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A New Origin Story for Coeducation at the University of California: Josephine Lindley and the Decision to Admit "Young Ladies"

Laurie A. Freeman[1]

Josephine Lindley (later Corella Phipps) circa 1870.[2]

> "The names of these two ladies…ought to be handed down forever in the educational annals of California. It is to be hoped that their example will be followed by those who have been waiting on the edge of the pool 'lo! these many years,' and that they will all prove themselves worthy of the confidence reposed in their good sense and ability."
> — *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 6, 1870

On October 13, 1870, two and a half years after the founding of the University of California and just ten days after the Board of Regents adopted a resolution admitting "young ladies," Josephine Lindley became the first woman to inscribe her name in the University Register. A second student, Carrie Stone, signed immediately below her, forever linking the two as "comrades in arms." Their admission to the University marked a turning point in California's higher-education history and in the state's recognition, however imperfect, of women's intellectual equality. Their signatures in the University Register provide a rare and tangible record of that moment.

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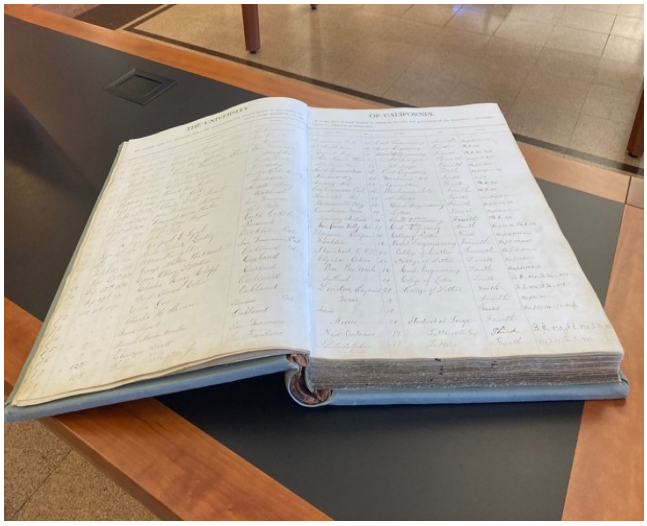
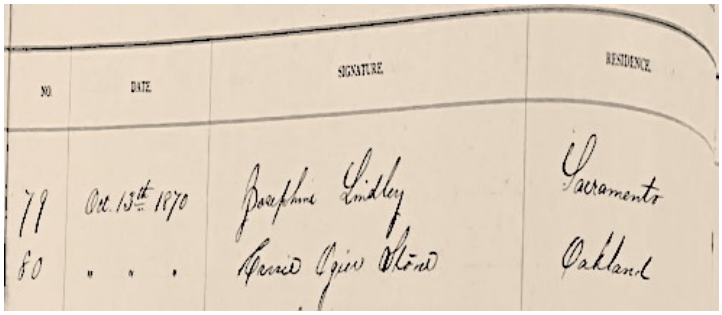
[1]The author is a descendant of Josephine Lindley. This relationship informed the initial interest in the subject, but all claims are based on independently verifiable archival sources.

[2]*Berkeley Key* (n.d.; published after 1927 based on internal reference to a 1927 ordinance), clipping in the author's possession, originally preserved by Josephine Lindley's daughter, Lottita Corella Buckingham.



The original Register of the University of California, 1869–1893. [3]



Signatures of Josephine Lindley and Carrie Stone, the first two women admitted to the University of California.

Josephine Lindley, Carrie Stone, and the women who followed them were participants in a broader national experiment unfolding during the latter half of the nineteenth century: the dismantling of sex segregation in higher education and the expansion of women's access to intellectual and professional life. That movement gained momentum after the Morrill Act of 1862 established the federal land-grant university system, as coeducation gradually diffused as a social, political, and moral ideal.[4] Within this shifting landscape, reformers increasingly framed higher education as an instrument of democratic progress, while women began to imagine intellectual and occupational futures long denied to them.

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[3] *Original Register of the University of California*, 1869–1893, The Bancroft Library, CU-10, Box 21 (UC Recorder [Registrar], Oversize Shelf). **At the head of each page, the Register bears the following pledge: "We severally enter the University with a full understanding and acknowledgement of these truths: viz. It is the duty of every Student to submit to the rules and government of the University. No combination, pledge, promise or vow can create an obligation to violate duty." The language characterizes the act of signing as entering the University and refers to each signatory as "every Student."**

[4] Morrill Act of 1862, 12 Stat. 503. On the expropriation of Indigenous lands underlying the Act, see the broader scholarship on land-grant dispossession.

In 1870, however, coeducation remained unevenly adopted and widely contested. Following Oberlin College's decision in 1837, roughly two dozen privately funded colleges adopted coeducation before or during the Civil War. Many of these private institutions were shaped by abolitionist, Congregationalist, Quaker, or Methodist traditions emphasizing moral equality and social reform.[5] By contrast, most postbellum land-grant universities were secular institutions adopting coeducation for pragmatic reasons: limited finances, enrollment pressures, and the impracticality of maintaining separate institutions for men and women. Although the Morrill Act promised educational opportunities "accessible to all," its implementation rarely reflected that breadth.[6]

California's experience fits within this broader national trajectory yet complicates the familiar contrast between "principled" eastern denominational colleges and "pragmatic" western land-grant universities. From its inception, the University of California combined the legal structure of a secular land-grant institution with significant cultural and intellectual inheritance from its predecessor, the College of California. Legally, it was a secular state university created under the Morrill Act and committed to practical instruction. Culturally and intellectually, however, it inherited much from the ethos of the College of California, a private preparatory school for boys established by Rev. Henry Durant and Dr. Samuel H. Willey in 1853, which transferred its land, curriculum, students, and several leaders to the new university in 1868. Like many antebellum and early coeducational colleges, the College's founders and trustees were drawn largely from reform-oriented Congregationalist, Unitarian, and New School Presbyterian circles that emphasized civic responsibility, moral development, and the educability of all individuals.[7]

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[5] Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz, "Putting the 'Co' in Education: Timing, Reasons, and Consequences of College Coeducation from 1835 to the Present," *Journal of Human Capital* 5, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 383.

[6] Second Morrill Act, 26 Stat. 417 (1890). Enacted in response to the exclusion of Black students from southern land-grant universities, the Act required states to provide access either through nondiscriminatory admissions or through separate institutions, an option that effectively institutionalized segregated systems across much of the South.

[7] The College of California formally limited denominational dominance among trustees, and the Organic Act of 1868 extended this logic by prohibiting sectarian tests and ensuring religious pluralism within the Board of Regents.

This continuity in ideals and leadership proved consequential. The College's cofounder, the Reverend Henry Durant, became a professor and the University's first president; the Reverend Martin Kellogg later served as its seventh president. Two College trustees, Reverend Horatio Stebbins and lawyer John Dwinelle, were among the original Regents appointed in 1868, where they exercised considerable influence.[8] All four supported women's admission and helped advance the issue within the emerging university. While this inheritance did not make coeducation inevitable, it created an intellectual climate in which arguments for women's admission could plausibly take root, especially amid growing public attention to women's education following the passage of the Organic Act of 1868**.**

For more than a century and a half, the University's own histories have attributed women's admission to a single enlightened act of a unified and benevolent Board of Regents. In this canonical narrative, the Regents unanimously adopted a resolution submitted by Regent Samuel F. Butterworth on October 3, 1870, thereby opening the University to women "on equal terms in all respects with young men." The resolution was terse and unelaborated. No rationale was offered for its unusual timing, more than two weeks after the academic year had commenced, and the University's archives preserve virtually no record of deliberation at any level.

The historical record suggests a different story. Women's admission was neither accidental nor merely benevolent. It emerged from a multi-year campaign involving families, educators, clergy, reform-minded alumni, journalists, and young women themselves. We now know that by the time Lindley and Stone arrived in Oakland to sit for entrance examinations in late September, these forces had already prepared the ground, rendering their exclusion by a bloc of Regents opposed to coeducation virtually impossible. Explanations centering solely on the Regents obscure this pivotal moment in the University's history, one in which women and their allies acted in advance of formal authorization, effectively forcing the issue before the Board had publicly resolved it.

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[8] Horatio Stebbins, a Unitarian minister and trustee of the College of California, served as a Regent and supported women's admission. John W. Dwinelle, also a College trustee and principal author of the Organic Act of 1868 (the "Dwinelle Bill"), was a lawyer associated with liberal reform causes, including his successful constitutional challenge to California's 1862 "coolie tax" in *Lin Sing v. Washburn* (1862) and, in 1874, a ruling affirming African Americans' right to public education. See Charles McClain, "John W. Dwinelle," *Western Legal History* 28, no. 1 (2015): 44.

Among the supporters of women's admission within the Board itself were John Dwinelle and Horatio Stebbins, both closely connected to the College of California. The eventual resolution thus reflected the gradual consolidation of a majority within a divided Board, a dynamic later captured in Charles Lindley's account that "until a majority was obtained in favor, … Mr. Butterworth gracefully gave way … and assisted in making it a unanimous vote."[9]

This essay reconstructs that process. Drawing on newly recovered press accounts, private correspondence, archival ephemera, the deliberations of the Associated Alumni of the Pacific Coast (AAPC), and a long-overlooked pamphlet by Judge Charles Lindley, Josephine's father, it traces the informal coalitions and strategic interventions that made coeducation possible in 1870. Without these efforts—including trial balloons, coordinated advocacy, and sustained press engagement—the question of women's admission might well have remained unresolved.

The Associated Alumni of the Pacific Coast (AAPC): A Shadow Forum for Educational Policy

> It was reserved for the United States to represent all races in one nation, but it was reserved for California to represent all colleges in one republic of letters—the 'Associated Alumni of the Pacific Coast.'
> — *Sacramento Daily Union*, June 7, 1868

The Board of Regents was not the first organized body to consider the possibility of coeducation at the University of California. That distinction belongs to the Associated Alumni of the Pacific Coast (AAPC), an elite consortium of roughly one hundred and fifty college-educated men drawn from more than thirty eastern institutions. Founded in 1864 by trustees and founders of the College of California, the AAPC sought to "keep alive the fires of college feeling and learning" and sustain intellectual community among educated settlers scattered across the region.[10] Almost immediately, however, collective nostalgia for individual alma maters gave way to a broader

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[9] Charles Lindley, *Industrial Education: An Address on the Subject, Developing a Popular Plan by Which Industrial Colleges Shall Be Established in This State to Train Our Youths to Mechanics, Agriculture and the Leading Useful Arts* (Los Angeles: Evening Express Steam Book and Job Printing House, 1877), Preface, 2. The Bancroft Library, call no. F870.E3 L43.

civic ambition: shaping the educational future of the Pacific Coast—and of California in particular. The Association defined its purpose as "the diffusion of education and culture throughout the State of California, and all the States of the Pacific Coast," pursued through social reunion, regular communication, and collective action.[11] Annual meetings held in Oakland, timed to coincide with commencement exercises at the College of California, became occasions for sustained discussion about higher education in the West.

By the late 1860s, the AAPC functioned as a forum for educational vision-setting. Its membership overlapped significantly with faculty and Regents of the new State University, educators of private academies and seminaries, and college-educated pioneers working across law, ministry, journalism, and public service. As Reverend Samuel H. Willey later observed, "much of the interest in liberal education which afterward resulted in the establishment of the State University was due to the influence of that Association."[12] Through the AAPC, the founders of the College cultivated expectations about the character of the future public university —expectations that increasingly included, if cautiously, the possibility of women's admission.

Walsworth's First Public Call for Women's Higher Education (1864)

The AAPC's inaugural gathering, held on the eve of the College of California's first commencement on May 31, 1864, produced the earliest recorded public call for expanding women's higher education in California. During that meeting, the Association's president, attorney and later UC Regent, Edward Tompkins, invited the Reverend E. B. Walsworth to speak, remarking that "Education has had no better friend in this State than the Rev. Mr. Walsworth."[13] Walsworth used the occasion to argue that the state's women deserved

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[10] Warren W. Ferrier, *Henry Durant, First President of the University of California* (Berkeley, 1942), 68.

[11] Samuel H. Willey, *A History of the College of California* (San Francisco: S. Carson & Co., 1887), 177.

[12] *The Pacific*, October 10, 1894, vol. 43, no. 43, 3.

[13] Willey, *History of the College of California*, 309.

educational opportunities beyond those already available, announcing the recent establishment of the Pacific Female College in Oakland as a response to that need:

> While I have tried to do, in my humble sphere, all that I could for this institution, I have always felt that there was one thing more that ought to be done…I have thought that some provision should be made for the education of the women of California, more than is at present afforded; and out of that thought has come the female college that crowns the first hill as you go north from Oakland…with accommodations for one hundred and twenty-five young ladies.[14]

Although it would take six more years for women to gain access to the State University, Walsworth's remarks marked a turning point. Women's higher education was framed not as a private or peripheral concern, but as a matter of public significance before an audience already influential in the development of California's higher-education system.

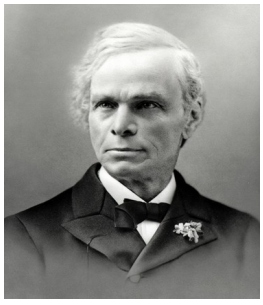
The 1868 AAPC Meeting: Articulating a Strategy

By the time the AAPC convened for its fourth annual meeting in June 1868, circumstances had changed dramatically. First, both the College of California and Walsworth's Pacific Female College had become land-rich but cash-poor, as their endowment lands failed to generate sufficient income. Second, the state Agricultural, Mining and Mechanical Arts College had been established in 1867 under the Morrill Act but existed largely on paper, lacking sufficient facilities and institutional infrastructure. In response, the trustees of the College of California proposed transferring their substantial assets—including a four-block campus in Oakland and 160 acres in Berkeley—to the state in support of a new land-grant university. The resulting Organic Act of 1868 formalized this arrangement and established the University of California. Along with its material assets, the College also transferred its curriculum, remaining students, and several key leaders, embedding its culture and objectives within the new institution. In this way, the College contributed both materially and culturally to the establishment of the University of California, extending its educational ideals into the state's emerging public university system.

[14] Ibid., 310.

During the June 1868 meeting, alumni began to speak of higher education in explicitly inclusive terms. Attorney Edward Tompkins, addressing an anticipated population influx, argued that California would soon need to provide a "broad university education" for every "son and daughter," predicting that such a policy would, within forty years, give California "the highest reputation for learning…of any country in the world."[15] More consequential still was an impromptu exchange that produced the earliest recorded strategic blueprint for women's admission to the new State University. Responding to an anonymous toast to "the Pacific Female College, the angels over our right shoulders," Rev. Walsworth argued that women should be allowed to matriculate. Horatio Stebbins, a Unitarian minister, College of California trustee, and soon-to-be one of the University's most influential Regents, responded decisively:

> Mr. Stebbins: "Send five young ladies to knock at the doors when the building is ready and make a test case."[16]
> Mr. Walsworth: "I will try it."
> Mr. Stebbins: "My word for it they will be admitted."



Rev. Horatio Stebbins

Rev. E.B. Walsworth

Reported contemporaneously in the *Sacramento Daily Union* and other newspapers, but absent from subsequent institutional histories, this exchange articulated a deliberate strategy.[17] In just two sentences, Stebbins described a course of action that closely resembled what unfolded in

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[15] "Fifth Annual Meeting of the Associated Alumni of the Pacific Coast," Oakland, CA, June 3, 1868 (San Francisco: A. Roman & Co., 1868), 42; *Sacramento Daily Union*, June 6, 1868, vol. 35, no. 5365.

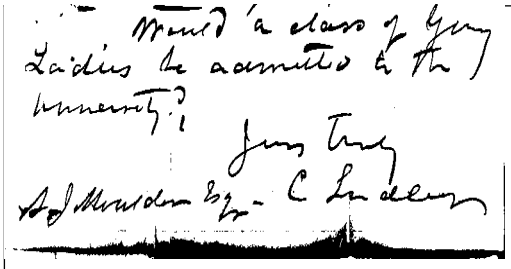
[16] The reference to "when the building is ready" reflects the temporary use of the former College of California campus in Oakland while Berkeley facilities were under construction.

[17] *Sacramento Daily Union*, June 6, 1868, vol. 35, no. 5365; "Fifth Annual Meeting," 57 (for a slightly different version of the exchange).

1870: identify qualified young women, bring them forward publicly, and force the University to confront the contradiction between democratic rhetoric and exclusion.

Activating the Blueprint: September 1870

Two years after the 1868 AAPC meeting, Stebbins's proposed "test case" strategy was effectively set in motion. On September 10, 1870, just two weeks before the University's scheduled entrance examinations, Judge Charles Lindley of Sacramento wrote to A. J. Moulder, Secretary to the Board of Regents, with a pointed question: "Would a class of Young Ladies be admitted to the University?"[18]



Would a class of young Ladies be admitted to the University?

Yours Truly
C Lindley

Whether Lindley received a reply remains unknown. Twelve days later, his daughter Josephine Lindley arrived in Oakland to present herself for the entrance examinations, which had been advertised in local newspapers as open to young men seeking admission to the University. She was soon joined by Carrie Ogier Stone, whose father, Dudley C. Stone, served as Reverend Walsworth's assistant at the Female College of the Pacific. The appearance of these two women on campus, before any formal decision had been taken, forced an immediate institutional confrontation. The outcome remained uncertain: the Regents were divided, no vote had yet been taken, and no policy announced. The women arrived without knowing whether they would be admitted, deferred, or refused.

From that point forward, the struggle unfolded on several fronts. Informal coordination continued behind the scenes, but the most visible arena quickly became the press. Newspapers

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[18] Charles Lindley to A. J. Moulder, September 10, 1870, Scholarships File, 1868–74, CU-1, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

across the state began reporting on women's presence on campus and speculating about the Regents' intentions, framing events as a test of California's commitment to public education and democratic principles. The strategy first articulated in 1868 had now been set in motion. The next phase would be fought not only in Regents' meetings but in print.

The Press Campaign for Coeducation

Within this complex inheritance of principle and pragmatism, the press played a decisive role in advancing coeducation in California. In the two years preceding the Regents' October 1870 vote, newspapers across the state helped construct a public sphere in which women's educational and professional ambitions were articulated, debated, and increasingly normalized. Journalists did not merely report events; they shaped expectations about what a public university in California should represent. Drawing on arguments long advanced by educators and reform-minded alumni, newspapers framed women's admission as both a matter of justice and a marker of the state's modernity, rendering access to higher education a public concern rather than a private aspiration.

Between 1868 and 1870, press coverage unfolded in three overlapping phases: public education and normalization; strategic signaling and momentum; and, finally, celebration and rapid narrative compression.

Phase One (1868–Mid-1870): Public Education and Normalization

From 1868 onward, the state's newspapers regularly reported on women's suffrage conventions, equal pay for teachers, and women's access to professional careers, often juxtaposing these developments with commentary on the University's exclusionary policies. In September 1869, for example, reporting on the Women's Suffrage Convention in Chicago, the *San Francisco Examiner* noted that delegates demanded not only the right to vote but also that "all institutions of learning should be equally open to both sexes."[19] The timing was pointed: the University of California had just begun its inaugural year as a male-only institution.

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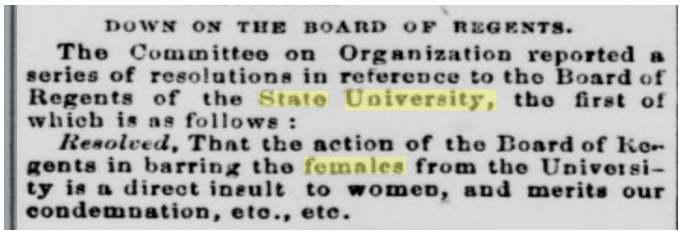
[19] *San Francisco Examiner*, September 11, 1869.

University insiders and other educators also entered the broader public conversation surrounding coeducation. In October 1869, the Normal School Institute held a debate on the question: "Should the sexes be educated together?" Ezra S. Carr, Professor of Agriculture at the University of California and formerly of the coeducational University of Wisconsin, was a supporter, saying "I don't see why they should not go to school together. I don't see any impropriety in the sexes mixing together in a school."[20] State Superintendent of Education O. P. Fitzgerald echoed this position, citing the Normal School as evidence of coeducation's practicality. The following month, Ezra S. Carr publicly endorsed coeducation in an hour-long speech that was "listened to with rapt attention and concluded amidst great applause."[21]

By January 1870, exclusion from the University had become an explicit grievance. Delegates at the California Women's Suffrage Convention condemned the Regents' policy as unjust, describing women's exclusion as "a direct insult," and insisting that "no censure was too severe" for trustees of an institution supported by the funds of both sexes that "still denied one-half admittance."[22] Coeducation had moved from abstract reform to visible public controversy.



DOWN ON THE BOARD OF REGENTS.

The Committee on Organization reported a series of resolutions in reference to the Board of Regents of the State University, the first of which is as follows:

Resolved, That the action of the Board of Regents in barring the females from the University is a direct insult to women, and merits our condemnation, etc., etc.

Phase Two (June–September 1870): Trial Balloons and Momentum

In June 1870, several influential newspapers shifted from commentary to open signaling. The *Daily Evening Bulletin*, responding to "frequent inquiries," clarified that there was "no special prohibition" against admitting female students and that qualified applicants could not legally be

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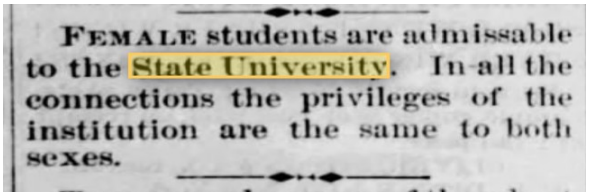
[20] *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 21, 1869, 2.

[21] *Stockton Independent*, November 20, 1869, vol. 17, no. 95.

[22] *Marysville Daily Appeal*, January 30, 1870, vol. 21, no. 25; *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 30, 1870.

excluded.[23] Echoing language first voiced within alumni circles in 1868, the paper observed that if "five or fifty young women" applied and met entrance standards, "there is no authority to shut them out," concluding pointedly: "We shall soon know who are disposed to profit by this concession."

Two weeks later, the *Sacramento Daily Bee* published a brief notice that read almost like a draft resolution: "Female students are admissible to the State University. In all respects the privileges of the institution are the same to both sexes."[24] This phrasing closely anticipated the language Regent Samuel F. Butterworth would formally propose in October. Both items functioned as strategic signals—trial balloons testing public sentiment and preparing the ground for formal action.


FEMALE students are admissable to the State University. In all the connections the privileges of the institution are the same to both sexes.

The Daily Bee, June 24, 1870

By late September, signaling gave way to action. On September 24, several newspapers reported that female applicants were in Oakland "making application for admission."[25] What had begun as public speculation had now become a practical institutional question. Identifying the applicants as "Miss Josephine Lindley, daughter of Judge Lindley, and Miss Carrie Stone, daughter of Professor Stone," the *Bulletin* explained that they would enter as "students at large," a recognized and statutorily grounded form of admission in the University's early years.[26] What

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[23] *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco), June 10, 1870, vol. 30, no. 55, 2.

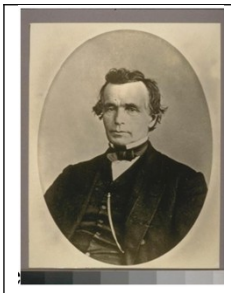
[24] *Sacramento Bee*, June 24, 1870, vol. 27, no. 4152.

[25] *San Francisco Examiner*, September 24, 1870, 3; *Daily Evening Herald*, September 24, 1870, 2.

[26] *San Francisco Bulletin*, reprinted in *Marysville Daily Appeal*, September 28, 1870, vol. 22, no. 63. Early University Register entries (1869–71) show that the designation "student at large," authorized under the Organic Act of 1868, sec. 3, was widely used and typically associated with the Fourth Class (freshman), indicating that it functioned as a standard entry category. Some students initially recorded as "at large" later entered degree programs, including Rosa Scrivner (class of 1874), the University's first woman graduate. Contemporary press reports indicate

went unremarked in the article—but would have been evident to contemporaries—was that Miss Lindley's appearance in Oakland was itself unusual: women had not yet been formally admitted, and no public authorization had been issued. She was, in effect, presenting herself for examination in advance of official action, forcing the University to decide whether it would enforce an exclusion not clearly mandated by the Organic Act.

In explaining the sudden appearance of women on campus, the *Bulletin* reported that President Henry Durant had concluded there was "no prohibition in the law," and that the faculty would give prospective female students "an encouraging reception." It also noted that Mrs. Jeanne Carr, the wife of Agriculture Professor Ezra Carr, and Mrs. Millicent Blake, the principal of a boarding school for young women, were prepared to assist incoming coeds with guidance and housing. The article closed with a public appeal: "The whole cause of woman in her education and advancement on this coast depends upon the manner in which these young ladies shall acquit themselves…Give them a fair trial." Attentive readers could see that something was out of order: practical preparations for coeducation were visible before the Regents had formally voted.



Henry Durant [27]

Jeanne Carr [28]

Millicent Blake [29]

Subsequent coverage further blurred the distinction between anticipation and decision. On September 28, the *Marysville Daily Appeal* reprinted the *Bulletin* story, going further and

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that applicants were originally required to complete the regular two-day entrance examination. On October 3, 1870, the Regents adopted two resolutions: the first admitted women "on equal terms" with men, and the second relaxed examination requirements for students pursuing partial courses (see *Oakland Daily Transcript*, October 3, 1870).

[27] "Henry Durant, President of the University of California, 1870–72," courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

[28] Jeanne Carr, n.d., public domain.

[29] Illustration of Millicent Blake, n.d., *San Francisco Call*, public domain.

asserting in its lead that the Regents had already resolved to admit "lady pupils."[30] Over the following days, as other papers, including the *San Francisco Chronicle*, made similar claims, coeducation began to appear an accomplished fact, even though the Regents had not yet publicly deliberated.[31] On October 1, the *Bulletin* reminded readers that the question remained unresolved, noting that the Board of Regents would meet on October 3 to "discuss the question of admitting females as students" and adding that "whether broad, liberal views will be entertained remains to be seen."[32] By that point, women were already on campus, preparations were underway, and public expectation had been created. The Regents' vote did not initiate change—it ratified a reality already in motion.

Phase Three: Vote, Celebration, and Narrative Compression

When the Regents met on October 3, 1870, they unanimously adopted Butterworth's brief resolution admitting "young ladies" on equal terms with young men. The minutes record no debate and no dissent. Newspapers across the state celebrated the decision, though interpretations varied. On October 4, the *Daily Alta California* reported that Butterworth's motion had passed unanimously and noted that "three or four" applicants were already present.[33] Some editorials linked admission to suffrage and professional access; others framed women's education as socially beneficial because it would free men for other pursuits.[34] The *San Francisco Chronicle* hailed Lindley and Stone as "the lady pioneers." The *Union Democrat*, citing the *Reporter*,

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[30] *Marysville Daily Appeal*, September 28, 1870, vol. 22, no. 65. The lead article reads: "We are pleased to know that the Regents of the State University have decided to admit lady pupils…" The precise date of the original *San Francisco Bulletin* article remains unknown. See also *Daily Bulletin*, September 24, 1870, vol. 15, no. 34, 3.

[31] *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 30, 1870, 2; *Daily Morning Union*, September 29, 1870, vol. 8, no. 1184.

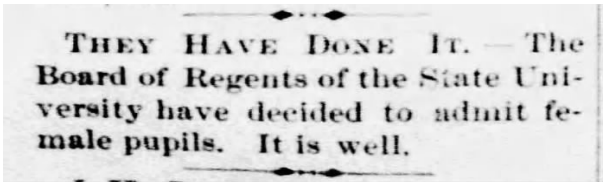
[32] *Daily Evening Bulletin*, October 1, 1870, vol. 15, no. 35, 3; *Daily Evening Herald*, October 3, 1870, 2; *Oakland Daily Transcript*, October 3, 1870, 2.

[33] *Daily Alta California*, October 4, 1870, vol. 22, no. 7501; *Daily Evening Bulletin*, October 4, 1870, vol. 30, no. 153, 4.

[34] *Los Angeles Daily News*, October 13, 1870, 2.

credited Josephine Lindley with having "inaugurated the movement," adding that "as soon as she becomes qualified, we trust to see her installed in the chair of one of the Professorships."[35]

For a brief moment, the press publicly credited women themselves with initiating the change. But celebration was quickly followed by simplification. Post-vote coverage rarely revisited the alumni networks, legal interpretations, advance preparations, and strategic signaling that had shaped events in prior months and years. Instead, the story gradually hardened into a narrative of enlightened regental action.


THEY HAVE DONE IT. — The Board of Regents of the State University have decided to admit female pupils. It is well.

Sacramento Bee, October 4, 1870.

In that condensation, something was lost. Through repetition and narrative narrowing, a coordinated and contested campaign was reduced to a short administrative resolution. The public retained the *fact* of women's admission, but lost sight of the *process* that made it possible. Whether motivated by institutional loyalty, narrative economy, or the natural drift of commemorative storytelling, subsequent press coverage and later University histories increasingly centered on the Regents alone. The cumulative effect was not deception but contraction: a complex political episode became a singular institutional decision. Nowhere was the impact of this contraction more evident than during the University's 150th anniversary of coeducation in 2020–2021, when commemorative narratives reduced a contested political process to a singular institutional milestone. To recover what this narrative narrowing concealed, we must turn beyond the newspaper page to the rare surviving evidence of private coordination and retrospective testimony.

Judge Charles Lindley's Pamphlet: The Missing Record of Coeducation

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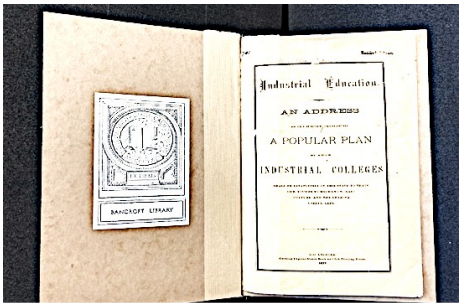
[35] *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 6, 1870, 3; *Union Democrat*, October 8, 1870, 2.



Industrial Education: An Address on the Subject by Charles Lindley (1877)

Were it not for the rediscovery in 2021 of a pamphlet published by Judge Charles Lindley in 1877, the coordinated nature of women's admission to the University of California would be far more difficult to reconstruct. *Industrial Education: An Address on the Subject*, issued just seven years after the Regents' vote to admit "young ladies," provides the only currently known non-press, first-person account naming participants and describing the process through which coeducation was achieved.[36] In doing so, it corroborates what the contemporary newspaper record strongly suggests but does not fully document: that women's admission resulted from sustained collective action rather than administrative spontaneity.

For decades, Josephine Lindley and her brother Curtis, who enrolled the same year, each maintained—Josephine in later interviews and Curtis in professional reminiscences—that their father had played a role in securing women's admission.[37] This claim circulated within family memory but proved difficult to substantiate. Charles Lindley does not appear in contemporary press accounts of the coeducation debate, in AAPC documents, or in the Regents' minutes. The rediscovery of his pamphlet therefore provides a crucial evidentiary bridge between private recollection and public record. While Lindley was one among many advocates for coeducation, his account remains the only surviving narrative describing how those advocates coordinated their efforts before the Regents' vote.

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[36] Lindley, *Industrial Education*, Preface, 2.

[37] *San Francisco Call*, September 22, 1907; *Berkeley Gazette*, September 20, 1907. "Curtis Holbrook Lindley (1850–1920)," *California Law Review* 9, no. 2 (January 1921): 88 n.2.

Lindley's pamphlet was addressed to readers in Los Angeles County and framed as an appeal for expanded "industrial education" for boys and girls.[38] In his prefatory remarks, he offers a brief autobiographical sketch explaining his commitment to educational access. He recounts a childhood of hard labor on a "poor, little sterile" New England farm, limited schooling on "oaken slab benches" during winter months, and an apprenticeship in brick and stone masonry. Determined to pursue education despite these constraints, he describes laboring at night "as overwork," wheeling bricks and mortar through the streets of New Haven and setting up stoves for Yale students, using the proceeds to purchase books and attend night school. "With all this early life, these experiences and aspirations," he concludes, "he cannot but have impulses now in behalf of the struggling boys and girls of this generation."[39]

Notably absent from this autobiographical account is the fact that this former stone mason ultimately attended Yale Law School, passed the bar, and became a prominent attorney and judge in California. The omission underscores the rhetorical posture of the document: Lindley presents himself not as an established jurist, but as someone shaped by labor, deprivation, and self-education, speaking on behalf of those whose access to schooling remained similarly contingent. The most historically consequential passage appears later in the preface, when Lindley turns, almost incidentally, to his involvement with the University of California. Naming himself among the advocates, he writes:

> In addition to the above, the author is a friend to the University. He drafted and urged the passage of the Cadet Bill… [and] the Scholarship Bill…which carried four young men through the University upon their merits. He also inaugurated and pressed the movement to admit young ladies into the University. It gathered strength through the active exertions of Senator Tompkins, Rev. O. P. Fitzgerald, Dr. and Mrs. Carr, Pres. Durant, Prof. Pioda, L. L. Bullock and others, until a majority was obtained in favor, when Mr. Butterworth gracefully gave way, and offered the resolution in the Board and assisted in making it a unanimous vote…[40]

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[38] "Curtis Holbrook Lindley (1850–1920)," *California Law Review* 9, no. 2 (January 1921): 88 n.2.

[39] Lindley, *Industrial Education*, Preface, 2.

[40] Ibid.

Several elements of this passage merit attention. First, Lindley explicitly characterizes coeducation as a "movement" that required persistence, coalition-building, and the gradual assembly of a majority. Second, he identifies a cross-institutional network of actors spanning the legislature, clergy, faculty, and university leadership, a pattern that aligns with the earlier reconstruction of alumni deliberations and press advocacy. Third, his description implies that regental unanimity was achieved only after a majority had been secured, suggesting that the appearance of effortless consensus masked prior division.

Read alongside contemporaneous newspaper coverage and AAPC deliberations, Lindley's account clarifies both the timing and the mechanics of the October 3, 1870 vote. The pamphlet neither displaces the press record nor elevates Lindley's role above others. Rather, it fills a critical archival gap, connecting public advocacy, private persuasion, and formal institutional action. In this sense, *Industrial Education* helps address a question raised decades ago by scholar Maresi Nerad, who asked how women could have arrived "so silently" at the University of California when coeducation at other land-grant universities provoked open controversy.[41] The answer is not that their admission was uncontested, but that later narratives simplified the process. With the recovery of Lindley's testimony, the coordinated character of women's admission becomes more legible, providing firmer ground for reconstructing an origin story that acknowledges conflict, coordination, and agency.

If Lindley's pamphlet recovers the coalition behind the Regents' vote, the words and life of the young woman at its center help recover what that victory meant in practice.

Who Was Josephine Lindley?

> Coeducation is now being thoroughly tested in the University. May it prove successful. The fate of young women's attempt in California to reach a higher—a more real education—depends upon this experiment.
> — Josephine Lindley (attributed), *University Echo*, March 1871.

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[41] Maresi Nerad, "The Situation of Women at Berkeley between 1870 and 1915," *Feminist Issues* 7 (1987): 68.

Josephine Lindley entered public view six months before the Board of Regents voted to admit women to the University of California. In January 1870, the *San Francisco Examiner* published a detailed account of an hour-long examination administered to "Josie" by her instructor, Madame Vasquez de Fossey of the de Fossey School for Young Ladies in San Francisco.[42] The examination required her to translate extemporaneously from French, Spanish, and Virgil's *Aeneid*—without access to the text—while speaking only in French.

The journalist was unequivocal: "For the thoroughness, readiness and accuracy, we have seen nothing superior in California…Such proficiency is seldom acquired except by years of study. It would be difficult to speak too highly of either pupil or teacher."[43] Josephine emerged in the article not as a curiosity but as evidence of what sustained, serious education for women could produce. The *Examiner* makes one fact unmistakable: her arrival at the University was not the product of chance. She entered already publicly recognized as intellectually prepared. At the time, neither she nor her family could have known that before the close of the year she would become the first woman to enroll at the University of California.

Josephine's admission in October 1870 was not simply an act of individual daring. It was made possible by reform-minded educators, alumni networks, and a press that had been shaping public discussion of women's education for several years. Her willingness to step forward while the outcome remained uncertain also reflected her upbringing. After her mother died of tuberculosis before she was six, her father sold the family home. Josie later boarded with a French family in San Francisco while her father's work in mining and real estate, and later in law as a member of the California Code Revision Commission, carried the family from Marysville to Virginia City, Mexico, Sacramento, and various locations in Arizona. Mobility, loss, and early independence shaped her expectations. For Josephine, a university education was not refinement but purposeful preparation for an uncertain future.

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[42] *San Francisco Examiner*, January 15, 1870 ("The De Fossey School").

[43] *Ibid.*

By contrast, the University articulated no comparable purpose for women's education. At the 1870 commencement, Governor Haight declared the question of coeducation "settled," while admitting he was "far from being a convert to the idea that females will ever participate in political contests…or to any extent the learned professions."[44] Two years later, President Daniel Coit Gilman posed a foundational question in his inaugural remarks—"What is the University for?"—but directed his answer solely to men: "It is to fit young men for high and noble careers, satisfactory to themselves, and useful to mankind…"[45] Three decades later, President Benjamin Ide Wheeler echoed this sentiment, reminding women that they were not at the University "with the ambition to be schoolteachers or old maids," but for "preparation for marriage and motherhood."[46]

Josephine Lindley did not accept these limits. As the first female editor of the student newspaper, the *University Echo*, she articulated a defense of women's presence at the University: "Feminine delicacy is certainly a necessary requisite to true womanhood," she wrote, "but it does not suffice in itself."[47] Rejecting the notion that education threatened domestic competence, she asked: "If she knows why fire burns, why bread rises, is it incompatible with her making fires or good bread?" Education, she argued, was preparation for independence in a world offering women few protections. "Women demand a broader education and a greater degree of usefulness," she insisted, noting that positions suitable for women were routinely given to less capable men because custom deemed other work "unladylike." Coeducation, she concluded, was an experiment whose outcome mattered deeply: "The fate of young woman's attempt in California to reach a higher—a more real education—depends upon this experiment."

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[44] Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "'No Man and No Thing Can Stop Me': Fannie McLean, Woman Suffrage, and the University," *Chronicle of the University of California* 1, no. 2 (1998): 86.

[45] Daniel C. Gilman, *The Building of the University: An Inaugural Address Delivered at Oakland, November 7, 1872* (San Francisco: John H. Carmany & Co., 1872).

[46] Clifford, "'No Man and No Thing Can Stop Me,'" 86.

[47] Josephine Lindley, "The Admission of Young Ladies into the University," *University Echo* 1, no. 1 (March 1871): 2.

Josephine Lindley was not alone. Carrie Ogier Stone entered alongside her in the fall of 1870, signing the register immediately after Lindley. The two remained lifelong friends, but Stone's path proved more conventional. She left the University in the fall of 1871, became a teacher, married, and raised children.[48] Together, their stories reveal both the collective nature of women's admission and the range of possibilities that followed, possibilities shaped as much by institutional ambiguity as by personal circumstance.

Like many early special students not enrolled in a degree program, Josephine left the University after two and a half years without a diploma. But she did not leave without direction. In her inaugural editorial, she had insisted that women needed to be "fitted to do something in life," in preparation for a time when "it becomes necessary for them to gain their livelihood."[49] Her own life soon gave that claim considerable urgency.

After periods in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles living with her father while teaching Spanish, working as a newspaper compositor, and raising honeybees, she married her classmate Manuel Maria Corella in 1878. Corella, hailing from Sonora, Mexico, attended the preparatory department of the College of California and later became the University's first Latino student and one of its Spanish instructors. At the time of their marriage, he had already served as an attaché to the Mexican Legation in Washington, a special commissioner to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, and an elected member of the Sonora legislature. The couple settled in Arizona, where Josephine established a Spanish-language newspaper, *La Sonora*, and Manuel sought to encourage American investment in Sonora while providing legal and linguistic support for Judge Lindley's Arizona law office. [50]

In July 1882, barely a month after receiving his commission as Mexican Consul in Tombstone, Manuel died suddenly, leaving Josephine a young widow with a two-week-old daughter. [51] Two months later, while still grieving, her father also died and was buried in Tombstone. The

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[48] *University Echo* 2, no. 1 (October 1871): 3.

[49] Lindley, "The Admission of Young Ladies," 2.

[50] *Los Angeles Daily Herald*, October 3, 1879 (on *La Sonora*).

[51] *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, July 9, 1882.

Tombstone Epitaph observed that Judge Lindley "never fully recovered from the shock occasioned by the death of his beloved and respected son-in-law." [52]

In the years that followed, Josephine relied on her linguistic skills and education to support herself and her daughter. She initially returned to California and sought a position teaching Spanish at the University of California, where resistance by the Board to women occupying formal instructional roles ultimately prevented her appointment. She subsequently lived and worked across national borders in the United States and Mexico, married again, raised children, and pursued many callings: teacher, writer, cultural intermediary, newspaper editor, and journalist. She became well known as a teacher of Spanish, French, and English in Mexico City, Chautauqua, Chicago, and Los Angeles. One newspaper later described her as a "pioneer woman in the higher education of the Pacific Coast."[53]

Josephine Lindley Corella's life was marked by periods of instability. Yet in each moment, her education functioned not as an ornament but as insurance—precisely as she had argued it should years earlier in the *University Echo*. Unlike the linear professional trajectories available to many male graduates, her life required continual adaptation—translation, literal and figurative—and self-reliance. Her life supplied a lived answer to a question the University itself never resolved: why women belonged there at all.

Conclusion: Coeducation and the Problem of Memory

When Josephine Lindley and Carrie Stone entered the University of California in 1870, they did so neither earlier nor later than women at many peer institutions. What distinguishes California is not timing but memory: the conditions under which women were admitted receded from institutional awareness almost as soon as the vote had been taken. Across the United States, early coeducational universities often preserve origin stories that foreground conflict, contingency, and women's agency. In California, by contrast, coeducation was gradually compressed into a single administrative act and absorbed into the University's institutional narrative.

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[52] *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, September 23, 1882, 2 ("Death of Judge Lindley").

[53] *Berkeley Gazette*, September 20, 1907.

At other land-grant institutions, the struggle itself became part of the public record—and later part of the campus landscape. At the University of Michigan, the failed petition campaign led by Sarah Burger in the 1850s and the eventual admission of Madelon Stockwell in 1870 are remembered as contested achievements; a campus marker recalls that coeducation was once considered a "dangerous experiment."[54] Indiana University commemorates Sarah Parke Morrison, whose petition forced trustees to confront the absence of any formal prohibition against women's admission. When no younger woman stepped forward, Morrison enrolled herself, becoming the lone woman in a class of roughly six hundred men.[55] In these cases, coeducation is preserved not merely as an administrative decision but as a political and cultural turning point.

The University of Wisconsin and the University of Iowa preserve comparably layered narratives, including episodes of retrenchment. Wisconsin's legislature initially mandated equal access, then weakened that guarantee, permitting only separate instruction and delaying full equality until 1874, an arc now publicly marked.[56] Iowa, the first coed state university, briefly reversed course before reaffirming equal admission as a governing principle.[57] Across these cases, women's access to higher education is remembered as contested, negotiated, and achieved through pressure as well as principle.

The University of California stands apart. Despite recent commemorative efforts, the specific circumstances surrounding women's admission in 1870—and the coalition that made it possible—have rarely occupied a central place in the University's widely circulated histories. This absence reflects a familiar pattern in the formation of institutional memory: complex political

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[54]Kim Clarke, "No Admittance," chap. 6, "No Means No," University of Michigan Heritage Project, accessed February 1, 2026, https://heritage.umich.edu/stories/no-admittance/

[55]Dina Kellams, "Women's History Month: IU's First Coed, Sarah Parke Morrison," Indiana University Bloomington Libraries Blogs, March 7, 2011, https://blogs.libraries.indiana.edu/iubarchives/2011/03/07/womens-history-month-ius-first-coed-sarah-parke-morrison/

[56] Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The University of Wisconsin: Its History and Its Alumni* (Madison, WI: N. Purcell, 1900), 78–80.

[57] Doris Malkmus, "Origins of Coeducation in Antebellum Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 58 (Spring 1999): 95.

processes are often distilled into simplified institutional narratives that obscure how social and political change actually occurs.

This tendency is evident across the University's major institutional histories. William Carey Jones's *Illustrated History of the University of California* (1895) reduced women's admission to a single sentence and deemed extended discussion unnecessary.[58] William Warren Ferrier's *The Origin and Development of the University of California* (1930) offered a brief summary under "Young Women Admitted," with little attention to deliberation or context.[59] Verne Stadtman's centennial history, *The University of California, 1868–1968* (1970), characterized the decision as occurring "without significant controversy," a claim difficult to reconcile with contemporary press accounts and the evidence reconstructed here.[60] Even more recent accounts tend to preserve a similar compression: coeducation appears smooth, internal, and largely automatic.

What these histories share is not simply omission but a common process of narrative reduction. A contested political outcome becomes an administrative milestone. Process yields to proclamation. In that condensation, Lindley and Stone appear only after the decision has ostensibly already been made.

This essay has argued that women's admission to the University of California was neither spontaneous nor exclusively regental in origin. It emerged from coordinated effort among alumni, clergy, faculty, journalists, families, and young women themselves. The press did not

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[58] William Carey Jones, *Illustrated History of the University of California, 1868–1895* (Berkeley: University Press, 1895).

[59] William Warren Ferrier, *The Origin and Development of the University of California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930).

[60] Verne A. Stadtman, *The University of California, 1868–1968* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970).

merely describe these developments; it helped structure them, legitimating women's claims, signaling institutional possibility, and, in the days before the vote, treating women's presence as an accomplished fact. Only afterward did the narrative contract around the Regents' resolution.

The implications of this reconstruction extend beyond chronology. Origin stories shape institutional self-understanding. When coeducation is remembered primarily as an enlightened administrative gesture, women's presence can appear derivative. When it is understood as something demanded by, prepared for, and enacted by women and their supporters—often in advance of formal authorization—its meaning shifts: admission becomes the product of agency as well as assent.

For these reasons, Josephine Lindley, Carrie Stone, and those who supported their efforts merit fuller recognition. Public commemoration—through naming, interpretive markers, or curricular incorporation—would not revise history but clarify it. The University's transformation was shaped not only by Regents but by coalitions of advocates and by women who made exclusion increasingly untenable.

Reconstructing this origin story restores coeducation to the realm of institutional choice rather than inevitability.

The following draft inscription illustrates how this reconstructed history might be translated into public interpretation.

Appendix: Draft Commemorative Inscription

Josephine Lindley and Carrie Stone
Pioneers of Coeducation at the University of California

On October 13, 1870, Josephine Lindley and Carrie Stone inscribed their names in the University Register, becoming the first women to enroll at the University of California. Their entry followed the Regents' resolution admitting "young ladies" on equal terms with young men, but it was not the product of a single decision.

Women's admission was made possible by sustained advocacy and coordinated action among educators, alumni, clergy, journalists, families, and the women themselves. Among them were Henry Durant, Horatio Stebbins, Rev. E. B. Walsworth, Edward Tompkins, O. P. Fitzgerald, Ezra and Jeanne Carr, Millicent Blake, Charles Lindley, Dudley Stone, and others who organized, argued, and pressed the case for coeducation in public and private.

This marker commemorates not a single decree but a sustained collective effort. The doors of the University did not open by inevitability; they were opened by women and their allies who made exclusion politically and publicly untenable.

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