MARY JULIA WORKMAN: CATHOLIC PROGRESSIVISM IN LOS ANGELES (1900-1920)

Jose Castro

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd

Part of the Catholic Studies Commons, Civic and Community Engagement Commons, Disability Studies Commons, History of Religion Commons, Other History Commons, Social History Commons, Social Justice Commons, Social Work Commons, Sociology of Religion Commons, United States History Commons, Women's History Commons, Women's Studies Commons, and the Work, Economy and Organizations Commons

Recommended Citation

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Graduate Studies at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.
MARY JULIA WORKMAN:
CATHOLIC PROGRESSIVISM IN LOS ANGELES (1900-1920)

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
History

by
Jose Castro
May 2022
MARY JULIA WORKMAN:
CATHOLIC PROGRESSIVISM IN LOS ANGELES (1900-1920)

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
Jose Castro
May 2022
Approved by:

Dr. Michael Karp, Committee Chair, History
Dr. Daisy Ocampo, Committee Member
ABSTRACT

Mary Julia Workman was a social activist in the early twentieth century. She was the founder of the Brownson Settlement House in Los Angeles. By the 1900s, during the Progressive Era, Mary Julia Workman, a Catholic activist, led a group of women to help the immigrants that were segregated and discriminated against in the growing city of Los Angeles. Although Catholic activism was influenced by the Protestant Progressive ideology, Mary Julia Workman provided social justice to the marginalized. Her Americanization methodology would be focused to learn from foreign culture and adapt it to our society. Meanwhile, the Americanization efforts promoted by conservative and nationalist religious groups in the immigrant communities brought antagonism, racism, and discrimination in the community. Mary Julia Workman had to leave her position as president of Brownson House due to the religious bureaucracy at the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deepest gratitude to my advisor Dr. Michael Karp who supported my thesis research from the beginning.

I would like to thank Father Michael Engh, S.J, for his unwavering support, endless encouragement, and advice during my research.

I want to thank to Dr. Jeremy Murray for his words of wisdom and support.

I want to express my appreciation to the faculty and staff of the History Department at California State University in San Bernardino.

To Paul Spitzzeri and Workman-Temple Homestead Museum friends. Thank you for teaching me the value of our local history.

Special thanks to Loyola Marymount University for providing access to the Archives of William H. Hannon Library.

I am indebted to many people for their help, support, and encouragement. I could not have finished writing my thesis without the support friends, classmates, and professors in CSUSB.
DEDICATION

To my mother, Aurelia Padilla, her support, and love gave me strength to finish this research.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.......................................................................................................................... iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS. ....................................................................................................... iv

LIST OF FIGURES.............................................................................................................. viii

INTRODUCTION.................................................................................................................... 1

  Methodology...................................................................................................................... 5

  Literature Review............................................................................................................. 6

CHAPTER ONE: MARY JULIA WORKMAN BACKGROUND

  The City Pioneers: Workman-Boyle Family................................................................. 15

  Brief History of Young Mary Julia Workman............................................................ 23

CHAPTER TWO: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

  1850-1870: Social Changes in the Town of Los Angeles................................. 34

  From 1870 to 1890: Industrialization and Expansion ........................................ 44

  Progressive Era and The Settlement House Movement .................................. 49

  Being a Catholic in America ..................................................................................... 57

CHAPTER THREE: BROWNSON SETTLEMENT HOUSE

  Catholic Progressivism in Los Angeles ................................................................. 65

  Kindergarten Teacher ............................................................................................... 76

  Clinics for Immigrants and Disabled Children.................................................... 83

  About Social Justice ................................................................................................ 93

CHAPTER FOUR: AMERICANIZATION DURING THE PROGRESSIVE ERA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mary Julia Workman. Circa 1918</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mary Julia’s Scrapbook Collection</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mary Julia Workman. Circa 1873</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Boyle, Elizabeth, Mary Julia, and William Jr.</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mary Julia Workman at the Academy of Our Lady of Sacred Heart. Circa 1890</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mary Julia Workman Diploma</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mary Julia Workman. Circa 1885</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Greater Los Angeles News Magazine</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bishop Thomas Conaty. Circa 1903</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Boyle Heights Welcomes Cable Railway, 1879</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mary Julia at College Settlement House</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mary Julia Workman Diploma of Graduation</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Brownson House Settlement Yearbook</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Brownson House Volunteers, Nurses and Doctors. Circa 1916</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Children With Newspapers in Sonoratown</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Brownson Settlement House Association</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Volunteer at the Brownson House</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mary Julia Workman Postcard. Dated 1915</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Municipal Charities Commission Report</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Los Angeles is one of the largest and most important cities in the United States. Immigration shaped demographics in the city and created a multi-cultural society with religious diversity. During the Progressive Era in the first decades of the twentieth century, middle-class women led much of the political and social activism occurring throughout the country. One activist with Progressive influence was Mary Julia Workman, who founded and led the Brownson Settlement House from 1901 to 1920.

I first learned about Mary Julia Workman while working at the Homestead Workman Museum in the City of Industry. She was the granddaughter of David Workman, brother of William Workman, one of the owners of Rancho La Puente. Aside from two articles written by Michael Engh about Mary Julia Workman that were published in the mid-1990s, there was a lack of information about her activism and the social work she undertook.

As a social activist in the early twentieth century and founder of the Brownson Settlement House in Los Angeles, Mary Julia Workman dedicated herself to promote social justice to immigrants from different nationalities, mainly from Mexico. Contrary to the Progressive rhetoric of the time, where there was a rejection of immigrants, Catholics, and Mexicans, Workman helped these families in the poor neighborhoods of Los Angeles. Sponsored by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and with influence from the city's middle and upper classes, Workman
supported and maintained the Brownson House for almost twenty years. While the Protestant settlement houses worked with the social gospel, Mary Julia Workman promoted social justice to all the people in the community, regardless of their race and religion. The Brownson Settlement House was a secular home for any religious group like Protestants, Jews, or Catholics. Yet, by 1920, the clerical bureaucracy removed her from the presidency, and they began to make changes, such as centralization of religious institutions, charities, and Americanization programs. Mary Julia Workman did not agree with these changes, most of which were instituted by Bishop John J. Cantwell. She decided to leave her job as president of Brownson Settlement House because the new administration lacked humanism and social work.

The context for understanding the founding of the Brownson House was an era of expansion of the United States as more and more people moved to California. They were immigrants who came from the Midwest and the South of the United States looking for an opportunity to settle in California. By the end of the 19th century, the majority were white Protestants in the city, but at the beginning of the century, the demographics began to change in the city. Due to the Mexican Revolution, immigration from this country increased after 1910. By 1917, due to the First World War and the Russian Revolution, the Red Scare, started to permeate the streets of industrial cities such as Los Angeles. The bishops of the United States reacted to the political-social context of the world
and incorporated Americanization into the diocesan charities and religious institutions.

The Catholic Church began Americanization programs in schools and settlement houses, including the Brownson House in Los Angeles. The city was indirectly segregated by housing policies that established white-only communities. Immigrants were left in poor housing conditions with a lack of public health and education services that contributed to a systematic racism from which they could not get out of their poverty due to low wages and miserable jobs. Progressive government leaders opted to launch Americanization programs with the Commission of Immigration and Housing. Mary Julia Workman worked in the community observing the needs of the poorest and most marginalized people. Workman’s activism challenges the historical paradigm of mainstream Progressivism. Her refusal to heed the demands of the ecclesiastical and governmental bureaucracy demonstrated how Mary Julia put her social work with the poor above all.

The Progressive Era was a time of industrialization, development, and massive immigration from Europe and Mexico. Historians Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob have noted that “the Progressives had won the battle to control the nation’s collective memory, in larger part because their depiction of historical action seemed more believable to a generation weaned on the strife of
industrialization.”¹ It was the time where the nationalistic history took over to promote a Progressive agenda, including a patriotic and nativist ideas of a country with the same religious values and Anglo-American traditions. In this thesis, we must discard this argument because Mexican immigrants rejected American nationalism due to the historical conflict between these two nations such as the military intervention in the Mexican-American war and the corporate influence with the Mexican dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz. Although, “the progressive never doubted that aspirations for personal freedom and economic opportunity represented core human drives.”² They ignored that the progress did not reach everyone in the United States, leaving aside those who did not identify with the American values. Indeed, the culture, tradition and religion of the Mexicans immigrants were stronger and they refused to adapt for fear of losing their roots.

This thesis will contribute to the historiography of the Progressive Era in several ways. It analyzes the Americanization program within the Catholic Church and the methods of racial repression and segregation that fueled systematic racism in Los Angeles. With my research and analysis, I want to demonstrate how the fear of immigrants and religious intolerance did not help Americanization programs. I will discuss how Mary Julia Workman used the Brownson House to help immigrants to adapt in Los Angeles. This thesis

² Appleby, Hunt, Jacobs, 141.
explores how nativism created a marginal environment in a multicultural society. At the same time, it considers how Americanization failed because it lacked social understandings and how gender dynamics influenced the clerical decisions made by the Archdiocese.

The social work and leadership of Mary Julia Workman in the Brownson House remains primarily hidden in the archives. There are files, letters, and notes written during her presidency in the settlement house. With those files as primary sources, I want to demonstrate how during that time, Americanization was more important than social work for the leaders of the Catholic Church. By putting Mary Julia Workman and the Brownson House at the center of this research, I want to demonstrate how the lack of social justice in this community contributed to the lack of public health, education and job training for immigrants creating a systematic racism in a segregated community within the boundaries of the Los Angeles River.

Methodology

The bulk of my primary sources will come from collections dedicated to Mary Julia Workman and the Brownson House. Mary Julia Workman wrote letters, notes, journals, and articles. The archives of Loyola Marymount Library have a collection of Mary Julia Workman files and The Workman Family. Also, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles has records and files from the Catholic Church in
Los Angeles from that period. As secondary sources, I will use journal articles, magazines, newspapers, and secondhand accounts of the time.

The analysis of the primary sources will include an examination of the gender dynamics between Mary Julia Workman and clergy in the Catholic Church. Additionally, my project will explore the interactions that affected the social work done in the community with the immigrants of Los Angeles. This analysis will support the historiography written of the history of California during the Progressive Era.

Literature Review

When we think about the Progressive Era in America, we think of the political and social activism of the late nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century. The reasons why society promoted Progressive ideas, such as the right to vote for women, have already been studied from various points of view, schools of thought, and with different historical methods. This research adds to the historiography on Progressivism in California by focusing on the life and legacy of Mary Julia Workman and the women in Brownson House.

The Progressive Era inspired women to work together to improve our society. Some consider it an era of awakening in the nation, where women’s rights were championed, and political and labor reforms were enacted due to the problems caused by industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. However,
during the Progressive Era there were marginalized, poor, and segregated immigrants who were rejected by American society. In the historiography of Progressive Era, a vast number of studies focuses on California and the middle-class activist women in the state. Yet, in many ways, historians have forgotten to write about the activists who worked in those poor communities that existed at that time such as the Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles.

William Deverell and Tom Sitton’s collection *California Progressivism Revisited* remains one of the most comprehensive books on Progressive Era. This book is a compendium of articles. At the introduction of the book, the authors explain the difference between Progressives and Progressivism. It is important to know that Progressives are the individuals, the parties or groups who used those terms; on the other side, Progressivism is their work, themselves, and their outlook at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In the articles in this book, the Progressive Movement is described and defined as a conservative, white, middle-class group. Regardless of political affiliation, they held in common a primary purpose that was the advancement of the nation. The Progressives were described as young, educated and members of the dominant white society. By 1910, the influence of socialism began to reach the streets of the cities and the middle class began to look to the left. This book contains articles on how women came together and created groups such as Socialist Union of California, who worked together with other groups looking for social equality. It can be assumed from the radical movement of those women,
who sought employment support and equality, but also well-being and prosperity in society. Notably, these groups of women began to create educational centers, such as kindergartens.³

In 1995, Gayle Gullet published an article where she examined Progressive women in California and their influence on politics. In her article "Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California, 1915-1920," Gullet writes that California women wanted to redefine the meaning of U.S. citizenship and they launched the Americanization movement. In doing so, Progressive women sought to persuade businessmen and patriotic groups to educate immigrants with the help of settlement workers and educators. Through these types of programs, Progressives sought to spread American patriotism. By being good citizens, they believed that a national identity could be defined with rights values. Notably, all this nationalist patriotic integration was based on Anglo-American values. Indeed, the Settlement House movement that emerged in California was based on the model of the Chicago Hull House. The article explores how the cultural Americanization of Mexicans immigrants was more difficult, due to their culture and the lack of initiative to assimilate. Progressive women worked beyond a political end to maintain a social order with education and work that will bring peace and American patriotic unity.⁴

Gayle Gullett built upon her initial work with the publication of her book *Becoming Citizens: The Emergence and Development of the California Women’s Movement, 1880-1911*. Her book provides a brief study of the history of the Progressive movement in California and how women influenced the political agenda of the United States by seeking equality and rights. According to the book, the Progressive movement began in the 1870s in the United States. The author starts writing about how Protestant, white and middle-class women decide to create Women Clubs to seek political equality, the right to vote, and to promote civic mentality in homes across the United States.

Gullett writes how in these first decades of Progressivism, there was an anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic climate. In the first chapter, she examines the internal conflict in the Public Reform Association, how there was bigotry and how religious intolerance was spread to schools. Last, it is important to understand that by this time, the significance of the purity of women was promoted by Progressive groups in American society. In the 1890s, Catholics were scapegoated for prevailing economic problems and the Progressives were primarily Protestant women that wanted to improve the life of the American society.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Women’s Clubs began to be seen in the Progressive movement. In California, the first Women’s Club was established in 1902. As noted above, Gullett examines how women won suffrage and charted a path to political equality. The civic work of women through
Women’s Clubs and other organizations promoted a series of political victories that helped to consolidate their citizenship and civic participation. In sum, Gullet’s book contains an extensive examination of women’s suffrage history and women’s work in California’s civic and political sphere.5

Although work by scholars like Gullet focuses primarily on Protestant Progressives, others have examined Catholic organizations during the Progressive Era. Kristin Ashton Gunnell’s article “The Daughters of Charity as Cultural Intermediaries: Women, Religion, and Race in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles,” examines the Catholic nuns who worked during the first decade of the twentieth century. The Daughters of Charity joined other groups that served poor communities like the Brownson Settlement House, but these institutions worked differently in the communities. These Settlement Houses were instructed to Americanize immigrants all over the country. Protestant religious groups began most of these programs. Los Angeles had hundreds of Mexicans and Californios living in poor communities, and some of them were Catholics. At that time, there was a resentment against the Mexicans, and they were scapegoated for the nation’s bad economy and unemployment that arose in the 1910s.6

Gunnell’s article helps to contextualize the Progressive Era and religion. It should be noted that the Sisters focused on helping under the Bishop’s tutelage,

unlike Mary Julia Workman. Americanization programs were all over the country and they were no exception in employing their labor to do the same. According to Bishop Cantwell, Americanization was a "Catholic responsibility," and priests, nuns, and charitable organizations oversaw establishing and disseminating programs to promote the English language and citizenship. According to the article, European immigrants were easy to be assimilated, but Mexicans were more difficult to be assimilated due to the lack of identity and racial sentiment that made them feel oppressed and discriminated against.

Michael Engh’s article “Mary Julia Workman, the Catholic Conscience of Los Angeles” describes part of Workman's life and social activism in the city. It was the first of two articles he published on Mary Julia Workman. In these articles, he talks about how Progressivism influenced the pursuit of opportunities in education, and social and humanitarian benefits for a poor and segregated community in Los Angeles.

Most of the population in Los Angeles in the beginning of 1900s were Protestants, and Workman, who was Catholic activist, decided to create a Settlement House in one of the poorest communities of the city. In 1901, Workman started the Brownson House project. The influence of other activists like Jane Addams, who started Hull House in Chicago, called upon women to work for their communities. Engh argues that the Brownson Settlement House was a non-sectarian organization, but Mary Julia Workman began to have a conflict with the authorities of Catholic Church when Bishop Cantwell decided to
centralize all charities by putting the Reverend Corr of New York in charge of administration.\(^7\)

Another article written by Michael Engh in 1998 was “Female, Catholic and Progressive: The Women of Brownson Settlement House of Los Angeles, 1901-1920.” According to this article, a priest of the Saint Vibiana Cathedral in Los Angeles invited her to create a women's society to expand her outreach to Hispanic communities. These communities were growing due to the massive immigration from Mexico in this period. Engh uses his previous article on Mary Julia Workman to go from there and delve into Brownson House more than the person. The coexistence in the Settlement House served to help workers understand the health, home, work, salary and working conditions problems that the immigrants dealt with because the volunteers were able to see and understand the problems of these communities.

Michael Engh writes about the history of Workman and the Brownson House, but the power dynamics within the Catholic Church and Mary Julia Workman's resignation must be analyzed to see where the ecclesiastical patriarchy influenced to move a woman from an organization that was working

\(^7\) Michael E. Engh, “Mary Julia Workman, the Catholic Conscience of Los Angeles.” *California History* 72, no. 1, (1993), 2-19.
not only for the Catholic Church, but also for the community that was being marginalized.\textsuperscript{8}

In the 1990 book \textit{Century of Fulfillment}, published by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles and edited by the official archivist Monsignor Francis J. Weber, there is no reference to Mary Julia Workman. On page 359, the Brownson House is mentioned but the credit is given to Bishop Conaty about his direction and work plan.\textsuperscript{9} On the other hand, both George Sanchez in his book \textit{Boyle Height} published in 2021 and Ricardo Romo in his book \textit{East Los Angeles, Historia del Barrio} published in 1983 have omitted to write about Mary Julia Workman and how important she was in the community in the early years of these two communities when the massive immigration of the 1910s came to Los Angeles. Although Romo mentions Brownson House as the oldest center for Mexican immigrants, he ignored the work and activism within the community done by a group of women volunteers before the Catholic Diocese intervention in this Settlement House. This thesis seeks to build upon Engh’s work to highlight the contributions of Mary Julia Workman and her colleagues at the Brownson House. In doing so, it provides new insights into the Progressive Era, religious


history, and seeks to update the historiography of Los Angeles that has often overlooked Workman and the activism she brought to the city.

Figure 1. Mary Julia Workman. Circa 1918
Department of Archives and Special Collections,
William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
In 1964, Mary Julia Workman passed away at the age of 93. The place, where she rests, at the Calvary Cemetery in East Los Angeles looks dusty, old, and lonely. Most of the people of California do not know about her public life, or the civic and social work she performed during the Progressive Era. We must look back at the background of Mary Julia Workman to understand the way of thinking that led her to devote herself to social work in the city of Los Angeles at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Mary Julia Workman was an upper-class woman from a wealthy family who was educated from an early age by her mother Maria Elizabeth Boyle under the Catholic faith. The Boyles were one of the most influential families in the city of Los Angeles in the late nineteenth century. Mary Julia's grandfather was Andrew A. Boyle, an Irish immigrant, who had come to Los Angeles during the expansion to the west during the Gold Rush. California was a fertile land available to immigrants from the American Midwest and immigrants from Europe, and Andrew A. Boyle did not miss the opportunity to seek his fortune in Southern California.

Andrew A. Boyle had come to the United States at the age of 14. After being in New York for two years, he decided to settle in southwest Texas with a
group of Irish immigrants in the town of San Patricio by the Nueces River.\textsuperscript{10} Two years later, when the Texas Revolution began, he enlisted in the Texan army. He was a young eighteen year old boy when he joined the army of Colonel James Fanning at the Goliad Battle. It was one of the bloodiest battles in the war where Boyle was wounded and captured. The Texas army surrendered to the Mexican troops. In his memoirs, Andrew Boyle remembers, "our suffering was intense on account of the heat of the sun, thirst, and want of medical attendance."\textsuperscript{11} The wounded soldiers laid on the floor and waited to be taken to receive medical attention. According to Boyle, a week later, "all the wounded men were marched out the fort in separate divisions and shot."\textsuperscript{12} Boyle clearly spoke and understood Spanish, and he translated for his comrades that the Mexican soldiers ordered them to walk outside the place where they were captive. He walked with the help of two fellow soldiers who helped him pass the building door. The young Andrew Boyle saw how they laid the wounded soldiers on the ground and shot them in their heads. While he was waiting for his turn to be executed, he heard a loud voice in English asking for a soldier named Boyle. He did not hesitate and answered. The Mexican officer took him to the hospital to have his wounds

\textsuperscript{10} The Dardier-Christie Side of the Family as told by Mary Elizabeth Workman, November 8, 1919, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 1 and folder 2, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 2.


\textsuperscript{12} Boyle, “Reminiscences,” 285-91.
cured. He was treated kindly in the hospital by the Mexican soldiers. He was one of the three men of 420 who survived the Goliad massacre in Texas.

According to the chronicle written by Andrew A. Boyle, the commander who saved his life was General Francisco Garay. The general received the description of him from Boyle’s sister, Mary. She asked the General if they captured her brother not to kill him. General Garay stayed at the Boyle’s family house in San Patricio where he was treated kindly by Andrew’s sister, Mary, and his brother Roderick. The Boyles were a friendly Catholic family, who did not hesitate to help others. Their friendship between them began and General Garay told Boyle that “he keenly regretted the barbarous butchery of the disarmed Texans at Goliad.” General Garay travelled to Matamoros, Mexico, with Andrew Boyle. Garay invited him to Mexico City, but Boyle declined due to his legal status in Texas and the conflict caused by the Revolution. He stayed in Texas until he obtained a passport and travelled to New Orleans where he married Elizabeth A. Christie on January 31, 1846.

Boyle became a businessman who traveled to Mexico regularly. According to his daughter, Maria Elizabeth, “he continued trading into Mexico on the Gulf.” Four years later, he established a trading store. A family tragedy came on October 20, 1849, when his wife Elizabeth A. Boyle passed away. Maria Elizabeth remembered that “when she was two and one half years old, Her infant

---

13 H.D. Barrow, “Andrew A. Boyle,” *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California and of the Pioneers of Los Angeles County* 5, no. 3, (1902), 241-44.
14 Dardier-Christie Side, 1.
15 Dardier-Christie Side, 3.
brother died within six months and she became the sole object of her father's affection. He never married again.”

As a single father of Maria Elizabeth Boyle, Andrew decided to leave New Orleans. He began his trip to California where he first settled in San Francisco in 1851. He became a successful shoe and boot businessman in the biggest west coast city. Boyle stayed in San Francisco with his daughter for two years until he had the opportunity to move to southern California.

In 1853, he bought twenty-two acres east of the Los Angeles River. Andrew Boyle had the vision to begin a new business in Los Angeles where he would start to trade with wine and grapes. The land had a vineyard that was planted in 1835. Historian George Sanchez writes that, “after surveying possible investments, he purchased the 'Old Mission Vineyard' located along the river and the bluffs of El Paredon Blanco.” Boyle had the vision to invest in a dry lacking water place, allowing him to buy the land at 25 cents an acre in some parts.

According to Maria E. Boyle, “the first water irrigation came about 1859, known

16 Maria Elizabeth Workman, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 1 and folder 2, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1.
17 Dardier-Christie Side, 4.
as Zanja No. 7.” The city previously approved the construction of a private ditch from the river that could carry water to the vineyard. The prices of grapes and other fruits were increasing and the farmers traded to the market in northern California. Maria Elizabeth later noted that “those who had bearing vineyards in Los Angeles at that period had a better thing than a gold mine or than oil wells.” Finding success, Andrew Boyle gained prestige and influence within the city and became a member of the City Council in 1865.

In that year, Los Angeles City Council auctioned off his public land east of the river dividing the area into 35-acre lots, and Boyle bought about five of them in 1865 and four more in 1868. After the expansion to the southwest, American pioneers acquired a large proportion of the land that was in the hands of Californio rancheros. With the droughts of the 1860s and rising taxes, it was not profitable to have a large property. As a result, most of the developers began to subdivide the properties for residential purposes.

The quest to do business and acquire land in Southern California attracted dozens of immigrants from the American Midwest. However, before the U.S.-Mexican War, immigrants had arrived to settle and acquire land granted by the Mexican government. Among them, William Workman and his friend John Rowland were granted the land that would become Rancho La Puente in 1841.

---

19 Dardier-Christie Side, 2.
20 Barrow, “Andrew A. Boyle,” 241-44.
21 Sanchez, Boyle Heights, 25.
22 Dardier-Christie Side, 3.
William Workman was an English immigrant living in New Mexico, who was converted to Catholicism, married a Mexican indigenous woman, and obtained Mexican citizenship. William Workman reached southern California in 1841. Maria Elizabeth explained that “the Mexican government required that all foreigners who applied for land grants should become Mexican Citizens.” The Workman family became successful ranchers. According to Maria Elizabeth, “the Workman-Rowland party was not merely another expedition that came to California before the gold rush. The members of the party came here to establish their homes, to become part of the community.”

William Workman was a saddler in New Mexico and his closest relative in the United States was his older brother David Workman, who lived in Missouri. David Workman came to the United States from England when he was 18-years-old. He was a saddler and constantly travelled to Santa Fe, New Mexico due to commerce. His first wife Mary Hook died when she was giving birth to his first child. David decided to marry again with Nancy Hook, a younger sister of his first wife Mary. Nancy and David become the parents of three children, Thomas, Elijah, and William Henry Workman. Maria Elizabeth wrote that in 1854, “William induced David to bring his boys to California.” His ability to speak Spanish, which he learned in Santa Fe, helped him cross the west. According to William

---

24 Mary Elizabeth wrote how at Santa Fe, William (Workman) met an Indian girl who later became his wife. Her name was Nicolasa of the Pueblo Indian tribe. Maria Elizabeth Workman, 2.
26 Maria Elizabeth Workman, 1.
27 Maria Elizabeth Workman, 1.
Henry II, his grandfather saved his caravan because “David Workman was able to parley with the Indian Chiefs in Spanish.”

Once David Workman reached Rancho La Puente with his family, he began to work with his brother William Workman in his ranch cattle business. In 1855, David was bringing a band of cattle to the mines in northern California. While travelling a road along the mountain side, he fell off a cliff. He passed away on the site. His body was carried to La Puente and buried in the private mausoleum in the ranch.

David Workman left three kids. William Henry Workman was the youngest. He was born in New Franklin, Missouri, on January 1, 1839. He was 15-years-old when he came with his father to California. When his father died, Maria Elizabeth noted that the “three young sons assumed the responsibility of maintaining their widowed mother.”

He began working in different clerk positions in Los Angeles and he was a messenger that travelled from Los Angeles to San Bernardino on horseback. Maria Elizabeth wrote that, “in the early years of his manhood, he engaged in the saddlery and harness business with his brother, Elijah.” Their business prospered and they became successful businessmen in Main Street.

On October 17, 1867, William Workman and Maria Elizabeth unified their lives by marrying and creating one of the most influential families in the city of

---


29 William Henry Workman, Serie 3: William H. and Mary E. Workman, box 8 and folder 9, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1.

30 William Henry Workman, 1
Los Angeles. Maria Elizabeth lived with her father, Andrew Boyle. As an Irish Catholic woman, she attended school with the Sister of Charity in Los Angeles. At that time, Maria Elizabeth recalled that “there were no bridges, in those days across the Los Angeles River which was a lovely pastoral stream bordered by willow trees.” She learned Spanish because it was spoken by almost all the inhabitants of the town. At a young age, she learned to read her first Spanish words from the inscription then found on the sanctuary arch of the old Church on the Plaza, “Nuestra Señora Reina de Los Ángeles ruega por nosotros.” She was a devoted Catholic girl who made her First Communion and was confirmed in this historic old church of Los Angeles. According to her writing, in 1864, she went to San Francisco to study at the Clark’s Institute.” She graduated a year and a half later and returned to Los Angeles. Three years later, Maria Elizabeth married William H. Workman, raising seven children on the eastside of Los Angeles River, and the oldest girl, second child, was Mary Julia Workman.

31 Maria Elizabeth Workman, 1.
32 Maria Elizabeth Workman, 1. The sign that Maria Elizabeth saw at the old church is “Our Lady of Los Angeles pray for us.” She learned Spanish in the old town where the English speakers were a minority.
33 Maria Elizabeth Workman, 2.
Brief History of Young Mary Julia Workman

Mary Julia Workman born on January 4, 1871, at the old Andrew Boyle brick house in Los Angeles. Her siblings were Andrew Boyle Workman, Elizabeth, William H. Jr, Charlotte, Gertrude, and Thomas. Her mother was a housewife, and her father was a businessman who became mayor in the city of Los Angeles from 1887 to 1888. Although her father was Protestant, Maria Elizabeth raised her eldest daughter, Mary Julia, under the Roman Catholic faith. Mary Julia’s first communion was at the old plaza church of Our Lady of Los Angeles and her education was in Catholic schools.

There were few public schools in the town, the first of them was established in 1854. By 1856, The Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul established an orphan asylum and a school. This was the same school where Maria E. Workman attended when she was young and where, years later, she decided to send her daughter to receive her elementary education. Mary Julia Workman was educated by the Sister of Charity nuns who occupied a building at Macy and Alameda Streets. Every morning she had to cross the Eastside of the Los Angeles river to go to school. Mary Julia remembered, “the horse was so reliable that Charlie Parker, the driver, would tie the reins, and sit with us children, reciting poetry and telling stories, for the long homeward pull up Alison

34 “Miss Mary, 91: ‘Mother’ to L.A.’S Children, "Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 2 and folder 11, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1.
Mary Julia enjoyed riding with other children in that carriage that crossed those dusty roads to school. During this time of her childhood, she began to develop an appreciation for poetry and music. Although there are no written sources from her during this time, she collected poems published in newspapers of the time. She kept a scrapbook with poems that reflect her love for children, the common good and her desire to be a consecrated woman to God. One of the poems was written by F. E. Wilson in the Boston Chronicle in 1864 titled, “Blessed to Give.”

The kingly sun gives forth his rays;  
Asks no return; demands no praise;  
But wraps us in strong arms of life,  
And says distinct through human strife,  
“If thou wouldst truly, nobly live,  
Give, - ever give.”

Since young age she was interested in poetry, but in high school, she became more involved with music and writing. Maria E. Workman decided to send Mary Julia to earn a higher education, but Los Angeles did not have a high school dedicated for girls. In 1865, the Vincentian Fathers founded a private Catholic school for boys in Los Angeles, St. Vincent’s college. William H. Workman was one of the Board of Education in 1870 when the first High School began to be built. Due to the lack of Catholic higher education for her daughter in Los

---

35 Miss Mary, 1.
36 Scrapbook of Clippings of Poetry, “Blessed to Give” Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 2 and folder 11, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1.
Angeles, Maria E. Workman decided to send her daughters, Mary Julia, and Elizabeth, to Oakland to the Convent of Our Lady of Sacred Heart of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. Wealthy families sent their daughters to this high school due to the good curriculum such as music, writing and included school training demanded by convent schools.

Mary Julia graduated in 1890 and returned to Los Angeles. She got the responsibility to help her mother at home and take care of her young siblings. Mary Julia helped her mother with the weekly cleaning and dusting of the house. She was called “Little Mother” by her young siblings because she demonstrated the love and care as her mother did. Mary Julia’s childhood and adolescence was full of joy. Her younger sister, Gertrude, described that Christmas eve was always wonderful in the house. Friends and family around the Christmas tree full of gifts for the children, and Mary Julia entertaining her family with music. Gertrude remembered, “those of us who could play piano or the violin, did so and there was always a play written and directed by Mary Julia.”

---

39 Thomas Edgar Workman, Memoirs, Series 1: box 1 and folder 1, Workman Research Materials CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 4.
40 Gertrude Workman Furman, Memoirs, Series 1: box 1 and folder 1, Workman Research Materials CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1.
young brother, Thomas, “old William H. Workman had a great voice with Truman-like gestures and often prefaced a remark with ‘My God’ as ‘My God Mary Julia where’s my’ (towel)?” And she was there supporting the house needs. She would be responsible for her parents until their death.

Her desire to serve God and her vocation was not permitted by her dad. When she asked her father permission to join a Religious order and become a Catholic nun her father replied, “I can’t give my permission to let my little girl leave our home to do that. But you may use your mind and your heart to do anything you wish in this city, but I can’t agree to let you join an order.” Beside being a protective patriarchal father, Mr. Workman was not Catholic, he was Protestant and did not support the idea to have a nun in the family. She had the desire to be a novice due to the education received, the experience in the convent and her friendship with the sisters who lived there because they marked her life. In the letters written to her friend and composition teacher, Sister Mary Leopold, Mary Julia writes, “I am more desirous of my holy vocation and more grateful to God for calling me to Himself.” Her father did not want to let Mary Julia go beyond the boundaries of Los Angeles and pursue her religious vocation because Mr. Workman kept her daughter at home taking care of the family.

---

41 Thomas Edgar Workman, 3.
43 Mary’s Letter LVI, Golden Friendship, 159. Serie 2, box 3 and folder 1, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University. The Holy Names Graduates and teacher’s letters were collected and edited by Sister Mary Leopold.
While at home, in her twenties, she asked herself, “I wonder what is coming to me in the future; it is an idle thought, but a natural one in the face of my difficulties.” Her doubts and fears were expressed to her spiritual director. Mary Julia Workman manifested, “Father M. thinks that by leaving the home circle a little, my designs will be more easily accomplished.” It was her desire to serve both the church and the people in need, but Mary Julia Workman knew that she had to give up her domestic activities and it saddened her the most.

The happiness expressed in her letters when she passed the entrance exam for the State Normal School shows how the call to a vocation was beyond staying at home. In 1899, she enrolled into the State Normal School in Los Angeles. Maria Julia wrote, “in our Kindergarten Department the girls seem so sweet and gentle, I was quite impressed by this, it seems to develop a certain womanliness which is beautiful.” In that beautiful building of the State Normal School on 5th street and Grand avenue in Los Angeles, the students were trained to be future educators. Under strict responsibility and school duties, they took several classes from English to Psychology class, and they learned the Kindergarten Theory. They observed how the senior students applied that knowledge learned in the classrooms to children. Mary Julia recalled, “I thought I knew something of Kindergarten Work, but I knew nothing. It is marvelous work

44 Mary’s Letter LIX, Golden Friendship, 165.
45 Mary’s Letter LX, Golden Friendship, 167. We do not know who Father M. is, but we may think is a local Priest.
46 The State Normal School in Los Angeles became UCLA in 1919.
47 Mary’s Letter LXI, Golden Friendship, 167.
and requires so much of a Teacher that I feel I can never accomplish such great results.”\(^48\) She understood how difficult the profession was and the physical, mental and spiritual exhaustion. They were taught the theory of early education created by Froebel.\(^49\) Mary Julia Workman stated that, “Froebel leads you so to God as the source of all, he makes you reach out for the child’s soul which is so sacred in his eyes.”\(^50\)

She never hesitated to tell her friend Sister Mary Leopold how she felt during this period of her life. Mary Julia wrote, “I love the Kindergarten more and more. Its theory is so beautiful, so spiritual, so Catholic.”\(^51\) She stated, “I offer again and again my work to Our dear Lord and beg His blessing on my poor efforts, to gain some means of future usefulness in His service.”\(^52\) Mary Julia Workman believed in the freedom of will, individual responsibility, the necessity of sacrifice, the beauty of unselfishness, and the value of love. She believed that all those virtues are needed to be learned and taught.

She felt that childhood is a sacred time, as she wrote, “I feel that childhood is a sacred time, the seed time of a life and it is the seed of life.”\(^53\) For this reason,


\(^{49}\) “Froebel considered the whole child’s, health, physical development, the environment, emotional well-being, mental ability, social relationships and spiritual aspects of development as important. Drawing on his mathematical and scientific knowledge Froebel developed a set of gifts (wooden blocks 1-6) and introduced occupations, (including sticks, clay, sand, slates, chalk, wax, shells, stones, scissors, paper folding).” Friedrich Froebel, *Early Education*, The British Association for Early Childhood Education, https://www.early-education.org.uk/about-froebel (accessed November 2021)

\(^{50}\) Mary’s Letter LXIII, *Golden Friendship*, 173.


\(^{52}\) Mary’s Letters LXII, *Golden Friendship*, 170.

it was essential to show them a seed of human integrity that could contribute to their development for their own benefit and society. Mary Julia Workman believed that the teachings at the State Normal School resembled the philosophy of charity that she had previously learned at the Convent. It was that teaching the true meaning of “give.” Mary Julia wrote that, in school, they tried to eradicate as much as possible the desire of avarice on the children; instead, they began to teach them to share with others, including the most in needed. They celebrated Christmas with a Santa Claus that was represented in a spiritual way rather than materialistic. She asserts, “Santa Claus must be the spirit of loving-giving,” she wrote to Sister Mary Leopold. “The personal sacrificed for giving should be all year. It should be a celebration of love and sacrificed and to value the treasure of unselfishness.” Mary Julia realized how materialistic humanity is, especially at Christmas, and she noticed the absence of a humanistic mentality that teaches us the meaning of love-giving.

During her school days at Normal School, she decided to associate with the Catholic Aid Society, volunteer in El Hogar Feliz, and participate in the Catholic Truth Society. Mary Julia Workman saw the poor conditions of the Kindergartens and children in the El Hogar Feliz. She stated, “I love children, but my love is growing with my pity that so many of us do not know the harm we


55 El Hogar Feliz (The Happy Home) was established in 1897 by Rev. George Montgomery, Bishop of Los Angeles. The objective was to help neglected children living around the Plaza and religious instruction.
carelessly do.” In the growing city of Los Angeles, Mary Julia Workman realized the precarious living condition of the children.

It was by the end of her school days when Mary Julia Workman had the fear of failing to her vocation. She wrote in anguish, “I feel that all failing me I can still do something for God and his little ones, for Kindergarten is a powerful means of uplifting the helpless children of misery. Thus, could I do something in the line of my calling.” She was not ready to fail and did not want to fail to her vocation but she was afraid to be disappointed by someone that could make her to fail. “Pray that God’s Will may be done and that I may serve Him as He chooses for me – But I am human and have my hopes and my disappointments, though I try to rise above them.” She wrote to Sister Mary Leopold, “Since my Kindergarten days a ray of light has shone upon the darkness of possible disappointment in regard to my vocation.” Mary Julia had a mentality of serving the neediest. However, she had fears and the greatest of those fears was the fear of not being able to exercise her vocation and fail. In 1900, the opportunity to serve the poor since began when group of students at the State Normal School were recruiting volunteers for the College Settlement Association and she did not hesitate to become one of their members.

56 Mary’s Letters LXIII, Golden Friendship, 176.
57 Mary’s Letters LXIV, Golden Friendship, 177.
58 Mary’s Letters LXIV, Golden Friendship, 177.
Mary Julia Workman earned her diploma from State Normal School in 1902. By 1905, she became a certified kindergarten teacher by the State of California. Since she was born, in 1871, the city of Los Angeles had grown due to industrialization and immigration. This brought a chain of inequality among the inhabitants within the city. She became a teacher; however, at the age of thirty, in 1901, Mary Julia Workman was called by the Reverend John Clifford to establish a new settlement house, and it became the Brownson Settlement House.

---

Figure 2. Mary Julia’s Scrapbook Collection. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

---

[59] State Normal School Diploma, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 2 and folder 11, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

[60] Mary J. Workman, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 2 and folder 14, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1.
Figure 3. Mary Julia Workman. Circa 1873.
Department of Archives and Special Collections,
William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

Figure 4. Boyle, Elizabeth, Mary Julia, and William Jr.
Department of Archives and Special Collections,
William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
Figure 5. Mary Julia Workman at the Academy of Our Lady of Sacred Heart. Circa 1890
Department of Archives and Special Collections,
William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

Figure 6. Mary Julia Workman Diploma.
Department of Archives and Special Collections,
William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

1850-1870: Social Changes in the Town of Los Angeles

When Maria E. Workman told stories to her children about her childhood in the town of Los Angeles, she described a colorful Spanish town. By 1850s, Spanish was the main language in the town and the inhabitants were Mexican, Californios and Indigenous people. Southern California was a lawless territory and close to anarchism that tried to adapt to the laws of the country that took control of this territory in 1848. The social change was reflected with arrival of new immigrants from the Midwest of United States to Los Angeles.

After Mexico and the United States signed the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, the population in California began to grow due to the Gold Rush in 1849. Los Angeles experienced marked social impacts, as it went from being a predominantly Hispanic Catholic city to being an Anglo-Protestant city between 1850s to 1900s. Boyle Workman recalled that “the town had a population of about 2500 people. It had rather a picturesque frontier appearance”\(^{61}\) Of those, there were 300 English speakers and a few indigenous people from California—the rest were Mexican descendants.

---

While southern California rancheros lost their power due to unfair taxation, members of the Californio elite mixed with the American society, but most of them stayed outside the Anglo society. The Californios were born in the state before the Mexican-American War. While the Californios were engaged with agriculture like vineyards and livestock, the Anglos-Americans were engaged in mercantile business. “Natives from New England, Middle Atlantic, and eastern Great Lakes states and immigrants from England, Ireland and Germany—fully adopted American aspirations and attitudes before coming to Los Angeles.” 62

Mary Julia Workman’s great-uncle, William Workman, owned Rancho La Puente since 1841 and he saw the commercial opportunity to bring cattle, and their derivatives such as tallow to produce candles, and soaps to northern California mines during the Gold Rush. In a letter written to David Workman, William Workman persuades his brother to come to the west due to the success in his cattle business. 63

In 1854, David Workman arrived in California along with a group of immigrants from the Midwest who hoped to take advantage of opportunities in the new land acquired by the United States. In the ox team party Workman


arrived with about 50 families that came from Missouri and Nebraska.\textsuperscript{64} Business opportunities and land seduced those immigrants to come to California.

Meanwhile, the Californios began to lose their land and social statues. Historian William D. Estrada suggest, "most pronounced was Anglo economic growth, which led to a gradual decline in the economic and social status of Mexican Angelenos."\textsuperscript{65} The elite of the Californios kept their social authority for a while; however, within a few decades, the removal of Californios from political power helped the newcomers to influence in city matters.

Mexico lost the territory of California, and the Mexican elite, most of them ranch owners, wanted to maintain their power and land under the United States government. Pio Pico, the last governor of California under Mexican rule, managed to make a hotel from 1868 and do business with the newcomers in the city. After being one of the richest ranch owners in the state, he gradually lost his fortune. The Anglo-American politics and government transition in the city lasted until the 1870s with the last Mexican descendant City Mayor, Cristobal Aguilar, in 1872. The Californio elite formed alliances to support politicians like Joseph Lancaster Brent, who represented the deep south democratic party and was in favor of slavery and Manifest Destiny—they supported him because he was Catholic and he was a fluent Spanish speaker. He was a lawyer who helped the

\textsuperscript{64} The Workman Side of the Family Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 2 and folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

rancheros defend their land titles. During the Civil War, Lancaster travelled to Louisiana and became a Confederate general.\textsuperscript{66}

Those strategic alliances were meant to maintain the status quo they had held before the Mexican-American war, allowing them to keep a status that differentiated them from workers, peasants, miners, and other Mexicans born in California or who had migrated from Mexico. According to historian George Sanchez, “the elites of Los Angeles worried that the city’s growth could be negatively affected by racial mixture .... (they) tried to keep the Anglo newcomers away from both the poorer Mexicans community that had remained around the Plaza.”\textsuperscript{67} Most of the poor Mexicans from California and immigrants who came to work to the mines during the Gold Rush lived in Sonoratown. Historian Greg Hise stated, “Yankees arriving after 1847 chose either to convert Californios and Mexican nationals, to ignore them, or to isolate them as a distinct group, a colony with its own space which Americans, whether resident or visitor, associated with a past that was static, hidebound, traditional, outside the course of history.”\textsuperscript{68} Historian William Deverell suggest that, “Sonoratown used to be a place of large adobe houses, and became the last link of the Mexican past in the city of Los Angeles. Their past was impregnated in those adobe houses, which Anglo-Americans criticized for backwardness and of what they viewed as the Catholic

\textsuperscript{66} Estrada, \textit{The Los Angeles Plaza}, 57.
\textsuperscript{67} George J. Sanchez, \textit{Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), 31
\textsuperscript{68} Greg Hise, “Border City: Race and Social Distance in Los Angeles,” \textit{American Quarterly} 56, no. 3 (2004), 548.
and unusable past." In 1906, Amanda Matthew wrote an article in which she remembered Sonoratown: "behind the adobes occupied by the descendants of proud old Spanish families, poor now, but with the tradition of the halcyon days before the gringo invasion, are numerous courts concealed from the street and swarming with the despised cholos, imported by the railroads for cheap labor. Here the low life of Mexico is duplicated." Social changes happened in that community that once flourished with its adobe houses and became a hole of poverty and violence. In these ways, Sonoratown demonstrates how racial segregation and social injustice created an environment of inequality. Boyle Workman described in his memoirs that "Sonoratown, north of the Plaza, too frequently was the arena for battling forces of lust and liquor. It was an arena almost untouched by the Americans' influence, and its boundaries lived the highest and the lowest." The city began to fragment as Mexicans, Chinese, and other non-Anglo immigrants remained cut off from mainstream society.

In that lawless violent decade in the Southwest, there were groups of vigilantes in the city that patrolled the streets and the county roads. In 1853, the Los Angeles Rangers were established. William Wallace, a news reporter, described Los Angeles as wracked by race war. "Blood flows in the streets – justice weeps," Wallace wrote, "All is Anarchy." Groups of vigilantes patrolled

---

70 Estrada, *The Los Angeles Plaza*, 112. The halcyon days: denoting a period in the past that was happy or peaceful.
the rural roads of Los Angeles, killing and hanging people, most of them
Mexicans and Indigenous people from California. A group called the El Monte
Boys carried out brutal acts of racial persecution. Their act of violence included
rumors that they used to bowling with the head of a murdered Mexican.\textsuperscript{73} The
hate against Mexicans and other minorities increased as soon as the Anglo
immigrants reached Southern California in the 1850s.

On October 24, 1871, just eight months after Mary Julia was born on the
Eastside of the Los Angeles River, Robert Thompson and a local police officer
named Jesus Bliderrain were in the middle of a crossfire between two rival
Chinese gangs. Boyle Workman wrote in his memoirs that the cause was the
struggle between two Chinese tongs, or gangs, over the ownership of a slave
woman. The crossfire occurred at a place known as La Calle de Los Negros by
the plaza. Robert Thompson was killed and a crowd of 300 Anglo and Mexican
people decided, according to Boyle Workman, to look for revenge against the
Chinese community. Nineteen Chinese were lynched, some of them were boys
that were shot, stabbed, or hanged. Their bodies were placed in the city jail yard
for public viewing. Boyle Workman stated that, “the mob was demanding the life
of every Chinese in town-man, woman or child.”\textsuperscript{74} Several Chinese homes and
businesses were looted. People of different nationalities united against the
Chinese, carrying out the violence and lynching. In 1877, Calles de los Negros,

\textsuperscript{73} Deverell, \textit{Whitewashed Adobe}, 23.
\textsuperscript{74} Workman, \textit{The City That Grew}, 147.
where the lynching began, was renamed Los Angeles Street, and the old Chinatown was moved from its original location to Broadway Street in 1920s. The Chinese community suffered discrimination within the city and tried to live along the Mexican and Anglo people established around the plaza. By 1882, anti-Chinese legislation was enacted by the Los Angeles City Council after the federal Chinese Exclusion Act was passed and local employers signed agreements not to hire Chinese workers.\textsuperscript{75} Chinese were one of the groups of immigrants that came to California after the Mexican-American war, and they were repudiated and discriminated by the people of Los Angeles.

After the Civil War, just prior to the increase of immigrants from the Midwest and the South. According to Historian Robert M. Fogelson, "Los Angeles had no more than 20,000 people before the boom of the late 1880s."\textsuperscript{76} While the Anglo migration began to grow, the Mexicans and Chinese began to move away from the plaza. By the end of the nineteenth century, the population of Sonoratown changed. Historian Stephanie Lewthwaite explains that "Mexican immigrants began outnumbering native-born Californios by the turn of the century. Numbering less than 15 percent of the city's total population in 1900, some three to five thousand Mexicans inhabited Sonoratown and smaller

\textsuperscript{75} Estrada, \textit{The Los Angeles Plaza}, 78.
dispersed colonias.” 77 Seventy percent of the city's Mexican population resided in or near Sonoratown. 78

The city was unintentionally divided. While the Anglo American-born immigrants began to settle the westside of Los Angeles, on the other side, at the east, a multicultural society began to be developed. Starting with the Molokan Russians, the Italians, the Japanese and the Mexicans immigrants that moved eastward within the city. They began to live ethnic neighborhoods where each racial group lived together apart from the Anglo society of the westside. Peter Fogelson has observed that “many families that did intend to settle in Los Angeles lacked the confidence to move away from their group and wherewithal to purchase a house.” 79 These minorities began to congregate in ethnic ghettos.

The arrival of Anglo-Americans not only created a racial change in the population of Los Angeles, but religion also changed over the decades and in the beginning of the twentieth century a Protestant majority replaced what was a city of Catholic inhabitants 50 years earlier. Our Lady Queen of Angels Church in the plaza was the most representative place of Catholicism and Spanish-Mexican heritage. The Anglo immigration began to arrive in the city with the need to celebrate their church services. According to Boyle Workman, “the first Protestant Sermon ever preached in Los Angeles was in 1850.” 80 The Anglo-

78 Lewthwaite, 330.
79 Fogelson, The Fragmented Metropolis, 200.
80 Workman, The City That Grew, 53.
immigrants brought their denominations, including the Baptists and Methodists. Boyle noted that “Protestantism was organized on a firm basis, each of the denominations purchasing property and building churches commensurate with the dignity of this fast growing city.”81 Twenty years later, Los Angeles was a city with social clubs, fire companies, military brigades, Masonic lodges, and Protestant temples of worship.

The railroad and industrialization in the southwest began in the 1880s. William Deverell notes that “in the late 1880s, with the increase in regional rail service, the city and the railroad companies began to construct more bridges and viaducts that spanned the river from various downtown streets.”82 William H. Workman as a member of the city council helped to improve the city roads. As mayor, he inaugurated the first electric car of Pico Heights Electric Railway, and he improved the roads to Boyle Heights including the bridge at Fourth Street on the Los Angeles River.83 Industrialization took hold in the city and commerce, factories, and warehouses invaded communities like Sonoratown, pushing populations to the east side of the Los Angeles River. Minorities were kept in their own communities, according to Deverell “zoning ordinances reveal one way in which the city elites thought of and utilized the river”84 Migration made the city grow exponentially. From being a rural Mexican town, Los Angeles was

81 Boyle Workman, The City That Grew, 55.
83 William Henry Workman, Series 1: William H. and Maria E. Workman, box 20, folder 12. Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
84 William Deverell, Whitewashed Adobe, 110.
transformed into a metropolis where non-white immigrants were de facto insolated on the east side of the city. This segregation brought poverty to minorities who immigrated to Los Angeles in the early 20th century.

Figure 7. Mary Julia Workman. Circa 1885. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
From 1870 to 1890: Industrialization and Expansion

In the 1870s, Los Angeles was surrounded with orange groves, walnut trees, and vines that were the primary source of the economy in southern California. When the transcontinental railroad was completed, the city was industrialized bringing modernity to the people in the city. As result, population growth increased poverty among immigrants creating inequality in the city.

By 1885, The Santa Fe railroad connected Los Angeles with the rest of the country. In 1888, William H. Workman obtained the right of entry to the city for the Santa Fe Railroad through a levee that was built along the west bank of the river. According to Deverell, “in the late 1880s, with the increase in regional rail service, the city and the railroad companies began to construct more bridges and viaducts that spanned the river from various downtown streets.” The isolated town of Los Angeles began to have connections with the rest of the country.

Industrialization began in the United States after the Civil War in the 1870s. With the railroad expansion to the west, Los Angeles started experiencing more industrialization and commerce. In 1868, San Pedro harbor began to have railroad connection to Los Angeles increasing the maritime commerce. The

---

increase in immigration brought a demand for real estate in southern California. It is at this point, where the ranchers saw the opportunity to divide their land and convert it into residential areas. As historian George Sanchez states, “the 1870s witnessed the falling into American hands of the Mexicans land-grant ranchos. In the 1880s many of these Americans held ranchos, especially those of Los Angeles County, were subdivided and sold as residential property. In the 1890s these subdivisions grew into towns and cities.”87 Beside the need to sell this property to the newcomers, the state suffered droughts, and floods, the stock market crashed in 1876, and it was a risky enterprise to keep this land. Between 1885 and 1887, the most spectacular real estate boom in American history happened when the newcomers in California spent about 200 million on property.88

When Andrew Boyle passed away, William H. Workman hoped to develop the first suburbs inside Los Angeles. According to Henry Workman Jr, “Mr. Workman prepared to subdivide the property in 1876. He named the subdivision Boyle Heights in honor of his father-in-law.”89 Workman believed that Boyle Heights would serve as the first suburb of refined whiteness for the Anglo-American settlers from the East. However, As George Sanchez stated, “the Anglo-American newcomers were directed to the Westside of the growing

89 William Henry Workman, 4.
metropolis, and Boyle Heights would establish itself as a community often to a much racially diverse population.” The boundaries of the river began to be stigmatized as dirty because it was at the east side of the plaza where the Chinese and Mexicans lived. According to Deverell, “the river became known as a place of bad smells and bad people, a place where Anglos expected and insisted, crooks, Mexicans, Indians and Chinese congregated.” The real estate entrepreneurs portrayed Los Angeles as a sunshine Old Spanish paradise that was growing into a metropolis. It promised a fuller life and opportunity to all immigrants, but their segregation was particularly visible. The invisible separation in the city began to occur with the massive immigration in this decade. As historian, Robert M. Fogelson stated, “they (Mexicans) were deemed undesirable by the Americans.” While the United States viewed Los Angeles as a promised land of opportunities, the reality of a community was totally different. On the East side of the river, and north central of Los Angeles in Sonoratown the minorities, most of them Mexicans settled and were isolated in slums.

The expansion of the railway was not only to the west, but also to the southern border. The railroads expanded it down to Mexico and this contributed to an increase in immigration from the south of the border. Entire families from Mexico came to the United States to settle down. In Los Angeles, they came to

---

90 Sanchez, Boyle Heights, 38.
91 Deverell, Whitewashed Adobe, 108.
93 Fogelson, The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles 1850-1930, 188.
work and support their families. They did not speak English and had a lack of sanitation and shelter. They were called peons and they were from the lowest social class of Mexican immigrants who came at the end of the 1870s. The Mexican immigrants outnumbered the native-born Californios and they became increasingly segregated from Anglos. They stayed in Sonoratown prior to the industrialization of Los Angeles until companies such as The Sonora Wood and Coal Yard, Los Angeles Cornice Works, Metropolitan Steam Dye Works, and other warehouses began to be built.  

Industrialization impacted industrial cities like Los Angeles. There was a population increase but the people lived in poverty because of low wages causing a problem for public health, education, and housing. As historian Stephanie Lewthwaite stated, “the expansion of industry and the arrival of new workers brought housing and a lot of congestion.” The living conditions in the city began to decline. It is during this period that immigration from Russia, Italy and other Eastern European countries increased in Los Angeles. This would be the prelude of what will be the Progressive Era in 1890.

---

95 Lewthwaite, 334.
Figure 8. Greater Los Angeles News Magazine.
Department of Archives and Special Collections,
William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
Progressive Era and The Settlement House Movement

After the Civil War, the era of reconstruction began, as the country was economically and socially wounded. Industrialization began in big cities like Detroit, Chicago, and New York. A group of industrialists expanded their power throughout the United States by influencing the nation's politics and economy. As the wealth of this group of magnates increased, the numbers of poor people increased. By 1890, the middle class began acting against the status quo in which people lived during the Gilded Age. This is the beginning of the Progressive Movement in United States.

Promoted by young, educated, majority white Protestant members of the middle class who grew up post-Civil War era, the Progressive Movement would seek social change such as fair labor laws and women's rights. Progressives experienced a level of corruption in the government and business across the country. The Progressive Movement expanded to California and the leaders were white Protestant born in California or midwestern states.\textsuperscript{96} The Progressive Movement expanded to different areas of society. One of the most important movements during the Progressive Era was the Settlement House Movement that began in the 1890s and reached Southern California in 1894.

\textsuperscript{96} William Deverell and Tom Sitton, eds., \textit{California Progressivism Revisited} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994),100.
The Settlement House Movement was promoted by college women in the most important and industrialized cities of the United States. The cities began to suffer from an increase of industrialization creating the need to employ more labor. Men, women, and children worked in factories that flourished in urban communities. Immigration increased after the Civil War serving as fuel for large factories that requested cheap labor because the United States economy was growing while part of Europe was submerged in poverty. Sadly, those people could not reach a better social status due to the complexity of industrial capitalism. In Chicago, when Jane Adams noticed the increase in immigrants in the city, she noticed how they suffered from labor abuse and economic deprivation. Adams decided to start what would be a movement within social progressivism, the settlement houses. The help given to those immigrants gradually spread to the ranks of professional social workers, and settlement houses were established in several industrial cities across the United States. Jane Adams became the pioneer of this movement that began in England. In 1884, Canon Samuel Barnett founded the first settlement house, Toynbee Hall, in London, England. In United States, Jane Adams founded The Hull House to help immigrant from Europe in Chicago.

The Hull House was a non-secular house that worked to connect the new migrants with the American people, but the Protestant Christian influence took over with the Social Gospel. The main purpose of the Christian Church had shifted from the salvation of souls to the reconstruction an old and immoral
economic system and the creation of a fair relationship between different social
classes. They worked with the poor working class which most of them were
immigrants who came from Eastern and Southern Europe. Jane Addams' attitude
towards new immigrants can be praised for her comprehensive formulation of the
immigrant problem, but the Hull House programs were designed, therefore, to
bring the achievements of American civilization closer to the poor. Historians
interpreted the settlement residents as examples of social control and the
settlement workers attempting to manipulate their neighbors to benefit the middle
class, and Hull House was basically committed to total assimilation while
professing an old cosmopolitan stance in America. Those are one of the
reasons why Jane Adams failed to embrace the Italians and Russian Jews.
Historian David R. Roediger wrote, “Addams tragically joined the typical
settlement house practice of accepting Jim Crow and consequently barring
African American participation, on the theory that bringing in black residents
would cause immigrants to withdraw.” The ghost of slavery and the racism
were in the minds of the white Anglo-Americans. In the nineteenth century,
people of color had been made to symbolize the category of “anti-citizens” unfit

---

to participate in the republican experiment of the United States.\footnote{David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, 176.} In the 1890s, while the whiteness of Italians and Eastern Europeans compared to other immigrants was still debated, there was a hope to Americanize them under the Social Gospel Movement.

Protestants in settlement houses worked across the country helping immigrants along with religious proselytizing. Historian John Hingham writes that, “until the end of the nineteenth century social work had been largely synonymous with charity, and for the most part its practitioners had loudly bewailed the immigrant grant flood that was swapping their resources.”\footnote{John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2002), Kindle.} In the industrial cities of the United States, the settlement houses became notorious because young college women decided to lead this progressive idea. Historian William Deverell stated, “remarkable middle and upper class women working at settlement houses for immigrants taught and witnessed Americanization.”\footnote{William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 71.}

Charity was transformed into Christian evangelization and nationalist doctrine for all those with sufficient characteristics to be accepted by the Anglo-American society.

Jane Addams extolled the virtues of ongoing cultural differences among immigrant groups but she encouraged the assimilation of them. She became a leader in the Settlement House Movement and traveled around the nation giving
speeches about her activism. In 1894, a group of college women graduates listened to Jane Adams in Los Angeles. Addams influenced this group of college women to follow her steps in the creation of the first settlement houses in Los Angeles. The Settlement House Movement came to the city as a functional duty for college women to serve the community. Run by college educated women at Castellar Street, the College Settlement House was founded in 1894.

The College Settlement house began to recruit student volunteers from the State Normal School. Mary Julia Workman was one of the volunteers in this settlement house during her school years. She argued that “College trained women used their intelligence and their educational opportunity to aid in the solution of community problems.” It is during the Progressive Era that a generation of educated women started campaigns to help their community without getting involved in politics from which they were excluded. They were able to get involved in women's clubs and get involved in activities such as education. As volunteer at the College Settlement House, while she was preparing to teach in a public school, Mary Julia was able to observe the poverty of the people living in Sonoratown and other poor communities near La Plaza where the volunteers assisted them with social work. Beside the College Settlement House, some other protestant women groups began to open settlement houses around the central plaza. While the protestant settlement

---

houses were able to embrace Russian, French, Armenians, Italian and other European immigrants, they failed to expand their social work among Mexicans primarily because of the religious difference with this immigrant community.

The conflict between Protestantism and the Catholic Church over social work started before the Settlement House Movement. According to John O’ Grady, between 1850 and 1880 Protestant charities expended a large part of its energy in so-called “rescue work,” which meant the removing of Catholic children from their homes and placing them in Protestant homes.\(^{105}\) However, this “rescue work” lasted a few more decades. In 1904, the case of the orphan train from Arizona that involved the Sisters of Charities from New York is an example of the conflict between these religious groups. The Sisters tried to place a group of Irish Catholic children in Mexican Catholic homes in Arizona. This is the case where religion, and racism were involved and how the supreme court favored the Protestant Anglo citizens and vigilantes who abducted the minors.\(^{106}\) At the beginning of the Progressive Era, there was a shift within the Catholic Church and Protestant organizations such as the Charity Organization Society, which changed its charitable role to promote the Settlement Home Movement after 1890.\(^{107}\)


\(^{107}\) John O’ Grady, *The Catholic Settlement Movement*. 
In Los Angeles, Mary Julia Workman saw how the Protestant sectarians reached those Catholics who avoided the church or were ignored by the clergy of the city. As she wrote, “the Presbyterians have Spanish Missions and an Industrial Training School, where young Mexican girls are taught sewing, cooking, etc., and made good Presbyterians.”\textsuperscript{108} Also the Methodist opened schools and Mission stations to cover the Mexican population. Some other Protestant churches opened around the plaza with free baths, kitchen, and boarding houses where they charged them a small fee. Some others offered cheap meals and clothing to all the people. Catholic social reformers realized the work of the Protestant counterpart working to approach the new immigrants as they offered charitable assistance and social service, but it often meant attending religious services.\textsuperscript{109} Mexican immigrants often reject these charities due to the lack of tolerance of those Americans that ignored their cultural background and needs.

The settlement houses, as they attracted new adherents from Europe, worked to influence the promotion of progressive laws at all levels of government. In the College Settlement House, Bessie D. Stoddart was one of the leaders that influenced the government to expand health care into public schools. It was a period where women took the lead to fight for their rights in issues like

\textsuperscript{108} Mary’s Letters LXVII, \textit{Golden Friendship}, Serie 2, box 3 and folder 1, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 183.

housing, health, and recreation to make a better society. Mary Julia Workman noted that, “the settlement has for its underlying principle the fundamental unity of society, the brotherhood of man. In theory and practice it would bring to further the wise and the ignorant, the powerful and the weak, the rich and the poor, the mutual helpfulness, understanding and cooperation may develop for the benefit of the individuals and of the whole social fabric. Cooperation is the settlement foundation stone.”\footnote{“Social Service”, May 16, 1915, Box 14ov and Folder 08, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.} In order to influence society, the settlement houses had to reach all those marginalized people who lived isolated in the city.

Mary Julia Workman saw that there were Mexican immigrants who escaped from poverty, persecution, and lack of opportunities in their country. Mary Julia Workman was in a meeting at Ladies’ Aid Society at Saint Viviana’s Cathedral when the priest, John J. Clifford, suggested to the young women to establish a Catholic social work in the community. Mary Julia Workman and a group of Catholic women began to work in the foundation of a Catholic settlement house in Los Angeles. Influenced by the Progressive Movement and inspired by the encyclical written by the Pope Leon XIII entitled \textit{Rerum Novarum}, the Brownson Settlement House was founded in 1901.
Being a Catholic in America

In this apostolic letter, *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leon XIII called his parishioners to take a social attitude in the world. Beside the right to private property, and labor rights, the encyclical calls for civil associations for mutual aid. According to the letter, one of the objectives is to establish societies that reach everyone, insofar it pursues the common good, in which it is fair that everyone participates. The society must be united with each other to constitute a nation or a community.  

Although Pope Leon XIII called for respect for private property, he called for an effort to create unions and societies that seek the common good and each society must fight against the inequality created by the industrial revolution as he wrote that poverty is the consequence of capitalism and social dislocation.

In the United States, this encyclical was seen as too progressive. The Catholic Church ignored the need to embrace those poor Catholics who came to the country. While the Pope asked for a union in the Catholic Church to get ahead with the social problem, the Church in the United States was divided into ethnic groups and nationalities. To understand the context in which Maria Julia Workman and other Catholic Progressives worked, it is essential to detail the situation of the Catholic Church in the United States at the turn of the century.

---

In the 1870s, Saint Vibiana’s Cathedral was built in Los Angeles, which became the site that framed European Catholicism in the city. While the Church of Our Lady of the Angels in the Plaza continued to be the place of worship for Mexicans and their descendants, the Cathedral became the exclusive place of worship for the Anglo population.\textsuperscript{112} This is an example of what happened across the country. Neighborhoods in big cities were divided into a racial ghetto, and consequently, Catholic churches and chapels for each community were equally divided. There was some residential concentration by nationality around churches and schools. Parishes often included schools providing instruction by nuns of the same “racial” group and committed to language preservation, the boundaries of the “racial” parish defined the neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{113}

Gradually the Irish community took control of the Catholic Church in the United States, and they were the most accepted among American Protestants. Most of the Irish immigrants came during the famine in the 1850s. After having suffered discrimination, the Irish community was able to overcome the harassment of the Protestants. This allowed people like Andrew A. Boyle or John G. Downey to become influential in American politics and society in the late nineteenth century in Los Angeles. Irish immigrants sought assimilation and Americanization to prosper in society and stop being discriminated against.

\textsuperscript{112} Estrada, \textit{The Los Angeles Plaza}, 83.
\textsuperscript{113} Roediger, \textit{Working Toward Whiteness}, 168.
A Catholic writer and activist, Orestes Brownson, who although he was not from Ireland, promoted Americanization among Irish Catholics in the 1850s just after his conversion from Presbyterianism. Brownson argued that “the Irish and all other immigrants ‘must ultimately lose their own nationality and become assimilated in general character to the Anglo-American race.” Orestes Brownson believed that Catholicism was the best thing that could happen to democracy in the United States. This radical way of thinking by Orestes Brownson upset several bishops in the United States, including the bishop John Hughes who said, “Catholicism cannot and should not adapt itself to the American Culture.” However, Orestes Brownson always had the idea of the need for Catholics to adapt to American society.

By the end of the 19th century, anti-Catholic discrimination reached a point that was intolerable in the country. Race was not only an imposed category but also an embraced identity for new immigrants and it included Catholics. Historian David R. Roediger notes that “early in the twentieth century, it was by no means clear those immigrants from southern and eastern Europe would escape the condemnations of white supremacists.” Protestants believed that the clergy were to blame for the Irish not adapting to American society, and their reluctant hostility to public education. For middle-class Americans, the Irish were

114 Dolan, In Search of an American Catholicism, 63. Bishop George Thomas Montgomery suggested the name to the Settlement House after Orestes Brownson.
115 Dolan, In Search of an American Catholicism, 65.
116 Dolan, In Search of an American Catholicism, 63.
117 Roediger, Working Toward Whiteness, 53.
118 Roediger, Working Toward Whiteness, 93.
inferior because they were poor and rowdy. By the end of the 1800s, Irish immigrants were able to assimilate to the American society, leading the Church and political grounds of power that were used against other racial minorities. The Irish leaders dominated the Catholic Church and, in some sections, bossed the Democratic Party. Meanwhile, the Mexicans were Catholics, but their language, culture, and traditions were reduced and humiliated by some leaders within the Church.

In Los Angeles, the construction of other Catholic Churches like St. Vincent and St. Joseph in 1888 increased the division against the Mexican Catholics who attended the Plaza Church. The Catholic hierarchy turned their back to the Plaza Church. The Mexicans kept celebrating religious feast days in the church. The religious cultural expression of the Mexican community included the celebration of Pastorelas Navideñas, Posadas and Día de Muertos. During Holy Week, the celebration of the Passion of Jesus was important, and the most significant celebration between the Mexican Catholics was the Virgin of Guadalupe celebration on December 12. Since Bishop Thaddeus Amat, who demonstrated little sympathy for the Mexican Catholicism in his Diocese when he

---

120 Pastorelas is a Nativity play done every Christmas eve. Posadas are praying and fiesta to celebrate the Holy Family. All those celebrations were Spanish Colonial religious feast.
121 Estrada, *The Los Angeles Plaza*, 66.
was appointed in 1853, all these celebrations were ignored and repudiated by the European Catholics who migrated to Los Angeles. 122

The Mexican immigrants and Californios shared the same traditions, cultural and religious roots. Bishop Amat began to prohibit any festivity because he could not understand the Mexican popular piety and believed that it fomented superstition. Historian Jay Dolan notes that "many priests looked upon the Mexican practice of religion as superstitious and indeed publicly embarrassing." 123 Amat believed that these traditions were seen as ridiculous by Americans. Bishop Amat and the American clergy believed that ceremonies, cults, and devotions were excessive and would be seen as corrupt Catholicism and would discredit the church to the Protestant Anglo-American society. 124 Bishop Amat and other priests had a lack of understanding of the cultural and traditional background of Mexican society. Little by little, all the fiestas, dances, and religious feast were isolated from the Anglo community and put aside. The plaza continued to be a place for Mexican religious congregations but in a modest and simple way. The Cathedral of Saint Vibiana became the center of the American Catholic Church in Los Angeles ignoring and setting aside the old California Spanish-American past.

122 Bishop Tadeu Amat was born in Barcelona, Spain but most of his career was done in United States. He became the first Bishop in Monterrey-Los Angeles Diocese after the Mexican-American war.
123 Dolan, In Search of an American Catholicism, 143.
124 Dolan, In Search of an American Catholicism, 153.
By the end of the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church had ceased to be a religious institution that embraced Mexican Catholics. Within the Catholic Church in California, Mexicans were divided into three groups. The Californios, the upper class who came from Mexico, and the lower class who were immigrant peasants and workers. The Californios had to stay in the United States after the Mexican-American war, and they had to adapt to the new society that took control of the state. The wealthy upper-class Mexicans were people who came to the United States and decided to live in the country. Both the Californios and the wealthy Mexicans were fervent Catholics who contributed to the charity of the church. One of them was the corrupt General Luis Terrazas, who was the governor of the Mexican State Chihuahua from 1860 to 1873 and contributed to the Ladies of Charity (Senoritas de la Caridad) which was a branch of the Daughters of Charity. However, most of the Mexicans who immigrated to the United States were poor peasants and workers. These immigrants were unassimilated, unwelcome, and unprotected, and thoroughly isolated from the Catholic Church. The Catholics who arrived from Mexico felt isolated and stopped exercising their religion. Mary Julia Workman noticed how Protestant groups reached these immigrants, she realized how these Catholics had put aside their religion and the clergy did not have any interest to approached them. Mary Julia Workman wrote, “these children, these poor people are ours, and their

---

126 Fogelson, The Fragmented Metropolis, 188.
faith is being exposed to danger—Think of many of these people, poor as poor can be, living in rooms crowded and yet bare all that brightens or encourages, think of them ignorant of their faith, because of a million circumstances that God alone knows, and wonder as I do, how they could resist those who reach them a helping hand.”¹²⁷ Those poor Mexicans immigrants were people with deeply rooted traditions and strong beliefs. The Mexican culture and the Catholic religiosity that was taught by their ancestors and of which they were proud to exercise. The American Catholics was so striking that the clergy looked upon the religious practices of the Mexicans with suspicion if not disdain.¹²⁸ With the expansion to the Southwest, the Catholic Church in the United States decided to change the Mexican-Spanish priests and bring in a new clergy who did not understand the Mexican Catholic faith and culture in the city of Los Angeles.

¹²⁸ Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism*, 143.
Figure 9. Bishop Thomas Conaty. Circa 1903
Department of Archives and Special Collections,
William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

Figure 10. Boyle Heights Welcomes Cable Railway, 1879.
Department of Archives and Special Collections,
William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
MARY JULIA WORKMAN learned about immigrants’ needs at the College Settlement House, but it was during her time as a Kindergarten teacher that she realized the virtues of cultural differences between immigrant groups. Although Mary Julia’s influence was stemmed from Progressive activism, she began to distance herself from those groups that spread hate against immigrants and conceit their superiority against others. Women’s clubs, like Friday Women’s Club and other Progressive activists, celebrated that the United States’ conquest of the Southwest. Historian Gayle Gullett stated, “the women declared themselves patriots of white America. The United States was correct in appropriating Mexican land because this meant the victory of ‘civilization’ over ‘barbarism,’ of an advanced ‘white’ race over those backward races, Indian and Mexican, who stood in the way of Manifest Destiny.”

Mary Julia Workman had the need to distance herself from these social clubs because she realized that the idealism of the Progressive Movement set aside immigrant minorities and based its rhetoric on Anglo-Saxon religious and ethnic fundamentalism.

---

The College Settlement House, and other women organization like the Friday Women’s Club influenced to pass laws like juvenile court bills in the community. They called for the creation of a juvenile probation department and expanded their public role into a paid professional service paid by the government. They focused on youth’s habits, family background, culture, to upbring any offense committed.\textsuperscript{130} Most of the women in these clubs attempted to reshape a society that was corrupted by industrialization, immigration, and urbanization from an Anglo-Saxon and conservative point of view that defined much of American Progressivism. The College Settlement House was an instrument not to help immigrants, but to help the Anglo-American community to reform those deemed as criminals. It was a link between Anglo-Saxons and minorities but not understanding of the needs of the population. Therefore, Mary Julia Workman saw the need to create a new Settlement House and embrace the people in the dirty dusty streets of Sonoratown and the banks of the Los Angeles River.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Mary Julia Workman noticed the changes that the city suffered. “From a quiet pastoral pueblo, it had developed into a great city, stretching out in all directions,” wrote Mary Julia Workman describing her hometown. “An industrial district and a turmoil in traffic replaced the vineyards and the beautiful pioneer estates by the river.”\textsuperscript{131} The city had grown and new

\textsuperscript{130} Deverell, \textit{California Progressivism Revisited}, 174.

\textsuperscript{131} Mary Julia Workman, “Brownson House Settlement Work,” \textit{The Tidings}, Series 2, Box 3, Folder 8, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1.
inhabitants arrived. Mary Julia noted that “the streets full of ragged children of foreign aspect.” In describing the streets of Los Angeles, she elaborated that “dark, skinned, barefoot boys and girls who speak the sweet language of Spain… women with rebozos over their heads and babies in their arms, swarthy Mexican labors returning from work, all will pass one on the way.”132 Those Mexicans lived hidden in poverty and segregation, or as the city official described it, “out of sight in the brush.”133 The need to create a Catholic Settlement House to reach those poor Catholics began in 1901. It was not the first settlement house in the Pacific Coast, as it was preceded in Los Angeles by the College Settlement, or Casa Castellar as it was well known. She learned from Casa Castellar and El Hogar Feliz how to carry out the social work that many people, mostly Catholics, needed, as Mary Julia described, “it was at that settlement house, as volunteer worker in a little girls’ club, that I saw the possibilities of a Catholic Settlement House.”134

Reverend John J. Clifford, the priest of Saint Vibiana’s Cathedral, noticed the need for spiritual care of Mexican immigrants and viewed it as a responsibility of the Catholic Church. Mary Julia Workman saw those immigrants in the streets living in deplorable conditions. There was a need to reach them as Catholics and poor immigrants who lived in the slums of Los Angeles. Reverend Clifford

133 Deverell, Whitewashed Adobe, 110.
134 Mary Julia Workman, “Letter to Mr. Jamison,” Workman Family Papers, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Mary Julia Workman, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
presented the initiative to the Ladies’ Aid Society at Saint Vibiana’s Cathedral. He addressed the members, urging Catholic social work for the foreign and poor residents of Los Angeles. Mary Julia Workman took the lead of the group. On March 29, 1901, the Brownson House Settlement Association was organized to serve the poor and unprotected immigrants in the city. Bishop George Montgomery sanctioned them with the purpose of establishing a Catholic neighborhood center in a district of Los Angeles where living conditions were difficult, and where Catholics of foreign birth and poor circumstance abounded. Mary Julia Workman and other volunteers began what would be nineteen years of continuous work for a marginalized society.

Brownson Settlement House started with Sunday School with volunteers and professionals. By September 1901, volunteers started making home visits, and they began programs to improve living conditions at home. On average, volunteers visited 200 homes in the neighborhoods each month. The young women were taking housekeeping, washing, ironing, sewing, and cooking classes while young men were taught carpentry to make furniture, and equipment was provided to use in their homes. They tried to teach them any hand work skill to be able to work in the factories. The site where the Settlement house was established was full of children and adults from the neighborhood.

135 Maria Julia Workman, “The Brownson House,” The Tidings, 1913, Series 2, Box 3, Folder 8, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1.

136 “Know Your CYO,” Series 2, Box 3, Folder 9, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 2.
Mary Julia Workman stated that “the Settlement, based upon the principle of the unity of society, the brotherhood of many as an effort to overcome the segregation which takes place in modern centers of population where privilege and unprivileged classes become more and more widely separated by conditions of life.”\(^{137}\) These visits were to understand their needs. It also served so that there was a mutual understanding and to seek development in their environment and the capacity for adequate social assistance.

The work at the Brownson House was more than expected in a poorly equipped cottage at 422 Aliso Street. Sociologist, economist, social reformer, and priest John O’ Grady wrote that “Miss Workman made her settlement an educational center in a real sense. It was a place where the families of the poor might go for the things they needed, but which they could not secure in other ways.”\(^{138}\) Since its conception, Brownson Settlement House stated a mission in the neighborhood:

“to establish and maintain a Catholic Social Settlement which shall be a center for personal service and mutual helpfulness, for civic, social, and religious betterment in sections of Los Angeles where conditions of living are difficult, and where Catholics of poor circumstances and foreign birth abound. To preserve their spirit of mutual friendliness, respect and service in all relations of their Association with its neighbors of every race and creed.”\(^{139}\)

\(^{137}\) Maria Julia Workman, “The Brownson House,” 2.
\(^{139}\) Mary Julia Workman, “The Activities of Brownson House”, The Tidings, Series 2, Box 3, Folder 8, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1.
It was a house that welcomed Italian, Slovenian, Armenian, Austrian, Polish, Russian, and mostly Mexican boys and girls, men, and women. All of them found a home in the Brownson House.

The Brownson House became a center for the oppressed and outcast who were not able to fit in the growing metropolis of Los Angeles. The Reverend Martin Keating wrote that “the real cause of evil is the abuse of the individual power and liberty; the theory that the owner is the absolute master of his goods to use them or abuse them as he pleases. This has never been Catholic doctrine.” In a lecture given at the Brownson House, Keating said, “when, therefore, a great portion of the nation’s property and wealth is so administered by its owner that a large proportion of the people are deprived of the opportunity of obtaining a decent livelihood or a just remuneration for their labor, then the general right is violated and it becomes the duty of the state to protect the commonwealth.”140 Workman and Keating believed that the idea of “sharing” stimulated the imagination of the people and was an important factor in strengthening their morale and building up their self-confidence. They infused these beliefs into the training and education they carried out in their neighborhood.141 Mary Julia wrote, “the Settlement brings together the various elements of society so that by personal contact, a mutual understanding may

---

140 “Sociology,” The Tidings, 1916, Series 2, Box 2, Folder 1, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 1.
develop, mutual assistance may be rendered, the vision of all may be broadened, and genuine cooperation may result.”\textsuperscript{142} Both the volunteers and Mary Julia had in mind the Divine mandate: “Love your neighbor as yourself,” regardless of race and religion for the common good of a society that seeks prosperity.

When she began her decades long efforts to serve the neediest corners of Los Angeles, it was not easy. Workman wrote that “there are hundreds of children and many, many parents that we cannot reach because we have so few to work and such limited resources.”\textsuperscript{143} They had a few volunteers and just two paid workers. Nonetheless, the Settlement House became successful. Besides religious instruction and Mass on Sundays and Holidays, they worked with the government, including entities like the public welfare departments and clothing bureau to supply the poor. They had specialized activities, like sewing clubs for girls and toymaking workshops for boys. In addition, they provided medical assistance, a library, and a playground was available for the children. Also, Mary Julia organized dances and entertainment for the neighborhood, including music and folk dance lessons. The activities increased as different needs reached the house. The financial support was important to provide these services. Mary Julia remembers, “we had to educate ourselves, to educate our financial supporters

\textsuperscript{142} Mary Julia Workman, “The Activities of Brownson House,” 1.
\textsuperscript{143} Mary’s Letter LXVII, \textit{Golden Friendship}, 182. Series 2, Box 3, Folder 1, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
and to gain the confidence and cooperation of our foreign-born neighbors, mostly of Mexican origin.”

The success of the Brownson Settlement Association called the attention of the new Bishop, Reverend T. J. Conaty, who visited to examine the activities done in the house. Bishop Conaty became a friend of Mary Julia Workman and supported the work done in the Settlement House. In 1904, he authorized a plan to erect a new building. Writing to Sister Mary Leopold, Mary Julia reported that “our Brownson House is almost finished. Early in the year we shall move into it . . . it is a nice little place and gives us many opportunities we had not before.” On January 8, 1905, the new building was inaugurated with an impressive ceremony officiated by Bishop Conaty. The place, located at 711 Jackson Street, had adequate space and the number of active volunteers increased to 34. Also, there were 11 volunteer teachers in the Sunday School including three Spanish teachers. Mary Julia stated, “there is tremendous work for the lay Catholic to do in a genuine social reform. We can never hope for statistical perfection, but we can always strive to raise the social standard of living and give equal opportunities.”

---

144 Mary Julia Workman, “Mt. St. Mary’s College,” February 19, 1947. Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 20, Folder 13, Workman Family Papers, CLSA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 2.
145 Bishop Thomas J. Conaty replaced Bishop George T. Montgomery in 1903.
146 Mary’s Letter LXVI, Golden Friendship, 180.
147 “Know Your CYO,” 3.
house increased. The objective was to do constructive social work and promote the cause of civic social work and religious betterment.\textsuperscript{149}

The house welcomed people from all nationalities and religions. With the new building, they added neighborhood bathhouses and mothers could bring their families for a weekly bath. Also, mothers could bring their kids weekly to be examined by doctors and learn how to take care for themselves and their little ones.\textsuperscript{150} There was no religious test in its work and the religious rights were respected. Again, in this respect, the organization’s aim was to do constructive social work. Their attendance was up to 1000 visitors per week on average, and besides education and playground for children. Finally, another service done at the Brownson House was the pure milk distribution with the Municipal Child Welfare.\textsuperscript{151}

Despite having acquired a new property, Mary Julia Workman lamented the lack of help, volunteers, and workers. She admired the work of the Protestants. She noticed that Protestants who were paid by Home Missionaries Societies visited Mexican neighborhoods to proselytize to Catholics who rarely attended church and who knew little about their own religion. Mary Julia wrote to Sister Mary Leopold, “the people need their faith and it must be brought close to

\textsuperscript{149} Yearbook of Brownson House Settlement Association of Los Angeles, 1913. Workman-Temple Museum Archives.

\textsuperscript{150} “Seeking Aid for Babies,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, May 17, 1915, Series 2, Box 3, Folder 5, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

\textsuperscript{151} “A Catholic Settlement House in Los Angeles,” Series 2, Box 3, Folder 1, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
them, for they are not alive to their need.”

She wanted to have a Chapel in the Brownson House because she could not go to Mass into the Plaza Church with the children, and at times they could not see anything from the room of the sanctuary. The Settlement House increased their staff while more people reach out for help. Mary Julia Workman stated, “there are forty active volunteer workers, both men and women, in service at Brownson House…. these volunteer workers live at home, and come regularly in their appointed time, to conduct the various clubs and classes.”

Mary Julia was the president, but she was also one more volunteer. In the mornings she exercised her teaching profession in kindergarten and was also in charge of the care of her parents. Her brother Thomas recalled,

My dear Mary Julia who cared for both Mother and Father during their old age and who founded Brownson House. I first knew it at the corner of Vignes and Jackson Street just west of river between First and Aliso. I used to drive her in the Stoddard-Dayton to Mass on Sunday at St. Vibiana’s Cathedral at 7:00 o’clock and then drop her off at the Settlement House. What a great soul she was, strong in her religion, dedicated citizen, always ready to help anyone or any good cause.

The dedication to the children of Settlement House and her kindergarten classes lasted nineteen years. As Bishop Montgomery told her, “Keep up the good work,

---

152 Mary’s Letter LXVII, Golden Friendship, 185.
154 Thomas Edgar Workman, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
Mary…. If we had half a dozen Mary Workmans in Los Angeles, we would make of it a City of Angels indeed."\textsuperscript{155}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure11.jpg}
\caption{Mary Julia at College Settlement House.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{155} Mary's Letter LXXIII, \textit{Golden Friendship}, 196.
Kindergarten Teacher

In 1902, after graduating, Mary Julia Workman began to work as assistant teacher at Castellar Street public school by the College Settlement house. In this poor neighborhood by Sonoratown, most of the students were Mexican and Italian immigrant children. Beside teaching the children at the Kindergarten, she was able to give the parents of her students a well-rounded understanding of American citizenship, and the responsibilities in the country at the settlement house. Her second school as assistant teacher was the Second Street School by her home on the bluffs of Boyle Heights, where forty percent of the students were children from Russian families. The school was two blocks from her house. She decided to work there because it was close to the Brownson House and her parents’ house. The Victorian two stories brick house had a huge rose garden where Mary Julia used to take her young students to walk and listen family stories. Over the next two decades, she became schoolteacher in Los Angeles during the morning, and, at evening, she was the volunteer leader as president of the Brownson Settlement House.

By 1905, once she received her certificate as kindergarten teacher, Mary Julia decided to teach by her home at Boyle Heights at the Utah Street school

---

156 “Miss Mary, 91: ‘Mother’ to L.A’s Children”, Los Angeles Times, May 13, 1962, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 2 and folder 11, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

157 “Early Memories” Series 2, Box 5, Folder 17, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
where most of the children were immigrants. In the early twentieth century, factories in the city relied upon cheap immigrant labor. While parents worked long shifts, children attended school with their younger siblings. Mary Julia noted that “you see little girls carrying babies at school, and in school you see babies sitting up at the desk in their brother’s or sister’s lap.”

There was immense poverty in industrial cities because the factories underpaid their workers. Families had the need to work long shifts, and some children had to work to help with the household expenses.

By the 1890s, the Kindergarten Movement became a center piece of the Progressive Era, promoting education to young children in the industrial cities of the United States. Across the country, kindergarten teachers were at the forefront of the social reform including an improvement in the educational system. Mary Julia Workman decided to be part of this Movement, enrolling the State Normal School to become a kindergarten teacher.

The Kindergarten Movement began in Chicago, where the Froebel methods influenced education programs at the Hull House. By 1890, the Froebel method was spread to normal schools throughout the United States. Froebel’s methodology consists of respect for the freedom of the child. In this method,

---

159 Michael E. Engh, “Responding to Urban Poverty: Mary Julia Workman and Brownson Settlement House of Los Angeles, 1900-1920” Series 1: Box 2, Folder 12, Workman Research Materials CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 6.
160 State Normal School, now UCLA, was located at 5th avenue and Grand in Downtown Los Angeles.
children had the opportunity to express themselves. Froebel argued that with games children develop forms of creative activity. With this method, the child developed activities with her mother and in a group to project the inner states of the child with the outside world. With Froebel's principles, the kindergarten developed language activities, games, crafts and art that provided mental development of the child from an early age.161

The Kindergarten Movement was sought to intensify early education during the Progressive Era. In the 1890s, Progressive activists wanted to include and fund kindergarten as part of the public school system in California. In 1896, the State Normal School in Los Angeles began to train future teachers. The Los Angeles Unified School District opened kindergarten schools around the city including new neighborhoods like Boyle Heights.

The growth of the city expanded to the west where immigrants came to inhabit these new communities. Mary Julia Workman decides to start her career as a teacher in boundaries of Boyle Heights where a group of Russian immigrants began to inhabit what was El Paredón Blanco. They were from the Molokan ethnic group, who suffered persecution because the Russian Orthodox Church considered them heretical.162 Mary Julia learned about their religion, their worship, their chants, and the way they dressed. She saw how the Russian children were able to adapt to American life. She noticed how Russians quickly

---

162 Sanchez, Boyle Heights, 42.
found jobs and they were able to demand high wages. She noticed that the children were intelligent, industrious, sturdy, ambitious, and self-reliant. From her perspective, they seemed to be the opposite to the Mexican children, who were clever, and as she described them as “easy-going, good-natured, and indolent but gentle and amiable.”

Teaching gave to Mary Julia the opportunity to know different kind of immigrants arriving in the U.S. in the early 1900s. She was able to work with a multi-ethnic group of students and understand their needs and how they were treated in society.

For Mary Julia, teaching was a virtue and she understood how skillful a teacher had to be with the students to guide them. She understood the vital energy that the teacher had to have to provide the appropriate stimulation to the student. She stated that a teacher does not have to be a dictator in the classrooms. The love for kindergarten gave her the tools to influence the education of the infants, where the children learned and understood that the rights of others are equal to themselves. For Mary Julia, it was important for children to learn sacrifice, reference, and to obey laws with justice and wisdom. She believed that children had to learn the use of free will in their lives while acknowledging justice above all things. Mary Julia believed that it is in this place, the kindergarten, where children could learn to express themselves and tell stories of their life, tell their experiences at home, such as experiences with pet animals, nature, other children, neighbors, and family. Every year, after Easter,

---

they learned the universality of the human family where the stories of other races and religions are told to understand the world where they lived. Mary Julia wrote, “the development of the subject must be logical and solid and yet attractive. Its purpose is to make the child…to lead him to think.”

Mary Julia Workman attended a lecture by Edward Howard Griggs on “Human Progress.” Griggs was a lecturer and educator that published several books. Mary Julia read Giggs' book *New Humanism*, in which he wrote, “the progress of history is measured, not by the spread of material conquests or the accumulation of the equipment of civilization, but by the transformation of the universe into the life of the spirit, by the progressive emancipation of the individual and the deepening and widening of the content of his personal life.”

With Griggs, Mary Julia learned more about social reconstruction and social reform. Both ideas came along with Progressivism at the beginning of the 1900s. Progressives believed that elite women would strive for social peace and reform, not revolution. Indeed, the kindergarten movement served to advance through education in the industrial cities. Social changes should come from cultural incorporation and seek the social, economic, and political development of immigrants in American society. Women of social position should engage in social work that would achieve social justice and social peace. Indeed, in

---

Progressivism, social reconstruction in education asserts that students should be able to critically examine present culture and resolve the inconsistencies, controversies and conflicts.

Mary Julia Workman learned Froebel’s methodology and how the mental, physical, and spiritual state were important for everyone within the community and oneness with God.\textsuperscript{167} The Progressive Movement took this philosophy and applied it in kindergarten and early child education. It was the Christian morality, ethics and character that would be able to fit a natural desire to improve the suffering of the poor young children in the industrial cities of the United States. Griggs stated, “that which is most intimately personal is most universally human; and the religion which consists in the inner faith and attitude of the individual is always that which unites one with all in pursuit of the high aims of life.”\textsuperscript{168} Mary Julia applied her teaching career both in kindergarten and at Brownson House. She stated that, “each man must live his own best life, and strengthen his own soul: The spiritual is the true aim, but we must make use of the gifts of nature, not ignore or shun them.”\textsuperscript{169}


\textsuperscript{168} J.R. McDonald, 413.

\textsuperscript{169} Mary’s Letter LXXXVII, \textit{Golden Friendship}, 220.
Figure 12. Mary Julia Workman Diploma of Graduation. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

Figure 13. Brownson House Settlement Yearbook. Workman-Temple Homestead Museum Archives, City of Industry.
As disabled rights activist, in 2020, Alice Wong wrote in her book, *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century*, “disabled people have always existed, whether the word disability is used or not .... Disability is pain, struggle, brilliance, abundance, and joy...Being visible and claiming a disabled identity brings risks as much as it brings pride.”

In the peak of the Progressive Era, the eugenics movement began to flourish against immigrants and disabled people in the United States. Mary Julia Workman began to go against this movement helping immigrants with a public health program in the Brownson House that would meet their needs to preserve life and give rehabilitation to disabled, mostly immigrant, children.

Eugenics and scientific racism influenced immigration laws restricting the entrance to disable people and non-white immigrants. Since 1907, during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, the Immigration Act and the Dillingham Commission was created to study the problem of immigration in the United States, which had accelerated in that same year with approximately 1.2 million immigrants reported at the ports of entry. This commission had the objective of establishing the parameters for immigrants according to their racial and physical criteria. The commission set recommendations that, according to historian

---


Katherine Benton-Cohen, “included placing limits on those who ‘by reason of their personal qualities or habits, would least readily be assimilated or would make the least desirable citizens.”\textsuperscript{172} The Commission created the term “new immigrants” to refer to southern and eastern Europeans. Differences between “old” and “new” immigrants were described as of “racial” origin and who was fit enough to live in the US. Immigration increased during the Progressive Era in the United States, creating a fear against "new immigrants" and those who had disabilities because they were not considered adequate for American democracy.

The racist and ableist mentality of the eugenics movement influenced The Dillingham Commission. By 1907, while the Immigration Act required a medical certificate for any foreigner who could be considered "mentally or physically deficient" which might affect their ability to earn a living, the Commission sent to the congress the “Dictionary of Races or Peoples.”\textsuperscript{173} It is in this document that the skin color, and the language is classified according to the parameters of the white American scientists. For example, according to historian Benton-Cohen, “concerns about the racial fitness of “new immigrants” were most evident in the Commission’s discussion of southern Italians, whom it distinguished from northern Italians as a “long-headed, dark, ‘Mediterranean’ race of short stature” more prone to “all crimes, and especially violent crimes.”\textsuperscript{174}

\textsuperscript{172} Katherine Benton-Cohen, \textit{Inventing the Immigration Problem}, 35.
Italians is how the commission integrated the physical and mental reasons of a population to set parameters and stereotype ethnic groups that they considered unfit to enter the country.

The racist rhetoric against non-Anglos and the anti-Catholicism that increased during the Progressive Era reached the city of Los Angeles with the increase of Mexican immigration. Some women's clubs began to create forms of persecution against what they considered social pollution. Women's clubs promoted laws against sexual delinquency aimed at minorities. There was an anxiety about the population growth in these communities and it was perceived that there was a growth in prostitution among young immigrants. While young immigrant women had to work the streets to meet their economic needs, Progressive and conservative groups took a eugenic approach and sought to create juvenile delinquency laws to stop prostitution among minority groups because they feared that prostitution would cause social problems and were concerned about population growth among non-white minorities.

Maria Julia Workman believed in respect for life from before birth to the last minute of the individual’s existence, contradicting the rhetoric that was gestating during the Progressive Era. She decided to work from the Brownson House creating a clinic for preventive medicine and to help pregnant women. This clinic would be an asylum for children with disabilities and people with other health needs. Her writings were permeated with her attitude toward the respect for life, as she wrote, “we must consider the law of God, the rights of the
individual, and the social effect.”\textsuperscript{175} She believed in the rehabilitation of teenagers who committed crimes in the streets and to provide support to single mothers to get ahead with their children. In her writings, she described how young people who were delinquents approached the Brownson House to seek help to become better citizens, and how the community needed affordable health clinics to improve their lives. With the creation clinics in the Brownson House, they expanded the services for those most in need, especially children with disabilities and pregnant women.

The Brownson Settlement House had three clinics. The Dispensary for Crippled Children sought to cure children of physical disabilities and provide them with accommodations as needed. The Infant Welfare Station, under Los Angeles Health Department, helped babies to have proper examination, medicine and food. The Maternity Dispensary gave prenatal care and helped expectant mothers. The three clinics helped those most in need regardless of their religion or race. Most of them were Mexican immigrants who came to seek proper health services.

The Dispensary for Crippled Children was maintained at the Brownson House Settlement. It was free for all to get advanced treatment from a professional doctor.\textsuperscript{176} Six months after opening they will reach up to 200

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{175} Mary Julia Workman, “The Hopelessly Defective,” Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 2, Folder 15, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{176} “Sociology,” The Tidings, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 1, Workman Research Material, CSLA-35.}
patients. Much corrective work was done and many children were saved from preventative disabilities.\textsuperscript{177} Clementina De Forrest Griffin, one of the volunteers wrote about how the doctors helped little babies with their disabilities. Dr. Saphro and Dr. Carling, who were orthopedic specialist, helped without a monetary fee to a mother who brought her little child. Griffin wrote, “the mother was immediately instructed in the manipulation of the tiny ankles and feet and as soon as the baby was old enough the feet were strapped. The child has since been entirely cured.”\textsuperscript{178} The need to have an orthopedic dispensary was necessary in the community for poor children and mostly immigrants who could not pay for treatment. On October 22, 1914, Brownson House opened the Free Dispensary for Crippled and Deformed. In the next seven month, 310 children were treated. Hopeless poor kids with deformities were treated for various ailments and disabilities. Boys and girls with paralysis were treated. Professional doctors charged a small amount of fees to the Association for their service but nurses were volunteers. In describing the work of the Dispensary, Workman explained that “the little twisted hands and feet can be straightened; the useless limbs may be strengthened to greater usefulness; the crooked backs may be benefited by

\textsuperscript{177} “A Catholic Settlement House in Los Angeles,” 1915, The Tidings, 41, Series 2, Box 3, Folder 8, Workman Research Material, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

\textsuperscript{178} Mary Julia Workman, “Brownson House: A Centre of Social Service,” The Tidings, 59, Series 2, Box 3, Folder 8, Workman Research Material, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
the best modern scientific methods and much care and patience. Mothers are taught the best methods of caring and assisting the children."\(^{179}\)

At a time when being a person with a disability was frowned upon in a society that sought human perfection, the clinic at Settlement House was a relief to mothers desperate to see their children somehow cured or rehabilitated. During the Progressive Era, people with some disabilities or poor physical formation were segregated and treated with inferiority. Progressives who embraced eugenics sought to eradicate and prevent more children from being born with disabilities. In 1903, Harry Laughlin, an educator and eugenicist, stated that for the nation to succeed, it needed to limit its expanding poor, as well as its intellectually, physically, and morally defective citizens. Eugenicists like Laughlin began to push laws against disabled people. Dr Henry Clay Sharp was an Indiana doctor who believed that degenerate classes were increasing, which included the so-called insane, epileptic, imbecile, prostitutes, sexual perverts, poor, and orphans. Eugenicists believed in forced sterilization to people and with physical disabilities. Their bodies were to be disabled for democracy if they were not able to perform their labor at the factories or farms.\(^{180}\) The Brownson House clinics stood against these movements in two important ways: they were

---

\(^{179}\) Mary Julia Workman, “The Activities of Brownson House,” The Tidings, 41, Series 2, Box 3, Folder 8, Workman Research Material, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

dedicated to the preservation of life and the rehabilitation of children with disabilities who were discriminated against and segregated in American society.

By 1916, the idea of creating a school for disabled children was put forward where specialists and assistants could live with children and help them to excel in society. Mary Julia stated that, “the future plans were to establish a school for crippled children where they may receive an education while undergoing treatment or, when the deformity is incurable, where they may be given the special attention necessary to prepare them to earn a living in the future.”

By this year, there were three clinics in operation at the center, orthopedic, infant, and maternity. They began to charge a minimum fee to whoever can pay, but most of the financial needs were covered by donations.

As society was changing from being an agricultural society to an industrial one—where labor and civil rights lacked protection as much as people with disabilities, the elderly or racial minorities—activists like Mary Julia Workman tried to integrate people with disabilities into the workplace. They tried to give them a dignified life and put aside the social and religious paradigms. Mary Julia knew the social environment determined the health of people. It is until a century later, 2014, that the CDC (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and WHO (World Health Organization) have created an analytical study of how the social

---


182 Know Your CYO, Series 2, Box 3, Folder 9, Workman Research Material, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
environment affects and benefits children. With the Commission on the Social Determinants of Health they have defined Social Determinant of Health as “the conditions in which people are grow, live, work and age” and "the fundamental drivers of these conditions."183 Mary Julia was a forerunner of what is now called Social Determinism of Health by observing, analyzing and finding a solution for poor disabled children. She knew that their families’ income and their education went hand in hand with their health because those factors determined their social development. Mary Julia realized that the health problem with the disabled children had to be resolved immediately because otherwise it would affect their future.

In the Progressive Era, according to historian Kim Nielsen, “policies were put in place to carefully monitor the bodies of those entering the United States and sterilize the deviant bodies of those already within the nation’s gates. Sexuality, class, race, gender, and ethnicity forcibly intersected with notions of disability and quality citizenship.”184 Poor immigrant families came to these clinics without previous medical help. Pregnant women came looking prenatal services and mothers came with their disabled children hoping to get any kind of rehabilitation. They resided in the city of Los Angeles, but also, they came from

---


184 Nielsen, A Disability History of the United States, 140.
other counties and cities. This is the case of a Mexican mother who fled with her five young children from the bloody Mexican Revolution. She was a poor peasant who did not speak English. She was able to find asylum at Brownson House. The volunteers noticed that the youngest child was disabled. The doctors examined the baby and they realized the child was able to get rehabilitation in the clinic. The child had a congenital clubfoot and had been walking on the ankle bone for some time. He was three years old.\(^{185}\) Five months later, he was cured and was able to play with his four siblings and friends in the patio of the Brownson House.

What differentiated Mary Julia Workman in her social work with other Progressist was her respect for life. The purpose of Brownson House was to give a second chance to the disabled and to create rehabilitation and self-sufficiency programs for individuals. She said that not even a physician or social worker had a moral right over life. Mary Julia stated that we could seclude and care for those who are not safe for society but we cannot take away their right to procreate. Indeed, she criticized the tendency of the eugenics movement that promoted methods of sterilization for criminals, especially in non-white communities. With proper social justice, she believed that a lot could be done to develop individual and social responsibility and a lot could be done to improve people's social conditions. Mary Julia wrote, “the finest traits of human character have been

developed by the discipline and self-sacrifice entailed by the protection and service of the helpless."\textsuperscript{186}

\textit{Figure 14. Brownson House Volunteers, Nurses and Doctors, Circa 1916. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University}

\textsuperscript{186} Mary Julia Workman, "The Hopelessly Defective," Workman Family Papers, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 15, Mary Julia Workman, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
By 1910 there was an increase in Mexican refugees in the city of Los Angeles. They were families that lacked opportunities in their country and came with the hope of having better living conditions in a country that boasted of receiving immigrants. Ten years after Brownson House was established, the arrival of numerous immigrants increased the need to provide social work for those poor foreigners in the city. In addition to education and public health, Mary Julia began to provide employment and job training. Brownson Settlement House aim was to seek social justice in the poor neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

The demography was changing in the Los Angeles with the increase in immigrant population. Most of those immigrants were peasants from Mexico who could not read or write in Spanish and were unskilled laborers who did not speak English. Some of them were seeking a job in the farm fields around the city and beyond the county limits. Their children were on the streets of Los Angeles, working selling newspapers or shining pedestrian’s leather footwear on the Plaza. Families with children were often staying in a small shanty house made with old wood and bricks in deplorable conditions. The Mexican diaspora caused by the Mexican Revolution brought thousands of immigrants to Los Angeles in the 1910s.

At the beginning of the 1900s, a social conflict that unleashed a bloody revolution in Mexico began against President Porfirio Diaz, who had a corrupted
and dictatorial government at the service of rich Mexican landowners and foreign industries. The government allowed labor exploitation against peasants and workers, increasing poverty and misery, leaving them with a lack of education and public health. By the end of the 1890s, the political and social setting in Mexico was defined by a wealthy ruling class, the political class, and the Catholic Church. The wealthy ruling class were the landowners and foreign industrialists. Diaz increased railways routes with companies such as Union Pacific with the Mexican International Railroads and oil companies such as Pan American Petroleum and Transport Company owned by Edward W. Doheny.¹⁸⁷ The political class worked together with the president trying to stay in power and used all possible ways to silence their opponents who encouraged any opposition to President Díaz and his presidency such as the Flores Magón brothers who started a series of publications and propaganda against Díaz and his government in Mexico City. In 1904, The three brothers had to go into exile in the United States because Diaz began a persecution against political opponents of the regime. As founders of the Partido Liberal Mexicano, Flores Magon Brothers

¹⁸⁷ Myrna Santiago, “Culture Clash: Foreign Oil and Indigenous People in Northern Veracruz, Mexico, 1900-1921.” The Journal of American History 99, no. 1 (2012): 62–71. Doheny went to the Sierra Huasteca in the north of Veracruz and bought land and haciendas from the indigenous and mestizos’ owners to create oil wells. Some of the land was expropriated by the government from the Teenek communities who were the indigenous people living there for centuries. They witnessed the replacement of their homes and the tropical ecosystems by drilling rigs, pumping stations, pipelines, and huge open pit oil deposits and fires. Many of these indigenous people were forced to work in the oil companies. Others decided to go to the big cities like Tuxpan or Tampico and some indigenous people ended up emigrating to Los Angeles, California between 1913 to 1917.
stayed in Los Angeles to continue their political propaganda. The Catholic Church had enemies in Mexico who noticed how the religious institution had lucrative privileges over the state, such as education. Finally, the Church and the clergy fear to lose its political power and assets in Mexico. The advantage of the Catholic Church in Mexico was the influence and power in agrarian communities and the cities. Religion was part of the culture and traditions and it was practiced in every city and small town.

The Mexican identity and culture remained intact with the modernization that came during the Diaz dictatorship. By the 1890s, the industrialization promoted by Diaz began with the construction of railroad routes that connected the Mexican territory from the south up to the north to United States. The railroad routes from central Mexico to the north made it easier for the people to travel to the United States. Most of the Mexicans immigrants in the United States came from Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Michoacán. According to historian Ricardo Romo, before 1910, “the massive migration was that peasants lost their land because they were expropriated by private companies and wages fell while the price of food increased.” With the hacienda system, each owner kept a large amount of people working as slaves with a low salary and unjustified debt to the “tienda de

---

188 Sanchez, Boyle Heights, 82. In July 1907, Flores Magon brothers moved to downtown L.A. They gave speeches in the Plaza against the semi feudal conditions in Mexico. Sanchez, 82. The political party headquarters were in Los Angeles. Partido Liberal Mexicano: Mexican Liberal Party. It was founded in 1907.

189 Romo, East Los Angeles, 39.
Diaz allowed the enslavement of thousands of mestizos and indigenous workers who work in the haciendas, factories, and mines. The intellectual middle class began to question Diaz regime. In 1910, they began what would be a revolution that would last a few months with the exile of the dictator Porfirio Diaz. The seizure of power by Francisco I Madero did not finish with the social conflict in Mexico. Instead, civil war between military groups and revolutionary leaders caused thousands of displaced people to seek asylum in the U.S. in the 1910s.

The city of Los Angeles changed dramatically from 1910. Mexican immigration surpassed the Europeans that had arrived before 1900. Mexican refugees began to settle in the city and east Los Angeles river. According to historian William Deverell, “with the arrival of the new century, various city officials and reformers throughout the Los Angeles basin grew increasingly concerned about the larger numbers of Mexican laborers who had begun to live in colonias on the riverbend lands.” This migratory phenomenon was not accepted by the population in the city. Progressivism began a radical labor movement and racial hatred creating immigration laws such as restricting migration based on race and nationality. Nativism started the movement to purge

---

190 It was a commercial establishment in a hacienda, plantation, cattle farm, latifundio where workers were forced to obtain goods for their food and consumption, on account of their wages.


192 Cardoso, Mexican Emigration to the United States, 38.

193 Deverell, Whitewashed Adobe, 110.
foreigners from society with cultural elements of their place of origin because
they blamed any problem in society on those foreigners. The Los Angeles
Times referred to Mexican immigrants as the "uninvited guests." The Mexican
communities in the city were considered a place of low standard of living, with
crime and unemployment. In the opinion of many Progressive reformers, they
called Sonoratown part of the "indigenous slum." Historian David Roediger
stated, "some exclusionary rhetoric directed against new immigrants stopped
carefully short of condemning whole races and instead argued that the particular
poverty-stricken segments of the population migrating were made unfit for
citizenship by history as much as by biology." In an article written for The Tidings, Mary Julia Workman wrote about the
situation of Mexicans:

There are estimated to be 50,000 Mexicans in Los Angeles, almost one-
half of the total foreign population....it can easily be seen that the Mexican
problem is the greatest local human problem that we have, as citizens of
this community. Larger numbers of these people are pitifully poor and
helpless, the prey to insufficient food, and a lack of vitality consequent
upon undernourished bodies. They are of our faith, living in our midst, and
possess many native traits of unusual attractiveness. They are courteous,
appreciative, and responsive, gladly cooperating in efforts for any
amelioration for their conditions. With opportunity and education, many of
them could become skilled in some work of value to themselves and the
community.

Mary Julia wrote to the Catholics and non-Catholics of Los Angeles to be aware
of the need to help those immigrants who were fleeing a bloody war.

---

194 Romo, East Los Angeles, 90.
195 Estrada, The Los Angeles Plaza, 111.
196 Roediger, Working Toward Whiteness, 54.
197 Mary Julia Workman, "Brownson House: A Centre of Social Service", The Tidings, 61.
While others were blinded by racial hatred and failed to see that poor working conditions were the cause of most of the problems surrounding immigrant communities, Mary Julia Workman witnessed the problems in these poor neighborhoods. The government was not capable of solving these problems due to political conditions since the progressive politicians opted for a rejection of these immigrants. The help for immigrants was not only with education, or public health, but also in job training. Mary Julia stated, “Brownson House sees the need of developing workshops for industrial training along with practical work where unskilled adults who are handicap or by the lack of skill or by ignorance of the language, etc., could secure suitable employment due developing a measure of efficiency.”

The unemployed Mexicans gathered in a small park north of the plaza. They met in great numbers when they were unemployed. Mary Julia Workman walked these streets where Mexicans were waiting to be hired. Unfortunately, they did not have the skills to work in the factories, and they were hired in underpaid jobs. Their wages were small, but they were satisfied if they had a steady employment. She appealed to the private and public sector writing in *The Tidings*, “this matter of Mexican unemployment has hardly been

---


200 John Emmanuel Kynlee, *Housing Conditions Among the Mexican Population of Los Angeles*, A Thesis Presented to the Department of Sociology, University of Southern California, April 27, 1912. Workman Research Materials, Serie 2, Box 5, Folder 1, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
approached in Los Angeles and should be a matter of immediate and most serious consideration. It will have to be worked out by some public agency on a large scale with the cooperation of the public and private forces of the community.”

She encouraged lay people’s work, as she stated that “there is a distinct need for Catholic men and women who will give personal service in constructive social work among the poor and foreign population.”

The lack of food among the Mexicans hardened in winter when there was no harvest available to work and the peasants returned to the city with their families. The Brownson Settlement House was open to give some relief, but there was not enough for everyone. Mary Julia explained,

Every winter the Settlement suffers the same sad struggle on the part of the unskilled Mexican laborer. In the summer they take their families to the fruit ranchers around the city, whereby the confided efforts to children and parents, a little money is saved. Winter is the period of unemployment. The savings are inadequate. There is no doubt that this problem of industrial conditions of the larger Mexican population of Los Angeles should be seriously studied, and that public and private agencies should cooperate in its solution in order to deal with it adequately.

Brownson House began by helping to carry out essential activities to train Mexicans for work. Mary Julia stated, “everything is done to help solve the problem of unemployment which affects the unskilled Mexican laborer, especially during the winter months. Positions have been secured for Mexican women and girls, and the sale of Mexican hand work has been carried on through the

---

202 Mary’s Letter XCIX, Golden Friendship, 232.
Settlement." She elaborated that “a great effort is made to assist boys of working age to secure positions which promise advancement.” If there were no jobs available in the city, they had to organize themselves to do some trade and earn money. The Brownson House volunteers decided to organize and employ women in need. Mary Julia noted that “the field workers form groups of Mexican women to sew in their own homes and to make garments for their own children. The material is supplied from the Settlement clothing bureau and paid for by the labor expended.” During WWI, they found a way to help the Red Cross and earn money during the war. Mary Julia remembered that “Mexican women have gathered at the Brownson House to sew for the Red Cross and to help with clothing sales.” Mexican boys helped the U.S Food Administration to gather the crops from the Brownson House garden. Workman also recalled that “wrecks of humanity who came knocking at the Settlement door have worked in the garden in payment for clothing and food.” These activities were essential and served to sustain households while they got some formal jobs in factories or shops.

---

205 Mary’s Letter XCV, Golden Friendship, 234.
While members of the Liberal Mexican Party (PLM) concentrated on overthrowing President Díaz with their political propaganda, Mexican refugees were suffering in poverty and misery in the city of Los Angeles. During the Mexican Revolution, the PLM radical activities were aimed at social and political reform in their nation. While members of the PLM in exile did political proselytism in Los Angeles and protesting United States in their speeches at the Plaza, Mary Julia chose to seek the well-being of the poor Mexican refugees. At the same time, she noticed the Catholic Church turning its back on the poor. Seeing these poor immigrants in the city was a primary factor for her to criticize the Church for not seeing the needs of the people and only their economic and power interests.

The Catholic Church had the most influence in Jalisco, Michoacán, and Guanajuato. In 1914, Archbishop José Mora y del Río in Mexico City, and Archbishop Francisco Orozco y Jiménez in the city of Guadalajara, consecrated Mexico to Jesus's Sacred Heart. This act showed the religiosity and support to the Church by Mexican people. Yet, during the revolution anti-Catholic ideas influenced by Anarchism and Russian Bolshevism grew in Mexico City. Peasants and workers sought social equality and fair labor laws and they were against anti-religious demagogy. Significantly, most of the Mexican immigrants who arrived in

---

209 PLM: Partido Liberal Mexicano founded by the Flores Magon Brothers established their headquarters in downtown Los Angeles in 1907.
210 Sanchez, Boyle Heights, 42
Los Angeles came from these three states where they were fervent Catholics and supported their Church.

With the Mexican Revolution the population of Mexicans in the United States increased to 70,000 in 1915. Bishop Thomas Conaty noticed that the Protestant were proselytizing among them. Mary Julia observed that “the vast majority of the foreign people for whom this institution is being planned are Catholics by birth, by tradition, and by baptism. They are our brethren, of the very household of the faith. Shall we see their temporal helplessness and misery and pass them by, while a stranger starts to minister to them.”

The Protestants raised money to spend to reach those immigrants in the Mexican barrios, but they closed the door to them. The strong Catholic faith made the Mexican immigrants arrive in the city looking for a place that, beyond religion, provided them with health services, education, and work. Mary Julia wrote, “the fact remains that foreign born poor of our faith need special adequate work under Catholic auspices. We, Catholic lay workers, should be the first to recognize their need and the first to come to their assistance.” For Mary Julia the problem was not immigration, but rather how those immigrants had to adapt to a society that closed its doors to them. The only way was through job training and education. Mary Julia suggested to teach them to survive in an Anglo Protestant society that kept them cornered in a miserable way of life.

---


213 Mary Julia Workman, “Brownson House; a Social Service Center,” 31.
The Catholic Church forgot its mission to protect the poor, as Mary Julia Workman wrote to her friend Sister M. Leopold,

When a man or a woman is hungry, overworked or exploited, you cannot teach Catechism to him, you must first remedy his condition. When children live with eight or nine people in one room, you cannot expect the grace of First Communion to perform a miracle in every individual case and keep them decently moral.\(^{214}\)

The relationship Mary Julia had with the immigrant community led her to criticize the social situation in Mexico, as she wrote that the “Catholic people and press, in their talk about Mexico express no sympathy or interest in the political reform needed in Mexico, or in the achievement of liberty by the enslaved people of that unhappy land. Their only idea is the enforced subjection of the people in order that Church property and institutions may enjoy temporary security. I would be a false security, and a temporary one as history proves.”\(^{215}\) Her criticisms against the attitude of the church about the situation in Mexico was in favor of poor people and those in need. She saw those people coming to Los Angeles, poor and sick. They become her neighbors, students, and friends. She noticed the long struggle of the Mexican people toward the attainment of freedom and justice. The church saw only its interests to safeguard its power, and their assets. The Church in Mexico had to seek social justice where people can have a dignified life. Mary Julia criticized the Church by writing, “men cannot be


economically enslaved and religiously free." Mary Julia Workman proclaimed social justice for the poor and needy. She saw in her community how refugees arrived from different countries. She proclaimed, “the Church is eminently right in maintaining her freedom from governmental control but she will be robbed of her influence if she is not associated in this instance with constructive plans for human betterment. At least, her influence should be clearly toward advancement in the realization of social justice and true liberty.” The church was meddling in a conflict outside the country, leaving aside its true work, which is to promote the common good, ignoring the needs of the people who were on the lookout for the anarchists and socialists who promised a just society with bloody and unjust revolutions for those who have the least.

Both the church and the social leaders forgot about poor refugees. They forgot about those immigrants who lacked social justice. American Progressive politicians did not care about the poor people living in the barrio because they could not vote or participate in politics. The Mexican revolutionary movement landed on the streets of Plaza with speeches and propaganda that promised a better life in the home country while their conditions in Los Angeles were deplorable. Those immigrants had the hope to return to their country and they had the hope that the situation would change after the revolution. The utopian

---

216 Mary Julia Workman Letter to Bishop Cantwell, January 17, 1927, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.  
217 Mary Julia Workman Letter to Bishop Cantwell, January 17, 1927.  
218 Fogelson, The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles 1850-1930, 188.
rhetoric of a better nation after the civil war in Mexico was given at those speeches in the Plaza by the PLM. Flores Magon supporters felt more concern for the Mexico City government than fighting for their rights in Los Angeles. The Mexicans leaders did not approach the authorities and politicians of the city. Those speeches were mixed with Anarchist and Bolshevik rhetoric, which had influenced the Mexican revolutionary leaders and spread throughout the United States. In a religious country, that rhetoric against religion alarmed many, including Catholic Church.

Socialism and anarchism came to the city in the late 1890s. These ideas were brought from Europe by Italian and Russian exiles, who came to take refuge in the city. As historian George Sanchez writes, “they brought with them leftist ideologies of anarchism, socialism, communism, or communitarianism, that would flourish in Boyle Heights in various labor unions and political organizations.”219 This ideology against American capitalism and religion began to arrive in Los Angeles. Ricardo Flores Magon criticized the economic system of the United States. In his speeches, he criticized the mistreatment of workers by the American bosses and the PLM incited the uprising against the bourgeoisie.220 These acts alarmed the American government who decided to detain Ricardo Flores Magon in 1917.

219 Sanchez, Boyle Heights, 46.
220 Romo, East Los Angeles, 94.
Mary Julia Workman believed that radical Socialism and Anarchism was hitting the streets. However, the poor lacked things essential for social justice such as education, healthcare, work, and fair housing. She argued that Socialism came to destroy the essential values of society, such as the family. Mary Julia wrote that “ideas are weapons and knowledge is power. During the past century the weapon of false ideas has been taken the arsenal of the human mind and turned against the children of God.”

She criticized Protestant pastors who tried to adapt socialism to the Christian faith because in Europe, Socialism boasted of persecuting Christians and blaming Catholicism for poverty and oppression in industrial cities. Maria Julia proclaimed that the Christian faith provides the principles of social reform. She firmly stated that Socialism and Anarchism were the enemies of Christianity, but she sought to create awareness of social work. She wanted all the members of the Church to come together to give charity to those most in need: men and women in industries and urban settings. She sought to being together social leaders and priests organizing social activities with Catholic women leading social and constructive missions in communities.

Influenced by the *Rerum Novarum* encyclical written by Leon XIII, Mary Julia wanted to reach every corner of the city and bring social justice to the poor. As it

---

221 Mary Julia Workman Letter. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 2, Folder 20, Workman Family Papers. CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

222 Mary J. Workman, “Brownson House Settlement Work,” *The Tidings*, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 4, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
is written in the Pope’s letter, “God himself seems to incline to those who suffer misfortune; for Jesus Christ calls the poor blessed.”223

The social justice work carried out by Mary Julia was based on her Christian belief that charity to the neediest was her primary goal. She stated that the social reform done by the lay Catholic cannot be perfect, but, as she wrote, they “can always strive to raise the social standard of living and give equal opportunities.”224 As she saw the poor walking on the dusty streets of Los Angeles, she saw the Socialist ideology growing in the city. As she noted, “in theory one would think that the weapon of atheism, and therefore materialism, could not be used successfully to destroy the traditional concept of man, all the more so since in scriptural language the man is a fool who says there is not God.”225 The Russian and Mexican revolutions had Socialist overtones that were at their peak in 1917 when the First World War in Europe began. Along with propaganda, such as revolutionary radical Socialist books and pamphlets, it began to concern the US government and mainstream society. This is how the


225 Mary Julia Workman Letter. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 2, Folder 20, Workman Family Papers. CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
Progressive Movement increased the Americanization programs throughout the country among the immigrants in the United States in 1917.

Figure 15. Children With Newspapers in Sonoratown
Department of Archives and Special Collections,
William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
CHAPTER FOUR

AMERICANIZATION DURING THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

Settlement House Movement and Americanization

Americanization programs in the United States intensified after 1917 due to World War I and the Russian Revolution. However, Americanization in the settlement houses began in the late 1890s at Chicago's Settlement Houses, such as the Hull House, but there was no Americanization program as the one that emerged in the second decade of the twentieth century. The mission in these institutions was to teach immigrants the benefit of living in the United States and to pursue the American dream with conservative Christian values. When the U.S. government implemented Americanization programs with social and religious organizations, the Catholic Church intensified the Americanization program within the institution trying to educate and indoctrinate immigrants who arrived fleeing their countries due to social conflicts in the world such as the Mexican Revolution.

During the Progressive Era, programs emphasizing Americanization were encouraged in government, from state and municipal organizations to the White House. President Theodore Roosevelt not only had a fear that massive influx of immigrants would cause the "racial suicide" of white Americans, but he also
incited the need to Americanize immigrants.\textsuperscript{226} The relationship of Progressives and Americanization had different stages due to the social conjecture such as the exponential growth of immigrants during the first two decades of the century from which the nation was transforming. At the beginning of the labor movement in the 1890s, Teaching Americanism also taught whiteness to the southern and eastern non-Protestant Europeans.\textsuperscript{227} By the 1900s, women tried to redefine the meaning of the U.S citizenship. In 1911, California women won the right to vote and lead education with the Kindergarten Movement, promoting patriotism to children at an early age. Mary Julia Workman recalled that “until 1917 and the world war, moreover, the word Americanization was not in the popular vocabulary.”\textsuperscript{228} Businessmen, clubs, settlement workers and educators began the Americanization movement to acculturate immigrants from different parts of the world, like Russians and Mexicans. Most Progressives opposed immigration restrictions but embraced the Americanization movement just after World War I. The most important women organizations in California joining the campaign were the California chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the California Federation of Women’s Clubs.\textsuperscript{229}

\textsuperscript{226} Sanchez, \textit{Boyle Heights}, 60.
\textsuperscript{227} David R. Roediger, \textit{Working Toward Whiteness}, 91.
\textsuperscript{228} Mary Julia Workman, “Presidential Report,” June 6, 1920, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
During the first decade of the twentieth century, most of the immigrants who came to Los Angeles were from Italy, Russia, and Southeast Europe. In the Progressive Movement, a group of puritanical moralists felt that society was sick and believed they had the duty to cure it with laws prohibiting certain behaviors, ranging from the political, economic, and social, while trying to maintain white European Protestant ideologies. One approach to Americanization came from the 1890s, not from their hopes for reform but from their nationalistic anxieties. Nativism became a movement of antipathy toward aliens, their institutions, and their ideas such as religion and language. Since the entire Americanization movement was meant to reflect a demand for a more united nation, it was characteristic that the campaign had its essential beginning in the new hereditary patriotic societies. Most of them were the decedents of the Civil War who sought to compose the fractured society trying to unite the country with the nationalistic rhetoric developed in the industrial cities.

After the Civil War, the second industrial revolution of the Gilded Age attracted millions of immigrants from Europe. Businessmen needed immigrants to work in their factories. Cities began to grow with poorer and needy people from different nationalities. To prevent a fragmentation in society, Americanization programs focused on uniting the nation in one community, in what the historian Benedict Anderson termed an “imagined community.” It is where all members

---

have the same cultural, nationalistic, and patriotic vision. They would not know each other but they will share the same values as fraternity regardless of their economic status or social condition. Benedict Anderson suggests that the printed propaganda such as newspapers, the church, and the government shape the people’s mentality. He stated that "it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship."232 During the Gilded Age, the United States sought to exalt the patriotic values of the nation to European immigrants, regardless of the labor struggles and repression in society. However, non-Protestant immigrant populations increased by 1890s, creating a tension between nativists and South and Eastern European immigrants, most often due to the anti-Catholic rhetoric impregnated in the American society.

Catholics immigrants from eastern and southern Europe reached places like Chicago, New York, and Detroit, increasing the population as many as 25 million between 1865 to 1915.233 This alarmed Protestants who were looking for any scapegoat to blame Catholics for social or economic problems. By the 1890s, xenophobia and anti-Catholicism increased due to false propaganda and rumors against immigrants, particularly after the onset of the 1893 economic recession that began in the United States. Looking at their Catholic neighbors, Protestant nationalists believed they faced an enemy of the nation. They

considered them soldiers of the Pope and Rome emissaries who intended to conquer America and impose their religion.

Besides the hatred suffered by these immigrants, there was also a division within the Catholic Church among immigrant groups in the United States.\(^\text{234}\) For example, many Irish Catholic leaders zealously denounced the Polish Americans due to their rites in parishes and Italian American nonsupport of parishes and parochial schools.\(^\text{235}\) Each immigrant group was inclined to organize its own parishes, creating a religious segregation within the Catholic Church.\(^\text{236}\) By the 1900s, the political and economic influence in the big industrial cities by the Irish Catholics would take the Democratic Party, and during the Progressive Era, the Catholic Church would serve as an ally of the government in undertaking Americanization among new Catholic immigrants. In California, in 1915, Archbishop of San Francisco, Irish descendant, Edward Joseph Hannah, joined the California state government at the Commission of Immigration and Housing of California. With Simon Lubin as the Commission's President, Bishop Hannah promoted better living conditions for immigrants and conducted Americanization and civic education for them. Edward Hannah influenced on Italian and German Catholic immigrants in San Francisco, and he served in the state government as mediator with the workers and immigrants during his archbishopric from 1915 to

\(^{236}\) Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism*, 91.
1935. The objective was that immigrants had to assimilate and develop within American society as Orestes Brownson suggested in the 1850s.

The Catholic Church had to ally themselves with the American nationalist rhetoric to be accepted and put aside the rejection of the Protestants who thought that Catholicism was faithful to the Pope and Rome as a nation. Historians and sociologists agree in concluding that the Catholic Church, as a religious institution, helped in the Americanization of thousands of immigrants.

Figure 16. Brownson Settlement House Association. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
Americanization in California

With the routes of the railroad expanding to the west, industrialization brought new immigrants to Los Angeles. According to historian Don Parson, “the city’s population increased in tandem with its economic growth: from 102,000 in 1900 to 1,237,000 by 1930.” 237 The cities in the California were growing with groups of immigrants who came from different countries; hence, nativists believed that “new immigrants were unfit to participate in the republican experiment of the United States.” 238 In San Francisco, attorney, and journalist editor from the weekly Truth, Bernette Haskell, described southern European immigrants as, “hordes of ignorant, barbarous, incompetent, incapable intractable slaves from the Mediterranean.” 239 Meanwhile, religious organizations saw an opportunity to proselytize among new immigrants and ministers considered that the first step to the Christian responsibility of assimilating immigrants was through the Social Gospel. 240 For instance, Protestant groups hoped to promote American values to Catholic immigrants including Mexicans that were approaching southern California, and through classes and recreational activities

238 Roediger, Working Toward Whiteness, 176.
240 Social Gospel was a movement within Protestantism. The objective was to apply Christian ethics to social problems, especially social justice issues like economic inequality, poverty, alcoholism, crime, racial tensions.
to promote American traditions as they approach immigrants trying to teach the white American culture and the promotion and conversion of Mexican Catholics to Protestantism.241

Progressive activists knew that the way to acculturate a society should begin from basic and elementary education like kindergarten. During the Kindergarten Movement, the government sought to use schools to promote nationalism and begin to Americanize young immigrants in schools. Mary Julia Workman wrote her experience in the classroom at the Utah Street School, “When I hear the school children with uplifted hands, pledge allegiance to the flag. I can feel the blood tingle in my veins. I believe that we need to have these feelings stirred in us, both in religion and in patriotism.”242 The government began to influence Americanization programs in schools, but beyond the classroom, government programs failed for Mexican immigrants due to the egocentric and mentality of superiority that defined much of the Progressive Era.

The result of the Americanization efforts and the proselytizing activity during the Progressive Era was a failure for some who believed that the only thing they achieved with the Mexicans was an attitude of anti-Americanization. The Americans went to the neighborhoods reaching the Mexicans houses with an attitude of inferiority trying to change their traditions, customs and promoting their religion. They claimed that immigrant communities were slums evoking

241 Ricardo Romo, East Los Angeles, 146.
242 Mary’s Letter LXXIV, Golden Friendship, 198.
disease, degradation, and ignorance that established the racial unfitness to society. According to historian Robert M. Fogelson, “the benevolent societies, religious congregations, and even commercial associations were less able to assimilate the newcomers, tie them together, protect their interest, and promote their goals.” Mexicans in Los Angeles at this time were an ethnic and cultural group that did not want to adapt to what was considered "American." It was about getting rid of their Mexican cultural and linguistic background.

Progressives believed that immigrants had to adapt to the nation's culture and traditions. Historian Gayle Gullet explains that “Progressives viewed Americanization as a tool to integrate immigrant workers into this interdependent society." Progressive institutions, such as the College Settlement House at Castellar Street, focused to help the privileged and unprivileged to a better understanding of their mutual obligations in society. Settlement houses were a way to integrate American society to the immigrants by adapting them to the local customs and traditions, leaving their culture behind. Nativists did not believe in the Progressive idea of the "melting pot" where the culture of foreigners and local customs were related to each other to create a new American identity and nationality. Conservatives believed that immigrants had to abandon their culture and traditions to assimilate Anglo-American culture.

---

243 Fogelson, The Fragmented Metropolis, 203.
244 Gullet, Becoming Citizens, 75.
245 Gullet, Becoming Citizens, 79.
The work of Americanization was not only civil or religious organizations but also governmental agencies began to take over the programs to educate immigrants. The California Immigration and Housing was created in 1913 and it is the example of how government and politics began to influence the charity organizations launching Americanization programs throughout the state. This agency focused on the housing conditions of the immigrant communities in cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles. It was created by Progressive Governor Hiram Johnson to help with Americanization in poor communities. The California Americanization plan was carried out and led by Mary Gibson. She was a member of the Protestant Conservative women’s club named Friday Morning Club. She was an officer of the California Federation of Women’s Clubs and leader of the women's Americanization effort in the state.

The Commission of Immigration and Housing noticed that Mexicans immigrants had a lack of initiative to be Americanized compared to other ethics groups. Mexicans lived segregated from the rest of Los Angeles and there was a problem of housing as factories began to be built by the river where they lived. By the mid-1910s, educators began Americanization programs that included home teaching, a special book for the immigrants, and house to house visitation by volunteers. The Home Teacher Act of 1915 was formally instituted. The idea was to bring education to mother and pre-school age children in the need for school preparation and attendance, sanitation techniques, and English. The

\[^{247}\text{Gullet, Becoming Citizens, 82}\]
teachers should be able to teach the American system such as the rights and
duties of citizenship. According to Historian Ricardo Romo, “Mexican women
rarely attended the organized sessions at the evening school. As a result, the
home teacher found it necessary to arrange visits to each of the homes of the
Mexican families for the purpose of recruiting students in English and industrial
craft classes.” Immigrants were unassimilated, unwelcome, and unprotected.
Non-white minorities were so thoroughly isolated that the American majority was
able to maintain its untainted vision of an integrated community During the
Progressive Era, the United States renewed and strengthened its nativist
attitude. The fear against immigrants changed their confidence in the capacity of
American society to assimilate all who came to the nation. Its traditional prejudice
based on color was expanded to include dislike for distinctive cultural and social
patterns including the non-Protestant immigrants in the United States. According
to Parson, to The Commission of Immigration and Housing, “the active
assimilation of the immigrant into the dominant culture—the process of
“Americanization”—was advocated.”

The Commission believed “Americanization was an interchange of the
best in all the world’s national traits: our democracy and freedom and commercial
and material skill, in return for whatever they have that has stood the test of

---

249 Romo, East Los Angeles, 133.
250 Fogelson, The Fragmented Metropolis, 189.
251 Parson, “A Mecca for the Unfortunate”, 47.
centuries. We can consciously and deliberately build a nation that shall unite the best of all cultures, ancient and modern a result no other nation can attain.”\textsuperscript{252} The studies done by the Commission suggested two problems that needed to be addressed by the state, the general welfare of immigrants and the housing problem. They should facilitate assimilation to immigrants in the cities, and they noticed that the house problem in Los Angeles was deeply connected with racial segregation. As historian David R. Roediger wrote, “ghettos,’ they were part of a well-intentioned scholarly effort to displace race from biology and characterize it as a fluctuating identity based on migration, culture, and history.”\textsuperscript{253} Fogelson stated that “Mexican families that did intend to settle in Los Angeles lacked the confidence to move away from their group.”\textsuperscript{254} By 1915, Bishop Hanna suggested an approach with education and jobs to immigrants. Mary Julia Workman was the pioneer embracing the immigrants with their needs to survive in the city. Before the Commission, the Brownson House employed those methods providing education, jobs, and health to immigrants in Los Angeles since 1901.

In the first annual report of the Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, the agency noted that “the immigrant population is usually congested in tenements and poorer quarters of our cities, therefore the problem of immigrant assimilation is so closely related to the problems of housing and

\textsuperscript{252} Richard, Gribble, CSC, “Social Catholicism Engages the American State,” 749.  
\textsuperscript{253} Roediger, \textit{Working Toward Whiteness}, 163.  
\textsuperscript{254} Fogelson, \textit{The Fragmented Metropolis}, 200.
sanitation that the legislature gave to the Commission certain supervisory powers of housing inspection.”

As Mary Julia Workman and Bishop Hannah believed, “immigrants would assimilate more rapidly and completely when attention was given to the needs of individuals” Notably, Fogelson explains that Mexicans “had no money to erect houses in fashionable neighborhoods, and in any case would not have been welcome there.” This would affect the assimilation within the group. As Parson writes, “focusing explicitly on improving housing conditions for the immigrant population as a means of Americanization, the commission wrote that the ‘home is the basis of all civilization in all lands.’ One of the objectives was “to make full inquiry, examination and investigation into the condition, welfare and industrial opportunities of all immigrants arriving and being within the state” According to the Commission, “the immigrant is so situated that he becomes an easy prey to exploiters, that he finds it almost impossible to get on his feet economically.” The Commission fail to embrace the Mexican living in the slums because they did not have the housing conditions as other immigrants. There was a lack of housing and the rent were high. According to Parson, “house courts could have their lineage traced to a modified Spanish

---

255 First Annual Report of the Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, Series 2, Box 4, Folder 24, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
257 Fogelson, The Fragmented Metropolis, 188.
258 Parson, “A Mecca for the Unfortunate”, 47.
259 First Annual Report of the Commission of Immigration and Housing of California.
architecture, while their purpose must be ascribed to the agglomeration of low-waged labor and the resulting demand for low-income housing.²⁶¹ The Commission used California State taxes to reach and study the immigrants in cities like Los Angeles. As historian William Deverell concluded, “the Americanization program in Los Angeles was focused upon study after study of one “Mexican” trait or characteristic after another.”²⁶² Thus, the state government used the Church as an ally to try to get closer to the Catholics. Governor Hiram Johnson and Commission Chairman Simon Lubin chose Bishop Edward Hanna as Vice Chairman of the Commission for his influence with European immigrants from Germany, Italy and Southeastern Europe who lived in the Bay of San Francisco and the Irish-American prelate will work along the government to Americanize fellow Catholics in the state including the newly Mexican Catholic immigrants in southern California. By 1917, Bishop Hanna will have an Irish-American ally in the Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles, who will launch an intense program of Americanization within the Mexican community in the city of Los Angeles.

²⁶² Deverell, Whitewashed Adobe, 45.
In 1901, Bishop George T. Montgomery supported the creation of a Catholic Settlement House. Young women were the volunteers who began teaching catechism to children in the middle of the “Bloody Eight” ward of the city by Chinatown where breweries, stores, coal yards, meat packing were located. This small, rented house at 422 Alison Street was not enough to serve the neighbors. Brownson House was the second Settlement House in Los Angeles and first founded by Catholic laywomen in the California. By 1903, Bishop Thomas J. Conaty took over the Diocese. He donated the house on Jackson Street in 1905 to expand social programs to help the most vulnerable in the community under the leadership of Mary Julia Workman. The Brownson House opened clubs for women, children, and teenagers. They opened both medical and dental clinics, playgrounds, bathhouse, and a library and it served as a community center where Catholics and non-Catholics were welcome. By 1917, Brownson Settlement House would undergo the biggest change in its history with the newly appointed Bishop of Los Angeles, John J. Cantwell.

The main supporter of the Brownson Settlement House was Bishop Thomas J. Conaty. He was aware of the activities carried out by the volunteers and workers of the house. Thus, he enjoyed the festivities done by the children and volunteers on Christmas. Bishop Conaty used to visit them and gave them a
special blessing to children and teenagers in the House. They were up to 400 children and teenager, and most of them were Mexican immigrants from the poorest neighborhoods of Los Angeles. With Bishop Conaty, Mary Julia Workman had the autonomy to lead the decisions within the Brownson Association.

On September 18, 1915, Bishop Conaty passed away, leaving a vacancy that would last two years before the arrival of the new bishop. In that same year, on June 1, 1915, the Holy Father in Rome, Benedict XV, selected Edward J. Hanna as Archbishop of San Francisco. The selection of the Bishop in the Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles would take two more years due to disputes between the Catholic hierarchy in the United States.

The Archbishop from San Francisco, Edward J. Hanna, supported his protégé Joseph J. Cantwell to be the successor of Bishop Conaty. Cantwell was born in Ireland and he was ordained priest in San Francisco on June 18, 1899. Bishop Edward Hanna appointed him as Vicar General in the Archdiocese of San Francisco in 1915 when he took position in the Archdiocese. They knew each other and worked together while Cantwell hoped to be called by the Pope Benedict XV to become Bishop in the Monterrey-Los Angeles Diocese. On March 22, 1917, the Los Angeles Times was pleased to announce that the Reverend

---

263 Mary Julia Workman, “The Brownson House,” The Tidings, 1913, Box 3, Series 2, Folder 8, Workman Research Material, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 49.

Peter J. Muldoon, Bishop of Rockford, Illinois, had been appointed by Pope Benedict XV. Apparently, the newspaper misunderstood, and Bishop Muldoon had no intention of coming to California. Later, Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Giovanni Bonzano gave the confirmation to Father Cantwell from the Vatican.²⁶⁵

The Salt Lake City Bishop, Joseph Sarsfield Glass, supported the idea of Cantwell as leader of the Catholic Church in Los Angeles. As a Mary Julia Workman’s friend, Bishop Sarsfield wrote a letter about the new Bishop when he was appointed by the Pope, noting that “(Bishop Cantwell) is an American citizen, and I feel you have an American, you will be proud of the stand he will take in Los Angeles.”²⁶⁶ Bishop Sarsfield Glass knew that Bishop Joseph Cantwell worked along Bishop Edward Hanna in San Francisco supporting immigrant Catholics in the Bay. Bishop Sarsfield Glass wrote to Mary Julia to express the best wishes for a new prelate in Los Angeles, noting to her, “you will find Bishop Cantwell a sympathetic helper and guide, and an appreciative friend.”²⁶⁷

John Joseph Cantwell was ordained Bishop in Los Angeles on December 12, 1917. The Cathedral of Saint Vibiana was filled with jubilant Catholic. The new prelate appointed by Pope Benedict XV had arrived after having been

²⁶⁶ Letter to MJW from Salt Lake Utah, Oct. 10, 1917. Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
²⁶⁷ Letter to MJW from Salt Lake Utah, Oct. 10, 1917
vacant the Diocese for two years. In his speech Cantwell highlighted what would be his labor in Southern California. To the mostly white Catholic elite attended to the ceremonial precinct, Bishop Cantwell encouraged the example of honorable living, of devoted lives, family purity, and as he stated, “civic righteousness and of patriotic service.”

Mary Julia Workman welcomed the new Bishop Joseph Cantwell at the Brownson Settlement House. She described him as a sincere, kind, earnest type. He visited the House and the volunteers prepared a nice welcome reception with dinner and entertainment provided by the children. He saw with interest the work done by the Association. Mary Julia sat between the two prelates. On one side, Bishop Cantwell and on the other side Archbishop Hanna. Mary Julia Workman was so pleased to tell her friend Sister Mary Leopold the experience of how she met Archbishop Hanna, writing that, “Archbishop Hannah is a most remarkable man. He has an absolutely radiant personality. His face just shines with interest and human sympathy. His face just shines with interest and sympathy.”

Beside Archbishop Hanna and Bishop Cantwell, Simon Lubin were with Mary Julia Workman at the Brownson House in the inauguration day. They were interested in the work done at the Brownson House by Mary Julia Workman. They were aware that most of the visitors at the Settlement were Mexican refugees, and Mary Julia talked about their situation in Los Angeles and

---

268 Weber, Century of Fulfillment, 412.
269 Mary’s Letter CIII, Golden Friendship, 250.
270 Mary’s Letter CIII, Golden Friendship, 251.
how they were escaping the violence and poverty in their country during the revolution.
Americanization at the Brownson House

Americanization and social work went hand in hand at the Settlement House. Contrary to the historical view that Progressive leaders were educated, middle-class white Protestants, Mary Julia Workman was a Catholic who led a group of women who focused on helping immigrants seek social justice through humanitarian work that encompassed health, education, and work. With her method of cultural integration and social understanding, Mary Julia was able to create an Americanization program among the Mexican immigrant community contrary to the conservative nativist mentality that ignored and rejected them. Thus, the relationship and work with the immigrant community was successful during the Progressive Era that must be recognized for its value in the history of United States.

In the summer of 1914, Mary Julia Workman opened the doors of Brownson House to teach a course in Sociology with the priest and sociologist Frederic Siedenburg S.J. He was the Dean of the new School of Sociology at Loyola University in Chicago from 1912 to 1932. He was a prominent sociologist who influenced Catholic social work in the United States. Father Siedenburg was against the relationship between politics and public welfare. He believed that civil service should be completed to serve the needy. Father Siedenburg was a
devoted servant of the cause of those who needed help. His 12 lectures helped to educate new social workers in Los Angeles. Mary Julia promoted those lectures from public leaders such as Frank A. Gibson, Commissioner of the California State Housing and Immigration Commission in Los Angeles, and the Reverend Monsignor William Corr, who visited and spoke between January and June 1916. Corr was an expert in social work from the East Coast, and he studied at Columbia University where he learned a scientific approach to social welfare including social survey techniques to assess needs before implementing programs. The conferences and lectures given by these social work experts focused to train and teach volunteers and workers from settlement houses, charities, playgrounds, the juvenile court, and other municipal offices of the city of Los Angeles. These lectures offered by Mary Julia Workman at the Brownson House reflected the Progressive influence with which she directed her social work. Beside their religious background, Brownson House aimed social justice and Americanization to the newly arrived immigrants in the City of Angels.

By 1917, when Cantwell took over the Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles, Mary Julia Workman was presiding over the Brownson Settlement House. Her attitude towards Americanization was ahead of the newly created Commission of Housing and Immigration. Her model of integrating marginalized, segregated,

---

and oppressed members of society would be the first and opposed to the American Legion and Daughters of the American Revolution. Workman was influenced by the social scientist Professor Emory Bogardus of the University of Southern California, who believed that immigration and population succession had brought such changes to make the Pacific coast an "experiment station" in human relations. He suggested that each segment of the population was racially and religiously divided, and each segment of the population contributed something to the new American culture. Bogardus wrote that “Conflict, adjustment, accommodation was incident to the meeting of heterogeneous races and cultures.”

Mary Julia Workman suggested that people living in the U.S. needed to Americanize themselves, to determine what kind of a person should be. Like Bogardus, Mary Julia considered “Liberty and Self Reliance, Union and Cooperation, Democracy and Square Deal, Internationalism and Brotherhood.”

Brownson House’s job was to try to embrace those who were looking for a way to survive in a multicultural society different from their own. Historian David R. Roediger writes that “a neighborhood in the city was defined by a specific nationality coexisting with the presence of many immigrant nationalities revolving around the connection between immigrant houses and house of worship, and

---


especially Catholic churches.” The connection between the Catholic Church and Mexican Immigrants was the Brownson House because the Settlement supported the Americanization and social work to those immigrants who were in the poorest neighborhoods of the city.

Mary Julia Workman noted that, the “Brownson House aims to keep its plans flexible and responsive to neighborhood needs; it aims to work with its neighbors rather than for them to cooperate with all civic, Catholic, and recognized agencies for social betterment to help secure, when necessary, enforcement of laws which concern the living and working conditions of the poor and the immigrant.” From the beginning in 1901, when it began as a religious education center, Mary Julia Workman saw the needs of the children, who were mostly Mexicans who attended to Our Lady of Los Angeles Church at the plaza. Little by little, social services were extended, seeking to satisfy the needs of the population. The aim was to help young people and children to educate themselves to get ahead in society. Mary Julia wrote, “Brownson House is valuable to the community because it lives and labor close contact with its neighbors in the foreign sections of Los Angeles and gets their point of view because it develops a sympathetic co-operative effort which is the best mean for

---

275 Roediger, Working Toward Whiteness, 168.
276 Mary Julia Workman, “The Activities of Brownson House,” The Tidings, Box 14ov, Folder 08, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Series 2, Box 4, Folder 14, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 43.
social advance because it is a neighborhood center for social, educational and preventive work.”

One of the most important activities at Brownson House was the education of children and young people. The library was open with reading groups and activities that encouraged education in English and Spanish. Children from Mexico read the classics and read about the same heroes as American children. The promotion of education and reading sought to create equality in education from which minorities were segregated. For this reason, when Mary Julia Workman stated that the children of Mexico read the same as their American counterparts, it was because she sought to promote the educational opportunities that immigrants lacked in Los Angeles schools. The library was full of children and they exchanged their books. Indeed, a little group of children spent time with their friend coloring picture books and through reading and books, children learned English and were assimilated to American culture. As Mary Julia Workman wrote, “larger boys were enthusiastically talking about Tom Sawyer and how he got his fence whitewashed, while another group of girls were talking how they had formed a story reading club.”

Mary Julia Workman and some Brownson House volunteers spoke Spanish. This helped to provide history

---


278 Mary Workman, “Brownson House,” The Tidings, November 22, 1919, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 2, Folder 2, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
and civic classes to those immigrants in their language. She always sought the education of children at the Brownson House, and she encouraged them to read and play learning games. The library could get up to 400 books for children’s education. Some of those books were in Spanish used by the Mexican Children. Although some older boys could not go in the morning because they had to go to the factories to work or sell newspapers on the streets of Los Angeles, they arrived in the afternoon. They were boys and girls up to 16 years of age who came to “Mexican Nights.”

Another club was the Angelus Club. They helped young Mexican boys and girls to learn about American culture and English while they danced, met, and prayed with young neighbors. Mary Julia remembered how a noticeable group of 15 boys described as “toughest in the neighborhood,” drew a circle under a light to read books like Treasure Island. They asked a volunteer to read the book to them and they enjoyed the reading.279 It was in these anecdotes where the stereotype that the Mexican immigrants lacked the initiative to learn or educate themselves was erroneously developed against a race by white American society of the time. This was the stereotype seen in the Progressive Era with the segregation of schools in California. Bogardus described Mexicans as individualistic, submissive, and loyal when confident, but they follow leaders.

279 Report, June 6, 1920, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Series 2, Box 4, Folder 14, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
rather organizations.\textsuperscript{280} Mary Julia demonstrated that she was a respectable leader to the boys as she recalls,

Some years ago, a gang of twelve boys afflicted a neighborhood in this city with their lawless ways. They seemed to have no good purpose in life and had no interest in any self-respecting work. They haunted the street corners at night and were apparently not the downward road. One of these boys was persuaded to join a boy’s club which offered certain material advancement and provided certain legitimate pleasures much desired by boys of his age. At the same time, high ideas were inculcated….He began to see things in different way and to take an interest in the work which was wisely planned with a knowledge of boy nature. Soon he persuaded the rest of the gang to young, which they did, all but one. Some time went by, and the boys sought work. A spirit of honest endeavor seized them….eleven of these boys became industrious and good citizens.\textsuperscript{281}

Contrary to the stereotype impregnated in the mentality of Anglo-American society, Mary Julia Workman was able to demonstrate that the claim of lack of intelligence, interests, and abilities existed for immigrant Mexican children was wrong and racially influenced by the ruling Anglo-American class. Public schools in Los Angeles separated Mexican students from the rest and tried to demonstrate their inferiority by modifying the students’ curriculum, which emphasized manual and domestic training for low paying jobs. Their classrooms were filled with underqualified teachers and the schools were in substandard facilities and left them poorly equipped. Indeed, the physical and intellectual space of Mexican schools became as segregated as the students. Mexican and

\textsuperscript{281} “Brownson House Settlement Works, The Tidings, 78.
Mexican American students could not climb economically in society, building a class of inequality due to a systematic racism that was reinforced in the classroom. Once Mexican schools came into existence, advocates believed that “traditional education was not possible’ for Mexicans who, in their eyes, lived ‘in an environment of poverty, poor housing and sanitation, health problem, mental defects, and unemployment,’ embraced the opportunity to work in a new, segregated context.” There was fear of competition from immigrants and other races. Mexicans were educated to serve and work in factories.\textsuperscript{282} The language, hygiene and special needs of Mexican students were mentioned as the main reasons why segregation was practiced. Mary Julia knew that education was what could open the doors for those young people who were marginalized and oppressed in a systematically racist society that abandoned them. Brownson House was open for teenagers and children seeking an educational opportunity as Mary Julia Workman wrote,

Brownson House is able to furnish dreams and air castles for children who live in mere shacks and have so little of material luxury is rather significant. It is the dream that helps one to live down the unhappy present condition; it is the dream that helps one to rise and find that air castle in some form or other later on. It is therefore significant that our Mexicans are given an opportunity to dream and live-in castles in the sky, and one day from those dreams they will rise up above the shacks into the realms of the America’s highest ideals.\textsuperscript{283}

\textsuperscript{283} Mary Workman, \textit{Brownson House}, November 22, 1919.
Education such as after school tutoring and book clubs were supplemented within Brownson House. Mary Julia Workman had the vision to not underestimate minorities and give them the opportunity to learn and work for the common good in society.

Her approach to education and methodology embraced all the students who came to seek help, which was something that drew attention for its effectiveness in education that was ahead of its time. Amanda Mathews Chase, who was one of the original school teachers at the College Settlement in 1903, explained that “the large Public School System has awakened to this method which Miss Workman adopted years ago and at the present the public schools are using the small cottage system where groups of 15 foreigners and even less gather around a teacher in the evening to be handle close and in a family-like manner instead of in larger classes.”\(^{284}\) In 1915, the state legislature approved the Home Teacher Act, which authorized local school districts to hire home teachers to work with schools in immigrant areas. Home teachers did home visits during the day and evening to provide education to immigrant mothers. Progressive activists believed that immigrant children could be assimilated at

\(^{284}\) Report, June 6, 1920, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9. Series 2, Box 4, Folder 14, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University. Amanda Mathews Chase, one of the original evening schoolteachers at the College Settlement in 1903.
school, and their fathers could learn at work; meanwhile, mothers should be visited by home teachers to be Americanized. The idea was to have home teachers visit in the poor immigrant communities like the settlement house workers. As noted above, Amanda Mathews Chase applied school cottage system used by Mary Julia Workman. In this case, the cottage would be used to give English lessons while they taught American values. The home teachers used the school cottage to teach English vocabulary that immigrant mothers could apply in their daily activities focusing on the practical and home making aspects of Americanization. The methodology was cutting-edge and both Maria Julia Workman and the Brownson House volunteers knew how to attend to the needs of immigrants and residents of the community.

Mary Julia Workman explained that the “Brownson House remembers this great basic fact in all its efforts for Americanization and seeks to preserve and strengthen the religious faith and practice of immigrants as the basis of good citizenship.” William J. Denney, from The Charity Organization Society, wrote that he “was very impressed with the progressive spirit of these Catholic social workers. As for Brownson House, no social worker can visit it and talk with Miss Workman without coming away with the feeling that here is a social institution worthwhile, and that is designed to meet a real need and that is trying to give the

---


best possible measure of genuine service.”

In the end, boys and girls who grew up in the House’s playgrounds wrote letters remembering the days of joys with the volunteers and other children. Mary Julia wrote that the “Brownson House has succeeded in listening to the beating hearts of a foreign people during the past years and with close attention has tried to provide correct channels for their repressed emotions can best be understood.”

She noticed the failure to Americanize the parents of these immigrant children was the large number of families lived in the same household. Their housing conditions reflected the racial inequality due to the labor exploitation and lack of opportunities in the city. She wrote that “the educational work it does consist in the upholding of the best standard of American living and citizenship in the preservation of the best traditions of the immigrant as foundation for the work of Americanization; in friendly interpretation, in encouragement, and where knowledge and skill are lacking and helplessness is manifest, in neighborly assistance toward the acquaint of needed information, skill and experience and in the securing protection against exploitation.”

The city began to be segregated by the facto when restitutions in housing began to develop in the mid-1910s. The housing restrictions defined the social conditions that defined the

---


288 Mary Workman, Brownson House, November 22, 1919

Eastside of Los Angeles as non-white territory. Their housing was in deplorable conditions. They lived in extreme poverty with the lack of jobs, health services and education. Each house contained up to twenty people and up to seven slept in one bedroom.

People found in Brownson House a religious and social asylum in the city with a Protestant majority and where the Catholic Church had forgotten to embrace them. For the Catholic hierarchy, it was important to Americanize Mexicans and they were expected forget about their religious traditions, as Mexican Catholic traditions that were different from European ones and were viewed with disgust and disdain. The Catholic clergy believed that Mexican immigrants did not provide financial support to the church, did not attended to parochial schools, and had a lack of interest to attended mass regularly. Yet, Mary Julia described in her letters how Mexicans mothers sent their children to Sunday school, and the church at the Plaza was filled of faithful people who had to be outside sitting on a bench during mass. Mexican immigrants had anticlerical views spread in Mexico due to corruption and abuse by the clergy, and yet they had a deeply rooted hidden religiosity with popular traditions and cultural syncretism that made them very different from the Catholic Church from Europe. The distance between the European Catholic clergy and the Mexican immigrants affected the social work that the church carried out with other ethnic

---

290 Sanchez, Boyle Heights, 10.
292 Mary’s Letter, Golden Friendship, LXVII.
groups, such as the Italians and Germans. The Church was a strategic social point for immigrants; however, with the Mexicans, instead of being a source of comfort and identity, it was a place of disagreement and rejection. Therefore, the clergy’s efforts toward Americanization did not include an effort to social integration.\textsuperscript{293} Contrary to the dominant approach articulated by the Church, the Brownson House objectives, as written in a pamphlet, stated that “Brownson House is doing a vital work. In practical ways, it is uniting native-born and foreign-born in a common devotion to American ideals.”\textsuperscript{294} Brownson House promoted the unity respecting the immigrant culture, and traditions because Mary Julia Workman thought of the value and contribution of immigrants to American society. She did not tolerate the prejudice and attitudes of racial superiority. Growing up and working with minorities on the Eastside of Los Angeles made her learn from them. She not only embraced Mexican Catholics, but she also worked hard to help other minorities like the Japanese living in Los Angeles.

While there was a Brown Scare due to the massive immigration from Mexico during the Mexican Revolution, and the Red Scare in 1917, during the Bolshevik uprising in Russia, an anti-Japanese hysteria demanded the expulsion of the Japanese from the state due to racial and cultural reasons. In 1913, women’s civic organizations remained silent when Progressives waged a

\textsuperscript{293} Mosqueda, \textit{Chicanos, Catholicism, and Political Ideology}, 56.

\textsuperscript{294} Mary Julia Workman, “Brownson House,” \textit{The Tidings}, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
campaign against the Japanese. Mary Julia Workman opened the doors of the Brownson House to a priest, Father Albert Breton, who was a missionary in Japan, to receive Japanese Catholics and not Catholics to give them asylum. Mary Julia, Father Breton and the Brownson House volunteers mobilized to help Japanese immigrants in various cities in Southern California. By 1917, when the new Bishop Cantwell arrived, the pressures on Breton created a conflict because the Japanese Catholics were not sufficiently converted to American Catholicism. Bishop Cantwell believed that the Japanese had to adapt to American Catholicism and forget their traditions and culture to forge a distinctly American attitude. Mary Julia wrote, “Father Breton is a very pious and simple missionary… The children love him dearly. He speaks so easily and spiritually.” Father Breton was removed from his mission in California and reassigned to Japan. Cantwell's intolerance of non-European minorities was reflected in this act against the Japanese. The Bishop wanted an Irish priest and missionaries to oversee the Americanization needs of the Japanese leaving out the French priest, Father Breton, and the group of Japanese Catholic missionaries who accompanied him. Bishop Cantwell had that attitude of superiority that Irish priests had over other Catholics. On the contrary, as an Irish descendent, Mary Julia Workman put that attitude aside and established a

296 Mary Letter LXXXVI, Golden Friendship, 218.
297 Cantwell wanted to the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll) and Father James A. Walsh. Engh, "Japanese Trimmings on Our American Catholicity."
relationship with other minorities. The 1913 “Alien Land Law” was reformed in 1920 due to the Anti-Japanese sentiment in California. The discrimination against Japanese increased in this decade increasing laws against this community. Mary Julia reacted to this law writing, “the reactionary forces that swept the Nation also swept the State and captured the California legislature.” Nativism had reached the State where racial intolerance had increased due to the fear brought by ignorance about other races and cultures. She wrote, “the Settlement has realized this all the more keenly because they have lived with the foreign born and have shared human experiences with them.” The cultural exchange and intolerance was present at the Brownson House, while the Catholic hierarchy had an intolerant attitude against the traditions and cultures brought by immigrants in the United States.

Since Bishop Thaddeus Amat, Los Angeles began to change their religious festivities. Religious festivities such as Virgin of Guadalupe Feast, on December 12, were celebrated in the Plaza by the Mexican Catholics. The non-Mexican Catholic saw with disdain the festivities and celebrations. Mary Julia knew how good it was to leave those popular celebrations within the church. The Catholic Church had reproached those popular customs and considered them pagan. She understood that the missionaries saw celebrations with grace and special meaning. Mary Julia stated, to destroy them (celebrations and festivities)

298 Mary Letter CIX, Golden Friendship, 264
299 Brownson House: A Centre of Americanization, 48.
would be to silence an historical note that has sound almost from the establishment of the Church."³⁰⁰ Mary Julia described those feasts in the article titled, "A Mexican Indian Feast at Brownson House" in 1919, where she praised those celebrations. As she wrote how thirteen Mexicans walked into the House with bright red and cerise suits to celebrate the feast of San Lorenzo, their saint patron. According with their customs from Durango, Mexico, they carried bows and arrows, painted gourds and religious pictures and crucifixes and danced. After a mass done by Spanish speaker priest, Camilo Torrente, they began the dance accompanied by a violin and a guitar. Their Marian fervor, which is an identity of the Mexican culture, was shown when they knelt and sang a hymn in Spanish to the Virgin as they enter to the altar.³⁰¹ Since the United States expansion to the West, the European clergy took over the Catholic Church and they believed that Catholicism should be practiced according to their rule and rite. Bishop John P. Carroll stated, "Only American-born, or Irish Priest, would work in this country for the glory of God"³⁰² The largely Irish clergy hoped that changing the culture and traditions of non-European Catholics would make them better Catholics and therefore better citizens in the United States.³⁰³

In order to intensify the work of Americanization among Catholic immigrants, Bishop Cantwell used whatever resources he could to encourage

³⁰² Engh, “Japanese Trimmings on Our American Catholicity,” 89.
³⁰³ Dolan, In Research of an American Catholicism, 145.
education courses. The University of California Extension Division opened courses in Americanization. Bishop Cantwell promised at least one hundred Catholics would enroll for the course.\textsuperscript{304} Cantwell not only wanted to transform the Mexicans into good citizens, but they also wanted to make Mexican Catholics into American Catholics.\textsuperscript{305} Cantwell decided to create the Associated Catholic Charities to endorsed Americanization work.\textsuperscript{306} Therefore, he began to influence the decisions taken at the Brownson House and other Charities and organizations.

Mary Julia Workman and the volunteers in the Settlement House had been helping to assimilate American society to immigrants in Los Angeles before Cantwell. “This is real work in Americanization,” said a visitor at the Brownson House, “acknowledging that she had no idea of the kind of work they were doing.”\textsuperscript{307} Municipal Charities Commission President wrote, “It is a joy to see an institution which, like Brownson House, not only has the vision, but is willing and able to carry out plans which can meet the needs so very evident.”\textsuperscript{308} Mary Julia believed, as she stated that, “Americanization is a reciprocal process in both

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{304} Sociology, \textit{The Tidings}, October 24, 1919, Series 2, Box 4, Folder 14, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
\item\textsuperscript{305} Dolan, \textit{In Research of an American Catholicism}, 142.
\item\textsuperscript{306} Some of the primary sources called Association and other sources, Bureau. I will use both terms, but officially in 1921 was named Bureau of Catholic Charities,
\item\textsuperscript{307} Mary Workman Letter, “Brownson House,” November 22, 1919, Series 2, Box 4, Folder 14, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
\item\textsuperscript{308} Municipal Charities Commission President to MJW, June 29, 1916, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
\end{itemize}
gives and takes. It can never be brought about by force, or by spasmodic-effort. In fact, the hysterical onslaught under pressure of emergency defeats its own purpose and causes a reaction of suspicion. Americanization is preeminently dependent upon the exemplification of American ideals by native-born Americans, and upon conditions which he creates. After all, it is the native-born citizen who determines conditions of entrance into America, and conditions of life and labor in America.”309

Frank A. Gibson from the California State Immigration and Housing Commission congratulated how the Brownson House won the neighbors' confidence and persuaded the Mexicans to register and then to answer the military draft.310 The children of the immigrants were drafted in the military during WWI, but there were fears and questions concerning the life of their sons in war. Mary Julia Workman stated, “the essential justice of the government regulations must be made clear to parents and wives who spoke no English, and whose fears were so many.”311 The soldier’s parents were not able to fill the paperwork, to write letters to fill applications to the government, but they were proud to know that their children were in the American military. The General Secretary of The Charity Organization Society, William J. Denney, wrote, “I was impressed with the progressive spirit of these Catholic Social workers…no social worker can visit

309 Brownson House: A Centre of Americanization, 48.
310 Mary J. Workman, “Brownson House,” Catholic Charities Review 2 (September 1918), Series 2, Box 4, Folder 14, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 213.
311 Brownson House: A Centre of Americanization, 48.
it (Brownson House) and talk with Miss Workman without coming away with the feeling that here is a social institution worthwhile, one that is designed to meet a real need and that is trying to give the best possible measure of genuine service."³¹² Mary Julia Workman wrote,

> The existence of the Settlement House in the midst of a foreign neighborhood is a great means to exemplify American ideals in their true significance; to prevent or remedy injustice and to secure protection for the stranger through appeal to the proper public agencies; to interpret to immigrant the customs and institutions of the country; to extended him and his family the hand of friendship and hospitality as soon as he arrives and to encourage him to learn English as step toward Americanization³¹³

In the Brownson House, Mexicans were being Americanized because they felt welcome and the Association understood their needs. While Amanda Mathews Chase claim that "Mexicans seem to have a specific gravity which keeps them at the bottom of the district melting pot."³¹⁴ The California Commission of Immigration suggest that Mexican had a lack of initiative making them difficult to adjust and assimilated, Mary Julia Workman stated that, "Brownson house is their friend, it is willing that they should be Mexicans, and with this feeling strongly impressed and felt it soon awakens a kindred feeling in their hearts, the feeling that they are willing to become like the good Americans"³¹⁵

---

³¹² William J. Denney to Mary Julia Workman, February 12, 1917. Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University


³¹⁵ Mary Workman Letter, "Brownson House," November 22, 1919, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
If we look at Mary Julia’s background, we can understand why she was able to understand immigrants. Her mother, Maria Elizabeth Workman, taught her the Christian values of mercy and the common good of others. Her Irish Catholic roots came from her mother’s family. Mary Julia listened to those stories from the old town of Los Angeles. Her grandfather’s story, Andrew Boyle, who saved his life through the mercy of General Garay in Goliad, Texas and the act of mercy that changed his grandfather life. Mary Julia grew up between the Mexican community since the old Californios and immigrants in Los Angeles. Her family lived in an old Mexican frontier and they learned their traditions, language, and culture. Her father, William H. Workman, lived the transition from the Old Wild West to a multicultural metropolis and her paternal grandfather, David Workman, came to California to work with William Workman, her great-uncle in Rancho La Puente. William Workman was loyal to the Mexican government and accepted the new regime when the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was signed and lived in peace in California. David and William Workman worked along Mexicans in the borderland in New Mexico, and William H. Workman, Mary Julia’s father, grew up in this old Mexican-Spanish town right after the United States took over the territory. May Julia was part of this pioneers’ families and she was able to speak Spanish and live among that Mexican community in Los Angeles.

Indeed, volunteers, workers, and Mary Julia Workman had excelled in their social work with Mexican immigrants because they understand their needs, culture, and traditions. Mary Henderson wrote, “I am very sure that the entire neighborhood is sweeter and brighter and better for having Brownson in its midst and I am glad, indeed, that the good work is to go on and on while most deeply interested in our right work at (...) hood.”317 The volunteers tried to support all the children and teenagers in activities to keep them out of the streets. Those activities reflected their social background and culture. The Settlement House preserved their celebrations to united them. As was described in The Tidings magazine, “the Moctezuma Club made use of it for some works in preparing program for the celebration of Mexican Independence day, September 16, and later gave a beautiful dancing party.”318 The idea was to embrace them and send them the message of acceptance and recognition of their nation and history. They would be proud of their roots, but they should be able to feel welcome and accepted to this country as she stated, “the whole spirit of the place is one of friendly hospitality. There is a continual work of home education carried on in conjunction with home teacher and district nurse, for the foreign-born mother is the most important element in the Americanization of the home.”319

---

317 Mary Henderson to MJW, Oct 3, 1917. Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
The reason why more Mexicans immigrant reach the house is because they hear stories that are carried from Los Angeles. As Mary Julia wrote, “stories which today bring the Mexican family right from the early morning train to the settlement house door. You are the friend waiting for me in Los Angeles is the sentiment which the expressions of face and manners how as they grip the hands of the workers.”\textsuperscript{320} The women at the Brownson House and Mary Julia did not had the scientific and academic knowledge and methodology that Bishop Cantwell wanted to use with Father Corr, but they had the knowledge of the needs of the people that made the Brownson Settlement House a successful charity organization within the Mexican community of Los Angeles.

Children in the House felt a closer relationship with Mary Julia as she wrote, “I have aimed at the relationship of mother to the younger children and big sister to the older ones. I have often heard the little children talking and counting on their little brown fingers how many mothers they have, the grandmothers, and I coming in on the second and third fingers, and others have felt the joy of a happy smile to hear another child to say, ‘Your mother is dead but you have a grandmother and a Brownson House mother.”\textsuperscript{321} While other Settlement Houses failed and closed their doors, Brownson House was successful among Mexican community leaving a legacy that was gratefully reciprocated by those immigrants who had helped as it is described in \textit{The Tidings} magazine, “Often sweet-faced
Mexican women are seen on their way to Settlement door carrying tamales, or some freshly cooked corn from the home garden, daintily wrapped in a flower trimmed basket to be presented with much nature grace to the Settlement residents as a token of gratitude for some kindness shown to them and the children.”

Figure 18. Mary Julia Workman Postcard. Dated 1915. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

322 “The Activities of Brownson House,” The Tidings, 41.
Amanda Mathews Chase, who was serving as a volunteer teacher for the California Regional Immigration Commission in Los Angeles, stated that “the Mexicans who come to us are the cholos, a primitive people, more Indian than Latino, brought here originally by the corporation for the work of the peons.” Chase’s view was contrary to Mary Julia Workman and the Brownson House Association who believed they were refugees in need. In the middle of a sprawling industrial city, when the Spanish flu hit, Brownson Settlement House provided medical support to the poor neighborhoods of the City of Los Angeles.

In February 1918, the world was suffering one of the deadliest flu outbreaks seen in modern times. By September, the epidemic of influenza reached the city of Los Angeles. The Spanish Flu virus found a fertile breeding place in the area surrounding the Brownson House and the badly ventilated and crowded houses in the slums favored spread of the disease. The Brownson House opened the clinic doors to give medical assistance during the fall. They had 80 cases in bed, but unfortunately 20 of them died. For three months, when the epidemic was reaching the highest point of sick people in Los Angeles, the Brownson House had workers to aid the stricken people. It was a 24-hour a day job that the volunteers and medical assistants worked to help the neighborhoods.
They arranged hospitalization in high risk cases when death was near. According to a report, the volunteers called a priest to administer the Last Sacrament and confer baptism on premature infants whose mothers were dying of the disease. The social work carried out by the volunteers and workers of the Settlement helped to maintain the neighborhood in a stable condition and to make the epidemic cease little by little, avoiding a major health catastrophe in the community. The Brownson House was an essential place for immigrants and low-income people because they had a place to find help and comfort. They sent trucks with big pots of steaming hot soup to neighboring communities. Their social work played a fundamental role in helping during the outbreak. Unfortunately, in that year, the donations to the Brownson House dropped sharply, which hampered their ability to carry out their social work. Mary Julia’s leadership was able to face obstacles to help those who had less and her biggest problem was the financial deficit caused by the lack of donations during the pandemic year.

323 Know Your CYO, Serie 1, Box 2, Folder 9, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
The Brownson House Association

The Municipal Charities Commission was in charge to examine the books, personnel, and equipment of every organization in Los Angeles that depended on the public for support, and either endorse or declare it unworthy or useless. Mary Julia Workman was named on the board of eight women to be part of the Commission’s Committee and the Brownson Settlement House Association was endorsed and praised for its service in the city.\(^{324}\) The Association was able to get donations from private hospitals, organizations, and citizens to have the best conditions in the Settlement. They had to work with different civic agencies and find the support to help the community.

One of the ways to obtain donations was through activities such as plays, performances, and dances. One of the first volunteers was the Mary Julia’s younger sister, Gertrude Workman. She remembered her benefit performance for the Brownson House, recalling that “it was given at 357 Boyle Avenue. We had a stage set in the barn; it was a rather crude affair, but we made some money, so we decided to have more benefits.”\(^{325}\) They had a few donations to help fund their social work efforts. Mary Julia’s family helped donate monetary support, including her parents’ will that stated a donation of $500 each one to the

\(^{324}\) Mary’s Letter XCIX, *Golden Friendship*, 244.
\(^{325}\) Memoirs of Gertrude Workman Furman, Serie 2, box 1 and folder 1, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, 03.
Brownson House.\textsuperscript{326} The social position of the Workman family was a determining factor in linking wealthy families with the social work that Mary Julia carried out.

Mary Julia's father, William H. Workman, had a prolific political life in Los Angeles by the end of the 1800s, and her older brother, Boyle Workman, had different positions within the municipal government of Los Angeles in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Mary Julia was an educated woman and she knew citizens of Los Angeles who could supported her activism like the Doheny, and Mulholland family. Also, some of the volunteers at the Brownson House were educated girls from wealthy Catholic families who were influenced by the Progressive women reformers and the support the Settlement House with activities such as the home parties, where the upper-class citizens had to take poor children and entertain them in their elegant homes. They transported them in their luxurious automobiles and came back with gifts for their families. This helped to understand the needs of these little children and their families and encouraged them to support the work at the House. Also, they expanded their relationship with social clubs and organizations like the Masonic Lodge of Los Angeles who supported the House with toys, and clothing that was delivered to their homes. Up to 115 families benefited.\textsuperscript{327} The goal was to build the

\textsuperscript{326} Maria E. Workman, and William H. Workman’s Testament, Serie 3, Box 8, Folder 9, William H and Mary E. Workman, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

\textsuperscript{327} Mary’s Letter CI, Golden Friendship, 248.
relationship between the privileged and unprivileged to provide support to social programs at the House.

Although it was listed as a Catholic Settlement by Protestants, the aim was to do constructive social work to neighbors of Los Angeles from all races and creeds. The objective was to promote the cause for civic, social, and religious betterment through personal service and mutual helpfulness.\(^{328}\) Mary Julia published the yearbook to donors and promoted in the \textit{Tidings} magazine the charity needed in the House, writing that the “Brownson House Settlement Association raises the money needed to carry on the Settlement work by securing annual subscribers, or donors, and by occasional entertainments.”\(^{329}\) The volunteers made campaigns to earn money. In one instance, they earned $1000 to cover their needs in just three days.\(^{330}\) They published their total expenses and how much they required to cover doctor and workers fees. It was always sought to account for what was accumulated monetarily and the use of money. It should be noted that there were only up to four paid workers, and most were volunteers. Even doctors and nurses sometimes worked as volunteers or lowered their fees for their services.

Although the Diocese of Los Angeles donated the land and helped build the Brownson House on Jackson Street, there was always contact with other

\(^{328}\) \textit{Brownson House Yearbook}, July 2015, Workman-Temple Homestead Museum Archives.


\(^{330}\) “Stir Public to Its Plain Duty.” \textit{The Tidings}. Unknown year. Serie 1, Box 2, Folder 9, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
religious and civil institutions. As was described at the *Tidings*, “Brownson House is endorsed by the Municipal Charities Commission of Los Angeles and is represented in the Council of Social Agencies. It belongs to the National Federation of Settlements. It co-operates with all public and recognized agencies for social betterment.”331 The Settlement house carried out a solidary social work to achieve the common good between institutions like the College Settlement House, Methodist Episcopal Church and the Bethlehem Institutional Church.332

The importance of helping and covering expenses were sometimes not enough. The services and needs grew little by little, especially after the massive Mexican immigration in 1910. As Mary Julia wrote, “The great sorrow of Brownson House Association is its inability to finance the equipment necessary for better work among the boys and young men….Under the present limited conditions, the boys, who go to work gradually leave the settlement and while there is evidence of, they want some such influence being continued in their lives.”333 Other communities such as the Jews, Italians, and Russians had mutual aid associations among their co-nationals in Los Angeles. The wealthy people of these communities helped their people and supported them to get ahead and develop in the United States; however, the Mexican upper class lacked the initiative to help the most vulnerable in their country.

---

In Los Angeles, there was no Mexican charity, so there were children on the street begging for money. Although there were wealthy Mexican exiles with the power to help, they had no interest in helping those poor families in the slums. The Mexican Spanish newspaper *El Heraldo* commented that “there is no Mexican charity in Los Angeles so there are children on the street asking for money. As the largest minority living in this city, it lacks a society that helps the poor. Having rich exiled Mexicans with the power to help, it does not help those poor.” By 1919, a group of upper-class Mexican people approached Mary Julia to seek support and advice to establish a Mexican association. Mary Julia recalled that she “looked at the eleven men and four women, all Mexicans, who called upon us, and heard their estimate of the situation, it seemed to me the most impressive moment in the career of the Brownson House. There was always a bit of light amidst the turbulent hopelessness in the House.” Young people appeared wanting to help their people in some way, as Mary Julia described it.

Mary Julia allowed the Mutualistas have their meetings at the Brownson House where they became aware of the work being done on behalf of Mexican immigrants. They were groups of Mexicans that began to help each other within their community. Beside those meetings, a group of young Mexican women who were not members of the Association or any other organized society approached

---


Mary Julia to give a concert for the benefit of Brownson House on November 29, 1919. They wanted to give Christmas gifts to the children. As well as these free benefit concerts to help raise funds, there were also dances, dinners and festivals. This without mentioning the classes and courses of which a modest amount was charged for those who attended to listen to the teachers and speakers. This is how the Brownson House Settlement Association survived for 19 years as an autonomous place that was governed democratically by volunteers whose sole objective was to help.

Figure 19. Municipal Charities Commission Report. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, November 12, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
Association Members

From the president to the simplest worker, they were women volunteers who did not receive any salary. Some of the most important volunteers were:

Mrs. Charles L. Whipple was part of the foundation of the Brownson House and Vice-president. Mattie Labory Gara, Clementina De Forest Griffin and Delia Hutchinson were the field workers. Mr. W.J Ergenzinger organized the Boy Scouts. Mary T. Devin was the secretary and Miss Rosa I. Bernard was the treasurer.

In the clinic were Dr. John Carling who served as orthopedist. Mrs. Ellen Beauchamp, Miss Mary H. McManus, Miss Katherine Thompson, Miss Regina M. Brady, Miss Marie R. Mullen, Miss Mary J., and Miss Nora Desmond were 24 hours resident workers. 337

Since its foundation, it was a democratic organization governed by rules to volunteer and salaried workers. There were three salaried workers. Two of those lived at the Settlement House and one of them was a trained nurse. They had to assist the 60 workers and the house was always open. The field workers formed groups of Mexican women to sew in their own home for their own children. All women in the neighborhood had meetings once a month. They had social interaction in Spanish where they learned home welfare and had recreation with food and music. 338 According to Municipal Charities Commission report in 1914, “one of the resident workers is always a trained nurse to respond to emergencies.

337 Mary Julia Workman to The Companion, April 4, 1951, Serie 2, Box 3, Folder 8, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
in the neighborhood, to cooperate with the city nurses, and because of her knowledge of sanitation is especially valuable in the care of clothing received. Her knowledge is valuable in the homes, care of children, etc.”

Since 1901, they followed the doctrine of serving the needy. The financing served for the facilities, the social work, and the clinic. For this reason, in 1918, when the flu pandemic hit the city, they stopped receiving money because they stopped doing activities that the volunteers carried out to raise funds that would serve to finance social work. Festivities, dances, conferences, and dinners were interrupted by the outbreak. This complicated the social work but people kept coming to Brownson House. By 1919, with fewer donations, they kept taking care of the needs of the people and helping the children who attended the Settlement House. The volunteers were still there giving all they could with the few resources they had.

The Settlement House had gradually grown. Both the social work and the Americanization programs were succeeding. Volunteers were dividing the duties in the House. Most of them were college students and women from wealthy families. Although Mary Julia Workman was the president of the House, her leadership was discreet because she delegated the administrative duties to a group of women who were the directors. The Association had a constitution and the president was chosen democratically by the volunteers and workers. She had

learned the value of women in society from the Catholic Saint Monica, as Mary Julia felt that “the role of Christian women resembles that of the guardian angels: they can direct the world, but only by remaining invisible like them.”340 As a leader, she was attentive to the simplest and most difficult details. Mary Julia Workman kept her job as a Kindergarten teacher while she stayed at the Brownson House as a volunteer and president. She had in mind what she learned in Kindergarten, “never to praise an intention to do good, but to wait until it is realized, and then commend in a fitting way, so as to encourage but not to flatter.”341 Her leadership helped to manage the House with those women who were there as volunteers and their main objective was to serve in the community.

![Image of a letter from Rev. William Corr to Mary Julia Workman](image)

*Figure 20. Rev. William Corr letter to Mary Julia Workman. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University*

Catholic Charities in Los Angeles

On March 11, 1918, Bishop Cantwell decided to bring two Sisters of the Holy Family from San Francisco to look over the House. Cantwell wanted their advice, as he regarded them as experts in charities. He asked Mary Julia Workman to assist them, writing to her that "if there be ever a time that you are not ‘awfully busy’ we must have a talk about the work….I am bringing two Sister of the Holy Family from San Francisco, not by way of a foundation but simply to look over the field and to give me the benefit of an expert advice."342 With the arrival of Bishop Cantwell, the autonomy and independent decisions that Mary Julia made over the Brownson Settlement House Association had ended.

The administrative, governance, and house structure were changing when Bishop Cantwell arrived at the Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles in 1917. By 1919, Cantwell noticed that the House had fewer donations because the Association provided him an annual report. This concerned the Bishop because he thought people might label charity work as "Mexican" work. According to the historian Francis Weber, “Cantwell did not believe in placing an ethnic label on charitable work. Bishop Cantwell believed that the ‘Brown Scare’ and the anti-Mexican feeling might discourage contributions.”343 However, the Brownson

342 Bishop Cantwell to Mary Julia Workman, March 11, 1918. Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
343 Romo, East Los Angeles, 100. The “Brown Scare” increased with the propaganda and speeches of the Hermanos Flores Magon and his followers. The newspapers oversaw spreading the speeches and replicating the Regeneration articles. American society, in Los Angeles and the
House demonstrated how the Mexican refugees in Los Angeles wanted to be good citizens and respected the values of the American society.

In 1919, after a difficult year in which the flu epidemic created social and economic damage in the city, Brownson House was still on its feet and continued to work for the community. By March 1919, the Brownson House extended their services in the district around Macy Street. The superintendent of Immigrant Education in Los Angeles City Schools asked for aid to establish their work on the colony of Mexican immigrants in the Belvedere district.\footnote{Know Your CYO, Serie 2, Box 3, Folder 9, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.} Some of the monetary support that came from the Diocese, such as the surplus made in the San Gabriel Mission development, was devoted to the work among, as Bishop Cantwell wrote it, “the Mexicans.”\footnote{Bishop Joseph Cantwell to Mary Julia Workman, March 3, 1918.} The lack of money was an obstacle for the Settlement House and other charities, so the bishop attempted to unify the disparate charitable efforts under the central administration. Some Catholic institutions were more financially successful than others, and Brownson House was falling behind due to the anti-Mexican feeling in the city.\footnote{Jay P. Dolan, \textit{Mexican Americans, and the Catholic Church, 1900-1965}, (Notre Dame, Ind: Notre Dame University Press, 1994) 157.}

Bishop Cantwell believed that Catholic charity was the responsibility of the Diocese. He began to reorganize and coordinate the activities done within Southern California. In 1919, he established the Associated Catholic Charities to
centralize power in a single institution governing all aid associations. This shift mirrored a centralization of powers was typical in politics and social organizations during the Progressive era. Like many other leaders at the time, Bishop Cantwell believed that all facilities must be brought under the jurisdiction of a central office. By 1921, the Association was restructured as the Bureau of Catholic Charities. In a letter complaining about the Bishop’s plans to centralize the charities, Mary Julia wrote, “Diocesan Bureau of Charities’ is written the need for unification is stressed and rightly so, but the dangers are pointed out as follows, viz., pioneer organizations should not be compelled to lose their individuality, and the Bureau must bring the charities together and not remain a financial agency only. Too much supervision, too much efficiency, may kill the spirit of Christian charity and harness the administration of charity to the paraphernalia of the steel industry or of a department store.” Meanwhile, Bishop Cantwell wanted to coordinate the work of all Catholic charities and institutions, including seven orphanages, two clinics, Brownson House and other charities in the Diocese. By promoting needed additional works, guiding, and encouraging benefactions and establishing a liaison with other public and private agencies, the Associated Catholic Charities was designed to modernize and increase their efficiency within their facilities. They would spend money on the programs and new facilities in the next two years, including Americanization programs in the Settlement House.

---

Mary Julia knew that Brownson House was going to come under Catholic Charities, so she expressed her discontent by writing, “I believe in true scientific administration, but I value most the spirit of love, without which the most elaborate mechanism become a monster.”\textsuperscript{351} Beyond a centralized government, Mary Julia believed in social justice beyond efficient work that did not contribute to the social growth of the population. As she published in \textit{The Tidings} magazine, “under normal conditions Christian justice and charity would sacrifice for the healing of society. Under the abnormal conditions of desertion of Christian principles and a corrupt social system, it does not and cannot suffice to meet the claims upon it.”\textsuperscript{352} Some of the changes done by Bishop Cantwell was the hiring of specialized personnel for the charities instead of volunteers who had given their service out of love for their neighborhood. Bishop Cantwell suggested to the Brownson House to stop the social work and focus on religious work. The Diocese will support immigrants with intense Americanization programs, and the function of the Brownson House should be purely religious such as religious instruction, and practices.\textsuperscript{353}

The city began to offer manual training classes and work with the poor so there was no more need to provided social work to Mexican immigrants. Mary Julia wrote that “the public authority must therefore assist, but not exclude voluntary action. And as the foundation of a truly effective social work, we lay

\textsuperscript{351} Mary’s Letter CIX, \textit{Golden Friendship}, 263.   
\textsuperscript{352} Sociology, \textit{The Tidings}, February 23, 1917, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.  
\textsuperscript{353} Mary’s Letter CVII, \textit{Golden Friendship}, 260.
down religion, religious education, the largest measure of individual liberty to allow development on natural lines and the inviolability of personal property.”

Mexicans had been excluded from civic and social programs and Brownson House helped to promote social work, education, and health services for 19 years. The work done in the Settlement was recognized by Bishop Cantwell, who stated that “the Brownson House need make no apology for the appeal it makes to the people of Los Angeles for assistance in the big constructive work in which it is engaged. Even in these days of stress and patriotic purpose nothing should be permitted to interfere with a work that for many years has deserved for itself the endorsement of the most representative citizens of this community.”

Until 1919, Brownson House had administrative autonomy and its work continued to grow in the community.

Along with the beginnings of centralization, Americanization had been the primary goal of the Bishop Cantwell in the Diocese, perhaps to garner an acceptance of the non-white and Catholic minorities or to demonstrate the patriotism of those Mexican immigrants who refused to change their language and culture. For Bishop Cantwell, the House had to transform and adhere to the new administrative form of the Diocese to help the national patriotic union and achieve acceptance among the Angeleno population. In 1919, Brownson House

---

354 Sociology, The Tidings, February 23, 1917, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
355 Bishop Cantwell to Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
was placed under the Association of Catholic Charities of which Rev. William E. Corr became director. Mary Julia Workman congratulated her friend Father William Corr for the appointment in a note stating, “you may be sure that our entire sympathy now, as always, is with the coordination and development of Catholic social work along cooperative lines.”

![Children at the Brownson Settlement House](image)

*Figure 21. Children at the Brownson Settlement House. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University*

---

356 Mary Julia Workman to Fr. Corr, August 30, 1919. Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
Who is Father Corr?

Reverend William Corr was born in Fall River, Massachusetts in 1882. He travelled to Belgium where he was ordained in 1907. He came back to the United States to become diocesan priest. Father Corr served as director of charities in the Diocese of Fall River prior to his migration to California. He decided to emigrate to sunny California where he met and became a friend of Mary Julia Workman. The priest was invited by her to visit and give a series of lectures in the Brownson House where he was saw the social work done by the volunteers in the Settlement House.

Father Corr and Bishop Cantwell shared same ideas about the work with the poor and immigrants of the city such as a centralized institution because they believed that centralization would help them work efficiently. Cantwell supported that the charitable institutions would be able to work with a centralized control and standardized management. Once he was appointed director, Bishop Cantwell, and Father Corr put under the Catholic Charities direction all orphanages, hospitals, and schools. The objective of the Diocese was to increase charitable donations and to expand its facilities and improve those that were already established. Father Corr wanted to establish another larger center

---

by the neighborhood adjacent to the Brownson House district. The Diocese was able to increase the donation and invest the money in the religious work and the Americanization program.

With these changes, Mary Julia began to have obstacles in her job as president of the Brownson House. In effect, her autonomy was ended by the bureaucracy at the Diocese. Father Corr represented an antagonism to the social work done by Mary Julia Workman and this conflict between them proved to be an example of power dynamics that affected to the social work done at the Brownson House.

---

358 Our Diocesan Charities, *The Tidings*, Serie 1, Box 2, Folder 1, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
Brownson House began as a Catholic Settlement House in 1901, but it became a charity site where social work was done providing essential services to all in need. In 1910, Mary Julia wrote to Bishop Conaty, who supported the charity work done by Mary Julia and the volunteers in the House, noting that “we are classed by the Protestants as distinctly Catholic charity, no matter how much we do for the children of all races and creeds, and the Catholic public, even the clergy, do not rally to our support in sufficient numbers. Thus, we are limited to those who know us personally, and who aid us all the time.”

Sadly, it is from the centralization of Catholic Charities that the conflict between the religious hierarchy and Mary Julia began and that would end up affecting the social work carried out for 19 years in the city of Los Angeles.

The case of the Escobedo family child is an example of the humiliation suffered by Mary Julia when the Bureau took over the Brownson House. In April 1919, a woman was found dead in the house of the Escobedo family. Next to her corpse a child was found by a man who brought the little boy to Mary Julia Workman. She took the boy to the County Charities and they put him in a boarding home. She went to Father Corr’s office to report the incident, but he did not receive her. Corr accused Mary Julia of interfering with the duties of the

---

Mary Julia Workman letter to Bishop T.J. Conaty, Los Angeles, Feb 27, 1910. Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
Catholic Charities; yet, she had made the decision because the Bishop did not opt to receive the case in his office. Six months later, there was no relative who claimed the poor Mexican child. Indeed, he was an orphan who needed a family to live out the rest of his life. Mary Julia knew that the boy was going to be put up for adoption. She knew that the kid was to be placed with the Children Home Society on September 8, 1919, by an agent of the County Charities. She called Father Corr, since he was assigned as head of Charities in the Diocese, to see if she could bring the boy to the Catholic Child Welfare League and take care of him. Los Angeles County stopped the boarding home payment where the child stayed for six months. She made the entire decision to take the child with her until she could find a family capable of adopting him.360

Once again, Mary Julia tried to meet Father Corr but he avoided meeting Mary Julia at the office. She was disappointed by the attitude taken by the priest against her, writing to him that she “was exceedingly grieved by the treatment I received from you yesterday.”361 After receiving the letter and knowing her frustration, the priest responded, “I could not understand why you should ask this office whether you would hand over to the California Home Finding Society Catholic children for placement. All Catholic children must be referred to this office at all times for action. If we wish to refer them to other institutions, the

360 Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, September 9, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
361 Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, September 9, 1919.
decision is made here.”362 Father Corr denied any meeting and he did not want to consult Mary Julia. Since she oversaw the Brownson House, the people of the neighborhood understood the work that was done in the Settlement. Indeed, people in the neighborhood had the confidence to reach the doors of Brownson House because it was a place where they could find charity and welfare. Mary Julia had autonomy in her decisions in the House since she was the Association president. This time, however, the decision had to be made by the Catholic Charities, but the lack of empathy for the people could be seen in this case where the priest did not want to open the door of his office and help to solve the child’s life situation. Mary Julia stated clearly to Father Corr, “I want to do good work, to benefit by wise advice, to give unselfish service, I wish to work in close harmony with your office. I believe in method, system, efficiency, but I also believe that they must be vivified with real human sympathy.”363

This interaction between Mary Julia Workman and Father Corr must be studied deeply on how the Catholic Church envisioned the role of women within the Church as an institution and in Catholic dogma. Mary Julia used the politest words and she did what was in her hand to do her job. She understood the respect for the clergy and those who are in higher hierarchy in the institution, but she kindly wrote, “in the future, you will, at least, be fair to me, and hear what I

362 Rev. Corr to Miss Labory, September 11, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
363 Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, September 12, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
have to say before you condemn me?\endnote{364}{Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, September 12, 1919.} The patriarchal attitude that the priest took towards Mary Julia is an attitude that has been fundamental in both the history of the Catholic Church and the culture of American society.

Throughout centuries, men in the Catholic Church have been traditionally given the authoritative and leadership positions and women, religious or lay, are assigned generally to subservient roles rather than to decision making positions. This dogma comes from Gospels where the women play a secondary role in Jesus’ life, like Magdalene. Indeed, one of the main reasons for inequality and discrimination against women is universal patriarchal culture in the society which is dominated by the traditional western Judeo-Christian mentality.

Father Corr took the management of the Bureau of Catholic Charities with an autocracy and egoism that involved a superiority against the women who worked in the Diocese. Mary Julia was surprised by the attitude taken by the priest against her since they had known each other for years. When Mary Julia Workman asked for a meeting with Father Corr, she recognized him as a friend, since she had him as speaker and visitor at the House. This time it was different because it was the beginning of Corr’s administration at the Catholic Charities. She was the president at the Brownson House, but the decisions were taken by Bishop Cantwell and Father Corr in the Bureau. She could not influence or suggest regarding the House anymore; meanwhile, the changes in the Settlement House were executed by the prelate in Los Angeles. One of the
changes suggest by Corr was the Child Welfare League and Family Welfare section; meanwhile, the Immigrants Welfare was postponed at the Catholic Charities. She wrote, “I want to see the plans you have made. I want to hear all the criticism you have to make of us.” Mary Julia complained in this letter since Reverend Corr did not give any answer. She wrote, “if you know me at all, you know that I love candor, forwardness, generosity, fair play, diplomacy, true democracy. You know the many years that I have help for a democratic federation of the Catholic social agencies in Los Angeles and for a coordination of the Catholic activities in a ray that will not crush individual initiative but which will make us of it order to attain the one great end we all have in mind.”

Her Catholic faith moved Mary Julia along the paths of charity and social justice. From being a kindergarten teacher, she ventured to help immigrants in a society that was submerged in division and prejudice. Mary Julia wanted young immigrants to get out of the oppression they faced with education and she wanted mothers to be able to fend for themselves by learning a job to support their families.

Mary Julia was educated under the Catholic faith and was expected to respect the priest who oversaw the Charities and the Bishop in Los Angeles. It was the education received as a Victorian Era woman in her household, and the Catholic education received in her adolescence at the convent. They believed

---

Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, July 31, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
that the ideal woman in the nineteenth century was supposed to be gentle and refined, sensitive and loving. Women were expected to be the guardian of religion and spokeswoman for morality. According to historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “the American girl was taught at home, at school, and in the literature of the period, that aggression, independence, self-assertion, and curiosity were male traits, inappropriate for the weaker sex and her limited sphere. Dependent throughout her life, she was to reward her male protectors with affection and submission.”366 The education Mary Julia Workman received dictated respect for the clergy and obedience to her superiors, and in this case, it was the Bishop and the male clergy within the religious institution. It is in Catholicism where it is taught that Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, is docile before God. That Marian dogma that was taught in the convent in a way that women are left out of submission and obedience. Virgin Mary in the church is presented the Lord’s servant.367 This is how Catholic religious women were educated in the convent. A patriarchal doctrine of obedience and submission undergirded everything women were taught. Since creation, Eve was created from the body of Adam. Dr. Alice von Hildebrand stated, Eve “was created last – the apex of creation – and her body was the only material creature taken from the flesh of a person.”368 This

366 Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles and Role Conflict in 19th-Century America” Social Research 39, no. 4 (Month or Season, 1972), 656.
ideology spread in the conservative sector of the Church, stressing that women came from men and consequently, are inferior. Her flaw is not being skillfully clever at persuading evil. Therefore, she needs the guidance of man, of the superior being that guides her. Throughout history, Christianity has perpetuated an ideology of gender that reinforces women’s status as inferior to men.\textsuperscript{369} That was the submissive influence with which Mary Julia had been raised, from a father who forced her to obey his wishes to stay at home and take care of her siblings as the Victorian and religious education with which she grew up.

The social paradigm where women were inferior to men was thus deeply imbedded in culture by the Victorian era. Beyond religion, society lived under these customs, but when the Progressive movement began women began to educate themselves and question patriarchal society. Eugenicists and conservatives of American society complained about women working, studying, and raising their voices to claim their human rights. Historian Thomas Leonard has commented that “the college-educated woman, who delayed marriage and children, was accused of abetting race suicide. The ‘new woman,’ whether a factory hand or a privileged alumna, threatened American racial health.”\textsuperscript{370} By the end of the 1800s, women were considered weaker according to the Progressives. Indeed, protecting women began with gender differences, and


difference usually meant inferiority. Father Corr and Bishop Cantwell evoked that attitude of superiority against the humility and respect that Mary Julia offered them. Although they recognized her leadership in the Brownson House, they highlighted the flaws and mistakes with an arrogant and patriarchal attitude.

In the Progressive era, shifting gender norms and American Catholic identity came to interrelate for these women who, on the one hand, were leaders who sought a change of social justice but did not put aside their faith. New developments in higher education, more urgent calls for professionalization, and expanded opportunities in public life signaled great changes, but Catholic women would interpret and accept these developments as women of faith and Progressive leaders. As these changes intersected with debates about American Catholic identity, gender continued to be used to differentiate American Catholics from their fellow Protestant citizens. Catholic women overwhelmingly aligned themselves with men who shared their religious beliefs rather than women who did not; and some Catholic women showed the same tacit support for the "feminist movements" and Progressive movements of the time.372

This is the period where women increasingly defied traditional gender roles by going to work and college.373 At the turn of the century, more women sought the optimal path to gender equality and respect. Political and social activism led women to seek further education. Indeed, Mary Julia obtained

---

371 Leonard, Illiberal Reformers, 168.
372 Cumming, Cummings, New Women of the Old Faith, 58.
373 Leonard, Illiberal Reformers, 178.
higher education and she was constantly taking classes in sociology that led her to understand the activism and social work that she practiced at the Brownson House. The influence and education received by prominent sociologists and scholars made her question the society where she lived and to look for ways to change the lives of those who lived segregated and oppressed in a nation that boasted of being a source of freedom and human development. Due to her education, she was able to understand the importance of her leadership in the social work in the neighborhood. Her religious faith was important to understand the leadership of Virgin Mary when Jesus and the apostles needed her to find relief and love. The doctrine of the Virgin Mary shifted from patriarchal doctrine, as she became liberator for women who continued to endure oppression, subservience, and denigration.374

The conflict with Father Corr increased when she rejected a paid job offer. On October 26, 1919, Mary Julia Workman responded to Father Corr about her decision to become a salaried position as secretary in the newly formed Immigrant Welfare Department of the Catholic Charities in addition to receiving a payment for her duties at the Brownson House. She turned down the offers as she considered it “a supreme labor of love.” She gave her life to the job at the House as she wrote, “I have always intended to devote my life to it and I have seized every opportunity to prepare myself for progressive work.”375 She rejected

375 Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, October 26, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
the offer and gave priority to her mentality of social justice to those refugees and immigrants in the neighborhood.

Mary Julia Workman began to manifest her unconformity against Father Corr, Bishop Cantwell, and the future of the Brownson House. She explained to Corr,

I have worked with the loyal, unselfish members of the Brownson House Settlement Association in perfect harmony with entire unity of purpose and with undiminished enthusiasm step by step, we have advanced together, always cooperating whole heartily with those in authority, with every beneficial movement in the community at large and with our foreign born friend and neighborhood.

After the long struggle we have had, as pioneers in community work, we have come to the place where we see the results of our labor. We have been hearted by the evidence of growing confidence in Brownson House on the part of the community at large by the love and trust of our neighbors and by the progress we have all made in mutual understanding.

We have hoped to develop more and more the participation of the foreign born people in the government of the House. We have aimed to develop good reliance and to distribute respectability. We have concentrated our work to the glory of God and to the good of humanity. We shall not fail to be true to these ideals even to the point of the greatest personal sacrifice consistent with principle.

If there is any place in your plan for an organization like ours which gives entire cooperation in every forward movement and which is willing to coordinate its work with the general plan for the common good, then we shall hope to continue to serve our own district with increased vigor.376

376 Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, October 26, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
The relationship began to fracture in the Diocese of Los Angeles and the Brownson House Association. In a memorandum dated November 30, 1919, it is stated that “Brownson House Settlement Association will continue to function in all the affairs of Brownson House in the future as in the past, subject to general direction and supervision of the Bureau of Catholic Charities.”

The Catholic Charities began to give priority to the Americanization program and taking over the expenses used at the Brownson House. Father Corr mandated to Mary Julia Workman, “Rt. Rev. Bishop agrees to have the Los Angeles Division of the National Catholic War Council take over all expenses of the Brownson House during the year beginning December 1st.” The house was on a reduced budget but the volunteers kept working on some activities, like Boy Scouts.

A complaint was received in Christmas Eve of 1919 by John Lang where he complained about the management of the House, writing that “the standards of Brownson House should be above that sort of thing and I am sure that they are.” He noticed that the Boy Scouts misplaced the tools and the shop was in disorder. These complaints reached the Diocese who exerted pressure against the directors and those in charge of the Brownson House Association. Father

---

377 Memorandum, November 30, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

378 Rev. Corr to Mary Julia Workman, December 4, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

379 John Lang to Mary Julia Workman, December 24, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University. This letter is important because it illustrated how visitors saw the house and notified to the Bishop. We ignored who was Lang.
Corr published an article in *The Tidings* on December 26, 1919, stating, “the activities of Brownson House have been taken over and will henceforth be financed by the National Catholic War Council.” Mary Julia and the members of the Brownson House Settlement Association were in shock because they did not have that agreement and mutual understanding as was stated in the article. Father Corr replied to the letter, “I supposed there might be room for misinterpretation…I shall try to clarify it in the next issue.” In this letter, he asked Mary Julia for a meeting and assistance and help for the Americanization work.

On February 4, 1920, Father Corr wrote about the future of the “new Brownson House.” He stated that a friend offered $5000 for Americanization work. He wanted to have a meeting with the Board of Directors and Mary Julia. He planned a campaign of $50,000 in activities for Americanization. However, Mary Julia expressed her discontent with Father Corr to Bishop Cantwell. The

---


381 Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, December 28, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

382 Rev. Corr to Mary Julia Workman, December 30, 1919. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

priest told her that Brownson House is a small thing in the great system and what Mary Julia and the Association did was a matter of little importance. Mary Julia had already expressed her concern about resigning to the Bishop and Corr, but they tried to convince her not to leave. He suggested that the others would not support her resignation. In an intolerant way, the priest told that five of the Directors of Brownson House did not support her. She discovered that was a lie none of the directors had any conversation with Corr and four of them shared their unconditional support to Mary Julia Workman.

Mary Julia’s friction with the Priest made it so that none of the volunteers felt comfortable with him. As she wrote, “we find it increasingly difficult under father Corr’s system to continue the policies which have characterized Brownson House up to the present time. Our fundamental conception of the work is wholly divergent.” She stated, “in his words and actions, I continually see a menace to all I hold most precious in the work.” Father Corr wanted to exert a power dynamic over the women and create a conflict to disarm the organization. He intended to divide the group of women by creating an internal conflict. Trying to get women to submit to his bureaucratic interest, he made them to question the future of the Catholic Charities as Mary Julia declared, “I am sure that the Brownson House I love will be wholly institutionalized and wholly destroyed in its finer value by the machinery of his system.” She knew that what she wrote could be taken trivially because they did not know the problems, the work, the care, and the study that for years they had been contributing to society. She was not
asking for a new building or a new leader, what they were asking for was to let them live their lives in the way they have been able to prove their worth and be allowed to live normally. This is where Mary Julia wrote, “if our way is judged no longer valuable then we ask to be allowed to withdraw in peace according to our convictions.”

The presence of this ideology of gender does not mean, however, that women were completely without power in a male-dominated institution. Father Corr blamed Mary Julia for the failure of the Pleasant Avenue project because she was the first to be against it since she believed that the Brownson House did not need a new building. In this letter, the fragile way of describing her withdrawal is written, “Can you not see why my heart is heavy at the prospect and why I have so little hope?” Father Corr was an administrator who had come from another city and another state. He did not understand the social work that people needed in the neighborhood. He did not understand Mexican immigration or Mexican culture and traditions. He was an outsider who sought the bureaucratic welfare of the institution he presided over but lacked leadership. For that reason, Mary Julia wrote that Corr “simply cannot understand us or our work.” Tensions increased and Father Corr’s authoritarianism reached new heights when cut the

---

384 Mary Julia Workman to Bishop Cantwell, February 8, 1920, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

385 Cumming, New Women of the Old Faith, 49.

386 Mary Julia Workman to Bishop Cantwell, February 8, 1920, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
budget. Mary Julia commented that “On January 31, our treasure (Miss Bernard) was told that no more expenses of Brownson House will be paid by Father Corr’s office until a more satisfactory agreement has been reach by him.” Therefore, Mary Julia complained to the bishop for that action taken towards the Brownson House. She elaborated that “we understand that it was your wish as owner of the property we occupy at present, therefore, we are paying our own expenses. We have a brief sense of freedom once more.” It was up to this point where Mary Julia respectfully took the decisions of her superiors. She endured the humiliations and rudeness to which she was subjected. It was in this letter where she wrote her feelings and desire to resign: “I shall give up everything, even my last desire that the name of Brownson House pass with us, if you will let me go. What we have done has been done holy for lord’s glory and I shall offer him the sacrifice of all our dear dead hopes.”

Describing what was happening in Los Angeles, Workman wrote to her friend Sister Mary Leopold in Oakland that “Brownson House is doomed.” Mary Julia wrote that Corr “believes that he has offered us much and that it has been refused. My refusal of the position as paid Secretary at the Bureau for one thing, will forever stand against us; also, my rejection of a stereotyped building offered, on Pleasant Avenue. But even if we accepted all this, Brownson House would have lost its individuality, and so would have died in its finer values.”

---

387 Mary Julia Workman to Bishop Cantwell, February 8, 1920.
388 Mary’s Letter CXII, *Golden Friendship*, 269
Contrary to Father Corr’s claim that the directors did not support Mary Julia, the directors decided not to appear on the ballot to democratically choose the new president of the Brownson House Association. They decided to leave the house with their leader, Mary Julia Workman.

“Our present outlook is most painful,” wrote Mary Julia. She knew that this was the end of Brownson House and her work in pursuit of social justice had been hijacked by a religious bureaucracy seeking financial and religious benefit beyond the human and social benefit that Brownson House had performed for nearly two decades. Her resignation meant a change in the mentality of a woman towards her superiors because beyond financial remuneration, Mary Julia believed in social work and charity. In the Progressive Era, women decided to take the reins of social work and create awareness through activism. While she tried to reach an agreement with respect and submission to her superiors, they exerted a systematic oppression, creating a conflict of interests where the most affected were those who benefited from the Settlement House.

Bishop Cantwell did not accept her resignation because he had not put her in office. Therefore, she had to go to the Association and make her formal resignation with them. He regretted the resignation and wrote, “it must be a great consolation to you to look back on so many years of unselfish labor spent among the poor children and to see other off-shoots of the work that you undertook in earlier days blossoming forth.” Somehow and unexpectedly, Bishop Cantwell

389 Mary’s Letter CXII, Golden Friendship, 269.
was seeing the effects of what was to be Mary Julia's resignation. “When a great work is now being undertaken in the Mexican quarters, especially when those who are hostile to our faith are working so zealously, it is regretted that our greatest worker and most intelligent should drop out.”

Mary Julia wrote to Sister Mary Leopold that “we offer to withdraw our Association if it is not a desirable medium. But if we continue, we ask for unquestionable recognition, and respect for all our constitutional rights.” The Bishop replied that nothing will change and he needed the organization. Mary Julia felt a long agony because she had a conflict with Father Corr. She felt mercy for him, as she wrote “poor Father X(Corr) does not mean to impress us as he does.”

He was mean and difficult to understand in the conversation with evasive and contradictory words. The whole institution was too much for him as Mary Julia recalled.

Mary Julia had a meeting with Bishop Cantwell and she made it clear that centralization can be carried too far. Mary Julia recalled, “we pleaded for development of Catholic women for public service through the bearing responsibility. We pleaded for liberty under law, with full recognition of lawful authority.” She had hope that the Bishop would understand the situation and conditions.

---

390 Bishop Cantwell to Mary Julia Workman, February 13, 1920. Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

391 Mary Julia uses Father X in her letters to Sister Mary Leopold referring to Father Corr. Unknow the reasons.

392 Mary’s Letter CXI, Golden Friendship, 267

393 Mary’s Letter CXI, Golden Friendship, 267
Intolerance towards women due to the selfishness and ambition of the church leaders began to affect the volunteers, who were no longer happy to help at Brownson House. Mary Julia described it “as a consequence of the ‘autocratic regime,’ our Catholic women are losing interest and going into nonsectarian organizations. In this day of democracy such direction as comes from the ‘Bureau’ here kills or drives away the energy needed for our Catholic activities.” In a letter to Sister Mary Leopold, she described the agony of being in that place she loved so much. “My natural inclination is to sever my connection with the work, for I long to be free of the burden of the last six months--we have passed through a veritable agony. But the many years of identification with the work would make my resignation now a cause of scandal and possible injury to the ‘Bureau.’ I am not fond of strife; it wears me out.” 394 She regretted leaving those who needed most, but she did not want to affect them. She left thinking in the poor Mexicans who looked to her and the Brownson House as home.

Mary Julia went from being a submissive woman to fighting for her ideals and facing the situation. She stood up to the patriarchal system that came to govern Catholic Charities in Los Angeles, leaving what she loved more, the Brownson House, in hands of an ecclesiastical bureaucracy.

394 Mary’s Letter CXI, *Golden Friendship*, 268
On June 6, 1920, Mary Julia Workman wrote, “now Brownson House sees the dawn of a changed era. You are all acquitted with the organization program for the Catholic Charities of this Diocese. His, as you know, a most highly centralized plan.” It was her last report as president of the Brownson Settlement House Association. This report was a farewell letter evoking centralization as a new work model and the end of social work in the neighborhood.

The Diocese had been able to raise finances for the Americanization work and it was used to increase and modernize the facilities. On March 2, 1920, Bishop Cantwell wrote a letter to Walter Temple, explaining that he was able “to get $50,000 in Washington for the immigrant welfare, which money is being largely spent among the Mexicans in this city.” With centralization, the Bishop was able to earn money from Catholics who were among the social elite and acquire sufficient funds for hospitals, orphanages, schools, and settlement houses. Walter Temple was one of the benefactors and, like Edward L. Doheny, contributed with money to increase the Catholic Charities facilities within the Diocese. Although there was an increase of resources, the institution distanced

---

395 Mary Julia Workman, Handwritten President Report, On June 6, 1920, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.
396 Bishop John Cantwell to Walter Temple, March 2, 1920, Papers of John Cantwell, 4285, Archdiocese of Los Angeles, California Archival Center. Walter Temple was Mary Julia Workman’s cousin.
them from the people. For this reason, Mary Julia felt uncomfortable with the way the Diocese managed Catholic Charities institutionally, leaving aside what really mattered, which was the people in need. As Mary Julia Workman recalled, “after experiencing the operation of this plan for the past year, some of us, who have been identified with Brownson House from the beginning, believe that it is better for us to leave the field free to the unhampered development of the changed order. We believe that by doing this, funds will be more easily available for the needed improvement of building and equipment, and for the extension of the work.” 397

The centralization plan served to acquire more funds, regardless of social service. In the settlement house, the funds supported an Americanization program aligned with what the United States government was doing to emphasize nationalism during World War I. The program, and others like it, sought to create a cultural mentality to fight against radical Socialism that was spreading the streets of the industrial cities in the 1910s. The Bishop guaranteed Americanization work on immigrants, which Mary Julia criticized in a report: “Until 1917, and the world war, moreover, the word Americanization was not in the popular vocabulary; the conditions of the immigrants was known to an interested few, only joined to all this difficulty of being unknown was the added obstacle of prejudice against the Mexican even among his American co-religionists.” 398

397 Mary Julia Workman, Handwritten President Report, On June 6, 1920.
Brownson House survived struggles against many odds. The volunteers had to educated themselves about the foreigners to educate those who supported their work about the immigrants and refugees they served. They had to learn and understand the refugees and immigrants and earn the confidence of them. They were financially poor, but they tried to give an adequate settlement house.

Contrary to the nativism ideology, Mary Julia wanted to learn and understand those immigrants to incorporate their culture and traditions to American life.

The spirit of the Brownson House, wrote Mary Julia Workman, “was a spirit of cooperation and service; a spirit of welcome of neighborhood, of generous willingness to work with its neighborhood and with every beneficial social force in the community.”

The way in which the Americanization program and the bureaucracy were modified were the trigger for leaving Brownson House. Mary Julia lamented that “the pioneer has a certain satisfaction when others find the trail which he has blazed, so we can rejoice today that the need of the immigrant is being recognized. Our hope for success shall attend the newly elected Directors of Brownson House Settlement Association and the whole plan for the Diocese.” Thus, the departure of the presidency of Brownson House was to be published in a respectful manner. The bureaucracy of the Diocese and the arrogance of Father Corr would stand in the way of publication in *The Tidings*. Mary Julia stated, “the Brownson House workers passed some

---

399 Mary Julia Workman, Handwritten President Report, On June 6, 1920.
400 Mary Julia Workman, Handwritten President Report, On June 6, 1920.
resolutions of appreciation for the retiring directors who had been so long in the work. They unanimously voted to publish them in *The Tidings* as well as in the minutes of the Association." They took the resolution to the secretary of Father Corr’s office, noting that the priest needed to approve it. They waited some days to the publication. After a few *Tidings* publications, they noticed that nothing appeared in the magazine. The Brownson House secretary approached *The Tidings* office and was told that the manuscript had been mislaid. “This is an example of the cold tyranny which characterizes our ‘Organization program,’” wrote Mary Julia. For some reason, not only Father Corr, but the entire institution was putting obstacles to the Association. Catholic Charities and the Catholic hierarchy were blocking the way of a relatively legal and honest process by the group of women who decided to act in the best possible way for the Association. Father Corr had become a tyrant at the head of the Bureau and, with an authoritarian attitude, he made decisions that affected the work carried out by the Brownson House.

Together with Mary Julia, all the volunteers left including the most influential directors. The Brownson House stopped doing social work and focused on religious and American proselytizing. The main objective was to provide social justice to the people but it was changed by a centralized and bureaucratic system that failed. Mary Julia Workman wrote in the last report:

> Brownson House aims to keep alive the same faith in the hearts of the little ones in an obscure part of God’s vineyard. This faith is

---

401 Mary's Letter CXIII, Golden Friendship, 270.
their most precious inheritance. In practice, it will bear fruit in lives of used fulness and virtue here, and it will bear still more abundant fruit in the life beyond the grave. The complete history of Brownson House cannot be written by any pen, for its data are to be found nowhere but, in the minds, and hearts of the children, the parents, and the workers and such data are not transferable to any statistical report.  

It was in that summer of 1920, when the Brownson House ceased to be what it had once been, as Mary Julia Workman recalled, “there has been an unbroken inner harmony at Brownson House, due to the unselfish devotion of each worker which has been the strength of the organization.” The volunteers decided to move away from the House, leaving an institution that failed to reach the immigrants and poor refugees in the city.

Her methods were ignored and underestimated by the Bishop and Father Corr, who did not support her labor in the neighborhood. As Mary Julia recalled, “Americanization has been interpreted as a mutual process in which participation in the rights and duties of the common life plays the most vital part. The greatest strength has been placed upon the explication of American ideals in terms of the most ordinary contacts of daily life. Health, housing, hours of labor, ways, industrial conditions and all what touches the immigrants’ life at home, at work and at play become topics of common interest and of vital importance.”

Mary Julia and the volunteers left behind those children and teenagers of the neighborhood. They kept the happy memories they had inside the

---

403 Mary Julia Workman, Handwritten President Report, On June 6, 1920.
404 Mary Julia Workman, Handwritten President Report, On June 6, 1920.
Settlement. As Mary Julia recalls how the children happily attended to celebrate Christmas at the House.

Some had to go out to sell their newspaper at dawn to help the household economy. They celebrated with joy and love. Some of them brought home sweets candies and gifts to go home before going to work before dawn at the cold winter morning in Los Angeles. Many of those children did not have Christmas at home due to the poverty in which they lived and the House was an escape from their reality.\footnote{405 The Activities of Brownson House, \textit{The Tidings}, 41.}

The news about the resignation of Workman and her volunteers ran all over the Catholic Church in California. “I am very sorry on account of your long experience and unselfish abnegation to work among the poor classes,”\footnote{406 Andres Resa to Mary Julia Workman, June 7, 1920. Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.} wrote a Priest of the Plaza Church. Not only the members of the Catholic church lamented her departure, as many influential people of the city who knew of the work that she had carried out at the head of the association. Years later, when Brownson House began to fail because of the new policies and management it had taken. Workman's absence began to be noticed and this was emphasized by Mary Julia’s friend and Judge, Paul J. McCormick, thirty years later in a letter:

> I have often wondered whether the improvement of what is called “organized” charity is as productive of realistic benevolence as the system under which our dear friend Mary Workman functioned so gloriously for so many years. I presume that industrialization and its concomitant centralization of benefaction has made necessary, even in our religion, a less personal and spiritual approach in such matters that existed in the olden times, but just the same, in my opinion, many of the most efficacious elements of real benevolence have been absent as result of too much system and state regulation.\footnote{407 Chief Judge of U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, Paul J. McCormick to Mr. C.L. Whipple, March 16, 1951. Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.}
Thus, over the years, the work of Mary Julia at the head of the Association was recognized by many different people throughout the city.

Not only the volunteers, but also the workers began to leave the place. One of the last members of the Brownson House to ask for her resignation was Regina M. Brady. She wrote a letter to Workman expressing her concerns in which she noted: “With all method vividly as my guide, that of treating the foreigner on every occasion as we, ourselves, wish to be treated, I in all sincerity believed it only right to interview Father Corr early concerning my position at Brownson House so that the Mexican would not suffer if it became necessary for me to leave.”

Miss Brady understood that Mary Julia Workman and all the directors quit their job and left the Association. For that reason, she approached Father Corr who was the person in charge of the Catholic Charities. Miss Brady recounted

---

Papers, CSLA-9. Judge of the Los Angeles County Superior Court until 1921 and in February 1946, Judge Paul J. McCormick decided the Mendez case in favor of the Mexican-American parents who sue the Westminster School District. During World War II, Gonzalo Mendez leased a farm from a Japanese-American family in Westminster, Orange County. Mendez moved his family to the farm, which was near an elementary school designated for white children by the Westminster school board. In September 1944, Westminster school officials told Mendez that his three children would have to attend the “Mexican school.” In 1945, Mendez and the other parents sued the school districts in federal court. They believed that segregating students based on their nationality or ethnic background violated the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Joel Ogle, the attorney for Orange County, argued that the federal courts had no authority to decide cases involving education because it was a state matter. Judge Paul J. McCormick concluded that segregating these children for as long as eight grades made it more difficult for them to learn English. Like Mary Julia Workman, he believed that segregating children of Mexican ancestry “suggests inferiority among them where none exists.” Mendez v. Westminster, Constructional Rights Foundation, Summer 2007, https://www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/bria-23-2-c-mendez-v-westminster-paving-the-way-to-school-desegregation (accessed, April, 2022)

Regina M. Brady to Mary Julia Workman, June 21, 1920. Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.
her bad experience with Father Corr, which included his arrogance and the bad treatment against women. Father Corr asserted that she had to go with the women who hired her. Miss Brady tried to have meetings, but he denied any of them. He did not allow her to have her pay and she asked for her salary. As she wrote, Corr said, “I have absolutely nothing to do with you or Brownson House.” She approached his offices, as Regina remembered, “he left me standing there looking like a fool.”

Father Corr offered a petulant arrogance to women. He demonstrated a patriarchal attitude toward the women who once collaborated in the Association.

By autumn in 1920, Mary Julia Workman was invited to the University of Chicago. Frederic Siedenburg, a Jesuit priest, was the department of sociology dean. He made an invitation to take sociology courses at the University writing, “I regret your retirement from Brownson House but of course, I think you did the right thing. This cloud may have a silver lining and I wish it could show itself in your connection with some school of Sociology, so that you could give to others the benefit of your sound principles and ripe experience.”

In late 1920, Mary Julia Workman wrote, “I had a happy Christmas in spite of the cruel, untrue statement made about the Brownson house of the past in the Christmas Tidings.” Father Corr wrote the article, “The Bureau of Catholic Charities,” to critique the activities in the house. As Mary Julia described, “it is

409 Regina M. Brady to Mary Julia Workman, June 21, 1920.
made to appear that those in charge became discouraged because of the seeming impossibility of reconstructing the activities which formerly flourished there and which had been discontinued during the war. All this is absolutely false."411 In that post, the reverend took pride in the newly created Santa Rita Settlement House. He wrote that the Brownson House was reorganized and emphasized that those who collaborated and work on the site receive a salary. Of course, he emphasized the money spent and received, without specifically mentioning whether he was able to get involved in the community.412 He stated that he was justifying the present which was the centralization of the Charities by defaming the Brownson Settlement House Association. Mary Julia claimed that “during the war our activities double. There were the regular ones and the war one added. Only during the ‘influenza pandemic’ when schools and churches were closed did we also suspend meetings.”413 They had to obey the law until June 1919 when the effect of the epidemic ended. They could not do festivals, classes, or reach donors to raise money to develop the work at the House. For the volunteers, it was difficult to reach out that year, including the religious work.

A priest, who was Mary Julia’s friend, argued, after reading the article at the Tidings, “it is just false and cruel through and through.” The effort by Father Corr to denigrate Mary Julia was to such an extent that he lied in those publications. His administration was beginning to fail and he looked back to

411 Mary’s Letter CXIII, Golden Friendship, 270.
413 Mary’s Letter CXIII, Golden Friendship, 270.
excuse himself from his mismanagement. Mary Julia proclaimed, “woe to that man who warps the truth and breaks the heart of brave and holy women only to flatter others who profess to be his devoted servants. But anything that is built upon the sandy ground of lies and perversity is necessarily sooner or later to crumble. I am told that Brownson House is going to rack and ruin”414 Mary Julia was asked if she was going to answer, but she simply opted for silence.

Mary Julia stopped going to Brownson House since the summer of 1920. She expressed her sadness to her friend Sister Mary Leopold, “I miss my dear Brownson House, but I am offering the sacrifice that God bless the work and enlighten those in charge.”415 Changes were imminent as her friend, Father Camilo Torrente, wrote to her, “No doubt that today they have better equipment, more ample and beautiful buildings, I would like to know if they have in their buildings a better, at least the same old spirit. I have often seen very beautiful cages with very ugly birdies. (Between us.)”416 The money was coming in with more donations. Bishop Cantwell was intervening, but the social work was falling. As Mary Julia stated, “I know that the work for which we labored and sacrificed for nearly twenty years, is disintegrating rapidly. It is a tragedy! Money cannot take the place of love, but love can make poverty a Paradise.”417

---

414 Mary’s Letter CXIV, *Golden Friendship*, 271
417 Mary’s Letter CXIV, *Golden Friendship*, 272
The lack of money and profit in donations came before the search for social justice. Creating a building to exalt Catholicism as an ally of American patriotism was more important than seeking the welfare of the unprotected. Mary Julia recalled that

We were accused of conducting Brownson House like a Protestant Work because we built a spiritual structure on a foundation of physical needs. The people must live! Food, shelter and right condition of labor and recreation must be considered as elemental human necessities. Our dear Lord the multitude 'lest they faint on the way.' All these material benefits may be used to reinforce the spiritual. We fed the hungry in emergency, and then we found a way for the hungry to feed himself honorably. We never stopped with alms; we sought a way to self-respecting self-support: people like to feel that they can help themselves.

The search for happiness was the search for social welfare. Persecuted people and refugees from countries with conflicts came to seek help. “In all the dire tragedies of life Brownson House was like a beacon light of God’s love for humanity.” In this letter, Mary Julia remembered,

Early one morning before dawn, the Pastor for the Plaza Church brought a superior Mexican family who lost everything in a fire which destroyed their home during the night. The father of the family was burned in the house. The survivors a mother, three daughters and a son were clad only in their night clothes. All were in an agony of grief and despair, because of the loss of the father and all their possessions, and because of the terrible shock. The Brownson House ‘staff of workers’ took the family, and nursed and comforted them, clothed them and gradually aroused the spark of faith and hope that slumbered among the ashes of the fearful catastrophe.

At the end she discerned, “Instance like this were many. You can see that it was Christianity applied to life, and that was more that preachments.

---

418 Mary’s Letter CXIV, Golden Friendship, 272
When the priest came to sow the work of God, the soil was ready for the seed.”

Mary Julia feared that she would be betrayed by someone she trusted and a friend and so she wrote to Sister Mary Leopold. She did not imagine that she was going to be betrayed by her friend and trusted person, Father Corr. The main thing was his conviction and his vocation to help the neediest and especially the children. In Mary Julia's archives, there is a scrapbook of newspaper clippings with poems and odes to charity and love for children where she was inspired to pursue throughout her life. That was the desire to help through charity to the neediest and especially children.

Bishop Cantwell messaged Mary Julia to have a meeting at his home. He received her and walked into the library where they talked for hours. He knew how influential she was in the wealthy society of Los Angeles so he had to reconcile with her. Although she had a progressive social ideology, she remained faithful to her Catholic convictions. The Bishop was generous with his attitude talking about his life and Mary Julia listened with sympathy. He asked to Mary Julia Workman to become diocesan representative for the National Council of Catholic Women and be part in the conference of the Catholic Workers of the Diocese. She did not give an answer because she was not sure about the requirements of the work. She stated that she felt a humility from the Bishop and he did all what a man can do to make things right. She always felt that her work

---

was for the people, as she recalled, “we have worked together and sacrificed together because we were laboring for God and for humanity.”

Father Corr was removed from his charge at the Charities in 1921 and the new Director was Father Robert Lucey, who become Bishop of San Antonio, Texas in 1941. Reverend Lucey asked Mary Julia to return to Brownson House. The Sister of the Holy Family who oversaw the new Brownson House took over the Settlement, but they urged to Mary Julia to return to continue a social work as before. Mary Julia declined. She met with the sisters and she wished the best for them at the House. Mary Julia Workman wrote that “they asked questions about the past and I told them briefly of the joys and labors of twenty years of the friendship of Bishop Montgomery and the Bishop Conaty of the aim we had for real community work based on cooperation.”

The true social work at Brownson Settlement House had been left behind.

Thirty years later, in 1951, Mary Julia wrote,

We have come to a place in world history when the radio, the airplane and two world wars have converted the whole world into a huge neighborhood. In addition to work at home, we must now add an active interest in worldwide needs.

The very same ideals that inspired the foundation of Brownson House must now inspire work for peace in our troubled world. Only with God’s help and by united efforts can we advance toward the goal of a world organized for justice and for peace. May God give us the faith, patience, wisdom, courage, to do our full part.

---

421 Mary’s Letter CXV, Golden Friendship, 275.
422 Mary Julia Workman to Father Vaughan S.J., March 12, 1951.
Figure 23. Children of the Brownson Settlement House 3. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

Figure 24. Children of the Brownson Settlement House 4. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
Figure 25. Classroom in the Brownson Settlement House. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

Figure 26. Mary Julia with Children of the Brownson House. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
EPILOGUE

The news ran through the main newspapers of the city. Letters and congratulatory cards were arriving at Mary Julia Workman's home in Los Angeles. On November 19, 1926, Mary Julia Workman received the "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice" Medal from Pope Pius XI.

In 1926, Pope Pius XI conferred the honor of bestowing that decoration on María Julia Workman and Queen María Cristina of Spain. The recognition came directly from the Vatican and extolled the charitable missionary work of Mary Julia Workman with the poor. Pope Pius XI publicly acknowledged her charitable and social work done in Los Angeles.423

It was in that fall of 1926 when Mary Julia Workman receives papal recognition. Her acquaintances, who lived and saw Mary Julia's hard work at Brownson House sent letters congratulating her. One of the letters written by Attorney Joseph Scott noted, "your life has been spent in self-sacrifice and service to duty to such a degree that it would do credit to a person who has consecrated her life by religious vows."424 Reverend Siedenburg from Chicago wrote, "I know no woman in America who deservers this honor more than you do.

---

423 Pope Honors Holy Names Graduate for Welfare Work, The Tidings, November 23, 1926, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman Box 1, Folder 3, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
424 Joseph Scott to Mary Julia Workman, Nov 18, 1926, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman Box 1, Folder 3, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
and it was great satisfaction to know that your work has been appreciated by the whole Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{425}

Mary Julia Workman was involved in the different Catholic and civic organizations after the Brownson House. It is a long list of organizations and activities in which she was involved throughout her life that only the most important are written in this research. By 1926, She organized and presided the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women and she became member of the Municipal League and League of Women Voters. Also in 1925, she became Civil Service Commission member and in 1922, she was in the Native American concerns. In 1935, she was the second Vice President of the Municipal Light and Power Defense League.

She was member of the Democratic Party and fight actively in political campaigns in the 1930s and 1940s. When the second World War began, she became chapter officer of the League of Nations Association. By 1939, she became part of the American Committee for Peace through Democracy. In 1943, she became actively working to defend the Japanese Americans in the concentration camps. In 1944, Mary Julia Workman became member of the Catholic Inter-Racial Council and fought for the Defense of African Americans. Mary Julia Workman was a tireless woman that looked for the defense of the persecuted people. She was member of the National Conference of Christian

\textsuperscript{425} Reverend Frederick Siedenburg to Mary Julia Workman, December 20, 1919, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman Box 1, Folder 3, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
and Jews and in 1946, she worked with Father George Dunne, who was a prominent leader activist and writer, to fight against racial segregation and discrimination in America. Mary Julia Workman became involved in the Hollywood Strike with Reverend Dunne advocating for fair labor laws in the film industry. Beside these activities, we would be needed another research to cover her legacy as an activist and her influence in movements in favor of civil rights, peace, and social justice.

Although her story is forgotten in the library archives, in her time, Mary Julia Workman was recognized for her altruistic work and political activism by local civil authorities. Her death made headlines and her social activism was remembered, mainly the Brownson House Settlement.

From a progressive platform, Mary Julia did not put her faith aside. It was that progressive Catholicism that led her to give her life for the neediest and the search for social justice. Mary Julia Workman did not marry and could not give herself to religious life but she gave her life to social work, the common good and world peace until the last days of her life.

On January 12, 1964, Mary Julia Workman died in Los Angeles, California. She rests in peace at the Calvary Cemetery next to her mother Maria Elizabeth Workman and her father William H. Workman.

---

Figure 27, 28. Pro Ecclesia Medal and Vatican Certificate
Department of Archives and Special Collections,
William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University

Figure 29. The Tidings, November 19, 1919.
Department of Archives and Special Collections,
William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University
Figure 33. Brownson House Volunteers with Children. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

Figure 34. Mary Julia Workman (Center) with Walter Temple Family at La Puente Homestead (City of Industry). Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
CONCLUSIONS

More than 100 years have passed since Mary Julia Workman's resignation from Brownson House in 1920. Her legacy during the Progressive Era is important and should be recognized by civil and religious institutions. Mary Julia Workman challenged social and clerical barriers in favor of those in need. Through her work, she was able to bring social justice to immigrants. The Brownson House sought true progress to the foreign-born by providing education, public health, jobs, and social services in city of Los Angeles.

The historiography of the Progressive Era raises the achievements of this period in the history of United States; however, it refuses to observe how some ethnic groups that did not fit to the American values were discriminated due to their religion, culture, and race. In Los Angeles, the Mexican immigrants did not reach the benefit of that Progressivism. Two of the reasons were the anti-Catholicism that contributed to this religious discrimination, and Eugenics Movement that pushed the whiteness rhetoric that a superior race was the ideal to migrate to the United States.

Mary Julia went against the current of those repressive and racist manifestations of the time. She is an example of those American Catholics who sought the common good among the poor regardless of race or religion. Brownson Settlement House was staffed by young women responding to poverty in the city. Mary Julia walked and lived in the city where she saw the needs of the
people. She was able to understand the language and culture of the poor Mexican immigrants. Mary Julia Workman sought the progress of the neediest and especially those immigrants who were isolated in marginal neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

Mary Julia managed to break the barriers of systematic invisibility that people with disabilities had. Those people who were marginalized from the society and were discriminated against because of their physical condition. The Brownson House clinics served to provide health and rehabilitation support to the disabled people. She realized how society and the environment determine the health of a child, a disabled person, and that is why she tried to improve their living conditions with rehabilitation and education. Going against the Eugenics Movement that started during the Progressive Era, she had respect for life and to those with disabled conditions. She was against the eugenic ideologues who believed that only physically perfect immigrants could fit into American society.

Mary Julia Workman challenged the nativist and nationalist rhetoric used to harass immigrants and make them leave behind their culture, traditions, and language. At Brownson House, English was important to be able to survive on the city streets, but the native language was important to learn and be educated bilingually. The culture and traditions of the immigrants were recognized and respected so that they could be adapted to the American culture. Therefore, It was important that the Catholic Church recognize those Mexican traditions and
the religious syncretism that they exercised in their country and contributed to their devotion within the Church.

The historiography of the Progressive Era indicates that the Progressives were white, Protestant and middle class men and women who worked to make a better and safer place to live in the United States. Mary Julia’s contribution to society has been left out of history books and lists of notable and outstanding women in United States history. Whether it is civil society, or the Catholic Church, the contribution that Mary Julia Workman made to society in Los Angeles has not been thoroughly valued and studied. Perhaps her progressive mentality within the Catholic Church, or because of her struggle in favor of the oppressed, and the search for social justice has been a determining factor in being rejected by the most conservative members of the Church. Mary Julia was a woman who, with her faith, embraced the unprotected and poor who came to seek help at Brownson House.

Mary Julia Workman and the women at The Brownson House Settlement Association were forerunners in bilingual education in schools. They were against segregation in the classroom and sought the social liberation of young people through education. In this Settlement, men and women were trained and educated to have a decent job and support their families. Also, within the House, public health was essential for poor pregnant women who lacked medical services and rehabilitation of disabled children was important to be able to live and adapt to their social environment. We can conclude that Mary Julia was a
forerunner in what, in 2014, the World Health Organization would call Social Determinants of Health, which the economy, society, and human condition are a fundamental part of people's health, in this case the disabled children.

Mary Julia's files were kept in boxes and the Catholic Church has not recognized her work in society. The Church has forgotten her vision for social justice, and the liberation of the oppressed through education, work, and health. She observed and learned the needs of the poor and marginalized to embrace them and provided them the support to succeed in the Anglo-American society. She did not agree with the centralization of charitable institutions because she knew that it was a bureaucracy that only sought to increase financial resources rather than social benefit. It is at this point in the life of Mary Julia Workman, where she put aside the values of submission and obedience taught in her adolescence to raise her voice and consolidate her leadership with the other volunteers.

The official history of the Los Angeles Dioceses ignored and underestimate Mary Julia Workman legacy in the Catholic Church in California. In all his books published by the Dioceses archivist and historian Monsignor Francis Weber, he ignored giving her credit for what she did and in some cases, Weber mentioned Brownson House downplaying how successful it was during the almost two decades of its existence in Los Angeles. In the book written by Weber, Catholic Heroes of Southern California, he writes about several prominent Catholics but he ignores Mary Julia Workman. We must emphasize
that in the files of the Diocese there is no letter from Cantwell to Mary Julia Workman, and there are not Brownson House records or Mary Julia’s archives. Therefore, it was difficult to find anything related to her in the Diocese Archives; however, Mary Julia had the audacity to keep documents that were transferred to relatives.

In 1929, Sister Mary Leopold published her book of letters written by her friends at Holy Names convent in Oakland, California. It is in this book where, without Mary Julia’s permission, Sister Leopold published her letters. The book was banned within the Diocese of Los Angeles. Bishop Cantwell and Father Corr were incensed and prevailed with the religious superiors at Sister Leopold convent to destroy all copies of the volume. This compilation of personal letters from Mary Julia reflects her intimate feelings about the situation she experienced during her conflict with the clergy of the Diocese. When the book was published, Father Corr name was censored because he was priest at St. Elizabeth Catholic Church in Altadena, California so he was named as Father X. Cantwell got irritated when he saw that Bishop Hanna wrote the foreword and his picture appeared in the book. The few copies of the book are a primary source on the life of Mary Julia Workman, and from these letters we can gain an intimate insight into her life during this period.

Although the Dogma of the Church is inviolable, the Church must give women an equal place within the institution and recognize their leadership both in the Church and in society since they are the ones who have managed to sustain
the foundations of the Church which is charity and love for the most unprotected and poor such as Teresa de Avila in Europe, Elizabeth Seaton in the United States and Mary Julia Workman in California.

The Mexican community has grown in the city of Los Angeles. It is in these neighborhoods like Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles where Irish-American priests, such as Thomas O'Dwyer, and Gregory Boyle, have influenced with social programs in this communities. The Catholic Church in Los Angeles is the largest Diocese in the United States and the most ethnically diverse. This Diocese has understood its social work in the poor sectors of the city. This religious institution is aware of ethnic and cultural diversity and the social work of the Diocese is trying to reach all the poor and immigrant communities in the city. Something Mary Julia Workman did in Los Angeles neighborhoods from the Brownson Settlement House over 100 years ago.

Figure 35. Mary Julia Workman. 
Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.
Primary Sources

Letters

Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, July 31, 1919, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

Mary Julia Workman to Fr. Corr, August 30, 1919, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, September 9, 1919, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, September 12, 1919, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, October 26, 1919, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, November 12, 1919, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

Mary Julia Workman to Father Corr, December 28, 1919, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

Mary Julia Workman to Bishop Cantwell, January 17, 1927, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

Mary Julia Workman to Bishop Cantwell, February 8, 1920, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

Frederic Siedenburg S.J. to Mary Julia Workman, October 22, 1920, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

John Lang to Mary Julia Workman, December 24, 1919, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

Mary Henderson to Mary Julia Workman, Oct 3, 1917, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

Municipal Charities Commission President to Mary J. Workman, June 29, 1916, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

Regina M. Brady to Mary Julia Workman, June 21, 1920. Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.


Rev. Corr to Mary Julia Workman, December 4, 1919, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.


Rev. Corr to Mary Devin, February 4, 1920, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

William J. Denney to Mary Julia Workman, February 12, 1917, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

Mary Julia Workman Letter from Salt Lake Utah, Oct. 10, 1917. Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9,

William J, Denney to Rev. Joseph S. Glass, Feb. 12, 1917. Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, Box 1, Folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9,
Reverend Frederick Siedenburg to Mary Julia Workman, December 20, 1919, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman Box 1, Folder 3, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9,


Archdiocese of Los Angeles, California Archival Center.

Bishop John Cantwell to Walter Temple, March 2, 1920, Papers of John Cantwell, 4285,

Memoirs


Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.


Maria Elizabeth Workman, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 20 and folder 13, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

The Workman Side of the Family as told by Maria Elizabeth Workman to Thomas Edgar Workman, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 2 and folder 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.

The Dardier-Christie Side of the Family as told by Mary Elizabeth Workman to Thomas Edgar Workman, November 8, 1919, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 1 and folder 2, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.


Publications


The Tidings, December 26, 1919, Archdiocese of Los Angeles, California Archival Center.


Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.


Mary Julia Workman, Series 1: Mary Julia Workman, box 2 and folder 14, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.


“Social Service”, *The Tidings*, May 16, 1915, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 1, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35.


“Our Diocesan Charities”, *The Tidings*, Serie 1, Box 2, Folder 1, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35.


“Early Memories” Series 2, Box 5, Folder 17, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35.


Documents

Brownson House Settlement Association of Los Angeles, Yearbook, 1913. Workman-Temple Homestead Museum Archives.


Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.


Memorandum, November 30, 1919, Serie 1: Mary Julia Workman, Folder 1, box 1, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.
Maria E. Workman, and William H. Workman’s Testament, Serie 3, Box 8, Folder 9, William H and Mary E. Workman, Workman Family Papers, CSLA-9.


Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, Immigrant Education Leaflet 3, Series 2, Box 4, Folder 24, Workman Research Materials, CSLA-35.


Secondary Sources

Books


Journals


_____________ “Responding to Urban Poverty: Mary Julia Workman and Brownson Settlement House of Los Angeles, 1900-1920” Series 1: box 2 and folder 12, Workman Research Materials CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.


McGroath, John S. “From The Mountains to the Sea.” Serie 1, Box2, Folder 9. Workman Research Material, CSLA-35, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University


In Memoriam


Dissertations

Kynlee, John Emmanuel “Housing Conditions Among the Mexican Population of Los Angeles”, PhD. diss, Department of Sociology, University of Southern California, April 27, 1912, Workman Research Materials, Serie 2, Box 5,
Folder 1, CSLA-35. Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University.

**Internet**

