

**Change and Continuity,
Networking, Newspaper, Kinships and Twentieth Century Elite Women**

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Elite women's kinship networks C20th

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Summary

This article examines the juncture point between British-(Anglo)-American elite women in the first half of the twentieth century, their female networks and newspapers. It considers the maternal background, reconstructing biological and fictive kinships, to illustrate generational patterns leading to both female barrier-breaking in elite western institutions and clustering in the political and charitable work environments. The paper covers a century of adult female life using a central stem matrikin whose activities can be recovered through press-cuttings which chart change and continuity of values, confidence, identity and self-awareness through the range of kin based networks. It reconsiders the background to the 1970s breakthrough of women in leadership within elite political and charitable western institutions which has previously been considered as a result of effective equal opportunities combatting barriers rooted in male networking patterns. Finally it reflects on the nature of the press as encountered by, used by and marginalising of elite women during the period.

Keywords

Elite Women, Milwaukee, America, Britain, Kinship, Family, Newspapers, Networking, Social Class, Equal Opportunities, Nineteenth, Twentieth, NYBA, Progressive Era, Vassar, Letters, Peace Activism, Institutions, Glass Ceiling

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A kinship contribution to a historical understanding of elite women's networking practices as observable through American-British Press cuttings

Introduction

The study of historical kinship and family patterns is a relative new tool to understand past and current societies. It remains a niche approach to history yet has enormous potential as a contributor to an interdisciplinary approach for understanding changing societies. Within the United Kingdom context the traditional antiquarian focus upon elite family genealogy and elite historical endeavours of individuals resulted in attentiveness to the doings of the State and its Great Men but did not provide a fertile environment in which to explore the kinship and family networks of elite women. The insertion of the past lives of women into historiography has brought to light alternative understandings that have vastly improved perspectives on historical societies and events.

For example Richardson's recent research on Harriet Lewin Grote, as part of a joint study on George Grote, MP., showed the importance of Harriet as an individual and the impact of her networking behaviours to her husband's contribution to significant political changes across the early nineteenth-century (Richardson, ed. Demetriou, 2014: 134-160). Such re-discovery of female impact on politics was also undertaken by Chalus

in the 1990s through a study of the socio-political endeavours of late eighteenth century elite women acting in spousal support roles (Chalus, 2000).

Writing in the 1980s Gwen Moore identified that some contemporary women were emerging from ‘support-adjutant roles’ to their partners’ careers into careers of their own in the elite institutions (Moore, 1988). Her sociological research identified that women who had broken into elite positions within powerful, American, West German and Australian institutions by the 1980s generally shared two qualities. Firstly they were better educated than their vastly more numerous male counterparts, secondly they had a familial-cultural background as elite as their male colleagues. From Moore’s work has descended a search for understanding the patterns of formal and informal networking, and the consequent strategies employed by individuals. Moore also highlighted a clustering of elite women workers in politics and the voluntary sector.

This article uses both familial (biological) kinship and the class-collegiate (fictive) kinship to further understand the continuity and change in elite women’s societal positioning during the first half of the twentieth century. Networking reconstruction and local press interactions expose the exploitation of women’s achievements by their close kin and exposes that even more distant male biological kin could seek to benefit from elite status women’s achievement. The paper raises queries around the deployment of women’s resources and talents for their husbands careers as well as whether there is evidence of more assertive behaviour later in life and whether this fractured relationships with spouses.

The underlying research of this article draws almost exclusively upon digitized American local papers, bar British governmental records and the occasional Anglo-

American national broadsheets to both reconstruct the kinship social networks and also extract points of significance and impact. These primary sources also highlight potential tensions of belonging to both familial kinships, often patriarchal and fictive kinships, often matriarchal.

A Kinship Case Study

This article is neither a presentation of a fully fleshed out set of individuals nor even a series of mini-biographies of interconnected women extracted from local press-cuttings, the reasoning for this is twofold; to achieve such a presentation would require vastly more space than is available and more importantly such a presentation would merely be a reductive set of connections. Instead this article is a grappling with both the significance of public ‘networking’ against themes such as socio-economic elitism, gender and the press.

Through the 1950s and into the 1960s a highly educated and socio-politically well-connected New York lawyer, Carolinda Waters, (b.1920 d.1978) was a constant female presence on the committees of the New York Bar Association (NYBA). The NYBA was an old male dominated body noted for its elite-college personnel and consequent elitist attitudes (*New York Times (NYT)*, 4 Oct 1973). Carolinda whilst unable to rise to its executive in the 1960s had joined the bar committees in her early thirties (*NYT*, 20 Jul 1952). From the mid-sixties Carolinda disappears from public view after her second marriage. In comparison to many female relatives she had an early death, the

public notice of which drew attention to a long-illness (*NYT*, 6 Jan 1978). The late opening of senior leadership roles within NYBA to female participation combined with ill-health are probable reasons why Carolinda's early promising career did not see a publicly noted breakthrough. Even so the concept of kinship can contribute to understanding Carolinda, who with her Yale law degree and impeccable New York social connections bears the distinctions that Moore identified in upper echelon women in elite institutions in the 1980s (*Milwaukee Sentinel*, (*MwS*), 17 August 1947; *Milwaukee Journal*, (*MwJ*) 30 Dec 1944).

Carolinda had accompanied Hilda to England in 1927 as a seven year old following her parents' divorce. The indicators are that Carolinda remained in contact with her father, William Waters (b.1877 d.1956) but the primary parental influence came from Hilda. Equally the elite social component of Carolinda's background was transmitted through her mother not her father. This study also probes a further generation backwards to Hilda's mother Ethelinda, a progressive era mid-western elite woman.

This study looks at the kinship background to Carolinda, primarily through her mother's, Hilda Johnston (b.1883 d.1957), life arc and Hilda's networks as displayed in Illustrations 1 and 2 below. The Illustrations lay out the United States based female and male relatives of Hilda Johnston, the display of the two genders separately is purposeful so as to enable both ease of interpretation and more importantly to enable an understanding of connectedness in a gender-biased society. Historical bias against women has resulted in a pattern of women's public impact being downplayed and a story of women's insignificance. The results of such a bias is that women are often understood through their relationship to men,

Illustration 1. US based matrifocal-network of Hilda Johnston

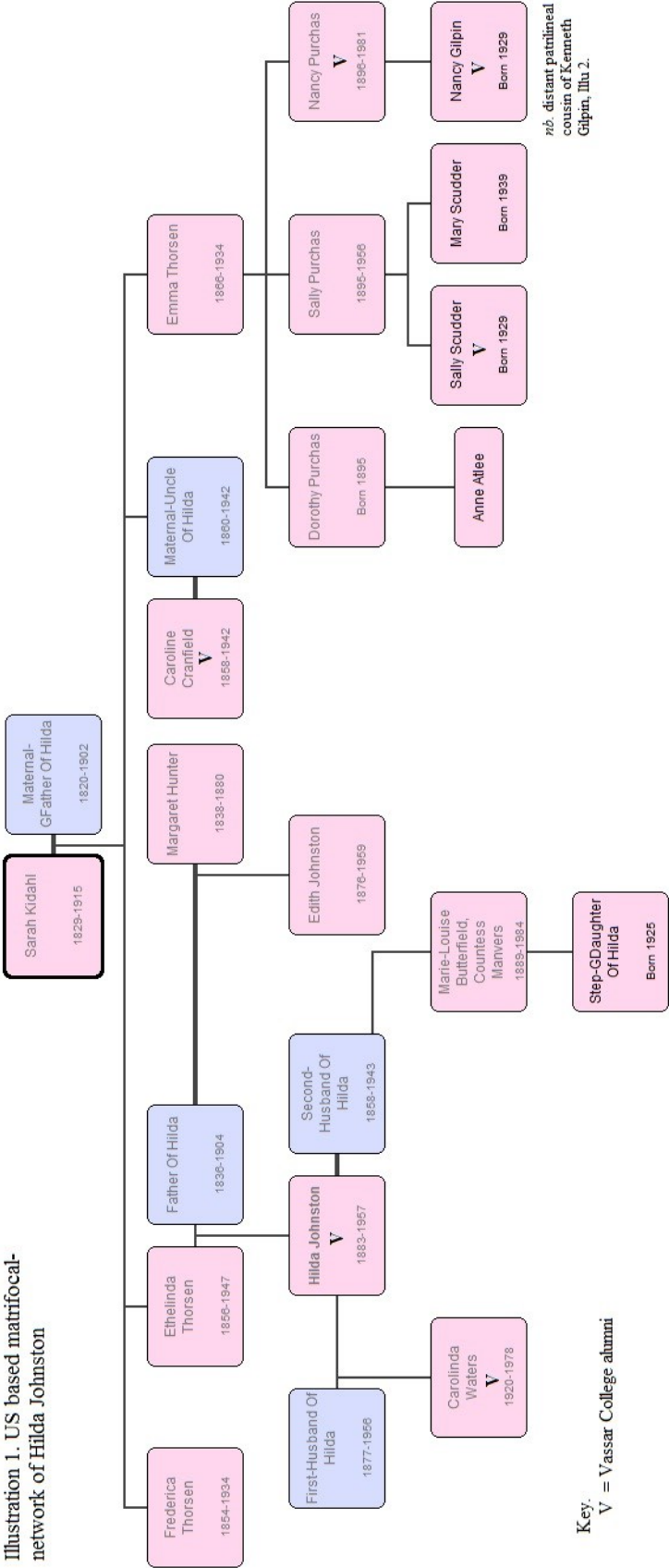


Illustration 2 provides an anchor of context to mainstream historical emphasises whilst Illustration 1 gives the article its main backbone. Thus illustration 2 provides a framework to contextualise the centrality of influence and resources enjoyed by the kinship over the long-term amongst the male relatives. For instance Mitchell Mackie's enterprises provided the names of iconic Downtown office buildings in Milwaukee, Alexander Mitchell's former mansion is now the city's premier social business club and General William Mitchell provides the name of the city's airport. Furthermore John Johnston provided the land for the city's first hospital and his cousin's husband Dr. William Mackie became the second Head of Surgery soon after its completion. In a similar vein the women in Illustration 1 offer up a challenge to a traditional analysis of women's status with numerous divorces, travel and living independently abroad particularly in the case of Emma Thorsen and Hilda Johnston, alongside an enduring promotion of daughter's education since the 1870s.

A perusal of Ethelinda's and Hilda's networking patterns can be used to ascertain both change and the continuity of female networking patterns as they passed down to Carolinda from the 1880s. The study examines the networks of these three women for hallmarks of reciprocity of service, enduring relationships, social influence and the transmission of network values. The evidence for the study is drawn from worldwide newspaper clippings over the period 1880-1978 and substantial journalistic pieces taken from the local Milwaukee papers, that city being the cradle of the Ethelinda-Hilda-Carolinda kinship which could be regarded as constituting an elite regional network.

To this end the article next explores an understanding of elite, the meaning of kinship and grasps the importance of evidence extracted from Newspapers before then

applying these conceptual tools against illustrative cuttings related to the Ethelinda-Hilda-Carolinda network and its impact on the public sphere.

Regional Elites; An Elite Kinship

It needs to be recognised that the notion and definition of an ‘elite’ is a contested term for use in understanding societies. Schijf in his 2013 review of the research of elites identifies the duality of resources and influences as underpinning an evaluation of who can be described as elite within any context. Critical for the purpose of this article he goes onto highlight that ‘even in largely meritocratic societies where people are judged by their individual achievements is everybody able to reach a top position without the proper social background and helpful networks.’ (Schijf, *ed.* Abbink, Salverda, 2013) Schijf points towards the work of Farrell on the Boston Brahmin families undertaken through a painstaking genealogical reconstruction that in the opinion of Gamber revealed the enduring, overlapping impact of familial alliances that retained power and status for the Brahmins long after the orthodox sociological-fiscal analysis suggested that they had been economically eclipsed (Gamber, 1995). Marcus was similarly taken with how Farrell’s work when combined with Bobkin Hall’s showed a long lasting pattern of kinship behaviour (Marcus, 1995). Both Marcus and Gamber pointed towards Farrell’s findings picking at both the ‘separate’ spheres discourse and at romantic attachments being sole-primary basis for spousal attachments; Instead both agreeing that spousal

attachments benefited the wider kinship and thus brought the private right into the heart of the public yet also included elements of romance and individual choices.

The selected Ethelinda-Hilda-Carolinda kinship contributes and builds upon these ideas by moving away from the traditional East Coast lineages of Boston Brahmins or New York Bankers and instead engages with the Mid-Western Eurocentric society from its inception into the vacuum of First Nation displacement. The kinship offers an insight into how a society without an established elite glass ceiling functions over the long-term.

Kinship over family

Both the UK and US societies of the nineteenth century ideologies revolved around the primacy and righteousness of individualistic patriarchy as socially expressed through the myth of the middle class nuclear family. So powerful was this social ideology that it was used and imposed as a social corrective tool on various marginalised groups, women, the poor, First Nations peoples as a matter of state policy (Cradock, 2006; Stremlau, 2005; Gordon and Nair 2002). Yet as far back as 1975 the likes of Smith-Rosenberg have challenged various aspects of both individualistic, patriarchal and nuclear family interpretations of society, instead calling for an understanding of female relationships ‘which would view them within a cultural and social setting’ (Smith-Rosenberg, 1975).

Euro-American understanding of kinship has been revolutionised in recent decades and with it attitudes to the family, society and relationships have begun to shift

(Schweitzer, 1990: 10-15). Gone is Laslett's 1960s concept of a post-industrial society typified by discreet, isolated nuclear family units each within their own dwelling (King 2014: 1147-1148). Also ejected from kinship theory is the dominance of the patrilineal defined notion of kinship. In its stead a much more complicated understanding of cross-community kinship clustering, stem and composite household patterns, the realisation that matrilineal linkages are equally important and recognition that people construct all kinds of non-biological kinships (Schneider, 1984:223-225). Thus instead of kinship being merely fascinated with who is related to whom by blood or law, the focus now is upon reciprocity of service and enduring multi-indicative relationships, *e.g.* networks.

In contrast Moore's methodology for understanding pioneering corporate boardroom women was limited to examining only the parental backgrounds and thus showed a bias for the father as a class determinant, whilst only referencing mothers' education status. Moore was concerned that women were negatively impacted by both formal and informal work-place networking behaviours forcing women to over excel especially in the elite strata. She pinpointed that women with elite backgrounds had more effective networking and she identified the better equality policies in politics and voluntary sector as factors for female executive clustering.

Richardson used epistolary evidence to illustrate that Harriet Lewin Grote maintained correspondence with both women and men building mostly non-biological kinship network across the arts and into politics. Richardson notes in regard to correspondence with men such letters formed both friendship and a means for a woman to exercise leadership within a formally male dominated arena (Richardson, 2014: 143-145). What Richardson does not tackle, in her contribution to understanding George

Grote through his wife's life arc, is the transference of women's leadership skills from mothers to daughters. The family dynamics are limited to brief comments on their fractious relationships and most family identities, including mother's, are passed over. Chalus explored how elite family and networks patterns in the UK were changed by the rise of Parliament as a dominant institution during the late eighteenth century. For elite women the draw to London of the politicians' families had both a biological kinship impact due to the limited number of elite inter-related families and forced the growth of non-biology based kinships around new social activities.

Networking was both domestic and public with both patterns and environments giving rise to opportunities for women to exercise leadership on behalf of husbands or upon shared priorities (Chalus, 2000: 675-679). Nenadic's 1990s study of Georgian gentry families located in the Highlands showed how changes in societal patterns affected kinships both short-term and long-term. Nenadic illustrated that when social forces drew young people away from family based kinships at an early age the 'blood kin' influence on the individual weakened. Consequently the individual participated in new, formed kinships, and adopted patterns of behaviour inculcated by those institutional frameworks (Nenadic 2006).

Newspapers as evidence

The availability of free digitisations of US regional papers has greatly improved the opportunity for researching US socio-economic elites both to reconstruct genealogical

networks, especially for individuals and families, and track influential public profiles; In contrast the more private papers of particularly women are disguised either within their broader family archived papers or within the collections of organisations in which they were involved. Beyond merely the practicalities of accessibility a heavy reliance upon local papers also makes an important methodological contribution to the paper.

The individual news clippings on which this study is based are of an assortment of journalistic technique and purpose, some pieces originated from the Associated Press (AP) reporting from Europe, whilst other clippings are the result of interviews with elite members of society or based upon local knowledge / research of the journalist. The third type of article are merely social notices issued by the named individuals to the newspaper around their marriages, parties, events and even hi jinx.

It must be recognised that the insertion of such personal data into American local paper represents a most public engagement with wider society and is a manifestation of influence. This is particularly true for the majority of pieces used in this article and its underlying research much of which is small detail pieces such as notifications of dinner parties and social events. Clearly these had to be provided for publication by the subjects themselves, as were longer articles on wedding events, anniversaries and graduations. The cuttings used often appeared in the social pages or women's supplements thus having a status of 'non'-news, *i.e.* they did not cover essential 'male' activities such as business, politics, national and foreign affairs but were about family and women.

This has to be understood against the analysis of Schudson in which he highlighted that for the American Press Corp the first half of the last century saw shifts in core values (Schudson, 1981:3). These shifts challenged the value of facts and how facts

interplay with society, Schudson highlights that whilst the overall trend in American newspaper journalism across the period was to respond to the incongruity of value and facts (Schudson: 5-6). Yet he also notes that there was still pressure to, and pockets of, journalistic literature crafted around attractive storytelling whether with or without a regard to the primacy of fact. As to AP sourced reports Schudson regarded them as relatively free of editorialism and instead were embedded in the 'value of objectivity' so as to be useful to a variety of purchasers (Schudson: 4). These journalistic shifts and the over-riding concerns of the corporations behind the newspapers need to be considered when approaching their clippings as a principal source of information from which to construct knowledge of Ethelinda, Hilda and Carolinda.

Schudson also focused attention on the newspaper owning corporations' primary concern being to economically survive and thrive (Schudson: 3). Thus stories across the first half century highlighting the simple doings of the local social elite as column fillers must have been regarded at the very least as, not damaging to the economic brand of the newspaper. Whilst larger profile pieces, such as the 1950s era Milwaukeean press articles harking back to Milwaukee's heritage, must have served a purpose for the papers view of society or its local standing, aimed at strengthening the commercial status of the city's papers with its preferred audience base.

In regard to the Ethelinda-Hilda-Carolinda kinship the articles relating to them need to be considered in the light of verifiable fact against effective storytelling and whether the storytelling originated in the journalist or the subject. Thus the conjunction of private individuals of elite status making available information from 'private' letters and journalists being prepared to report on the contents of private letters is interesting. This

conjunction also asks questions around the late life motivations behind Ethelinda's networking relationship with Dorothy Parnell that went on for many years. Was Ethelinda motivated merely by a listening ear or was she using Hilda's elite status to prop up the rest of the family network? The letter sharing baton was passed to Kenneth who had slipped far from the social and economic heights of his grand-father John Johnston, did Hilda give him the 'magnificent'-link back to the city's pioneering heyday, which he could then manufacture social status from? In which case his press linkages with his wife's great-aunt another female figures of Hilda's generation adds to this case (*MwS*, 17 Mar 1960). A satisfactory answer may only be possible if sufficient archived family materials have survived and emerge.

Still a critical contribution arises from an almost exclusive use of local newspaper cutting. The vast majority of the pieces are either presented for insertion by the subjects of the pieces or their intimates or they are the product of long standing relationships between journalist and source and thus represent how the subject(s) and their circle on the whole wished to be publicly perceived. Thus lengthy recollection interviews with elder members of families with influence provide a great deal of framework to this paper and need to be considered as part of an ongoing alliance between the interviewer and interviewee. This paper therefore rests upon a public projection of the private sphere, of Euro-American women with influence and access to resources, both during and whilst reflecting upon the latter nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

The Kinships or ‘Networks’ that were Carolinda Waters’s heritage

From her mother, Carolinda inherited a number of kinships for which evidence can be substantiated in the press. First amongst these is a broad elite familial kinship which linked her to the wealthy pioneering families of Milwaukee. Her grandmother Ethelinda was a daughter of the Norwegian migrant-lumber entrepreneur John Thorsen and his Norwegian wife Sarah Kidahl the latter of whom died when Hilda was well into adulthood. The elder Thorsens’ and their daughter Ethelinda were often reported as travelling across the Atlantic (*MwJ*, 5 Aug 1893; 16 Aug 1947). Emma a younger daughter after a Milwaukee education continued to study music overseas in the 1880s and then lived in Brazil with her British husband. Widowed young, Emma raised her children as a lone parent in a property adjacent to Kensington Palace, London, before returning to Milwaukee with her by then adult children (*MwJ*, 3 Jan 1915; 16 Feb 1944).

A brother, William transferred the family lumber business to California, visiting his widowed mother and sisters regular in Milwaukee with his family. William’s will made small provisions, for his numerous nephews and nieces as well as his own sons (*MwJ*, 1 Aug 1903; 20 Dec 1911; *Berkley Daily Gazette*, 19 Jul 1943). Hilda’s father was the Scottish-Wisconsin banker John Johnston, Ethelinda being his second and much younger wife (*MwJ*, 27 Jan 1888). The Johnston’s like the Thorsens were a second tier elite family, both patriarchs leaving substantial financial arrangements at their 1902 and 1904 deaths (*MwJ*, 10 Jun 1904). Hilda had an older half-sister Edith May who returned to her father’s homeland to marry a relative of her aunt-in-law, the then Dr. and Mrs. Cruickshank eventually settled in Cheshire, England.

John Johnston had settled in Milwaukee in 1856 at the request of his uncle, Alexander Mitchell, arguably the principal citizen of the city's early decades. Mitchell was a two term congressman, banking, rail and insurance magnate with national impact (*Clinton Evening News*, 21 Apr 1887; *MwJ*, 29 May 1944). In the 1940s the Milwaukeean press had taken to referring to the Magnificent Mitchells (*MwJ*, 7 May 1946). Alexander's family included son Senator John Lendrum Mitchell, grandson General William Mitchell, a grand-daughter, World War II Serbian resistance fighter, Ruth Mitchell and a great-nephew Mackie Mitchell, the leading Milwaukee business magnate of the 1940s. Like John Johnston, Mackie Mitchell's mother, a niece of Alexander's, had been summoned in the 1870s from Aberdeenshire, she was followed by her husband to be Dr. William Mackie, later Head of Surgery at Milwaukee General Hospital. The Johnston and Mackie descendants continued to play a civic leadership role in the city until at least the 1960s these descendants remained a linkage for Hilda to the city of her birth (*MwS*, 14 Apr 1959).

The second network bequeathed to Carolinda by her mother was a collegiate-kinship through a shared experience of the leading progressive women's educational institution in New England, Vassar College. It is unclear whether Carolinda's aunt Edith May received an education there but Hilda and four other related women most certainly did. According to Ethelinda Hilda was accomplished in both grades and social graces. Yet Hilda, between her father's death and her first marriage, at her mother's request, had abandoned Vassar and toured Europe spending time studying at the Sorbonne. Thirty years after her mother's departure arrangements were made for Carolinda to also spend a period at Vassar in the mid-1930s. Carolinda's experiences of Vassar were

outside of the golden progressive period 1890 – 1920 during which the college placed an emphasis on ‘Progressivism, suffragism, interest in career, and a close relationship between students and faculty’ (Gordon, 1990: Abst).

Carolinda’s short time at the college was likely not her first experience of Vassar’s values. Hilda’s early years in London 1927-1930 and beyond were spent in an elite social circle drawing in many Vassar graduates based in the United Kingdom and French Republic. Press cuttings do not give any clues as to the type of early education that Hilda prepared for Carolinda, but Ethelinda was confident enough to talk about her grand-daughters academic successes who went on to be amongst the limited number of Yale Law School female alumni in the 1940s.

The Vassar network spilled over into two other significant networks for Hilda and Carolinda once they relocated to London. Firstly it reinforced their membership of the transatlantic Euro-American set that were comfortable and familiar with continual travel between the continents. Hilda’s cousin General William Mitchell was born in the south of France in 1879 and her second husband Sir Frederick Butterfield had originally been an American citizen working for US Diplomatic Corp before taking British Naturalisation and taking over the Butterfield businesses and properties. Secondly it accessed for Hilda the core of British establishment, an early reported dinner guest Lady Beauchamp, was simultaneously sister of the Tory Grandee, the Duke of Westminster and wife of the Liberal leader in the House of Lords at the same dinner was Lord Chief Justice Hewart’s wife with whom Hilda maintained a relationship for at least thirteen years as Lady Hewart sponsored Carolinda’s coming out at Buckingham Palace (*MwJ*, 17 June 1928, Society). The third major network made available to Carolinda by her mother was

mustered from the East Coast elite progressive-democratic women's club network. As a Milwaukeean Hilda would have had some experience of the progressive women's movement in her childhood. Milwaukee saw the formation of an elite women's club in 1886 and the city had been offering higher education to women since 1860 resulting in a female lead law-firm formed in Hilda's childhood (Brown, 1975:18). During her first marriage, whilst residing in New York Hilda was drawn into the network circle of Florence Jaffray "Daisy" Harriman, women's suffrage campaigner, US Ambassador and titan of the Democratic party. Hilda joined the elite Colony Club alongside wives and daughters of the Roosevelt, Morgan and Astor families. When she returned from Britain as a widow in 1944 Hilda was able to base herself out of Colony Club and the Women's National Democratic Club. Carolinda herself at age thirty-three took on leadership responsibilities with the slightly less prestigious Women's City Club of New York in 1953 alongside her legal practice and NYBA activities.

Whilst Carolinda's British father made a successful life for himself in the US and retained a relationship with his daughter up until his death he did not make an elite network available to her. Understandably press cuttings give us no indication of whether Carolinda had a relationship with her maternal uncle who in 1911 was an Assistant Naval Store Officer in Portsmouth later relocating to London where he died in 1956 (Portsmouth and Mid-Southsea, 1911 PRO, *RG 14/5603*; SN 358, p.716). Potentially the Butterfield link to British Methodism may have encouraged an awareness of her paternal grand-parents a Wesleyan clergy family with ministries in the poorest communities of London and Newcastle both dying at the turn of the century.

Hilda's kinship and network relationships covered in the press

The press cuttings from the 1880s to the 1970s that touch upon the networks around Carolinda and Hilda fall into two types. The most abundant are short articles and notices that give glimpses of lifestyles, events and relationships so as to make the most of these sources it was necessary to undertake background research in order to appreciate the indicators about kinship and networking. The second type arises in the local Milwaukeean press and mostly point toward the familial kinship patterns of mother and daughter. These articles draw heavily on journalistic encounters with recipients of communiques from Hilda mostly her mother Ethelinda and then Hilda's nephew Kenneth Johnston (*MwS*, 25 Sep 1948). The latter pieces when considered indicate the maintenance of familial kinship relationships over long-distance and over extended periods.

The evidence from local cuttings over the decades is that the highly mobile family units descending from John Thorsen and John Johnston retained both the resources and intentionality to retain inter-connected lives by cross-country visiting and in the case of Hilda cross-Atlantic. This behaviour is evident not just between Carolinda and Hilda, the latter of whom died in the formers residence or Ethelinda and Hilda, where the daughter ensured she was present at her mother's death. The descendants of Emma Thorsen showed similar familial bonds gathering on regular basis for extended family visits to Milwaukee.

In the 1930s Hilda and her two siblings, Edith May and John Johnston II came together over legal questions facing their fathers estate. This legal action and Hilda's intervention with the city's administration on behalf of her mother's finances ultimately failed but they do evidence an enduring reciprocity of the dispersed family (*MwJ*, 2 May 1935; 21 Dec 1937). Similarly William Thorsen's estate disbursement which included nephews and nieces is indicative of relationship bonds.

The significance of Hilda's non-family networking networks were a shared status of social elitism, access to disposable wealth and the use of influence, with a preponderance but not exclusiveness to the female gender. Ethelinda was clearly convinced that Hilda had done well at Vassar College, which was the cradle of a network, but had no compunction of encouraging her withdrawal and in the long-term this did her no harm as it eased her entry into the London socio-political scene. From the 1927 cutting 'Mrs Waters is a London Hostess; several events' consisting of a mere ninety-nine words emerges a complex web of networks. After the Hewarts and Lady Beauchamp, the American wives emerge if disentangled from the husbands. Mary Borden was a novelist and a Vassar contemporary of Hilda's graduating in 1907 (*Pittsburgh Press*, 26 May 1910), (*Newburgh Evening News*, 3 Dec 1968). Mary Borden like Hilda was a mid-west heiress, the Borden fortune originating in Chicago where family remained significant politically and economically. Mary had launched herself into the public sphere during the Great War, by opening up a number of field hospitals and writing (Kendall, *Blog*). Like Hilda she had made an unexpected first marriage but by 1927 she was wife of Brig.-General Spears, former and future MP, friend of Winston Churchill. The second US citizen at the table was Mrs. Alfred Bossom, wife of the Anglo-American architect. The

Bossoms' had relocated to London in 1926 from New York. The careers of Alfred Bossoms and William Waters between 1908 and 1926 in the same cities and in similar career paths would indicate that Hilda and the Bossom's were at least likely old acquaintances (George, online article, 2010). In 1927 Alfred Bossom was set on a pathway to establish a UK political career. His wife was part of New York's Bayne oil and banking family. The final female guest was Mrs. Frank Schwab a Vassar College graduate based in London who was part of an extended Vassar alumni sorority set and whose husband was attached to the Embassy (*St. Petersburg Times*, 4 May 1928). With her Aunt Emma's departure from London back in 1915 it is unlikely that Hilda exploited her familial connections, instead her entry into London's social political elite was eased by Vassar.

Hilda's second marriage has multiple network routes traceable through press-cuttings. Whilst being a generation older than her, Sir Frederick both shared Hilda's British-American identity additional through his mother he was a New York Roosevelt being a second cousin of the 26th President of the USA. Through her membership of the Colony Club Hilda had been within the Roosevelt New York social circle. Small snippets indicate that Carolinda took part in Hilda and Frederick's itinerant lifestyle and by age seventeen was acting independently and it is highly likely that a heritage of mixing with publicly active women prepared her for her own social elite roles (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 1 May 1939). Whilst her Mitchell male relatives maintained a Washington presence their financial domain like her father's was the Mid-West thus it is important to look to the non-biological network both in New York and London to understand both

Hilda's second marriage but also the influence and connectivity that underpinned Carolinda's legal successes.

The ongoing connection and pride of a mother and grandmother may not be so extraordinary leading to the passing of information to the Milwaukeean press but what of a nephew? Kenneth was barely six years of age when Hilda departed for London and before that she had been resident in New York for many years but he assumed his grandmothers mantle connecting Hilda's doings to his local papers

Hilda, elite women's leadership in informal patterns with informal networking

In the 1940s Ethelinda laid out a very traditional vision of elite female lifestyles fifty years prior, she or her interviewer Parnell or the paper's editor were keen to sell to the Milwaukee readership a traditional view of elite women in the late nineteenth century that is regarded now as self-effacing and potentially clichéd. This included the rota of receiving and visiting female peers through the week ensuring that women of leading households retained a non-public role well into the 1870s. Parnell notes the conspicuous display of wealth required by elite women of the final quarter of the nineteenth century through her reference to morning and afternoon outfits. Ethelinda takes this one step further with the easy of reference of her trips to Paris, France, to shop as 'nothing was to fine for me' (*MwS*, 17 August 1947). The consequent avoidance 'of a hands on' public role is also apparent and is highlighted by Ethelinda's comparison to the charitable work of succeeding generations. Yet her own aunt-in-law Martha Read, Mrs. Alexander

Mitchell had a very active public life in Florida (Shepherd, Online). From Villa Alexandria in Jacksonville Martha had run a separate household from the time of her brother's governorship of the post-civil war state. Unlike her niece-in-law Martha took a more forward social role; In a 1939 interview a Jacksonville lawyer Mr A. Gus, Hartridge, relayed his knowledge of Mrs Mitchell's active participation in establishing and administering the community hospital alongside his own mother. Martha was also an independent traveller and contractor in the 1850s according to her niece-in-law (*MwJ*, May 29, 1944).

Hilda's first marriage in many ways echoed her mother's traditional images but with a status change from elite to upper-middle class. Putting aside her elite status, extensive education and access to wealth, she initially followed her husband's career. William Waters's had arrived in the United States in 1901 intriguingly his father, Revd Waters, had ministered at Wellington, Shropshire, his church would have been the closest Free Church for a Mr. Hugh Shepherd, an Aberdeenshire native and a maternal cousin of Hilda's father, who was a long-term manager of a nearby estate,. This connection may have assisted Waters appointment as Chief Engineer of the Milwaukee Electric Company and family induction. The new Waters family spent time in the following years in Pennsylvania, heartland of the wealthy Gilpins to whom her cousin Nancy Gilpin belonged, before moving onto New York where Hilda's story re-emerges in press-cuttings.

The 1920 Federal Census and a 1947 profile of Hilda, place Hilda and William in the heart of the New York elite society at the commencement of the 1920s, where at some point Hilda became a member of Harriman's Colony Club and the family resided in

ultra-wealthy Glen Cove (1920 *United States Federal Census*, Nassau, New York; Roll: T625_1127). Thirteen years into the marriage a sole daughter was born and after almost twenty-one years Hilda divorced William for cruelty (*MwS*, 4 Feb 1927). Whilst Waters had a good solid upper middle class job it seems likely that both Hilda's wealth and social connections were required to ensure the elite home and society (*NYT*, 13 Mar 1956).

Soon after her second marriage Hilda was thrown into a new situation of formal leadership responsibilities when she was invited to the Chairmanship of the Yorkshire Conservative Women's Association. This development was an inherited political role as her husband had previously exercised local leadership in Yorkshire from his base at Cliffe Castle, Keighley. The invitation caused a difference of opinion between Frederick and Hilda regarding the public role of women resulting in Hilda withdrawing from the proffered role, summed up back in Milwaukee as 'Hilda Johnston bows to wish of His Lordship' (*MwS*, 12 Mar 1932). The New York Times gave two small pieces to this incident giving more depth than the Milwaukeean coverage. On March 9th Frederick had laid out that Hilda had an inadequate knowledge of English politics to hold the Conservative Women's leadership in Yorkshire (*NYT*, 9 Mar 1932). On March 11th her resistance to withdrawal is covered along with her sense of identity as 'half-British' through her Scottish father (*NYT*, 11 Mar 1932).

Press cuttings reveal that having sent Carolinda back to the US at the outbreak of World War II, Hilda who had remained in Europe was presented with female leadership models from her varied networks and made use of her networks for her own informal endeavours. From within the familial kinship her contemporary cousin Ruth Mitchell

stands out as not only did she remain on the continent and she became actively engaged with the Serbian Partisan resistance using a similar social network to gain access to the US government and media.

From Hilda's East Coast progressive elite women's network once again the stand out was 'Daisy' Harriman, who as the serving US Ambassador to Norway during the German Invasion played a role in a successful evacuation of Diplomatic Staff and the Royal Family in 1940 (*Meriden Journal*, 1 Sept 1967). For her part Hilda established the Children of the Fighting Forces using her US networks to attract in varied supplies of toys and clothes, using her husband's mansion as a Northern Depot. In 1941 her work rated a small mention alongside more formal and UK establishment efforts of the Red Cross, Mrs. Churchill and Lady Ward (*The Times*, 4 Jun 1941). This aid work was denoted by *The Times* as either the efforts of formal charities or endeavours of elite women. It is worth noting that it is during this period that Hilda decided to adopt the uniform of the Red Cross whilst maintaining her efforts as informal and separate (Eklund, 1947). Sir Frederick died in the summer of 1942 and Hilda remained UK based until very late 1944, her interests moved on from the just the provision of aid to an informal interest in peace activism.

The incremental exercising of personal informal leadership and / or the release from her second marriage gave Hilda the confidence and unfettered space with which to launch her own campaigning that snowballed over the next decade up to her death in 1957. Informally she travelled the world, attending UN meetings including the inaugural conference, she also meet with government figures in Japan, Austria, the UK, possible the USSR and most certainly in the USA to promote her peace through pen-palling.

Again the indicators are that she used her family networks as the first round of letters emerged from Chester, UK the home of her sister Edith May since the late 1900s

Another big contact for her campaign was California where it was adopted by the State Education system (*The Times*, 4 Apr 1944). The surprise is that the formal California contact was Helen Hefferman, whose recent biography described her as a West Coaster raised working-class woman, the opposite of the dominant manifestation of female social reformer, eastern, upper class elite of which Hilda was part (Weiller, 2001, p.xiii). From the press cutting the networking pathway is opaque, did she use channels through the East Coast elite women or did her uncle William Thorsen, residing in Berkley provide the necessary introductions?

Press-cuttings indicate that by 1953 Hilda, an associate of the elite Progressive-Democratic women's network, was in favour with the incoming Republican administration both of Wisconsin and the Federal government. Whether this was based upon her own reputation having toured many world capitals notching up governmental contacts or was eased by her nephew Kenneth Johnston again is uncertain from the press cuttings. Kenneth's mother and step-father had track records as Wisconsin Republicans but it would be presumptive to say that this garnered Hilda both an invite to the Governors Ball for Eisenhower's Inauguration let alone a guest-ship of the incoming First Couple at the main event (*MwJ*, 2 Mar 1941).

It is worth noting that in regard to Hilda's peace activism at least two regional papers decided to cover her work with national governments under the declaration of 'Little Lady' most likely drawing upon AP material (*Reading Eagle*, *St.Petersburg*

Times, 13 Nov 1949). Equally the coverage of Hilda and Frederick's dispute was one of the few times the Milwaukeean press slipped from a reverential stance.

Conclusions regarding change, continuity, queries and perceptions of elite women's networking in the early Twentieth century

These reconstructed familial and fictive kinships strongly illustrate networks that in general are at ease with the acceptance and use of elite status and progressively use such status in wider settings with more confidence. This evidence thus sits within the wider context of elite women stretching back to the Eighteenth century making use of networking, building upon biological kin, incorporating fictive kin to then deploy relationships to achieve family, social and personal goals.

As this study is reliant upon newspaper cutting there are acknowledged weaknesses yet in combination with family reconstruction they create a valid approach to explore complex and formative biological and fictive kinship patterns in the background of women with access to resources and an ability to garner and handle influence. The active nature of culturally elite kinship network has been identified in the cuttings both as an internal reinforcement of connectedness and also as a means of cultural social enhancement.

The newspapers are a crucial part of the public-institutional framework of industrial societies and it has been illustrated how the ways they reported women's leadership activities and patterns is an important topic in its own right. The cuttings used

are reflective of Schudson's basic premise around objectivity, facts and values with examples of crafted story. But the assemblage of cuttings reflects an enduring interest in a limited number of local families in the Milwaukeean Press is worthy of further examination as to the underlying editorial agenda in a city experiencing rapid social change. Equally a gender issue is brought into the spotlight as the endeavours of elite women in informal settings were treated with limited esteem plummeting to scorn in some cases.

Taken superficially the life arcs of Ethelinda, Hilda and Carolinda as tracked in press cuttings show a great deal of change and elite female advancement over a century of adult life but with the addition of kinship reconstruction a history of continuity becomes more apparent. The cuttings track a changing attitude to education moving from Ethelinda's experience of Higher education as potentially a promotion of marriage prospects, onto Hilda's where it was a formative cultural experience that may have challenged or developed the home based culture. For instance the strong assumption must be that it was the daughter who initiated the Sorbonne period rather than the mother. This passed onto Carolinda as a driver for formal public success. The education arc was echoed inversely in the generational attitudes regarding male and female relationships. Taking Ethelinda at her reported word she was content to subsume any leadership / public identity under her older husband's public role, whereas Hilda's reported life arc offers up layers of contradictions about women's leadership and networking, partly this can be attributed to her not just being dependent on her mother as a key female role model. Stories of the kinships matriarch Miss Martha Reed, Mrs Alexander Mitchell must have

influenced perceptions of female identity as an antithesis of the identity claimed by Ethelinda.

The separation from the family and being embedded in the Vassar culture will also have been impactful as to a positive emphasis on female leadership yet Hilda never showed any inclination to join the formal labour market preferring an informal independent leadership role when she did begin to exercise it. Also like her mother she showed in both her marriages a tendency to defer to the husbands' career leadership although clearly tensions were more than apparent around this. The manifestation of her individual leadership needs to be seen within the light of her many networks. Carolinda a woman on the cusp of Moore's glass ceiling passing cohort marks numerous changes from her mother and grand-mother, whilst like her precedents she married in her mid-twenties, not for her was a subsuming of her career and leadership pursuits. The first marriage was probably over in less than six years as she reverted to her maiden name of Waters.

The application of kinship reconstruction in combination with newspaper clippings has begged additional queries about the backgrounds of elite women in the 1980s as well as the societal trends to which they were subject and influenced. Moore's approach on using father defined class may have been a mistake as evidence presented suggests that the previous generation of mothers had diverse marriage strategies that included moving 'downwards'.

The clustering in politics and voluntary sectors in the 1980s may have had causes other than equal opportunity policies; once again in the previous generation the mothers

had used elite economic opportunities to exercise leadership in those environments albeit in a less formal manifestation, circumventing institutional activity with private wealth.

The deep background research also points to incremental generational developments rather than sudden breakthroughs. It is striking that it is the daughter educated outside of the Vassar golden progressivism that actually applied it to its full rather than the mother who was directly exposed to it. Carolinda was at least the third generation exposed to higher education and part of an 'old girl's network' from childhood both in familial and fictive kinships. Overall the challenge and question may be that the change in female gender elite employment opportunities was more heavily coupled to continuity in elite social class dominance over institutional equality reform. The article has also shown how elite female societal impact is part of a synergy of societal patterns and kinship behaviour through which a single social network became associated with significant socio-economic-political levers both within the city and stretching right up to a national arena.

Finally the press treatment of the various elite women featured in this article stretch the gamut from reverence of the economic-social elite through to the disparagement of female endeavours. Ethelinda's interactions with the paper sit at the crux of this as they either indicate that she was totally naïve, in which case the family would surely have intervened as they did over the finances, or her education and nineteenth century lunches had honed a set of skills which could be deployed for her kinships benefit in the twentieth century.

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