it upon herself to organize the female faculty members into drive committees to raise funds for the Red Cross and the YMCA. Several male faculty members served proper examples of manhood by choosing to join various military units, and even in a few extreme cases, serve overseas.<sup>42</sup> Other male faculty members took it upon themselves as their civil duty to continue to educate. Historian Albert H. Sanford went beyond his normal obligations by writing a pamphlet titled *Why The United States Is At War*, which he used as a textbook in his class to counteract the falsehoods that were, he claimed, being persistently spread over the country by German agents.<sup>43</sup>

Formed in 1918 to improve the popular image of the educated male's masculinity during the First World War, the Student Army Training Corps [SATC] was to provide educated officers for the army, and male students to prevent the university's matriculation from dwindling. The SATC allowed young men to both study and prepare for military service.<sup>44</sup> As new enlistees, they received both military and academic training with the long-term goal, for those students who were academically qualified, of turning them into domestic professionals. They would serve the nation as one of the professional elite, like doctors or lawyers, that were essential for the rapid development and reconstruction that the nation was enduring throughout the Progressive Era.<sup>45</sup> Other students who were not academically motivated were to participate in (at some undefined future date) alternative forms of man-making: officers' training camp, military technicians school, or as a last resort, they were to be placed into regular military service with the rank of private.<sup>46</sup> The latter threat was placed to motivate students to apply themselves to their academic work. The SATC was a useful agent of the Progressive Era to transform poor, or otherwise assumed useless men into members of society, while introducing them to the crucial masculine structures of the military.<sup>47</sup>

The SATC unit's daily routine was not one which the normal student could easily become accustomed to. The rigors of military practice, combined with the demands of an academic career, exhausted the men physically and mentally. The SATC ran on the same program every school day:

6:30 First Call  
 6:45 Reveille  
 7:00 to 9:30 Drill  
 9:45 to 12:00 Academic Work  
 12:10 Mess  
 1:00 to 4:30 Academic Work  
 4:35 Retreat  
 6:00 Mess  
 7:15 Roll Call at Normal

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club's meetings. The students within the club even published their own newsletter called *The Tattler*. The material published in the newsletter was gossip about the physical education department and its students. An oddity of the newsletter was that for each issue published there was a new editor working on it. The constant change in editors led to some humorous situations where each new editor tried out-doing his predecessor.

<sup>41</sup> La Crosse Y Papers, Mss 23, Box 1, Folder 1.

<sup>42</sup> Gilkey, 125. Professor C. B. Moore taught psychology in army camps, and see *The Racquet*, 8, 19 (14 May 1918), 1. Professor O. O. White of the English department served for the YMCA in France.

<sup>43</sup> Albert H. Sanford Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Area Research Center, Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin La Crosse.

<sup>44</sup> *The Racquet Yearbook*, (1914), 43.

<sup>45</sup> Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search For Order: 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999), intro, *in passim*.

<sup>46</sup> *The Racquet Yearbook*, (1914), 43.

<sup>47</sup> Gilkey, 127.

7:20 to 9:30 Supervised Study  
 9:30 to 9:45 March or Double Time to the "Y"  
 10:00 Taps Followed by Inspection by Night Sergeant  
 10:00 to 6:30 Eight Hours Sound Sleep<sup>48</sup>

A student remarked, tongue-in-cheek, that at the end of the sleeping cycle the, "same old grind begins" again the next day.<sup>49</sup>

This description of the unpleasantness that was SATC life is visually shown in the group photograph of the 120 men of the SATC unit, which was printed in the 1919 LCSNS yearbook (see Fig. 18). The strong feelings of duty and exhaustion that infiltrated the men's writings are echoed here in the faces and postures of the men in the photograph. Strangely though the men in the photograph appear to fit in so nicely into what seemed like such a simple design, but in reality the SATC was anything but that.<sup>50</sup> In fact every man involved in the SATC was unsure of his position in the grand scheme. The educators feared that the SATC was an effort by the military to take control over the protected, time-honored position of producing men through the university, because the government paid the tuition for the student-soldiers and started to prescribe parts of the curriculum. Even the military was unsure of its role in this social experiment or even how long they would remain involved. In September 1918 it remained to be seen if the strict paternal military discipline that was applied to the LCSNS was to produce more willing students than had previously attended college in the past. Congressman John J. Esch, who arranged for the SATC in La Crosse, chose the LCSNS for the "strong department of physical education at the institution. Teachers in that department are especially efficient in military drills and kindred work which goes to make strong men and good soldiers."<sup>51</sup>

Four months after the organization of the SATC armistice was declared, and the SATC was disbanded (see Fig. 19). This social experiment in education was not sorely missed; in fact all universities that ran the SATC program declined to offer another military program until the Reserve Army Training Corps (ROTC) appeared on campuses during the Vietnam conflict. The faculty was happy to return to teaching normal classes again, and the students were happy to stop splitting their time between the two organizations, because many student-soldiers complained when they knew that the end of their service was near, "The school work was the most disagreeable part of the entire work. We were deprived of good times by study in the evenings and when a fellow is in the army, what does he care about learning such junk as "Why We Are At War," "Literature," "Gymnastics," etc.?"<sup>52</sup>

One poem printed in *The Racquet* during the First World War and the SATC experience, was dedicated to the LCSNS boys at the front:

***"I'm Leaving"***

*If I should die in some foreign field,  
 Mid shrapnel-song and steel-capped bullets' scream  
 Should find at last that glorious hour revealed,  
 With fevered brain should sense it in a dream,  
 In my last moments turn my burning eye  
 And let me throw a kiss my last on earth,  
 To where our flag is flung across the sky,  
 And to it give a life so little worth.  
 Then Lay me down in blood-soaked, shattered ground,  
 The flag, like loved ones' arms, around my heart  
 To hold me in a lingering last embrace  
 As ye, ye joy-crazed victors, homeward start!  
 Then add my name to that long, hallowed list,  
 By nations honored, tortured mothers kissed,  
 And say, when friends shall read its story there,  
 "Well, there's a scout who tried – and did his share."*

<sup>48</sup> *The Racquet* Yearbook, (1914), 45.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 45.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 45-6.

<sup>51</sup> *La Crosse Tribune*, 15 Aug. 1918.

<sup>52</sup> Albert H. Sanford Papers, Box 1, Folder 1.

-S. W.<sup>53</sup>

This poem is an amazing piece of language when one deconstructs the imagery used within the discourse. A prime example, in the fifth line, would be where the author throws a kiss across the sky to the flag, and then as a result of his love to the flag, it embraces him like a loved one's arms. The expressions the author used, like *embraces* and *kisses*, is very intimate language to be used between comrades. This poem hints at the existence of very strong homosocial relationships between men that both the YMCA and LCSNS attempted to nurture.<sup>54</sup> It is a possibility that the author is not afraid to show his sensitivity inside of the poem because of his closeness to death's door, but are these emotions something he learned at war, or at LCSNS? At the minimum this poem shows that the men, who were exposed to the physical and mental cultures of LCSNS, were reanalyzing what they learned about masculinity while suffering from the traumatic imagery of war. The true significance behind the printing of this poem in the school newspaper, marked the campus communities acceptance of this type of intimacy among men, even though up front the little scout who tried and did his share just looks like he wants to be recognized as a hero.<sup>55</sup>

After the end of the war and the demise of the SATC, LCSNS's physical education program continued to function as a promoter of the physical and moral culture of men. LCSNS's physical education program helped young men to construct and maintain their masculine identity in relationship to that of women. The men who succeeded Cotton as the president of LCSNS continued to follow his structured lesson plans, and helped play an integral role in articulating new definitions of masculinity.

**Postscript.** Masculinity at LCSNS reflected nationwide trends on the cutting edge of moral and social reforms through physical education in the early 1900s. Today's UWL continues to inscribe similar messages in its institutional masculine image. The promotional poster of the 2003 Football Team promotes an aggressive masculinity in its depiction of team members lined up in front of a military helicopter (see fig. 20). These men stand proudly under the poster's slogan, "defending our house...and taking yours," which is a not-at-all subtle statement of aggression, competition, and dominance in the football team's masculinity.

Hypermasculinity is not the only type of institutional manhood that UWL promotes; it is just the most popular form. Another form of masculinity at UWL is shown in the 2003 Wrestling Team's promotional poster (see Fig. 21). The 2003 wrestling poster depicts six men in what appears to be a prison cell. In the foreground are two, smaller, fair-haired, younger guys, who on their knees, seem to be begging. At their sides are two others, crouching, who are seemingly displaying or guarding these two. Behind these four are two standing men restrained with long chains. Were it not for the UWL logo stamped at the bottom and on their uniforms, one would think that the image is taken from rough-trade or prison-fantasy gay pornography, which eroticizes the relationship between wolves (older and aggressive protectors) and new inmates. This warped version of masculinity echoes the form of institutional masculinity that is taught and accepted in the United States prison system. This brutal form of masculinity pushes men to either become the sexual predator or victim.<sup>56</sup>

So why is UWL sponsoring this form of masculinity? Do these individuals understand what they are representing in their team poster? The message that UWL today is reproducing into the future high school athletic coaches and teachers, and consequently high school boys, is dominate or be dominated, and that there is no middle ground. The early emotional experiment on the LCSNS campus during the 1910-1920s, has been done away with. One could only speculate that the men at LCSNS similarly had no idea about their role in reproducing the structures of power that the university taught them, throughout the rural communities of Western Wisconsin and Eastern Iowa.

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<sup>53</sup> *The Racquet* Newspaper, Vol. 8, No. 11 (Jan. 29, 1918), 1

<sup>54</sup> Gustav, 2.

<sup>55</sup> Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 62.

<sup>56</sup> Ian O'Donnell, "Prison Rape in Context," *44 Brit J. Criminology* 241 (March 2004).