Only Girl Architect Lonely

Susan F. King

Only girl architect lonely. Wanted—to meet all the women architects in Chicago to form a club.

So read Elisabeth Martini's 1921 advertisement in a local newspaper. At that time, she was the only woman architect licensed in private practice in Illinois.[1] Martini was not the first woman to practice architecture in the area, and her want ad underscores an overlooked chapter of Chicago architectural history: women architects practicing and organizing there. Indeed, Martini's want ad led to the organization of the Chicago Women's Drafting Club, which later became the Women's Architectural Club of Chicago (WACC) and then in turn formed the antecedent of Chicago Women in Architecture (CWA), founded in the 1970s and one of the longest-lasting associations of practicing women architects in the nation today.

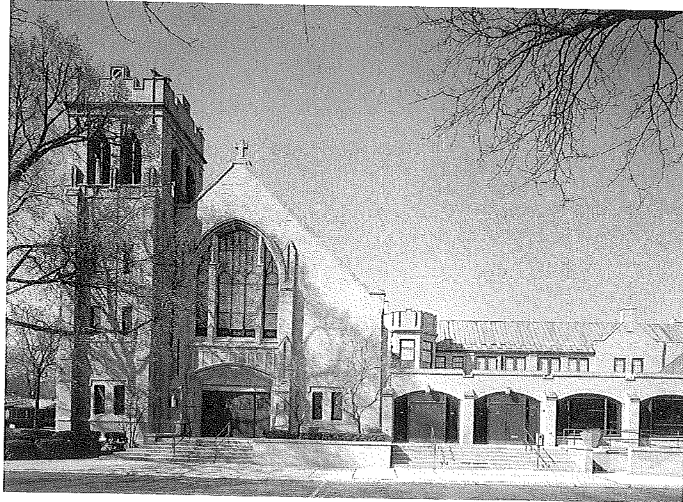
It is possible to piece together Martini's life and work as an architect (figs. 12.1, 12.2)[2] primarily through the organization she formed. What we know of her now has survived mainly in the form of written correspondence with the network of friends that she met through her club and its' "occasional" publication, the *Architrave* (fig. 12.3). Martini received her architectural training at the Pratt Institute of Design in New York in 1908[3] and arrived in Chicago in 1909 to seek a position in an architect's office. Rejected by ninety firms because of her gender,[4] she turned to business school and quickly landed a secretarial job in an architect's office. From this position she worked her way into the drafting room. When Martini sat for her three-day licensing exam in 1913 she was the only woman of the eighty-six applicants, and she became one of the twenty-eight successful candidates.[5] In May 1914 with license in hand, she opened her own office at 64 West Randolph Street in Chicago,[6] the first woman to become a sole proprietor of an architectural firm in the city. Much of her work consisted of residential projects. The professional path she created for herself allowed her to be independent of employment by men, a path that would be followed by many other women architects.

Martini's ability to sustain a productive architectural practice despite her avowed loneliness is emblematic of the cyclical pattern undergone by women in America of alternating progress and backlash.[7] The history of Chicago women architects and their efforts to organize is important for the history of American women architects because it acts as an example of both the opportunities and limitations available to professional women during different historical periods. The transformation of Chicago women architects from isolated individuals to organized groups, presently with a powerful professional and political presence in the city of Chicago,[8] shows that considerable ground can be covered in four generations. Yet the broader historical picture also reminds us how easily that ground can be lost when economic and social conditions reinforce the unequal economic and political power of women within and beyond the architectural

profession. The history of the ebb and flow of the fortunes of women architects as a publicly active and visible force in Chicago architecture is revealed here through two parallel processes: first by their presence in public exhibitions, and second by the formation of women's architectural organizations.

The 1893 Columbian Exposition

Changes in the education of architects during the latter part of the nineteenth century spurred women's entry into the architectural profession. Thirty years prior to Martini's admission to the Pratt Institute, formal training became an added requirement to the traditional apprenticeship system for architects. As a result, women architects began to appear more frequently in the profession. One example is Sophia Hayden, the architect for the Women's Building at the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago.[9] In 1886, she was the first woman to be admitted to the architecture program at MIT (fig. 12.4), and in 1890 she was the first woman to receive its bachelor of architecture, with honors. In 1891, at the urging of some of her friends in Chicago,[10] Hayden entered the competition to design the Women's Building for the upcoming Columbian Exposition, a celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus to be held in Chicago in 1893. According to Jeanne Madeline Weimann, author of *The Fair Women*, "On March 25, 1891, Sophia Hayden received a telegram from Daniel



12.1

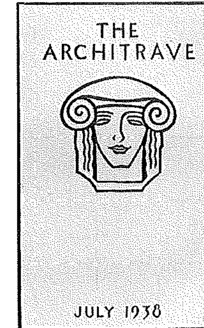
12.2

12.1 Exterior view of Saint Luke's Lutheran Church, Park Ridge, Elisabeth A. Martini, architect of record. This was her largest commission. It included both the Church and a three-story educational building. Courtesy of Anthony May Photography.

12.2 Interior view of Saint Luke's Lutheran Church, Park Ridge, Elisabeth A. Martini, architect of record. Courtesy of Anthony May Photography.

12.3 Cover, *Architrave* (1938), the "occasional" publication of the Women's Architectural Club of Chicago. Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago, 720-5 W872a, vol. 2–3, 1938–42.

12.4 Sophia Hayden, from class photograph at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Courtesy of the MIT Museum.



12.3

Burnham telling her that she had won first place in the competition and that she should come to Chicago for a consultation at the expense of the Fair authorities."[11]

Everything about women's involvement in the Columbian Exposition was controversial, including the creation of the Board of Lady Managers and their ensuing decision to hold a competition to select a woman architect to design the Women's Building. The Board of Lady Managers was a women's organization, but not in the sense of Martini's later club. To start with, the members were appointed by men. The idea for the Board of Lady Managers was the result of both the women's club movement that had swept the country during the nineteenth century and the political effects during this period of the heightened activity of the suffragists. Susan B. Anthony, a suffragist leader, had lobbied in Congress for women's representation at the Columbian Exposition and the creation of a Board of Lady Managers, and ultimately the Women's Building was the result of her struggle. However, the Women's Building and the Board of Lady Managers were not what she intended. Anthony had not called for the segregation of women from men in a separate building of their own but for women to serve on the fair's board along *with men*.[12]

Even if Anthony had wanted to serve on the Board of Lady Managers she would not have been selected; her opinions were too controversial.[13] The board was charged with responsibility for the Women's Building, and the women appointed to the board were wealthy and socially prominent. While they were not considered divisive the way Anthony was, they were powerful enough to reject the male architect previously appointed by Daniel Burnham to design the Women's Building, and to instead conduct a national competition to find a woman architect to do the job. Originally Burnham had chosen Richard Morris Hunt of New York to design the Women's Building. Bertha Palmer, wife of the affluent Potter Palmer, was the elected president of the Board of Lady Managers; considered the queen of Chicago's high society, it was she who objected to Hunt's appointment and requested the competition. Palmer felt that a competent, reputable, qualified woman architect existed and would be discovered through the competition.[14]

12.4

Louise Bethune, the first female member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and considered America's first professional woman architect, was outraged at the very idea of the competition.[15] She had entered the field through the apprenticeship route. It had been her intent to study at Cornell, but just prior to her application in 1876, she was offered a draftsman position with the Buffalo firm of Richard A. Waite.[16] Bethune took the position with Waite in lieu of the academic path typically followed by women wishing to enter the profession of architecture. As a partner in her own firm, also in Buffalo, since 1881, she could have been awarded the contract for the Women's Building based upon her already established reputation. This would have been consistent with the

way in which the other building contracts at the Columbian Exposition were awarded to male architects.[17] Bethune did not compete because she felt it was unethical. She is quoted in the *Inland Architect and News Record* in March 1891 as saying that

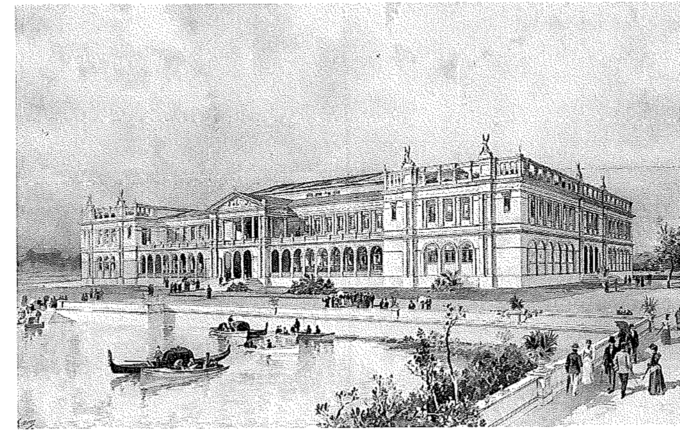
. . . The board desires a woman architect, and the chief of construction has issued a circular inviting competition, notwithstanding the fact that competition is an evil against which the entire profession has striven for years and has now nearly vanquished; it is unfortunate that it should be revived in its most objectionable form on this occasion, by women and for women.[18]

Thirteen women entered the competition and received significant press attention, thus achieving the aim set by the Board of Lady Managers to highlight the existence of women architects. First place went to Sophia Hayden. That a formally educated architect won the competition represents a key shift in the architectural professional generally and for women in particular:

The Exposition found the country Romantic, and left it Classic, and with that change in architectural ideals, schools of architecture automatically assumed a new importance and usefulness. No longer could an architect learn his profession in the drafting room alone. Like Sophia Hayden he must be academically trained; and with Sophia Hayden, he must learn to master the highly technical demands of classic design.[19]

The design of monumental buildings referencing historical forms was at the forefront of an architectural education at MIT. With this training came the watercolor-rendering technique used to capture the imagery of buildings that comprised the Columbian Exposition and would later contribute to its nickname, "the White City" (fig. 12.5). Hayden's thesis design had been a Renaissance museum of fine arts, and with only six weeks in which to prepare her competition sketches, her Women's Building was based on her thesis (fig. 12.6).[20]

Hayden arrived in Chicago in March 1891 with no practical experience in architecture. After graduation, instead of an apprenticeship position with an architectural practice, Hayden had accepted a job teaching mechanical drawing. This fact has been used to prove her level of inexperience concerning the actual construction of buildings. She is slightingly compared with her friend Lois Howe, who had immediately begun practicing architecture upon graduation and had taken second place in the competition.[21] However, Howe, Hayden, and others of this first generation were pioneers, and each had to carve out her own path. It seems harsh to criticize Hayden as inexperienced since in the professional climate of the day it remained difficult for women to obtain work as architects. As Bethune stated at the time, women "meet no serious opposition from the profession nor the public, [but] neither are they warmly welcomed."[22] Sixteen years later, when Martini arrived in Chicago, she too spent months looking for a position in an architectural office and had to take a job teaching mathematics to survive.[23]



12.5

12.6

12.5 Exterior view of the Women's Building, Columbian Exposition, 1893, Sophia Hayden, architect. Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society, ICHi-13864.

12.6 Interior view of the Women's Building, Columbian Exposition, 1893, Sophia Hayden, architect. Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society, ICHi-17136.

The Women's Building was the first building at the exposition to begin construction and the first to be completed.[24] The pressure on Hayden must have been tremendous. Her inexperience makes it probable that she did not realize the difficulty of the task she had undertaken, and she could not have anticipated the personality conflict that appears to have developed between herself and Bertha Palmer. Hayden also indicates in her report to the board that while she knew that she would be required to produce completed construction drawings when she arrived in Chicago, she had not anticipated making major design modifications first and the subsequent negotiations for payment for this additional work. These changes included the addition of a third floor to house a library, an assembly hall, and a rooftop garden. Hayden may not have known that she was paid only one-tenth of the amount the male architects were paid for the design of the other buildings.[25] She received an honorarium of $1,000 plus expenses for her troubles, while it has been estimated that the fee for her completed one-eighth-inch scale working drawings would have been $10,000 (equivalent today to about three hundred thousand dollars)[26] had she been male.[27]

As the construction of the building progressed, much confusion centered on how best to incorporate the numerous international donations by women that were received. Hayden unsuccessfully attempted to contact Palmer regarding this matter, and unfortunately the whole situation took its toll on her. Contemporary sources say that Hayden had a "breakdown" of some sort in Daniel Burnham's office.[28] By this time, Hayden considered the terms under which she had undertaken the work on the Women's Building to be "rather vague,"[29] and in 1894 she wrote that she felt she had been "unduly hurried in the preparation of the drawings."[30] From Enid Yandell, the young artist who sculpted the building's caryatids, and Laura Hayes, Palmer's secretary, we have this description of Hayden:

> It was generally known around the construction department that no one could change by any amount of persuasion, one of her [Sophia's] plans when she was convinced of its beauty or originality. She was always quiet but generally carried her point.[31]

It is possible that Hayden's supposed breakdown was a severe case of her "carrying a point"—at the time, being a forceful young woman was neither common nor respected. Whatever the truth of the matter, and in spite of the success of the Women's Building, Hayden never built again, although she lived until 1953.[32]

The Columbian Exposition had provided international visibility for women architects and empowered women to act as significant architectural patrons. However, the harsh political realities of the building's execution prevented Hayden from becoming a role model for future women architects, and the seemingly idealistic competitive process in fact discouraged Chicago women architects from organizing as a group. As Louise Bethune stated regarding the unequal terms of compensation, "It is an unfortunate precedent to establish just now and it may take years to live down its effects."[33]

The 1933 Century of Progress World's Fair

Forty years after the Columbian Exposition, twelve years after Martini's want ad, six years after the formation of the Women's Architectural Club of Chicago (WACC), and four years after the last of the women's world fairs,[34] the Century of Progress World's Fair took place in 1933. In contrast to the Columbian Exposition, the role of women at this second world's fair is more difficult to evaluate. Ironically, this is in part because women were not segregated within their own building. This is not to say that women did not participate in the Century of Progress World's Fair; however, their presence was "minimal."[35] There was a proposal for a Temple of Womanhood, and there are extant drawings prepared by Burnham Brothers[36] of this building among the Century of

Progress papers in the Special Collections Department of the University of Illinois at Chicago Library. A press release on May 8, 1932, announced that "Women's position in the economic and social world has become too important to be isolated in a Woman's Building. All proposals to erect such a structure have been rejected."[37] Susan B. Anthony finally got her wish.

The presence of women at this fair did not cause the stir it did in 1893 for four main reasons. First, the Depression had intensified competition for jobs and significantly reduced interest in supporting the cause of women. The fair itself had to be self-supporting and had no government funding; in fact, only exhibits that were revenue-generating were included.[38] Second, the theme of the fair, "Science and Industry," was unfortunately not an area of strength for women at this time. Third, lack of strong local leadership led to exclusionary tactics. The National Council of Women (NCW), operating from New York City, manipulated the participation of all women's organizations at the fair to their own organization's benefit and to the detriment of women in general. Finally, although Helen Bennett, a reporter for the *Chicago Record-Herald*, built on her experience as the organizer of the four women's world fairs held in the late 1920s to become a key exhibit organizer for the entire exposition, her involvement with the women's exhibits was minimal.

The NCW exhibit, "One Hundred Years of the Progress of Women, 1833–1933," was displayed in the Hall of Social Sciences. Anthony, who had died in 1906, and Palmer, who had died in 1918, were both honored at the NCW's exhibit, the primary focus of which was a sixty-foot mural created by the artist Hildreth Meiere.[39] In addition to the mural, the exhibit included significant artifacts and memorabilia associated with women's history. Anthony's red shawl was included, and Palmer was represented in the form of a wax mannequin in a collection of historically important women.[40] Originally, the women's exhibit was to be a collaborative effort of women's organizations everywhere. Each participating organization was to be given space to display their history and progress. After a year of planning in this direction, the NCW abruptly and unilaterally decided on the unified mural concept. This action led to further infighting among the groups, and some key organizations withdrew.[41]

Martini's reformed club, the WACC, was five years old by then and had gained exhibition experience by participating in previous women's world fairs and by mounting annual exhibits of their own members' works, participated in the Century of Progress World's Fair by sponsoring an international exhibition on the work of women in architecture and the allied arts.[42] WACC was able to work in isolation from the exhibit of the NCW because its exhibit was "technical" in nature, and the NCW's control extended only over those

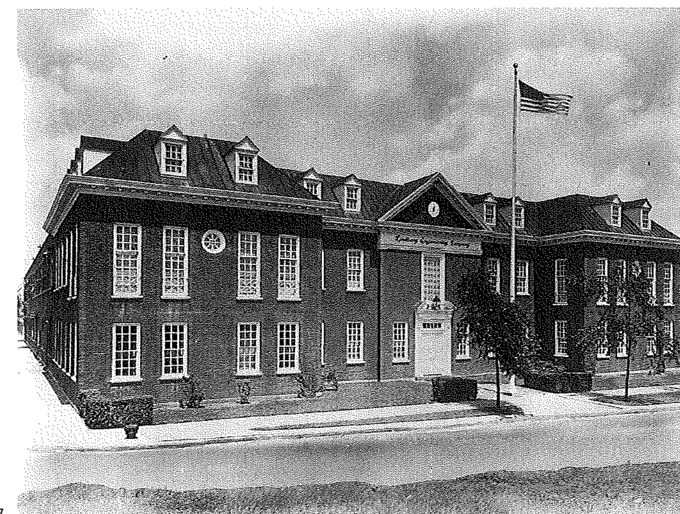
women's organizations that wanted to exhibit their own histories. The WACC exhibit, displayed in the General Exhibits Building, included one hundred entries from women architects all over the world. WACC actually expanded the size of its exhibit and also furnished a women's lounge at the request of the Century of Progress Administration.

The Scheid Residence, designed by WACC member Bertha Yerex Whitman, had won a contest sponsored by *Better Homes* magazine in 1931, and it was probably displayed as part of the WACC exhibit.[43] The written descriptions found in the *Architrave* and in the correspondence between the fair administration and the WACC organization provide the only documentation of the WACC exhibition; no visual record survives. While brochures often accompanied the exhibits, it appears that one was not prepared for the WACC exhibit, most likely due to lack of funding. As mentioned earlier, all exhibits had to be financially self-supporting and, ideally, profit-generating. Economic disempowerment and political dissention therefore combined to weaken women architects' presence at the fair, even as women architects in Chicago were already organized into a coherent and forward-looking organization.

Women's Architectural Club of Chicago

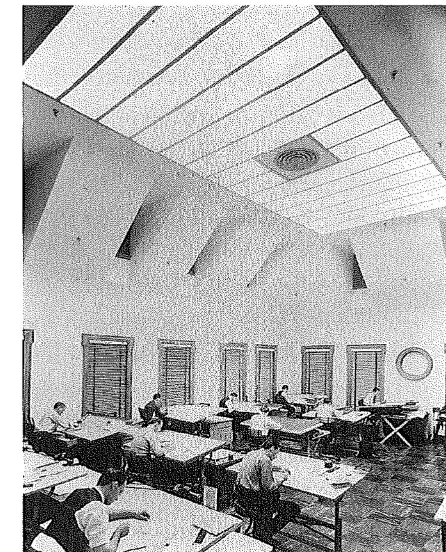
The Chicago Women's Drafting Club of 1921 is recognized today by active women's architectural organizations and historians as the earliest organization of practicing women architects in the United States. By the time she wrote her want ad in 1921, Martini had truly been an "Only Girl Architect" for almost a decade. While the Women's Drafting Club, the direct consequence of her ad, only lasted two years, in 1927 local women architects reorganized as the Women's Architectural Club of Chicago (WACC). This second attempt was a result of interest spurred by the series of women's world fairs held in Chicago annually from 1925 to 1928, organized by the previously mentioned Helen Bennett. WACC would sustain itself until the early 1940s.[44] Martini remained a member even after she relocated to Bangor, Michigan, in the early 1930s.

It is worth noting the formation of a student group during this period called Alpha Alpha Gamma (Auksases architektonis meta gunaikum, Greek for the advancement of architecture among women). This organization of women architectural students from Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis was formed in 1917.[45] This organization of women students, active in architecture, unfortunately operated in relative isolation from the professional organization of WACC. Ruth Perkins, another practicing architect who had responded to Martini's 1921 ad[46] and later authored the 1938 Historic Overview portion of the *Architrave*, stated, "This Club [WACC] was then [at its formalization in 1927] and is now so far as it is possible to ascertain, the only organization of women architects in the United States, except for a college sorority or two."[47]



12.7 The offices for Lindberg Engineering at 2450 Hubbard Street, Chicago. The most significant work of WACC's last president, Mary Ann Crawford. Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society, ICHi-13864.

12.8 Detail of entry to the Lindberg Engineering Offices, Mary Ann Crawford in the foreground. Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society, ICHi-35828.



12.9 Interior view of the drafting room at the Lindberg Engineering Offices. While the exterior of the building gives a residential impression, the two-story volume of the drafting room projects a modern attitude through the incorporation of what were considered state-of-the-art lighting and mechanical systems. Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society, ICHi-35829.

Sometime during the 1940s WACC itself lost steam. Architect and engineer Mary Ann Crawford was the last known president of the organization, and the last *Architrave* on record is from 1942, the same year she served as president. Crawford was another MIT graduate and received her architecture degree in 1930. It took Crawford eleven years to acquire enough work experience to sit for her licensing exam, which she passed in 1941. In 1943, she also became registered as an engineer.[48] By combining these two professions, Crawford was uniquely poised for the technological revolution that swept the profession in the 1950s and '60s. Crawford's most significant work is the offices for Lindberg Engineering at 2450 Hubbard Street (figs. 12.7, 12.8, and 12.9).

Lack of interest in this type of organization for women was consistent with the post–World War II trend of women leaving the workforce as men returned from war. According to Perkins, who practiced as an architect with Bertram Weber for twenty-five years,[49] even by the time of the 1933 World's Fair most of the women architects in the group had lost their jobs and were no longer practicing architecture. If it was difficult for women to find work under normal economic conditions, the Great Depression compounded the situation, and yet this was the period in which the Women's Architectural Club of

Chicago appears to have been most solid and active. Organizations such as the Society of Women Engineers, which Crawford chaired in the 1950s, remained active after World War II. Possibly through Crawford's efforts, WACC was "persuaded to join with some women engineers and merge into a Women's Division of The Western Society of Engineers." Perkins felt that this was "a disaster as far as our identities as women and as architects were concerned—and soon most of the architects withdrew."[50] The days of WACC were numbered.

Chicago Women in Architecture

Just as Martini represents the second generation, architect Gertrude Lempp Kerbis's career is emblematic of the fourth generation of women architects in Chicago. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, theoretical modernist quests were underway in the large Chicago firms. Project designers such as Kerbis, working in modernist firms like Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) and Murphy Naess, were searching for the perfectly square steel-framed building and the longest spans. According to local architect Jack Hartray, these quests went beyond firm loyalty, and the designers would meet in the evenings to share their progress. In the end, "Gertrude Kerbis proved to be the most macho of them all, not once, but twice."[51] Hartray was referring to the long span at the Dining Hall for the Air Force Academy in Colorado she designed for SOM in 1958, and to the perfect circular plan at O'Hare's Seven Continents Restaurant which she designed for Murphy Naess in 1963. Yet in 1967, after more then a decade of producing award-winning projects, Kerbis felt she was passed over for the position of designer for the McCormick Place project. At this point, she abandoned the politics and corporate culture of large architectural firms and opened her own practice, Lempp Kerbis Architects. While this action cleared away one set of gender-related issues, another set soon took its place. In a world that was barely ready to employ and promote women as architects, the struggle to obtain the type of client and project she desired as a business owner intensified.[52]

An echo of Martini's call was heard in Chicago when in the winter months of 1973–74 Kerbis "sent out a little note" to all of the women architects that she knew and their friends.[53] Kerbis had no knowledge of the ad that Martini ran in 1921 or of the clubs that had previously existed.[54] The note she sent was an invitation for all of these women to come to her small office on Michigan Avenue. The result was a gathering of more than twenty women, and the first meeting of Chicago Women in Architecture (CWA). While the WACC of the 1920s and '30s had officers like a typical men's club, Kerbis describes the initial CWA group as more a "forum" than an organization.[55] CWA existed without a formal "leader" or president for almost five years. If Martini's club represents the first phase of women's architectural organizations, then Kerbis's represents the second phase. When Kerbis speaks of CWA in her oral history, she discusses the fifth generation of women architects in Chicago as "[t]he next generation, the women who were ten, fifteen, or twenty years younger than me, . . . they became much more effective. But we had to go through this informal process before we got to the formal thing."[56] In 1978, when CWA elected to celebrate its fifth anniversary, the group decided to apply for a grant to assist with funding an exhibition. It was this process that forced CWA to conform to a more traditional format for organizations: in order to apply for the grant, the group was required to have officers. Architect Carol Ross Barney, a representative of this fifth generation and currently a principal of the Chicago firm Ross Barney + Jankowski, was a project designer at the offices of Holabird & Root at the time and was heavily involved with organizing the exhibit. She then became the first president of the group.[57] The grant was accepted, and CWA presented its first exhibit of members' work, Chicago Women in Architecture: Contemporary Directions. It coincided with a national touring exhibit, Women in American Architecture, curated by architect Susana Torre.[58]

CWA differs from WACC in ways that show that progress for women, however slow, has occurred. CWA's membership has always spanned the professional generations, simultaneously focusing energy on female students from the three major universities in the Chicago area while holding onto the founders as honorary members. The end result has been an organization that as it enters its thirtieth year has a diverse membership in terms of experience and staying power. As CWA has grown over the years it has become a mainstay of the Chicago architectural scene. Yet not unlike the WACC of the 1920s and '30s, CWA has had its own ebbs and flows. Its activities increased when opportunities arose, such as local AIA conventions or moments the organization created for itself, beginning with the fifth anniversary and continuing with major events and exhibits at each five-year milestone (1978, 1983, 1988, 1993, and 1998).

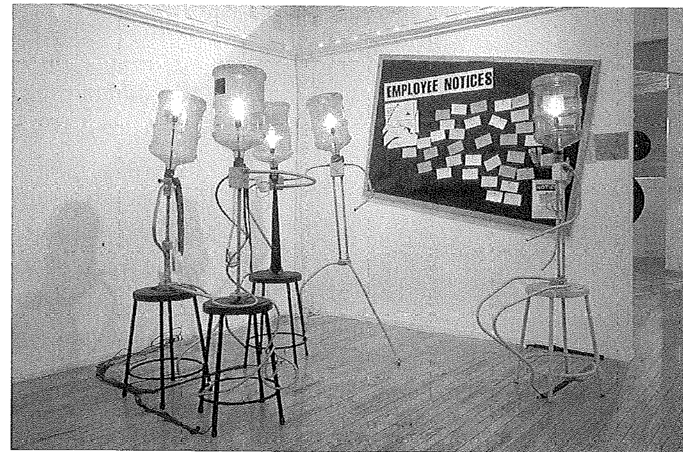
Of particular interest is the formation of a splinter group called CARY (short for CARYATIDS or Chicks in Architecture Refuse to Yield to Atavistic Thinking in Design and Society) in the early nineties to address the issues of women architects from a more controversial standpoint. Several of the CARY members were CWA members,[59] and CARY was a task force formed for the purpose of producing an exhibit addressing the issues of women in architecture. CARY's formation can be seen as indicative of the mainstream success of the CWA parent group, which had reached a plateau from which smaller groups could spring.

CARY's plan was to mount the exhibit during the national AIA convention held in Chicago in 1993. The multimedia exhibit, entitled "More than the Sum of Our Body

Parts," was the brainchild of three practicing architects, Carol Crandall, Sally Levine and Kay Janis. It was controversial almost from its inception. The intent of the exhibit was to educate the public about the fact that sexism and discrimination were very much alive in the profession of architecture. During the prosperity of the early 1980s, a veneer of equality for women was established, but when the recession hit, women architects seemed to be among the first laid off.[60] Little had changed since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Anger at this situation fueled the CARY group. Also, the exhibit was conceived during the appointment of Susan Maxman to the office of president of the national AIA, the first woman elected to this position. There was frustration on the part of many professional women, especially in Chicago, who felt that Maxman would not take up the feminist cause against the still-existent inequities between the genders in the profession.[61]

Initially CARY hoped that the exhibit could be mounted at the Chicago Cultural Center, one of the locations for the AIA convention activities. For months CARY was unable to obtain a commitment to a space for the exhibit there. Undaunted, CARY found a home at the Randolph Street Gallery and opened the exhibition with marked success. One of the vignettes, titled *There Were Three Professionals in a Boat . . .*, compared the position of women in architecture to that of women in medicine and law (fig. 12.10). Specifically, the exhibit illuminated the slowness with

12.10



12.11

12.10 *There Were Three Professionals in a Boat,* vignette from the CARY exhibition, Chicago, 1993. Courtesy of Carol Crandall.

12.11 *Water Cooler Wisdom,* a vignette from the CARY exhibition, 1993. In addition to a tape whose script contained inappropriate comments made to women architects by their male coworkers, this display involved a bulletin board on which women could pin up their own encounters with sexist language and attitudes. Courtesy of Carol Crandall.

which the AIA had addressed issues of pay equity, maternity and family leave, and sexual harassment as compared with law (American Bar Association) and medicine (American Medical Association). Humor was a key component to opening a dialog between the sexes. Another favorite was entitled *Water Cooler Wisdom,* which included a talking water cooler, whose script was a tape of actual comments made by male architects to their female coworkers, not twenty or thirty years ago but in the preceding five years (fig. 12.11). The display pointed out that this behavior was in "flagrant violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the AIA Code of Ethics."[62] The exhibit set records in attendance for the Randolph Street Gallery during its two-week time period, and AIA conventioneers were part of the audience. Perhaps more importantly an audience of younger women also attended. Indeed, while CARY disbanded after the exhibit, CWA benefited from its association with CARY by increased membership from women in the next generation who had attended the exhibit.

Today, CWA is credited with supporting and sustaining female leaders in Chicago architecture. The list of past CWA presidents and founding members is a Who's Who of women practicing architecture in the Chicago area. These include Carol Ross Barney, FAIA, principal of Ross Barney + Jankowski; Cynthia Weese, FAIA, dean of the School of Architecture at Washington University and principal of Weese, Langley, Weese; and Linda Searl, FAIA, principal of Searl and Associates and vice chairperson of the Chicago Plan Commission, among others.

CWA has also served an important historical role in recording the work of local women through its five-year anniversaries and its archive at the Chicago Historical Society. A current project in collaboration with the Illinois Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (INOMA) consists of the documentation of Chicago architecture by women and minority architects. The CWA newsletter, the *Muse,* is also an important resource for collating the histories of Chicago women architects as well as the histories of women architects both nationally and internationally. The invitation to speak at the CWA annual brunch has become a coveted honor for both local and national women architects. A lecture series initiated during the twenty-fifth year continues as a forum for promoting the work of women both locally and nationally.

Even as the number of women practicing architecture has radically increased and women are given more opportunities to practice and recognition for their contributions, women still only comprise 19 percent of total professional architectural staff, and only 11 percent of licenced members of the AIA.[63] It is through organizations like CWA that much of women's work in the field continues to be documented. While the 1970s wit-

nessed a burst of interest in the subject, the effort to document and record the history of American women architects, which was spearheaded by Torre in her position as cofounder and coordinator of the first national Archive of Women in Architecture at the Architectural League of New York, has not been surpassed or even maintained.

Indeed, the Architectural League's Archive of Women in Architecture is not, at the time of the writing of this essay, an active archive.[64] The history of women in American architecture is now almost as hard to access as it was thirty years ago. The AIA began to collect gender and racial demographic data in 1983, very late compared with other professions. The importance of these statistical records to tracking the progress of diversity in any profession cannot be overstated.[65] As architects place more emphasis on diversity, the ability of organizations like CWA to record the otherwise unrecoverable early histories of women architects and their organizations takes on increased significance. Awareness of the longevity and persistence of women architects, not only as individual practitioners but also as a continuing collective presence, continues to be an inspiration in Chicago and beyond. Yet, the tale of Chicago women architects is also a cautionary one. While the long perspective affirms the power of women architects to organize and succeed, it also reveals the ground still to be covered in restructuring the profession for women architects to participate equally. As this change occurs the need for women's organizations may diminish, as women architects themselves are able to more easily realize their own histories.

37. Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966); Rosalind E. Krauss's famous essay on grids in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985); and the study of Mies by Juan Pablo Bonta, *Architecture and Its Interpretation: A Study of Expressive Systems in Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1979).

38. Eric Hodgins, *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*, first published in 1946 with acknowledgement to the designer George Nelson, who was then working on Architectural Forum. It was made into a film in 1948.

39. Mies was the subject of a profile in *Life* magazine in 1953. See Windhorst transcript.

Chapter 9

From 1991 to 1992, Janet Abrams lived at 880 Lake Shore Drive while working as director of the Chicago Institute for Architecture and Urbanism. She recalls living in apartment 22A as the most enjoyable part of that experience.

Chapter 10

The author wishes to thank the Chicago Historical Society and the Richard M. Daley Library at the University of Illinois at Chicago for their assistance, and Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, Illinois, and Christopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica, California.

1. The building was built in 1922 as designed by Theodore Steuben, architect. During the 1950s the Chicago Pure Milk Co. occupied the street-level storefront space.

Chapter 12

The completion of my essay "Only Girl Architect, Lonely," would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of many people. I thank Anthony May, for his patience and his photgraphic talents, Carol Crandall for reading and commenting on early drafts and providing images of the CARY exhibit, Lisa Kulisek for her reading of later drafts and providing the encouragement I needed to finish it, Katerina Rüedi Ray, my editor, for her patience and guidance, Environ Harley Ellis, my current employer, for their support, and lastly but of no less importance, the staff at the Architectural League of New York, specifically, Director Rosalie Gennevro and her assistant Rose Evans, for allowing me special access to the inactive archive on Women in American Architecture. This access practically doubled the amount of information I had been able to gather on Elisabeth Martini.

1. *Architrave* 2, no. 1 (July 1938): 1. The *Architrave* was a pamphlet occasionally published by the Women's Architectural Club of Chicago. The only surviving copies can be found at the Burnham Library, Art Institute of Chicago. The Martini story is also told in Doris Cole, "From Tipi to Skyscraper: A History of Women in Architecture," first published in 1973 and reprinted in *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Susana Torre (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977), 88.

2. The Single Family Residence at 5637 North Newcastle Avenue, Norwood Park, was included, along with 17,300 other properties that are "considered to have some historic or architectural importance," in the *Chicago Historic Resources Survey* completed in 1996. Construction began in 1926, and Elisabeth A. (E. A.) Martini is credited as the architect. Martini is also the architect of record of Saint Luke's Lutheran Church in Park Ridge, Illinois, at 205 North Prospect Avenue. Martini stated in a letter to the AWA, dated November 12, 1974, that this church was her largest project. *Architrave* 3 (January 1942): 15, indicates that Martini left the Chicago area in 1932 and as far as is possible to tell she lived and continued to practice architecture in Bangor, Michigan, until 1961 when she officially retired and relocated once again to Uplands Retirement Center in Crossville, Tennessee. Attempts to contact local historical societies (Hartford Historical Society, as

Bangor does not have one) in Michigan regarding any further information on Martini have to date been unsuccessful.

3. Terry Tatum, director of almuni relations, Pratt Institute of Design, letter to author dated April 2002.

4. Hazel Ker, "South Haven Woman Top Architect," *News-Palladium* [Benton Harbor, Michigan], October 1954; and Marie Carney, "Profiles," *Cumberland County Times* [Crossville, Tennessee] October 6, 1971.

5. S. M. Franklin, "Elisabeth Martini, Architect," *Life and Labor* (February 1914): 235–36.

6. Office address for E. A. Martini listed on permit for the Norwood Park residence, for which Martini was architect of record.

7. Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1991), 50.

8. Gertrude Lempp Kerbis, FAIA, and founder of Chicago Women in Architecture (CWA), was the first woman architect to serve as local chapter president of the AIA in 1980. Linda Searl, FAIA, currently serves as vice chair of the Plan Commission and is a member of the Chicago Central Area Plan Steering Committee. Searl honed her leadership skills as a past president of the local chapters of both the AIA and CWA.

9. Other early examples include Marion Mahony Griffin and Julia Morgan. It was naturally young women of affluence who would first be able to take advantage of this opportunity to enter the architectural profession through the academy. Morgan is probably the best example of this first generation of American professional women architects. Morgan led a prolific career in northern California after being the first woman in the world to graduate from the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1902. In Illinois, the somewhat-famous Frank Lloyd Wright collaborator, Mahony Griffin, would become the first woman licensed in the state in 1897. By the time Martini would begin to seek out other women architects, Mahony Griffin had left the area for Australia with her second major collaborator, her husband Walter Burley Griffin. For more on Mahony Griffen, see chapter 14 in this volume.

10. Jeanne Madeline Weimann, *The Fair Women* (Chicago: Academy: Chicago, 1981), 150.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 36.

13. Ibid., 31.

14. Ibid., 144.

15. Pamela Hill, "Ladies of the Corridor Series: Louise Bethune," *Muse* (September–October 1996), Chicago Women in Architecture bimonthly publication.

16. Ibid.

17. Weimann, *The Fair Women*, 142.

18. Louise Bethune, "Women and Architecture," *Inland Architect and News Record* (March 1891): 21.

19. Madeleine B. Stern, *We the Women: Career Firsts of Nineteenth-Century America* (University of Nebraska Press, 1962), 76.

20. Weimann, *The Fair Women*, 148.

21. Even Weimann claims that "it was not a particularly good sign that she had chosen to become a teacher of mechanical drawing rather than apply her degree to actual architectural work, as Lois Howe had done with less training" (ibid., 151–52). Third prize went to Laura Hayes, Bertha Palmer's secretary, who had no formal training except apparently in knowing Mrs. Palmer's personal stylistic tastes (149).

22. Bethune, "Women and Architecture," 20.

23. Franklin, Elisabeth Martini, Architect."

24. Weimann, *The Fair Women*, 153.

25. Ibid., 151–52.

26. Erik Larson, *The Devil in the White City* (New York: Crown, 2003), 84.

27. Bethune, "Women and Architecture," 21.

28. Stern, *We the Women*, 74 (implying melancholia); and Weimann, *The Fair Women*," 177 (suggesting brain fever).

29. Dolores Hayden, "Sophia Hayden," in *Notable American Women: The Modern Period: A Biographical Dictionary*, ed. Barbara Sicherman and Carol Hurd Green (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1980), 323.

30. Ibid.

31. Weimann, *The Fair Women*, 153.

32. Hayden, "Sophia Hayden," 323.

33. Bethune, "Women and Architecture," 21.

34. The Women's World Fairs were a series of fairs held in Chicago each year beginning in 1925 and ending in 1928. More than 200,000 people visited the first fair in 1925, which included over one hundred exhibitions of women in business. The first fair netted $50,000. Each of the three fairs was larger than the previous year's, according to the obituary of Helen Bennett, who was their organizer. See Bennett's obituary, clipping folder, "Expositions: Women's World Fair. First," Chicago Historical Society.

35. Marilyn Domer, "The Role of Women in Chicago's World's Fairs: From the Sublime to the Sensuous," in *1992 World's Fair Forum Papers*, vol. 2 (Evanston: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University), 9.

36. After the death of Daniel Burnham, his sons formed an architectural practice called the Burnham Brothers in Chicago.

37. Domer, "The Role of Women," 23.

38. Ibid., 13.

39. *Women through the Century: A Souvenir of the National Council of Women Exhibit* (New York: National Council of Women of the United States).

40. Weimann, *The Fair Women*, 598.

41. Domer, "The Role of Women," 23.

42. *Architrave*, 1–2.

43. While sources on Whitman often cite the importance of the inclusion of her work at the Century of Progress World's Fair, unfortunately the Scheid Residence is not to be found in the brochure that accompanied the exhibit Houses of Tomorrow at the Home Planning Hall. All of the architects credited with the designs for the eleven houses in the brochure were men. Whitman was also a member and officer of the Women's Architectural Club of Chicago. Her experience with architectural education suggests that being admitted to a university and being welcomed were, at that time, not the same. According to Rita Rice in an article in the *Chicago Tribune*, September 27, 1974, titled "Architect Designs Her Own Life," when Whitman applied to the Architecture Department at the University of Michigan in 1914, she was told by the dean that "We don't want you, but since the school is coeducational and state owned, we have to take you if you insist." Whitman's determination to do what she loved, architecture, which she viewed as a combination of mathematics and art, would carry her through an inspirational career spanning over fifty years. Unlike Martini, Whitman not only carefully documented her work that, like Martini's, was pri-

marily residential, but also deposited her projects in several institutions. She recognized the historic value of her struggle to work as a woman architect in the early part of the twentieth century and that she could serve as a role model to other young women. There are at least fifty houses designed by Whitman in Evanston, Illinois, primarily examples of Tudor and Colonial revivalism. These were styles that she enjoyed and that her clients desired; they were also reflective of her training at the University of Michigan—like MIT and most architectural programs at this time, highly influenced by École des Beaux Arts methodology. Whitman's work was certainly not avant-garde. She is quoted in her 1984 obituary as saying "I'm not Shakespeare or Frank Lloyd Wright, but I enjoy what I do, and I enjoy showing men that we women are just as good as they are in whatever we do."

44. *Architrave* 2, no. 1.

45. This organization of women architectural students from Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis was formed in 1917. See *Overview of Women Groups of Architects*, 1, a pamphlet published by the Association of Women in Architecture to accompany membership invitations, 1960. Predating Martini's Club by four years, by 1922 this group, in contrast to the Chicago Women's Drafting Club, was growing stronger, with chapters in Texas and California as well as the two in the Midwest. It held a convention in St. Louis in 1922 and established itself as a national sorority for women architecture students. Over the next decade, the alumnae began to outnumber the students, and in 1934 the alumnae formed a sister organization of professionals called the Association of Women in Architecture (AWA). The AWA continues to exist today through its Los Angeles chapter, with a membership of around two hundred women architects from that area and members at large throughout the country. See under "'Historical Note," at the Association for Women in Architecture Records at the International Archive for Women Architects (IAWA) Web site: http://spec.lib.vt.edu/IAWA/inventories/awa.htm, accessed April 7, 2002.

46. Ruth, letter to the Archive of Women in Architecture, Architectural League of New York, dated October 25, 1974. Perkins also states, "As you no doubt realize, our main concern was to earn our livings rather than to make history, but we were in fact trailblazers and I must say that I enjoyed every minute of it."

47. *Architrave* 2, no. 1.

48. "Oral History of Mary Ann Elizabeth Crawford," interviewed by Betty J. Blum, Art Institute of Chicago Oral History Project: Mary Ann Elizabeth Crawford, biographical summary, May 17, 1983. Available at http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/dept_architecture/crawford.html.

49. Ruth Perkins, letter to the Archive of Women in Architecture dated January 30, 1975. Perkins goes on to state that in working with Weber she "performed every architectural service from interviewing clients through making full-size details. I did not supervise construction. The large houses that I did for Mr. Weber are located in every North-shore suburb of Chicago."

50. Ruth Perkins, letter to the Archive of Women in Architecture, Architectural League of New York, October 25, 1974.

51. Jack Hartray, conversation with the author, May 2, 2002.

52. Susan King, "Getrude Kerbis," *A Creative Constellation: Chicago Women in Architecture; Celebrating Twenty-Five Years* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1999), 123.

53. Blum, interview, 123.

54. Gertrude Lempp Kerbis, telephone conversation with the author, May 3, 2002.

55. "Oral History of Gertrude Lempp Kerbis," interviewed by Betty J. Blum, Art Institute of Chicago Oral History Project, May and June 1996. Available at http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/dept_architecture/kerbis.html.

56. Ibid., 124.

57. Information from Oral Stories told by founding member Carol Ross Barney in September 1999 at the CWA Member's Reception.

58. Torre is a self-described feminist. In 1977, she served as project director for the exhibit, Women in Architecture, which opened at the Brooklyn Museum and then toured around the United States. She also edited and wrote the introduction and several parts of the book, *American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, which accompanied the exhibition and continues to serve today as an invaluable resource of the history of women in American architecture.

Having received her architectural diploma from the University of Buenos Aires, she went on to study urban planning there and at Columbia University in New York. She has lived in the United States since 1968 and has held several top academic positions with architectural programs. Of particular note is her brief directorship for the graduate art program at Cranbrook Art Academy, a leading private school where top positions were once held exclusively by men.

Having served on the Board of Advisors for the International Archive of Women in Architecture from 1985 to 1995, today, Torre is an honorary member. It is rather ironic that she didn't bring the two archives together. See http://architecture.about.com/library/bl-torre.htm?terms=Torre (accessed February 22, 2004).

59. Other CARY members included, among others, Janet Abrams, Anita Ambriz, Ellen Browning, Susan Budinsky, Carol Crandall, Jason Feldman, Roberta Feldman, Bonnie Humphrey, Kay Janis, Sally Levine, Kathryn Quinn, John Ritzu, John Scully, and Amy Yurko.

60. Carol Crandall, *More than the Sum of Our Body Parts*, exhibition catalog (Chicago: CARY, 1993), 1.

61. It is not my intent to discredit Maxman's achievements in any way. Historically, Maxman's role in the AIA will be viewed as Bertha Palmer's role in the Columbian Exposition is viewed now. was a hundred years previously. The position of the AIA national president at that time required a noncontroversial woman. Unfortunately, to date her achievement has not been surpassed, as no other women have yet to serve as AIA national president.

62. *More than the Sum of Our Body Parts*, 34.

63. According to an AIA member firms survey in 1997, 19 percent of AIA members were women, but only 10 percent were licensed architects and 31 percent were interns. Current information (2004) provided by the AIA indicates that of their licensed members, 11 percent are women, and of their associate members, 33 percent are women. However, there is no update on the total percentage of women members (regardless of level). Therefore it is difficult to discern the progress of women in the AIA in the past seven years.

64. The author was given special permission to access the archive in June 2002 for the purposes of this essay and is grateful to the Architectural League of New York for this opportunity. After my visit, the league was pleased to inform me that the archive would be submitted to the International Archive for Women Architects (IAWA), maintained by the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). In this new location the archive will be more accessible to the public.

65. Kathryn H. Anthony, Designing for Diversity: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Architectural Profession (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 181.