

PRO-LIFE, PRO-LGBT: A PROUD HISTORY



PLAGAL

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Zakrzewska was also moved by her own vivid memories of living as a poor immigrant herself. Although she eventually had a comfortable home, Zakrzewska never lost her “remarkable insight and sympathy” that allowed her to understand the lives of poor patients “from their own standpoint.” She believed that instead of do-gooder charity, “it is justice to one another” that “we should cultivate and practice.”⁷ A suffragist and abolitionist, Zakrzewska called for an end to the sexual double standard. She warned the Moral Education Society of Massachusetts against consigning any women to “a class of animal women” who are treated as “legalized merchandise...I say, therefore, that one of the laws of our moral code should be, “Respect the woman in every woman.”⁸ Zakrzewska herself practiced those ethics throughout her life, in her work against abortion as much as in anything else.

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⁷ Marie Elizabeth Zakrzewska: A Memoir. Boston, MA: New England Hospital for Women and Children, 1903, pp. 17-18

⁸ Zakrzewska 1924, pp. 420-421.

widespread prejudice that anyone who helped single mothers was aiding and abetting immorality—sometimes even on the part of people who inveighed against the practice of abortion but did nothing to help women avoid it.⁴

Zakrzewska moved to Boston and founded the New England Hospital for Women and Children in 1862. She headed it until retiring in 1899. Zakrzewska made maternity services for the poor and single an integral part of its services. She also created the Temporary Infant Asylum. The New England Hospital graduated several generations of women physicians and was also a pioneer in the professional training of nurses, including Mary Eliza Mahoney, the first formally educated African American nurse (1879).⁵

Zakrzewska drew much strength for her prejudice-dismantling, abortion-preventing, reproductive justice work from her domestic partnership with Julia A. Sprague, club historian of the New England Women’s Club, and from their circle of pioneering professional women, many of whom were also lesbian couples.⁶ In early feminist circles, such “Boston marriages,” as they were called, were openly accepted and not uncommon before the rise of eugenics and its branding of LGBT persons as “perverts.” As the vast majority of early feminists opposed abortion, there was no dangerous and utterly misplaced confusion like there is today of LGBT justice with any right to abortion.

⁴ Derr, MacNair, and Naranjo-Huebl 2005.

⁵ Along with Zakrzewska’s autobiography, the hospital’s annual reports (available from “Women Working, 1800-1930,” Harvard University Open Collections,) document these activities.

⁶ Lillian Faderman, *To Believe in Women: What Lesbians Have Done for America—A History*, Houghton Mifflin, 1999, pp. 257-258.

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who considered abortion violence against female and fetal life, Zakrzewska strongly opposed abortion.¹

When the two friends sought to challenge Madame Restell (Ann Trow Lohman), New York's most famous abortion provider, a lawyer told them to stop because Restell was a "social necessity" defended by the rich and powerful and therefore beyond any challenge.² But like Blackwell, Zakrzewska continued to challenge abortion through radical measures that made it less of a "social necessity."

Zakrzewska worked with Elizabeth Blackwell and her sister Emily, also a physician, to start the New York Infirmary for Women and Children in 1857. The first entirely female-staffed US hospital, it was later chartered as a women's medical college. The Infirmary focused on service to the indigent. Elizabeth Cushier, a staff surgeon and Emily Blackwell's life partner, noted that the Infirmary was at the time the only safe haven in the city for single pregnant women.³ Elsewhere, while their babies' fathers were not called to account, single mothers themselves were moralistically deprived of aid before and after they gave birth, and even when they were in labor. Many ended up in prostitution because they had no other means of survival. The Infirmary was up against a

¹ Marie Zakrzewska, *A Woman's Quest*, ed. Agnes Vietor, New York: Appleton, 1924, p. 180. See also Elizabeth Blackwell, "Look at the First Faint Gleam of Life" as well as the accompanying biographical discussion, pp. 36-39 in Mary Krane Derr, Rachel MacNair, and Linda Naranjo-Huebl, *ProLife Feminism Yesterday and Today (Feminism & Nonviolence Studies Association, 2005)*

² Zakrzewska 1924, p. 180.

³ Elizabeth Cushier, "Autobiography," pp. 85-95 in *Medical Women of America*, ed. Kate Campbell Hurd-Mead, New York: Froben Press, 1933.

Respect the Woman in Every Woman: Maria Elżbieta Zakrzewska, Pro-life Lesbian and Pioneering Feminist Physician

By Marysia

Although born in Berlin, Germany, Maria Elżbieta Zakrzewska (pronounced roughly “Zak-chevf-ska,” 1829-1902) belonged to a Polish family who had lost their wealth and land to Russian occupiers. All her life, Zakrzewska, a religious freethinker, was acutely conscious of the ways that power could be abused or applied for good. She received excellent midwifery training in Europe and then, in 1853, immigrated to the United States to seek a medical education. At first, prejudice against her as a Polish immigrant and as a woman with professional skills and aspirations was so intense that she could at first only find ill-paid work as a seamstress.

Zakrzewska became friends with Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, the first US woman of any race or ethnicity to achieve the MD degree. Blackwell encouraged her to brave the overwhelmingly male environs of the medical school at Cleveland’s Western Reserve University. Zakrzewska earned her MD in 1856. She specialized in obstetrics and gynecology. She returned to New York City and with Blackwell sought to rent rooms where they could set up medical practice. They were refused time after time by landlords who mistook them for abortionists. The two doctors did not appreciate the confusion. Like Blackwell,

A PRO-GAY, PRO-LIFE NATION?

There is no automatic connection between being pro-gay and pro-abortion rights. Consider the history and culture of the Great Lakota Nation, as recounted by two contemporary women members.

According to Cheryl Long Feather’s essay in the new edition of the book *ProLife Feminism Yesterday and Today*, “the killing of an unborn child” was traditionally considered “abhorrent” and a “crime against nature”--unlike nonviolent means of birth control. Mary Crow Dog notes abortion as a point of difference between Native women and Anglo movement feminists. Yet she offers evidence that homophobia was decidedly not part of Lakota ways, that people who loved members of their own biological sex were honored as essential contributors to the community, not reviled as “criminals against nature.”

Crow Dog gave birth to her first child as she took part with 200 other American Indian Movement activists in the 1973 taking back of Wounded Knee, South Dakota. In 1890, US soldiers had slaughtered over 300 unarmed Lakota, including mothers with babies, at Wounded Knee. As she labored, Crow Dog thought of her sister, forcibly sterilized after giving birth to a baby who died soon afterwards from inadequate medical care.

Crow Dog also longed for the aid of a *winkte* (“two-souled person.”) In traditional Lakota culture, *winktes* were gay men who lived and dressed as women. They had a reputation for spiritual insight, generosity, and longevity. In fact, after a birth, a *winkte* would ritually

share his/her longevity with the baby by giving the child a secret name. The secret names were meant to be “funnily obscene,” like *Che Maza* (Iron Prick). Crow Dog was amused at the thought of going up to the macho warriors around her and asking if any of them were winktes. “This is not to criticize winktes. We Sioux have always believed that a person is free to be what he or she wants to be.”

At each phase of the life cycle, evidently.

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the Stonewall uprising, and all other women and men who have aspired to that “brighter day.” Including Tom Sena with his vision for a truly prolife, because pro-gay, movement. Perhaps we will arrive... Will you join us?

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“LIKE BABES IN WOMBS”

The great gay-male icon Walt Whitman (1819-1892) wrote frank, exuberant poetry that scandalized Victorian Anglo America with its praise of sexual and other largely unsung, proscribed delights accessible and vital to “ordinary” people. Though still misunderstood, his bold declaration “I celebrate myself” was not at all that of a destructively self-absorbed, arrogant person. Rather, he was including himself, and quite rightly so, in a joyful reverence towards all lives—including those of unborn children, judging from the tender simile that appears in this poem near the end of *Leaves of Grass*.

UNSEEN BUDS

Unseen buds, infinite, hidden well,

Under the snow and ice, under the darkness, in every square or cubic inch,

Germinal, exquisite, in delicate lace, microscopic, unborn,

Like babes in wombs, latent, folded, compact, sleeping;

Billions of billions, and trillions of trillions of them waiting,

(On earth and in the sea—the universe—the stars there in the heavens,)

Urging slowly, surely forward, forming endless,

And waiting ever more, forever more behind.

A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO HER OWN BODY

“A woman has a right to her own body.” Many assume that this feminist rallying cry originated in the 1960s with the movement for abortion-law repeal, and that it names the right all those “antichoice fanatics” REALLY seek to demolish, despite all the smokescreen rhetoric about “revering life.”

In fact, 19th and early 20th century feminists used this phrase to express their ardent demand for women's sexual and reproductive justice, which in their view (and the view of a substantial, growing American feminist minority today) was the very antithesis of abortion. Early feminists risked and often incurred prosecution under “anti-obscenity” laws for seeking this justice.

Early feminists quite plainly called abortion throughout pregnancy “child murder,” or “antenatal infanticide,” or simply referred to both abortion and postnatal lifetaking with the single word “infanticide.” Yet their concern for children hardly ended at birth. They led new movements to end child labor, reduce child mortality, and improve education, among other vital reforms.

Nor was their abortion stance tied to a nasty stereotype of aborting women as frivolous, selfish fashionistas. Indeed, early feminists protested this stereotype, pointing out that women were so often pressured into abortion or postnatal infanticide by grave sexual and reproductive wrongs against them.

These wrongs included the denial of sexual/reproductive education, including accurate information on prenatal

every street corner in America. In short, we would not exist...Perhaps a fund to care for mothers of unwanted children -- a Judy Garland Fund -- ought to be established by the LGBT community to underline this indelible link between the right to life and the birth of LGBT activism. It might bring a strong message that the LGBT community might not be aware of and would be difficult to ignore.

Such a fund would do well to remember also the much-wanted unborn children that Judy was coerced to abort by the Hollywood studio system, which left female actors, especially the unmarried, little other choice. Her own mother, who insisted that Judy would fail in her career if she went through with motherhood, colluded in the unbearable pressures upon her.

Matilda Joslyn Gage, the “Mother of Oz,” whose forthright speech was censored by other women for being too radical and disruptive, once predicted:

A brighter day is to come for the world, a day when the intuitions of woman's soul shall be accepted as part of humanity's spiritual wealth; when force shall step backward...The world is full of the signs of the near approach of this period...

Obviously, we are not there yet. Despite progress, wise women's voices are still silenced. Unborn children's lives are sacrificed because pregnant women lack real choices and they are expected to just take it. Queer persons are still being forced to sacrifice their true identities—sometimes at the cost of their lives. But we can in response remember and build upon the legacies of Matilda Joslyn Gage, Judy Garland, the drag queens of

persuaded him to commit to paper the enthralling tales he made up about it for his children and their friends.

And thus the wisdom of Oz was able to reach and captivate millions of all ages—especially, of course, through *The Wizard of Oz* movie starring the young Judy Garland (1922-1969), born Frances Gumm. But she almost did not get born into this or any other name, let alone become an internationally beloved entertainer. Her parents, Frank and Ethel Gumm, had not wanted to conceive a third child. Their finances were shaky, Frank was gay, and the couple was moving towards divorce. After Ethel tried frantically to self-abort, Frank turned to his friend, Dr. Marcus Rabinowitz (Rabwin), then a medical student, for counsel on getting her a surgical procedure. Rabinowitz kindly advised against this course, promising that he would instead help the family in any way needed with the child.

Rabinowitz kept his promise. Throughout the tumultuous joys and sorrows of her life, Judy trusted him almost as much as she trusted her doting father. Rabinowitz was the only person at her funeral who had known her for her whole life. Tom Sena, the late founder of PLAGAL, once reflected on the import of his kindness towards Judy, even before her birth, for the very community of fans who most adored her, and whom she loved right back.

When Judy Garland died, the LGBT community was engaged in mourning her that fateful night in 1969 which became the Stonewall Riots. The LGBT community had truly had enough when even their grief was not respected. Had Judy Garland been aborted, Stonewall would not have happened, Oz would never have captured the world, and Rainbows would belong in Never Never Land, not on

development; unhealthy medical, dress, and labor practices which turned pregnancy and childbirth into fear-laden, painful, horrific ordeals; the utter lack of private and public supports for mothers, especially those who conceived outside of marriage; and the robbery of women's power to prevent or achieve motherhood as they each saw fit.

These wrongs fell most heavily upon enslaved African American women. Not surprisingly, black and white abolitionist women contributed strongly and eloquently to the case for women's body-right. In her slave narrative, Harriet Jacobs told of her horrific struggles against a powerful white physician who subjected her to relentless sexual harassment. When she became pregnant by another white man whom she "at least did not despise," he spoke of her "disgrace" and boasted of his life-and-death power over her and her unborn child.

One of the earliest feminists to pen the case for voluntary motherhood was this daughter of a plantation owner. With her sister, she fled the premises in disgust against slaveholding and never returned. They defied taboos against women's writing and public speaking to proclaim human rights for all races and genders.

*[There is] a right on the part of woman to decide **when** she shall become a mother, how often, & under what circumstances. Surely as upon her alone devolves the necessity of nurturing unto the fullness of life the being within her & after it is born...she **ought** to have the right of controlling all preliminaries.—Sarah Grimké*

After Emancipation, Angelina and Sarah Grimké learned their brother had had two sons with a slave woman. Most unconventionally, the sisters welcomed these two

destitute, biracial young men as their nephews into their own home and paid for their educations. Francis and Archibald Grimké both distinguished themselves in careers of public service. Archibald's daughter Angelina Weld Grimké, named for her great-aunt, became a well-known writer of the Harlem Renaissance. A lesbian without children of her own, she wrote with great empathy of Black women's reproductive sorrows under racism.

If early feminists did not advocate postconception lifetaking, just what might Sarah Grimké have meant by women's right to "control all preliminaries"? Early feminists were quite politically and spiritually diverse, but almost all, from freethinking anarchists to Women's Christian Temperance Union church ladies, agreed that women had the right to choose if, whether, and when they had penis-vagina intercourse and thus experienced a risk of conception. In asserting this right, they expressed a most countercultural recognition of women's capacity for sexual pleasure, so often suppressed and damaged by exclusively male-centered sex.

In healthy, loving women, uninjured by the too frequent lesions which result from childbirth, increasing physical satisfaction attaches to the ultimate physical expression of love...The prevalent fallacy that sexual passion is the almost exclusive attribute of men, and attached exclusively to the act of coition...arises from ignorance of the distinctive human character of sex, viz., its powerful mental element.—Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell

There is nothing so destructive as that intercourse carried on habitually without regard to perfect and reciprocal consummation...I need not explain to any woman the effects of unconsummated intercourse...But every man

FROM THE MOTHER OF OZ TO STONEWALL...AND BEYOND

There is one particular set of connections among women's, unborn children's, and LGBT liberation that you have probably heard only in part, if you have ever heard it all. But it is guaranteed to resonate.

Even as she raised four children and struggled with her own and her husband's health problems, Matilda Joslyn Gage (1826-1898) voiced a profoundly radical feminism that was not only ahead of her own time, but ours! She identified such practices as abortion, the killing of disabled children, and animal abuse as pernicious effects of "the Patriarchate," effects closely tied to its systematic harming of women, such as the persecution of wicca, or wise women. She envisioned a "Matriarchate" in which

All life was regarded as holy...The earliest phase of life being dependent upon [woman], she was recognized as the primal factor in every relation...It is through a recognition of the divine element of motherhood as not alone inhering in the great primal source of life, but as extending through all creation, that it will become possible for the world, so buried in darkness, folly, and superstition, to practice justice towards women.

Even though Gage was deliberately struck from the historical record, her impact on American society continued, even if incompletely, and without her name on it. Her daughter Maud married an actor named L. Frank Baum, who became the author of the wonderful Oz books. Matilda, who was close to her son-in-law, deeply shaped his vision of an egalitarian utopia of strong women and evolving men. Not only that, Matilda

life,” quite in line with her outspoken national campaigning for death penalty abolition.

Van Waters became a cause célèbre on the American Left, and with their backing was able to keep her job. But the trial cost her dearly. Feeling she had no other way to protect her private life from her accusers, she burned 22 years of letters from her beloved, the philanthropist Geraldine Thompson. Such was the homophobia of those Cold War times. And however Van Waters’ opponents may have defined morality—their homophobia was, not unlike abortion, a destruction of life—and that against someone who so persistently sought to give life.

needs to have it thundered in his ears...that the other party...demands that he shall not be enriched at her expense....—Victoria Woodhull

For many early feminists, women’s body-right encompassed voluntary contraception.

The arguments for birth control that most appeal to us are based on the welfare of the women...and the welfare of their children...--Dr. Alice Hamilton

A woman was arrested and taken to a town jail because she dared to sell certain literature [on birth control]. Do you know that every woman here...has the same danger of arrest if she dare claim her child for her own?...[W]hat is the condition of this State, and almost all the States in the Union? A mother has no right to her own children except under the direction of the father.--Matilda Joslyn Gage

Some even spoke of preventing undesired pregnancy through sexual practices that involve no risk of conception.

We want the sexes to love more than they now do; we want them to love openly, frankly, earnestly; to enjoy the caress, the embrace, the glance, the voice, the presence & the very step of the beloved. We oppose no form or act of love between any man & woman.--Elmina (Elizabeth) Drake Slenker

Women’s body-right of course, depended also on the freedom to choose a partner, or to not have one. Much early feminist discussion and action regarding sexual and reproductive choice focused on heterosexual marriage. Yet its freeing implications for women who loved women were quite clear.

Women we might now identify as lesbian or bisexual felt encouraged to identify and pursue the lives they wished—as we shall see. And we are all the richer for reclaiming this and other aspects of the “live and let live” approach many early feminists took towards a woman’s right to her own body.

lives back on track. Unfortunately, moralistic opposition and budget cuts forced Van Waters to close El Retiro after only a few years.

Yet she took her professional creativity and optimism towards “deviant” girls and women everywhere she went. Along the way, she adopted a seven-year-old girl—then still a highly unusual step for an officially single woman. If Van Waters’ lesbianism had been public knowledge, perhaps the adoption would have been prevented, and her career brought to an abrupt end.

Van Waters’ best-known, longest-held post was as superintendent (1932-1957) of the Massachusetts Reformatory for Women at Framingham. There her compassion for female prisoners continued to arouse both praise and controversy. She allowed mothers to live in normal-as-possible conditions with their children on the prison grounds.

Official policy mandated disciplinary action against women inmates who formed sexual relationships. Yet Van Waters took the unusual step of leaving women in consensual relationships to their own devices, while acting against sexual coercion. Her opponents failed to understand her wise distinction. They luridly accused her of having what they termed a “doll racket” in the facility. In 1949, Van Waters was put on trial with the intent of forcibly removing her as superintendent.

During the trial, Van Waters’ personal character was attacked. Her kindness towards a troubled elderly woman imprisoned for performing abortions was brought up as evidence of her “immorality.” Never mind that Van Waters actually opposed abortion as a “destruction of

IN A LIFE-DESTROYING TIME

Love was indeed coming of age, but a backlash was quickly forming against its evolution. By the adulthood of social worker and penologist Miriam Van Waters (1887-1974), same-sex love and “gender-bending” behaviors met with such conscious and ferocious hostility that LGBT persons were forced into the closet as never before. Freudian and eugenic pseudoscience was invoked to justify this intensified repression. The still-pernicious stereotype equating gays and child molesters originated at this time, further whipping up a cultural paranoia that has yet to die down completely.

Determined to develop herself in the service of others, Van Waters graduated from college in an era when women were still largely excluded and discouraged from higher education. She then earned a doctorate despite harsh responses from male faculty. Van Waters was already showing her lifelong commitment to individual civil liberties. She was a birth control advocate who rejected the “biology is destiny” thrust of eugenics as unjust. While editor of a student paper, she refused the administration’s dictate that they have final say over the articles she published.

Van Waters went on to distinguish herself for her innovative, rehabilitation-oriented approaches to juvenile and female prisoners. Many of the young women she aided were simply pregnant and unmarried. But because of cultural attitudes about “illegitimacy,” they were actually branded as sex offenders. Fully aware that they needed entirely different treatment, she created El Retiro, a place in the Southern California countryside where these young mothers had a chance to breathe easy and get their

MORE OLD-TIMEY LESBIAN FAMILY VALUES

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, same-sex erotic love was widely considered a “perversion” in “mainstream” US culture. Yet it was culturally acceptable for women to have intense, passionate friendships. Female couples could openly share households and conduct their private lives as they chose without the level of interference that would take hold by the mid-20th century.

In her published 1889 autobiography, the long-time president of the WCTU praised her own female household and life partner, Anna Gordon, whose devotion made so much of her activism possible. Then Willard spoke of their bond as one of many such life-giving unions, which were known as “Boston marriages.”

The loves of women for each other grow more numerous every day, and I have pondered much why these things were. That so little should be said about them surprises me, for they are everywhere...In these days when any capable woman can earn her own support, there is no village that has not its examples of “two heads in counsel,” both of which are feminine. Often-times these joint proprietors have been unfortunately married, and so have failed to “better their condition” until, thus clasping hands, they have taken each other “for better or for worse.” --Frances Willard

Under Willard’s leadership and beyond, the WCTU sought to prevent abortion through a campaign to raise the legal age of sexual consent (as low as seven for girls in one state!) and through a national program of care

services for single pregnant and postpartum women and their children.

Many other members of feminist, Boston-married couples, as well as other lesbian family arrangements, worked diligently to bring about progress for women, born and unborn children, and other oppressed groups. Here are only a few examples.

- Drs. Emily Blackwell (sister of the more famous Elizabeth Blackwell) & Elizabeth Cushier were life partners with a daughter, Nannie, whom Emily had adopted while single. With Emily's sister and other colleagues, they were pioneering women physicians who devoted themselves to care of indigent women and children, including single pregnant mothers whom most doctors and facilities turned away, and to medical education for other brave souls of their sex, including African Americans.
- Susan B. Anthony, the great suffragist leader who identified abortion as an atrocity against women and children, was not any less involved in family life as a single lesbian woman. She actually helped to raise the children of her dear friend and married co-conspirator in feminism, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. She doted on her biological nieces and nephews. Her younger protégées in suffrage work also called her "Aunt Susan."
- Jane Addams & Mary Rozet Smith were a couple and the moving spirits of Chicago's Hull House, the internationally renowned settlement house that gave rise to just about every notable reform of the

Blessed of such women are the children; and blessed are they in childbirth. The open air and the sun and the moon and running streams they love all the more passionately for the sake of that which lies sleeping within them.

Recurved and close lie the little feet and hands, close as in the attitude of sleep folds the head, the little lips are not yet parted;

The living mother-flesh folds round in darkness, the mother's life is an unspoken prayer, her body a temple of the Holy One. I am amazed and troubled, my child, she whispers—at the thought of you; I hardly dare to speak of it, you are so sacred;

When I feel you leap I do not know myself any more—I am filled with wonder and joy—Ah! If any injury should happen to you!

I will keep my body pure, very pure; the sweet air will I breathe and pure water drink; I will stay out in the open, hours together, that my flesh become pure and fragrant for your sake;

Holy thoughts will I think; I will brood in the thought of mother-love. I will fill myself with beauty: trees and running brooks shall be my companions;

And I pray that I may become transparent—that the sun may shine and the moon, my beloved, upon you,

Even before you are born.

checks” per se. Indeed, he looked forward to a time when more foolproof means were available to attain

on the one side a more profound, helpful, and satisfying union, and on the other a greater energy for procreation, when that is desired...The overhanging dread of child-birth, which so oppresses the life of many a young mother, will be removed; and marriage will be liberated at last from the tyranny of brute need into the free and pleasurable exercise of a human and intelligent relationship.

Carpenter’s case for voluntary motherhood was deeply influenced by that of his American publisher, the feminist birth control advocate Alice Bunker Stockham. Stockham was acclaimed for her efforts to educate women about sex and reproduction, including the facts of prenatal development. In her wildly popular book on prenatal self-care, she insisted that “a life...once conceived...should not be deprived of its existence...*The remedy lies in the prevention of pregnancy, not in producing abortion.*” Carpenter, a dear friend of South African feminist and birth control proponent Olive Schreiner, may have also been aware of the deeply hurtful abortion she likely obtained in her teens and regretted the rest of her life.

Along with his point above on both sexes’ objection to killing off their offspring, the following passage from Carpenter makes it even more plausible that he, too, opposed abortion, and for similar reasons.

I see the noble and natural women of all the Earth; I see their well-formed feet and fearless ample stride, their supple strong frames, and attitudes well-braced and beautiful...

Progressive Era, including maternal/child health and welfare policy. Addams was the director and very public face of Hull House, but Smith, who preferred a quiet, behind-the-scenes role, was every bit as indispensable. She generously contributed her own wealth, fundraised, and gave Addams a private, comfortable refuge from the stresses of being a celebrity activist. After Hull House investigated abortion with an eye to stopping the practice, it not only continued and expanded its other maternal/child programs, but began to directly offer sex education and birth control services.

“LOVE’S COMING OF AGE”

Born into the English upper classes and educated at Oxford and Cambridge, Edward Carpenter (1844-1929) became an Anglican curate. A gay man keenly aware of hypocrisy, deception, and repression, he grew ever more discontent with religious “orthodoxy” and class “respectability” and gave back his holy orders. Carpenter then devoted himself, in the spirit of his favorite authors Walt Whitman and Henry David Thoreau, to finding and writing about “simplicity,” or what we might now call a sustainable life of integrity. He bought a home and market garden at Millthorpe in the countryside near Sheffield. Millthorpe became a gathering place for reformers and radicals of many stripes.

Carpenter lived there with his life partner, George Merrill, who came from a poor, uneducated background. Their bond was affectionate and enduring: a remarkable achievement in classbound England during an era that could trip up the great Oscar Wilde with “sodomy” charges.

Carpenter saw the civilization of industrial capitalism as one that sundered human beings from nature and thus sabotaged their health, which he defined in holistic terms. A pacifist, he resisted World War I as the product of this civilization. He envisioned a rurally based, democratic form of socialism as a peaceful remedy. An early environmentalist, he spoke out passionately against vivisection and promoted vegetarianism. As leather was just not his thing, he made his own sandals from plant fibers.

An ardent suffragist, Carpenter felt that the overdifferentiation of men’s and women’s social roles resulted not from their biological differences, but from the attitude that women were the chattel of men. If women were denied their own strength and freedom, how, he asked, could they, for example, be strong and free mothers? Carpenter also asserted that same-sex love was no sin. It was an innate, natural preference.

Carpenter believed that the world was entering a most welcome era when sexuality would no longer be exclusively connected to procreation. It would be valued in its own right as a great source of pleasure, intimacy, and generosity. He named this time “love’s coming of age.”

He expected that same-sex relationships, despite their biological incapacity to produce children, would be valued as generative in their own right. Gays and lesbians would have honored roles in the community’s responsibility to care for all children. Heterosexual marriages would become more egalitarian, and discrimination against children of nonmarital relationships would cease.

Like other early feminists, Carpenter saw the right to voluntary motherhood as essential:

And not only Man (the male) objects to lower nature’s method of producing superfluous individuals only to kill them off again in the struggle for existence; Woman objects to being a mere machine for perpetual reproduction.

He acknowledged that no family planning methods of the day were flawless, yet he did not oppose “preventive