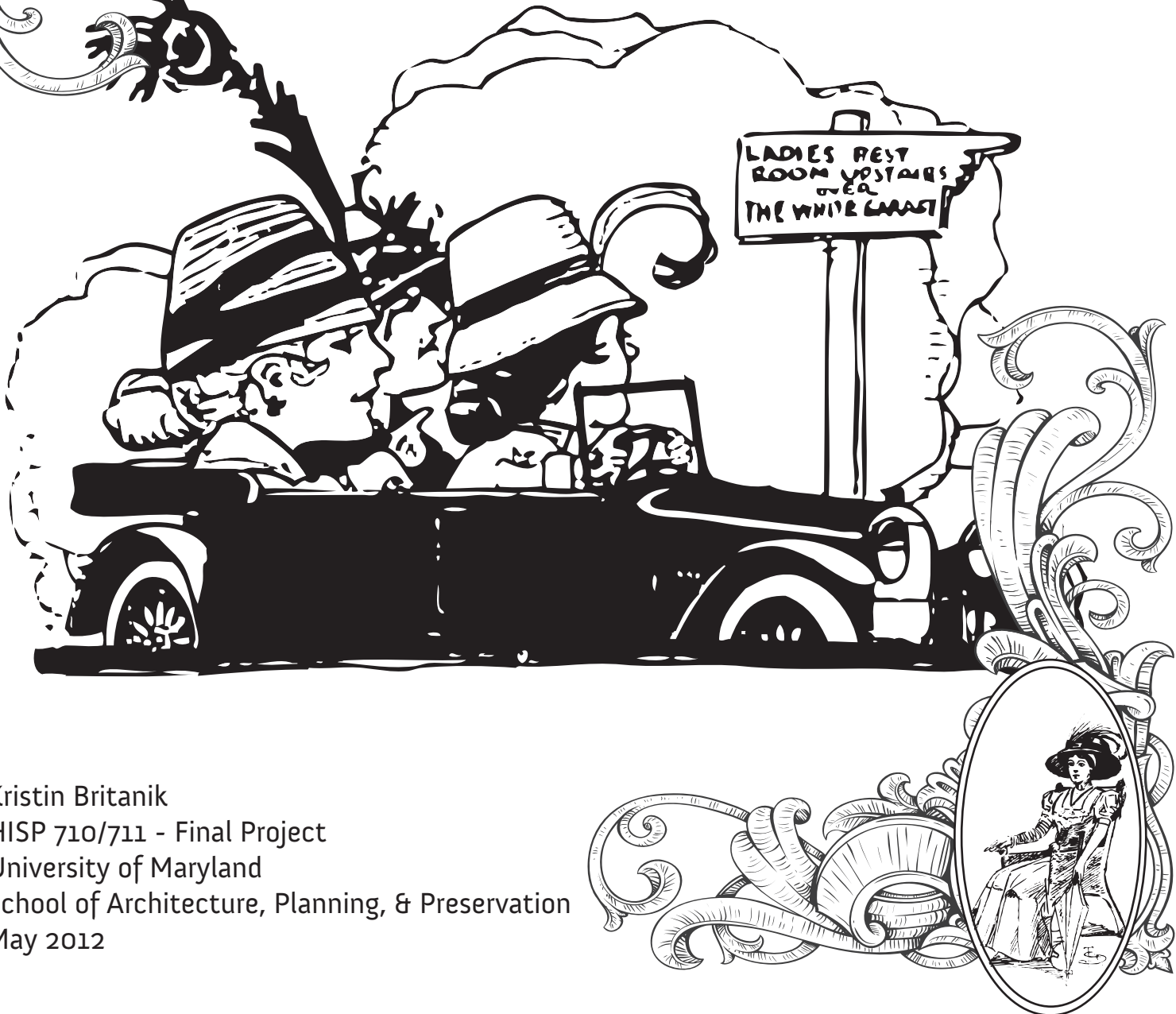


WHERE ARE THE LADIES' REST ROOMS?

The Evolution of Women-Only Resting Rooms Amid
Social Changes of the Early Twentieth Century



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ABSTRACT

Title of Document: WHERE ARE THE LADIES' REST ROOMS?:
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OF THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

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The early twentieth century was a period of rapid growth and social change in America. The daily lives of women in particular were transformed due to increased rights and accessibility to public spaces. Thus, a new type of room developed for the exclusive use of women. Called a ladies' rest room, these public rooms were originally established in the late nineteenth century to give women a designated space to rest, care for their children, and socialize with other women, in a town or city setting of mostly male-dominated, public spaces. Although the operation of ladies' rest rooms continued throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, by the late 1930s the use of these rooms declined and fewer examples are found. As the need for segregated spaces for women declined, the rooms once used as ladies' rest rooms typically assumed other functions. Consequently, little is known about the existence of these rooms today. The study of ladies' rest rooms can inform our understanding of the changing dynamics of gender roles during the early twentieth century. Therefore, this paper explores the ladies' rest room using a systematic approach to understand their

development and decline at a time of great social change. To understand the evolution of these spaces, I created a typology based on the room's location, function, and time period of use. This typology draws on a preliminary survey of ladies' rest rooms using evidence from various historical newspapers, publications, and other primary sources. The typology forms the basis for an analysis of the ways in which the evolution of the ladies' rest rooms parallels social changes in American society during the early twentieth century. The paper concludes with an assessment of how ladies' rest rooms demonstrate that preservationists should look more closely at the evolution of interior spaces.

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By

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The extraordinary industrialization and technological advances leading into the twentieth century facilitated social and economic transformations that had a profound impact on all aspects of life, particularly the role of women in society. During this time period, commonly referred to as the Progressive Era, gender roles began to change as women found themselves moving beyond the traditional “domestic sphere” of the Victorian Era.¹ Evidence of these changes were reflected in the built environment and the emergence of a new room type, the ladies’ rest room, is a good example of this phenomenon. The main function of a ladies’ rest room was to provide women a designated, domestic-like space to rest while they were away from their homes. As gender roles evolved and women gained easier access to the public domain, the function of the ladies’ rest room also evolved to accommodate women’s new roles in society, for example, their role as consumers. While little is known about these rooms, valuable information can be gleaned from studying how their evolution parallels changing gender roles of the period.

Defining a Ladies’ Rest Room

For the much of twentieth century the term *ladies’ rest rooms* did not have the same meaning as it does today. Currently, the compound word *restroom* is commonly accepted as a reference to a public lavatory facility. However, the earliest use of the two-word phrase “rest room” was as a literal description of the function of the room,

¹ Schneider, Dorothy, and Carl J. Schneider. 1993. *American women in the progressive era*,

a place where one went to rest. In a later section on Public Comfort Stations, the evolution of the term to its modern day use will be discussed in greater detail. The phrase *rest room* was first used in mid-nineteenth-century England, but it is unclear when exactly the first of this type was created and whether or not it was exclusively for ladies. In the United States, the earliest use of the phrase appeared in the late 1890s as an official name for a room.² When the term rest room is used in this study, it is referring to a designated room where women can rest. Research suggests that almost all instances of the term rest room are associated with women, either because it is preceded by a gendered adjective, or women are mentioned in the description of the room. There were few references to the use of a rest room by men, although several examples of nearby smoking rooms for men were found. While ladies' rest rooms can be found in multiple countries, including Canada, England, and Australia, the focus of this study is on ladies' rest rooms in the United States. Finally, it is important to note that although the use of various types of ladies' rest rooms crosses multiple class divides, they were typically reserved for the use of white women and no instances of comparable facilities for African-American women were found in the survey.

One of the challenges in building a typology of ladies' rest rooms was in determining when primary sources were referring to the type of ladies' rest room under investigation. In most instances, especially earlier examples, the rooms were simply referred to as Ladies' Rest Rooms. As their use became more widespread, the rooms were given different names, such as Women's Rest Room, Women's Room,

² "Restroom, n.". OED Online. December 2011. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/275516?redirectedFrom=rest%20room> (accessed March 05, 2012).

Women's Department, Ladies' Reception Room, and Ladies' Retiring Room. Since these rooms were most frequently called ladies' rest rooms, this term will be used throughout this paper. Because there were many different names for these rooms, I relied on the descriptions of the room's purpose, furnishings, and other context clues in the primary sources to determine if it was a ladies' rest room. Another challenge was the evolution of the use of the word ladies' rest room. As previously discussed, the term is now synonymous with a lavatory facility, and many examples of ladies' rest rooms are found adjacent to lavatory facilities. Because of this, in later examples, it was difficult to discern if the name referred to a room for resting or a lavatory facility. Thus, in searching for later examples of rooms, it was important to use context, descriptions, and images to determine the actual use. Most descriptions of these rooms mentioned that they were used to provide a place where women and children could rest or socialize. Common adjectives used to describe these rooms included *comfortable*, *convenient*, *inviting*, *cozy*, and *well-appointed*. These rooms were typically furnished with tables, chairs, recliners, and a place to write; most images depicting ladies' rest rooms were replete with these amenities.

Building a Typology

A typology was developed to classify the various types of ladies' rest rooms in preparation for analyzing the creation, evolution, and use of these rooms. The typology was compiled using 244 examples of ladies' rest rooms found in primary sources, such as historical newspapers, books, journals, and images. Newspaper sources were retrieved using the *Proquest Historical Newspaper Databases* and the

Library of Congress' *Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers* digital collection, while examples from books and journals were retrieved using *Google Books* search engine and *Proquest American Periodical Database*. The images used throughout this document were collected using all of these sources along with other online digital collections from various institutions.

The data collection for the survey relied heavily on searchable digital collections of the primary sources, and therefore the survey is limited in several ways. First, it is difficult to have a complete representation of the geographical distribution of ladies' rest rooms from just these sources, since the survey is limited to cities and regions that have searchable newspaper archives available online. Second, some digital newspaper collections are only available for certain publication dates, possibly missing examples from before or after the digitized date range. Despite these limitations, an effort was made to ensure that a large variety of digital collections were used to mitigate some of these issues by representing diverse geographical locations and a broad time period. Furthermore, digital sources were supplemented with archival research where possible, for example, the use of quarterly publications from the General Federation of Women's Clubs' archives.

Using these primary sources, each instance of a ladies' rest room was recorded with name of rest room, address, city, state, founding organization, and year of publication. Based on this information the rooms were classified by the group that founded the room and the supporting building type. The types are derived from the organization that is responsible for the room's establishment and its daily operation. Since this data was not always available, the type of building containing the rest room

was also used to classify the types. For example, a rest room that was established by a civic group who rented space in a courthouse is classified under civic group.

However, a rest room that is included in plans for a new courthouse was categorized as a civic building because it is assumed that the same governmental institution ran the courthouse and rest room.

The year that each rest room was established is recorded if known, but in most instances the publication date of the source is the only dating clue. Thus, the dates used for the typology are relative, since we can only know that the ladies' rest room was in operation at the time of publication; information on when exactly it was established or when it was closed is absent. Furthermore, the time span for each type varies and there is a lot of overlap between the types and therefore it is difficult to order each type in an exact chronology. To overcome these challenges and capture this chronology, the types are divided into three time periods, *first* (1896-1902), *second* (1903-1907), and *third* (1908-1912), according to when the earliest example for each type is found. For example, for the transportation type the earliest example is found in 1901, therefore it is included in the first period, whereas for banking institutions, the first example is found in 1910 and so it classified as a third period type. The reason for chronological arrangement is that it provides insight on the evolution of this room type through identifying the earliest types established and how different groups and institutions gradually adopted the use of ladies' rest rooms over time (Figure 1).

As shown in the histogram in Figure 2, the majority of the rest rooms used in this typology date between 1896 and 1939, with the greatest use occurring between

1913-1916. Despite the rapid decline in room use after the 1930s, there are still examples of rest rooms in use today, with the most notable example being the women's lounge attached to the lavatory facilities in Nordstrom's Department Stores. Since the chronology of each type is based on the earliest examples and the duration of each type varies, the description of each type includes a discussion of this time span.

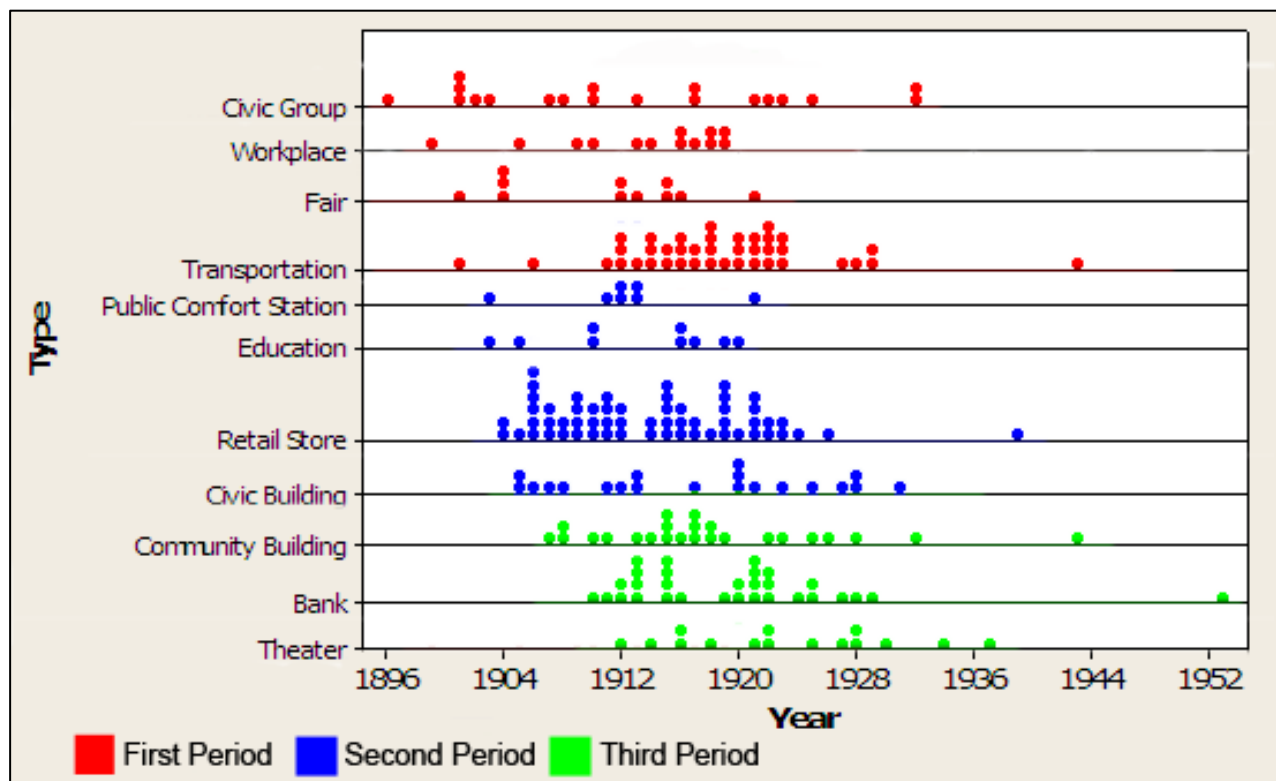


Figure 1: Boxplot showing chronological classification and timespan for each type.

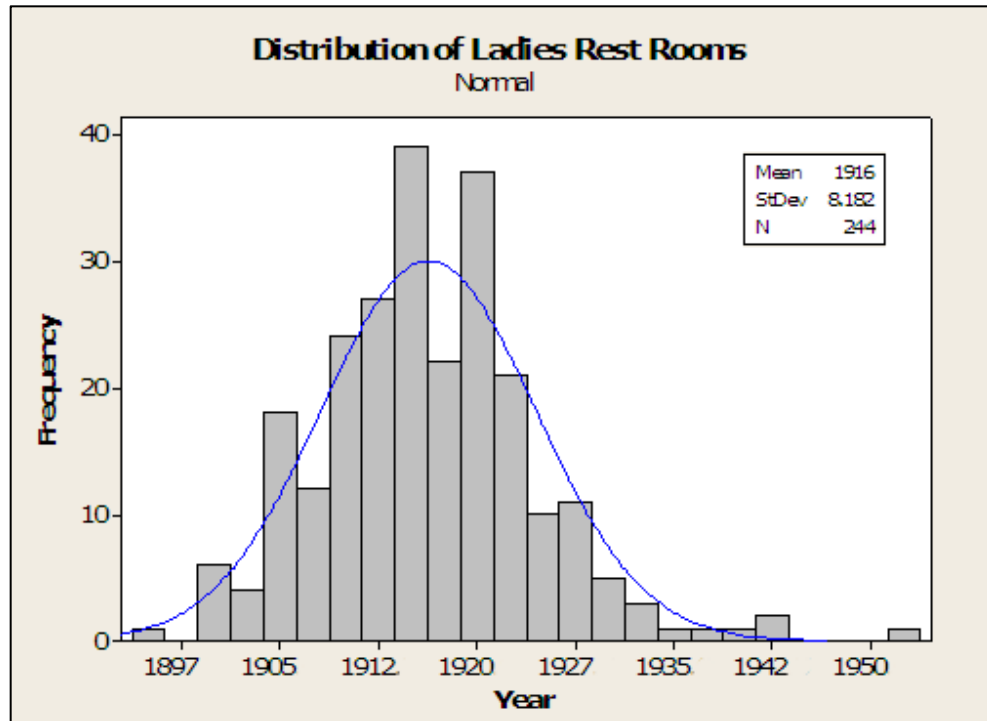


Figure 2: Histogram showing yearly distribution of ladies' rest rooms.

Using the parameters outlined in this section, 11 different types of ladies' rest rooms were identified for this typology.

First Period Types (Originating Between 1896-1902):

- Established by Civic Groups
- The Workplace
- County, State, and World's Fairs
- Transportation

Second Period Types (Originating Between 1903-1907):

- Public Comfort Stations
- Educational Facilities
- Retail Stores
- Civic Buildings

Third Period Types (Originating Between 1908-1912):

- Community Buildings
- Banking Institutions
- Theaters

The purpose of this paper is twofold: (1) through the development of the typology, to explore the emergence, use, and decline of ladies' rest rooms; (2) to demonstrate how these spaces are representative and reflective of greater social changes during the early twentieth century. For this analysis, I consider any apparent influence of social changes focusing on three key areas. The first is how these rooms are informative of changing gender roles at the time, specifically how these segregated female spaces were used to provide entrance into traditionally male-dominated public spaces. The second is how these rooms often mirror many of the Progressive Era causes, especially those championed by women. The last change is how the emergence of women as consumers influenced the adoption and use of ladies' rest rooms. Based on these observations, I then considered how preservationists can use the study of the function of interior rooms to understand how social changes are made manifest in the built environment.

In this paper, I first describe the broader historical and social context of gender roles and women in public spaces that lead to the emergence of ladies' rest rooms. Next, each type is described in detail; this section is broken into three chapters according to the three time periods outlined in the chronology. The description of each type is based on accounts from the primary source research. Each section includes a definition of the type and a brief overview of social movements and other factors that influence its development. After each type is outlined individually, I highlight key similarities and differences between all types. I then conclude with an explanation of how ladies' rest rooms illustrate why preservationists should consider the study of non-traditional resources, such as changing interior spaces.

Chapter 2: Historical & Social Context

To understand the nature of ladies' rest rooms it is important to consider the time period in which they were created. During the early twentieth century in America there was a marked shift in perceptions of women in public spaces. Areas that were primarily gender-segregated in the nineteenth century saw an increase in integration of the sexes.³ The use of gender-segregated spaces, like a ladies' rest room, was one way to slowly integrate women into what were traditionally male public spaces. This section examines the shift in gender roles from the Victorian Era into the Progressive Era to contextualize the evolution of ladies' rest rooms. In addition to changing attitudes towards women in public, there were also other social movements that either adopted or influenced the use of ladies' rest rooms.

Women in Public During the Victorian Era

The study of gender roles in America during the Victorian Era is dominated by the ideology of separate spheres of influence for each sex. The public sphere was dominated by men and was typically associated with work, whereas the private sphere or home, was the female domain. During this period, it was thought that women who frequently appeared in public places were immoral and not respectable.⁴ Therefore, it was expected that women would remain in the private confines of the home. These perceptions gave rise to the concept of the "true woman." Such a woman possessed the innate qualities of piety, purity, submissiveness, and

³ Sewell, Jessica Ellen. 2011. *Women and the Everyday City: Public Space in San Francisco, 1890-1915*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, xxii.

⁴ Upton, Dell. 2008. *Another City: Urban life and urban spaces in the new American republic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 318.

domesticity, and thus had a moral superiority.⁵ These qualities were thought to make women better nurturers and caregivers, activities that took place in the home, and thus a ‘true woman’s’ responsibilities were closely linked to the home.⁶ Consequently, there were few public places that were accommodating to women during the Victorian Era. As one woman stated in 1850, there were “no restaurants, no lunch counters, no place in the city where a lady could drop in, after all this round of shopping, taking a comfortable seat and order even a sandwich, or any kind of refreshment.”⁷ However, the reality of women in public was much more nuanced than a simple division of spheres of influence. Although public spaces were not accommodating or welcoming for women, they had to navigate them frequently during their daily lives. Moreover, the concepts of what constituted public and private spaces varied based on other factors, such as class and race.⁸ For example, for lower-class working women during the nineteenth century, the workplace, a public place, could be considered an extension of the home.⁹ In a rural context, the work of males and females might take place in much closer proximity to one another, happening on the same site. Regardless of the public space they occupied, proper women were to minimize their appearance and be as inconspicuous as possible while in public.¹⁰

⁵ Welter, Barbara. 1966. The cult of true womanhood: 1820-1860. *American Quarterly* 18 (2, Part 1) (Summer):151-174.

⁶ Domosh, Mona, and Joni Seager. 2001. *Putting Women in Place: Feminist geographers make sense of the world*. New York: Guilford Press, 5.

⁷ Upton, Dell, *Another City*, 319.

⁸ Kwolek-Folland, Angel. 1995. Gender as a category of analysis in vernacular architecture studies. *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 5 (Gender, Class, and Shelter): 3-10.

⁹ Peiss, Kathy. 1991. Going public: Women in nineteenth-century cultural history. *American Literary History* 3 (4) (Winter):817-828.

¹⁰ Sewell, Jessica Ellen, *Women and the Everyday*, 3.

By the turn of the twentieth century, women began to place themselves in public more often through activities, such as attending college, political involvement, the formation of clubs, and shopping. Despite women's increasingly public lives, the public spaces they occupied were still not accommodating to them. Consequently, later in the Victorian Era, parlors were increasingly installed in commercial spaces to create domestic space in commercial establishments, including theaters, dry goods stores, and hotels. Most of these rooms were not gender-segregated and were often only accessible to the upper middle class.¹¹ In addition to being private entities, during the Victorian Era it was also thought that civilized women were delicate, frail, and prone to illness and therefore better suited to a safe and comfortable domestic life. Given their perception as the weaker sex, women were thought to need special accommodations when they went into public spaces to ensure that they had ample places to rest in a domestic-like environment.¹² This new public presence was accommodated by designated spaces for women such as tearooms, women's departments, and ladies' rest rooms. These segregated spaces gave women private space in a public environment. An article from *The Outlook* in 1900 explains that the ladies' rest room is "a homelike room in the business part of the city [that] is furnished with cozy chairs, lounges, books, and magazines."¹³

¹¹ Grier, Katherine C., 1997. *Culture & Comfort: Parlor making and middle-class identity, 1850-1930*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

¹² Thomas, Samuel J. 1982. Nostrum advertising and the image of woman as invalid in late Victorian America. *Journal of American Culture* 5 (3):104-12.

¹³ Rest rooms for farmers' wives. 1900. *The Outlook* 66 (6) (October 1900), 296.

Women in the Progressive Era

The Progressive Era was a time marked by optimism that the problems that plagued society, such as political and social inequality, unsanitary living conditions, and unjust labor practices, could be solved through social reform and action.¹⁴ During the first two decades of the twentieth century, men and women reformers worked to improve all aspects of life. Although at the beginning of this period women did not have the right to vote, they still actively pursued many social reforms. Perhaps the social movement that had the largest impact on the creation of ladies' rest rooms was the Women's Club Movement. The formation of women's clubs in the late nineteenth century allowed women to enact reforms and gain influence in the public sphere by using their domestic traits and moral superiority.¹⁵ As reformers, women found themselves more involved in the public sphere. This presence, however, was acceptable because their reforms were perceived as a way to ameliorate the problems of the public sphere by making it more domestic-like. They accomplished this by facilitating improvements in areas like sanitation, childcare, and education.¹⁶

Women's active involvement in these reforms is what led to the women's rights movement, another significant reform of the Progressive Era. At the beginning of the twentieth century women were still disenfranchised, but their increasing public presence through the women's rights movement eventually gained women the right to vote in 1920. By the end of the Progressive Era, the image of the "True Woman" had evolved into that of the "New Woman." These "New Women" were increasingly

¹⁴ Schneider and Schneider, *American Women*, 11.

¹⁵ Blair, Karen J. 1980. *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 4.

¹⁶ Schneider and Schneider, *American Women*, 97.

public figures who organized in formal associations, earned working wages outside of the home, and were contributors to the new consumer economy.¹⁷ The evolution of various types of ladies' rest rooms is reflective of the emergence of the "New Women" of the Progressive Era. The establishment and use of ladies' rest rooms helped facilitate this transition, as these rooms were mediating spaces for women, providing a domestic-like space in public. Furthermore, the use of ladies' rest rooms was adopted by many women reformers such as suffragists, prohibitionists, and women's clubs as a means to educate other women about their causes.

¹⁷ Schneider and Schneider, *American Women*, 18-19.

Chapter 3: First Period Types (Originating Between 1896-1902)

Women's parlors and reception rooms were popular room types during the Victorian Era, providing home-like interior spaces specifically for the use of women. These rooms were typically found in homes, hotels, and ocean liners.¹⁸ There are similarities between the women's reception rooms and parlors of the Victorian Era and the ladies' rest rooms of the early twentieth century as they were both designated spaces to accommodate women. Yet these spaces differed in that the latter was typically found in more public spaces and was explicitly for the purpose of resting. Civic groups were the first to establish ladies' rest rooms, but the use of the rest room entered into other areas of a women's life, such as work and transportation, in a relatively short period of time. The expansion of ladies' rest rooms into various public places is indicative of how quickly women were entering the public sphere during this period. This section will detail the earliest types of ladies' rest rooms, including rooms established by civic groups, in the workplace, and transportation.

¹⁸ Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, 19-20.

Ladies' Rest Rooms Established by Civic Groups

The country woman shopper is a valuable factor in the commercial life of those towns whose growth depends mainly upon rural trade. A physiological analysis of the subject, however, reveals the fact that there are few who have a more miserable time of a day's shopping than the country woman in towns where there has never been established a public rest room. Her errands done, the country shopper has nothing to do and nowhere to go while possibly waiting for her men or the interurban to take her home, but to walk the streets or stand on some corner ready in her own words, "to drop with fatigue."

– "Rustics' Rest Rooms" in *Home Lands*, 1921.¹⁹

The earliest examples of ladies' rest rooms were established by members of civic associations looking to improve the lives of women in their community. A civic group is a voluntary organization of individuals based on geographical, social, or religious affiliations, formed to improve civic life.²⁰ Civic groups often regarded the establishment of a ladies' rest room as a means of civic improvement; they would raise funds, determine a location, and run and operate the rest room in their community.²¹

It is believed that women's clubs were responsible for the conception and introduction of this new room type. An article in *The Outlook*, written in 1900, attributed the establishment of the first ladies' rest room to The Women's Club of Rochester, Minnesota, in 1896. The article also states the early ladies' rest rooms

¹⁹ Darling Shultis, Ruth. 1921. Rustics' rest room. *Home Lands* 3 (1) (April): 6.

²⁰ Skocpol, Theda, Marshall Ganz, and Ziad Munson. 2000. A Nation of Organizers: The institutional origins of civic voluntarism in the United States. *The American Political Science Review* 94 (3) (Sep.): 527-546.

²¹ Evans, Anne M. 1918. Rest rooms for women in marketing centers. *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture*: 217-224.

were founded by civic groups and were mostly located in the Midwest.²² The preliminary survey of ladies' rest rooms supports this assertion as it includes rest rooms established by civic groups between 1901 and 1910 in Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Texas. The survey also shows that rest rooms of these types are prevalent until the early 1930s.

The type of civic association most actively involved with operating ladies' rest rooms was the women's club. Women's clubs emerged in the mid-nineteenth century as women came together through religious organizations and other groups that highlighted feminine moral superiority. By the late nineteenth century, the goal of women's clubs began to evolve from offering moral instruction to actively improving other's lives. For example, many women's clubs worked to improve the lives of impoverished and uneducated women through the formation of literary clubs.²³ By the turn of the twentieth century, participation in women's clubs flourished because many middle class women found themselves with less to do around the house due to both improvements in technology and children attending school for longer periods of time.²⁴

The earliest examples of ladies' rest rooms were often established by women's clubs for the benefit of the rural farmers' wives who accompanied their husbands into the city. During such trips, women were removed from their primary sphere, the home, and entered into the male-dominated commercial sphere.²⁵ Most wives were tasked with purchasing food and domestic supplies on these trips, while

²² The making of to-morrow. 1903. *The World Today* 5 (4) (September 1903).

²³ Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist*, 4.

²⁴ Schneider and Schneider, *American Women*, 13.

²⁵ "Rest-Rooms for Farmers' Wives," *The Outlook* 66, no. 6 (October 1900): 296.

the men conducted other business, such as banking and farm trade. Such excursions could last an entire day and there were few places where women could go to rest, eat, or take care of the children. One journal, *The World To-Day*, even noted that for farmers' wives "in winter time their only refuge was the grocery store."²⁶ But with the advent of rest rooms, rural women had a dedicated space outside of their homes; such a room offered comfort to women both physically as well as emotionally and provided the opportunity to socialize with other women.



A TOWN CLUB FOR COUNTRY WOMEN

Country clubs for city men are nowadays common enough, but the Carthaginian women have started something more useful in providing a room where the farmers' wives may rest and meet their friends whenever they come to town.

*Figure 3: Ladies' rest room established by the Carthage Women's Club in Carthage, Missouri.
(The Independent, Vol. 74 No. 3368, June, 1913)*

In addition to women's clubs, other civic associations founded ladies' rest rooms, including the International Association of Rebekah Assemblies, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Daughters of the King. There are also examples of multiple civic groups working together to establish and maintain ladies' rest

²⁶ *The World To-Day*, "The Making of To-Morrow," September 1903: 245-247.

rooms. One such example is the partnership between The Women's Club of Carthage, Missouri, and the Good Roads Club, a primarily male club dedicated to the improvement of the city's roads, to set up the Carthage Women's Rest Room in the county courthouse (Figure 3).²⁷

The types of buildings that contained rest rooms varied based on what was available to the civic groups. Some rest rooms occupied entire freestanding structures, while others used rented rooms in existing building located in the town center.²⁸ Civic groups financed the daily operation of rest rooms using a variety of income sources, including fundraising, loans, donations from nearby businesses, and the selling of lunches in the rest room.

The establishment of ladies' rest rooms by civic associations is significant because it implies that providing women a comfortable space in public was a priority that could lead to better cities that were more accommodating to women. These early rest rooms provided women an intermediate space where they could leave their home and enter the public sphere and socialize with other women. One member of the Rochester Women's Club remarked:

There is a homelike feeling about the place, which is very pleasant, and it is gratifying to see how freely the women come and go, sometimes stopping for only a moment to leave extra wraps, or packages, sometimes giving the children necessary care, or putting the baby to sleep in one of the cradles; sometimes waiting for a train, or friends, eating lunches, arranging disordered hair, or apparel in the dressing room, and in fact, making of the rooms just exactly such a place as we hoped.²⁹

²⁷ Newell-Blair, Emily. 1913. The best thing in our town. *The Independant*. June 19, 1913

²⁸ A women's rest room. 1906. *House & Garden* 10 (4) (October, 1906): 208
Good, Jessie M. 1901. The how of improvement work. *The Home Florist* 9 (1) (January, 1901): 15-16

²⁹ *The World To-Day*, "The Making of To-Morrow," September 1903: 246.

This quote illustrates how rest rooms provided women in cities a homelike space where they could attend to private activities, such as resting, attending to children, and fixing their appearance. Furthermore, it emphasizes how the establishment of rest rooms by civic groups embodies the philosophies of the Progressive Era. Through banding together in formal organizations, civic associations were able to improve the lives of rural women.

In addition to giving rural women a place to rest away from their homes, these spaces also promoted social interaction between urban and rural women. Many of the farmer's wives lived in isolated rural areas and therefore had limited social interaction with other women. A member of the Rochester Women's club noted the value of social interaction that is facilitated by ladies' rest rooms, stating that:

Then there is another phase of the work, which is also gratifying, and that is the cultivation of the social spirit and the breaking down of the barriers between the women of the city and country. Membership in the Women's Club is open to all ladies from out of town who desire to avail themselves of the privilege and many are thus drawn into closer connection with us.³⁰

Many of the women's clubs that operated rest rooms recognized that social exchanges between women of diverse backgrounds could advance their reform work.³¹ Thus, the allocation of a space where women of various circumstances could collaborate for a common cause is another example of how ladies' rest rooms embody the spirit of the Progressive Era.

³⁰ *The World To-Day*, "The Making of To-Morrow," September 1903: 246.

³¹ Van West, Carroll. 1999. Assessing significance and integrity in the national register process: Questions of race, class, and gender. In *Preservation of what, for whom? A critical look at historical significance.*, ed. Michael A. Tomlan, 109. Ithaca, NY: The National Council for Preservation Education.

Rest Rooms in the Workplace

The rest room is fundamentally a health measure. It is a means of utilizing leisure time under such conditions as will soothe ragged nerves, restore vitality, and relieve fatigue in general. It is also a social “safety first” measure providing a morally safe environment in which to spend the leisure of relief periods and a margin of the luncheon periods.

– *Bulletin of the Extension Division*, Indiana University, 1917³²

While women 16 years and older comprised only 10 percent of the workforce in 1900, by 1930 that number had grown to 30 percent, illustrating the rapidly changing makeup of the American workforce during the early twentieth century.³³ Also during this time, the idea of separate spheres for men and women that dominated the Victorian Era became less prevalent as women began to regularly enter the men’s sphere of the workplace.³⁴ As a result of more women in the labor force, there were corresponding changes in the use of space to accommodate the increasing number of women employees, who were perceived to have different needs than men. This is especially true in factories and offices, the two workplaces where the majority of these women were employed.³⁵

Rest rooms in the workplace are defined as rooms that were created for the benefit of women employees in the labor force. This rest room type represents 5 percent of the rest rooms found in the survey. The category includes three subtypes:

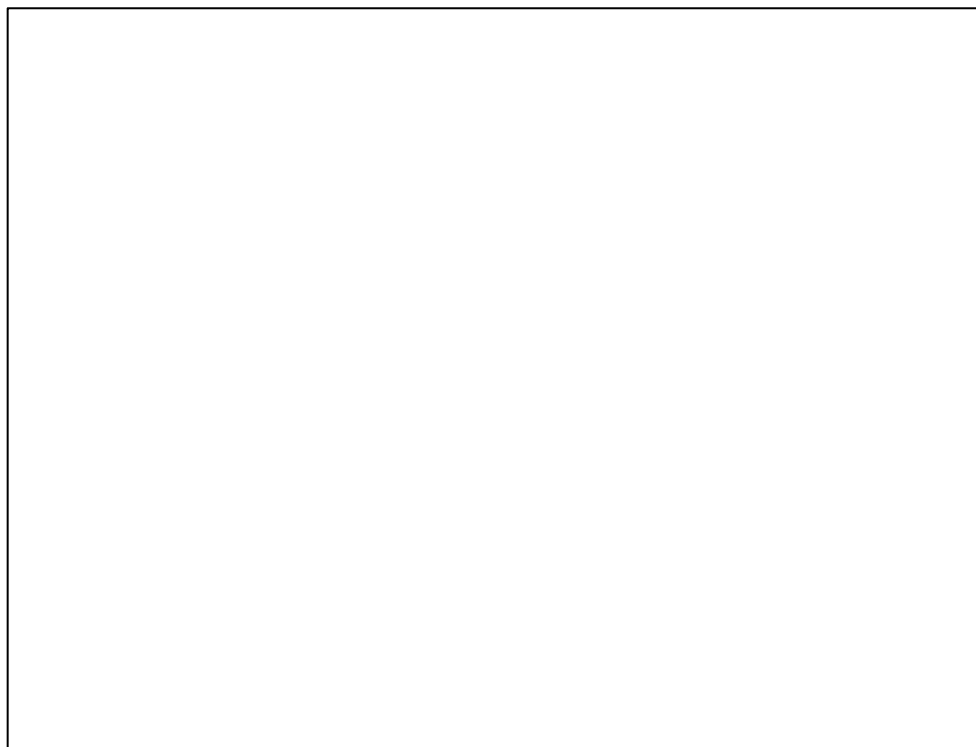
³² Indiana University, Bloomington. Extension Division. 1917. Vocational recreation in Indiana. *Bulletin of the Extension Division, Indiana University* 3 (5).

³³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Part 1, “Series D 32-46 – Labor Force – Sex and Age of Persons 16 Years Old and Over in Labor Force, 1940, and Gainful Workers, 1890 to 1930”

³⁴ Spain, Daphne. 1992. *Gendered Spaces*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 38.

³⁵ Ibid, 48.

manufacturing, offices, and employee clubhouses. Of these three subtypes, rest rooms in manufacturing facilities were the most common. These rooms typically contained furniture for resting including beds, couches, and chairs, and many of them also have tables to accommodate employees during their lunch break. Since these rooms were places where women employees could recuperate when they felt ill, some companies accommodated this function by either employing a matron or locating the rest room near a sick bay. Several descriptions of these rooms are indicative of the efforts to create a home-like and restful space different from women's working spaces. For example, the offices of The United Gas Improvement Company in Philadelphia decorated their ladies' rest room with potted plants, rugs, and pictures on the wall.³⁶



*Figure 4: Women's rest room at Osborne Works Twine Mill circa 1910.
(Wisconsin Historical Society, WHi-8128)*

³⁶ O'Donnell, W. F. 1913. They do things right - in jersey. *National Commercial Gas Association Monthly Bulletin* 4 (1) (January, 1913): 15

Rest Rooms in Manufacturing

In the mid-nineteenth century, an increasing number of women began to leave the home for work and sought employment in traditionally male-dominated manufacturing facilities. As a result of this shift in employee demographics, employers saw a need to make the workplace more accommodating to women, and thus ladies' rest rooms were created in a number of manufacturing facilities (Figure 4). One of the first examples is found in the National Cash Register Company in Dayton, Ohio, in 1899, which provided a ladies' rest room for their employees to rest and recuperate if they felt overwhelmed while working (Figure 5). At this time there was also an increased emphasis on improving workforce conditions and a myriad of literature was published prescribing ways to improve productivity through employee satisfaction. Women were also considered to be more vulnerable to fatigue than their male coworkers, and thus more likely to become ill and need rest. Some factories took this into consideration and provided women with their own separate accommodations to rest when needed.³⁷ This would not only help with productivity, but also had the potential to attract a greater number of women employees. A report published in 1920 by the Federal Board of Vocational Education confirmed the importance of accommodating the different needs of women, stating:

That the psychology of environment and its effect upon the girl in influencing her choice of employment is understood can be seen from the extent to which “agreeable surroundings,” “rest rooms,” “social

³⁷ Kogan, Terry S. 2007. Sex-separation in public restrooms: Law, architecture, and gender. *Mich* 14 (1) pp.1,-58

opportunities,” “food at cost,” etc., are featured in the “help wanted” columns.³⁸

This demonstrates women’s increased prominence and the necessity of having special accommodations for their wellbeing in the workplace, since they now had more of a choice in their place of employment.



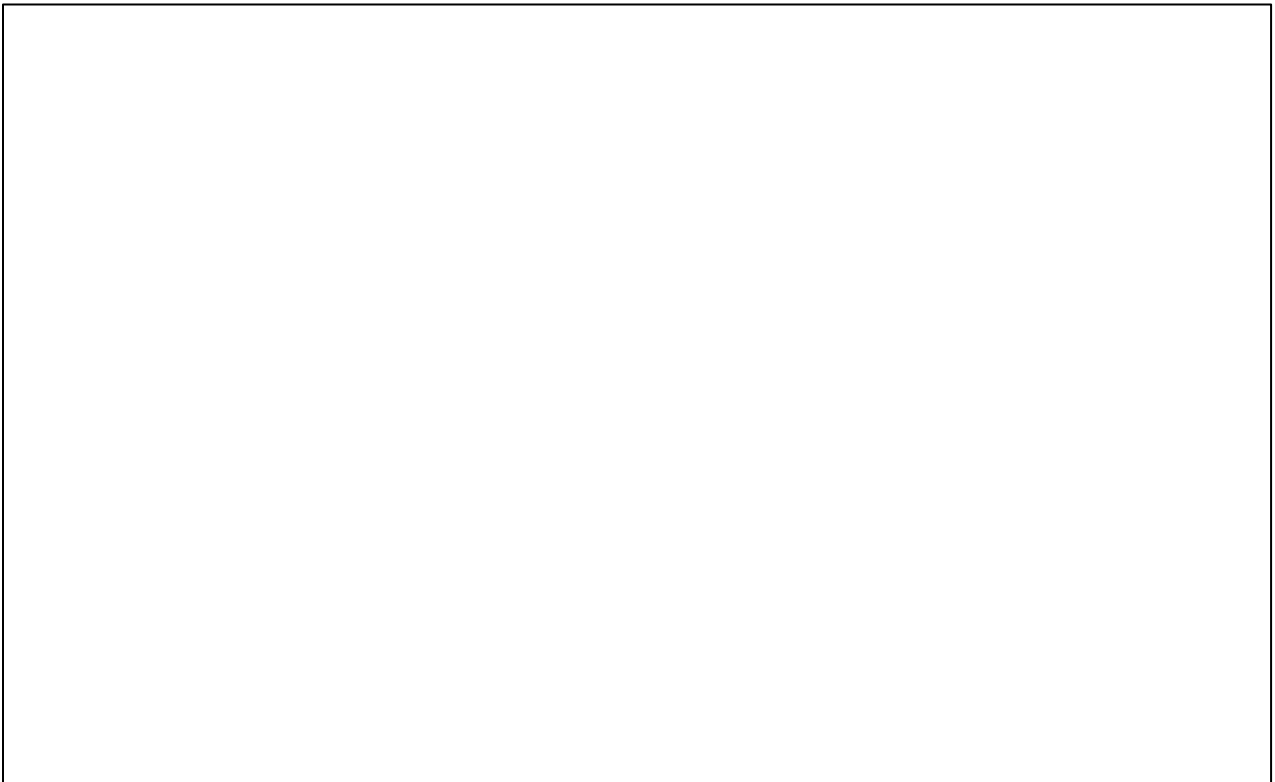
*Figure 5: Women’s rest room at National Cash Register's headquarters, Dayton, Ohio.
(Social Service, Vol. 11 No. 4, 1905)*

Rest Rooms in Offices

In addition to accommodating female employees who worked in manufacturing facilities, ladies’ rest rooms were also located in office environments (Figures 6 & 7). These rooms served a similar function to their manufacturing

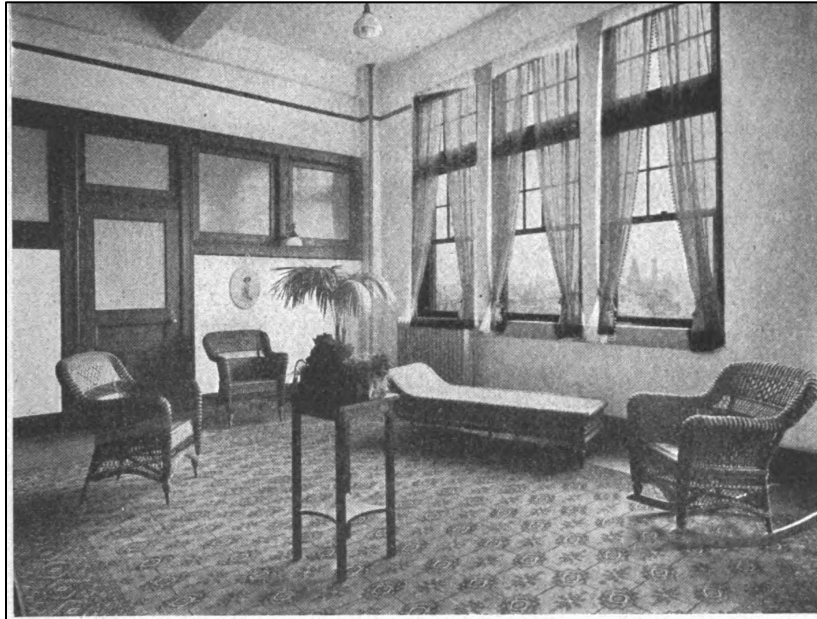
³⁸ Federal Board for Vocational Education. 1920. Economic and social aspects of vocational education for girls and women. *Trade and Industrial Education for Girls and Women* 15 (58) 29

counterparts, but in several examples these rooms were made available for public use instead of just employees. Here, women could use the rooms to rest or even hold meetings at these otherwise private places of work. In the case of the Ithaca Gas & Electric building in New York, the reasoning behind this decision was to make customers feel more welcome and trusting of the utility company.³⁹



*Figure 6: Curtis Publishing Co. - Women's Rest Room
(Postcard, c.a. 1910, Philadelphia University, Paul J Gutman Library, Special Collections.)*

³⁹ Ithaca gas and electric corporation moves into new office building. 1916. *Electrial Review and Western Electrician* 63 (December 30, 1916) 1141



THE LADIES' REST ROOM

*Figure 7: Ladies' rest room in the offices of the Public Service Company at Jersey City, New Jersey.
(National Commercial Gas Association, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1913)*



*Figure 8: Ladies' rest room in the Riverside Club of the Waltham Watch Co.
(Music Trades, Vol. 59 No. 1, 1919)*

Employee Club Houses

Employer involvement in worker's lives began in earnest with the advent of the company town in the mid-nineteenth century. Due to increasing strikes among workers in the early twentieth century, employers began to rethink and remodel the company town in order to quell discontent and unrest.⁴⁰ Numerous companies provided a clubhouse where employees and their families could socialize and be entertained in an effort to improve their morale. A few examples of these clubhouses had ladies' rest rooms for women to socialize and rest. These rest rooms differ from those located directly in the manufacturing facility in that they were not attached to the workplace. An advertisement in a 1919 magazine portrays the clubhouse for the Waltham Watch Company (Figure 8), noting, "The room illustrated is the ladies' rest room, which is handsomely appointed. The Bacon piano fits very well with its pleasing surroundings and will, without a doubt, be a source of pleasure and recreation to the people who will have occasion to use this room."⁴¹ This statement emphasizes the notion that the clubhouse was primarily for recreation, indicating a separation from workplace demands.

The three different subtypes of ladies' rest rooms in the workplace provide evidence of the growing presence of more women in the workforce. The existence of these rooms also shows how the built environment of the workplace changed to accommodate the growing number of women employees. These rooms provided women a home-like place to rest and be removed from the male-dominated domain of the workplace.

⁴⁰ Crawford, Margaret. 1995. *Building the workingman's paradise: The design of American company towns*. London; New York: Verso.

⁴¹ Frances Bacon piano in riverside club. 1919. *The Music Trades* 59 (3) (July 19, 1919): 21.

Rest Rooms at County, State, and World's Fairs

A ladies' rest room with toilet facilities has been provided under the grandstand. Here every opportunity will be given for the lady visitors to the fair to stop in and rest for a few minutes from the round of interesting sights that are often fatiguing. Comfortable seats will be provided, and since provision has been made elsewhere for the children under a certain age, there will be more than there has been heretofore in this room.

– “Women's Section is Great Asset” in the *Tombstone Epitaph*,
October 31st, 1915.⁴²

In the nineteenth century, American fairs emerged from their European counterparts as popular events where people could gather to exchange ideas, be entertained, and fundraise for a cause. Typically, the earliest fairs happened on a local or county level for farmers to exchange ideas on agricultural production. As transportation and technology improved, fairs were also held at the state level. Although these fairs still focused on agriculture, the idea of exhibiting the latest and greatest equipment and machinery for marketing purposes also became a central component of these events. As time progressed, fairs became more elaborate and after the Civil War these events became a way of showcasing improvements in science and technology. World's Fairs and Expositions also became popular in the nineteenth century, providing a venue for multiple nations to demonstrate superior social, technological, intellectual, and scientific progress.⁴³

Beginning in the early to mid-nineteenth century, women were instrumental in organizing fundraising fairs. These women's fairs, as they were commonly called,

⁴² Women's section is great asset. 1915. *Tombstone Epitaph*, October 31st, 1915, sec Weekly Edition. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn95060905/1915-10-31/ed-1/seq-5/> (accessed March 15th, 2012).

⁴³ Parezo, Nancy J., and Don D. Fowler. 2007. *Anthropology goes to the fair: The 1904 Louisiana Purchase exposition*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

were coordinated primarily by women with the main goal of selling homemade goods to fundraise for a cause. Although most ladies' rest rooms are associated with agricultural fairs, the existence of women's fairs reflects the notion of women banding together for a domestic cause.⁴⁴ A similar phenomenon is seen in agricultural fairs where formal women's groups organized their own booths and even established ladies' rest rooms.



*Figure 9: Ladies' rest room at the Delaware County Fair in Indiana, circa 1926.
(Copyright 2006, Ball State University, All Rights Reserved)*

⁴⁴ Gordon, Beverly. 1998. *Bazaars and fair ladies: The history of the American fundraising fair*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Although fairs emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, ladies' rest rooms do not appear to be in use at fairs until the beginning of the twentieth century. Use of ladies' rest rooms at fairs declined by the 1920s, which is slightly earlier than other types. Regardless of the size of the fair, women played a large role in these events as participants and organizers. For many county and state fairs, the ladies' rest room served a very practical purpose, to provide a place to rest for women who were spending the day walking around the fair. This function was also quite useful for women with children who might have become tired from all of the excitement of the fair. Most of these rooms contained furniture for resting, such as chairs, couches, and even beds. Several rooms had adjoining lavatory facilities and others featured the services of a trained nurse to attend to the women.⁴⁵ In addition to having general rest rooms as a part of the fair facilities, some organizations used rest rooms to attract ladies to their exhibits (Figure 9). For example, a women's club belonging to the General Federation of Women's Clubs created a ladies' rest room at the Minnesota State Fair in 1901 in order to educate and recruit more women to help with the club's causes and events.⁴⁶ The use of rest rooms to attract women visitors was more common in the larger world's fairs where there would be multiple ladies' rest rooms at various exhibits. For example, at the St. Louis Exposition of 1904, there were ladies' rest rooms at several different exhibitions including one for a textile manufacturer, the Illinois State Pavilion, and the Ohio State Building.

The development of ladies' rest rooms at fair facilities demonstrates how women were not only fair participants, but also important organizers in fair events.

⁴⁵ General Federation of Women's Clubs. 1901. *The Club Women: The official organ of the general federation of women's clubs*. VII (2): 19.

Rest Rooms in Transportation

The floor contains also a ladies' rest room. Often families come in with a car and the repairs take a long time. The women have no place to go with the children unless we provide one.

– Advertisement in the *The Coleville Examiner*, 1920.⁴⁷

Ladies' rest rooms intended to accommodate women while traveling were one of the most prevalent types found in the survey. As technology progressed and new, faster modes of transportation were made available, it became easier for men and women alike to travel farther from home. Although this technology facilitated a move from home into the public sphere, this type of travel was not without its challenges for women. While women's experience in public was still not equivalent to that of their male counterparts, advances in transportation provided increased access to public spaces.⁴⁸ The presence of ladies' rest rooms in transportation facilities was a way to mitigate this challenge, providing a private, domestic-like space to rest in public while traveling. Furthermore, as transportation technology improved, the nature of ladies' rest rooms also evolved.

Improvements in travel created the need to provide women with a space in a variety of new venues. Rest rooms in transportation can be broken into three subtypes based on the mode of transportation they served, including rail, automobile, and other methods. The earliest examples appeared in rail stations, and as travel by car became more popular they were included in auto repair facilities. Rest rooms were associated

⁴⁷ Willet Bros. Now Have Fine, Modern Building. 1920. *The Coleville Examiner*, September 18th, 1920.

⁴⁸ Richter, Amy G. 2005. *Home on the Rails: Women, the railroad, and the rise of public domesticity*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 88.

with almost all types of travel including ferries, ocean liners, and even an early airport. Because ladies' rest rooms were adapted to accommodate new modes of travel, the use of this type has one of the longest time spans with the earliest example in the survey is found in 1901 and the latest in 1943.

Railroad Travel

Segregated spaces for women traveling on railways began as early as 1836 with the creation of "ladies cars" for women who were traveling without a male escort. These cars differed from ladies' rest rooms because their purpose was to create a safe space for women traveling alone, rather than just a space to recuperate, hence, in this section the focus is on rest rooms in railroad stations. Late nineteenth-and early twentieth-century railroad stations were places of easy public access and were viewed as gateways to the city. Therefore, it was advantageous to make these spaces accommodating and more home-like for women travelers.⁴⁹ The primary purpose of rest rooms in railroad stations was to provide comfort to women while waiting for the next train to arrive. In some instances there were segregated waiting rooms for both men and women, but they were called waiting rooms and not rest rooms. Only the women's rooms are describe as rest, or retiring, rooms. In descriptions of rest rooms in railroad stations, the rooms are presented as a necessary amenity for women and there are often detailed descriptions of how ornamentation added to the home-like quality of the room. An excerpt from the *Sunset: The Pacific Monthly* in 1912 explains:

⁴⁹ Ibid, 70.

Everywhere throughout the building the central idea of looking after the traveling public's comfort and convenience is carried out to the smallest details, even to the selection of the matron in charge of the women's rest room, a comfortable, motherly woman who takes a genuine interest in her work. There are soft couches and deep rocking chairs in that room and upon them travel-tired women may find real rest.⁵⁰

Ladies' rest rooms in railroad stations provide a haven of rest for women in the new world of high-speed travel, but like the railroads themselves, the rise of the automobile transformed the nature of ladies' rest rooms.

Automobile

The emergence of the automobile coincides with the changing role of women in the public sphere during the Progressive Era.⁵¹ In fact, ladies' rest rooms established to accommodate women traveling by automobile are the most frequent type in the general transportation category. Unlike other types of transportation, such as the railroad or streetcar, those traveling by auto had more freedom over their schedule and destination. The emergence of the car also created a new market for goods and services related to automobile travel, like fueling stations and repair shops. These shops adopted various methods to increase their customer base, including catering to women by having a women's rest room. These rooms served the practical purpose of providing ladies a place to rest while they were waiting for their car to be serviced, but they also served a secondary purpose of boosting the sales of the business. Multiple trade publications extolled the financial benefits of establishing a

⁵⁰ Willard, Walter. 1912. Evolution of the passenger station. *The Sunset: Pacific Monthly*(29) (July-December 1912), 105-107.

⁵¹ Scharff, Virginia. 1999. *Taking the Wheel: Women and the coming of the motor age*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 67.

ladies' rest room in auto repair shops. An article published in 1918 in *The Horseless Age* suggested the installation of a ladies' rest room as one of three ways to increase business at repair garages. The author boasts of a guaranteed return on investment for any shop that opens a ladies' rest room stating that "With the large number of women traveling by motor and with the constantly increasing number of women drivers, the garage that looks after their comfort and caters to their trade is going to profit greatly by it." The article also details the need to keep the room clean and well furnished, followed by the importance of prominently advertising the room on any existing signage (Figure 10).⁵² Some garages even opened rooms up to all women, not just those in need of auto repairs. One such garage stated that by giving women a convenient place to congregate and park their cars they were more likely to return when they needed repairs.⁵³

In spite of the fact that automobiles provided easy access to and through public spaces, their interior was a very private space. They were owned by private individuals and, unlike streetcars or carriages, they could be easily operated by anyone.⁵⁴ Perhaps this is one of the reasons for an increase of women drivers. Many of the advertisements and articles about ladies' rest rooms in auto repair shops or auto dealerships acknowledged the importance of an increasing number of women drivers in the early decades of the twentieth century (Figure 11). The marketing of ladies' rest rooms by dealerships supports the fact that there was an increasing number of women drivers, or at least that women had some influence on the purchase of an

⁵² Farrington, Frank. 1918. Three methods for increasing garage business. *The Horseless Age*.(4) (May, 15): 33.

⁵³ Ladies' rest room at candler garage. 1927. *The Atlanta Constitution (1881-1945)* (October, 16): F6.

⁵⁴ Scharff, *Taking the Wheel*, 16.

automobile. In 1915, *The Atlantic Constitution* printed a story of a Buick dealership manager who reported on the “many ladies who are now driving Buick cars, and the fact that so many are interested in the new models, he found it necessary to provide some comfortable resting place for them while they browse the display rooms.⁵⁵”

It is also important to note class differences of the clientele of the ladies’ in rest rooms established by automobile dealers. Early automobiles were considerably more expensive than other means of transportation including horse and carriages, railways, and streetcars.⁵⁶ As such, a degree of wealth was implied in auto ownership, especially in terms of purchasing the earliest models. Given this, it was likely that there was a class difference between women visiting rest rooms in auto repair shops and those visiting rest rooms associated with other types of transportation, or even those established by civic groups. This is significant because it provides more evidence that the use of ladies’ rest rooms was not limited to one class of women.

⁵⁵ Ladies' rest room opened in Atlantic Buick headquarters. 1915. *The Atlanta Constitution* (1881-1945), July 4, 1915

⁵⁶ Scharff, *Taking the Wheel*, 69.



Figure 10: Illustration showing how signage can attract women to an auto repair shop. (The Horseless Age, Vol. 44, No. 5, May 1918)

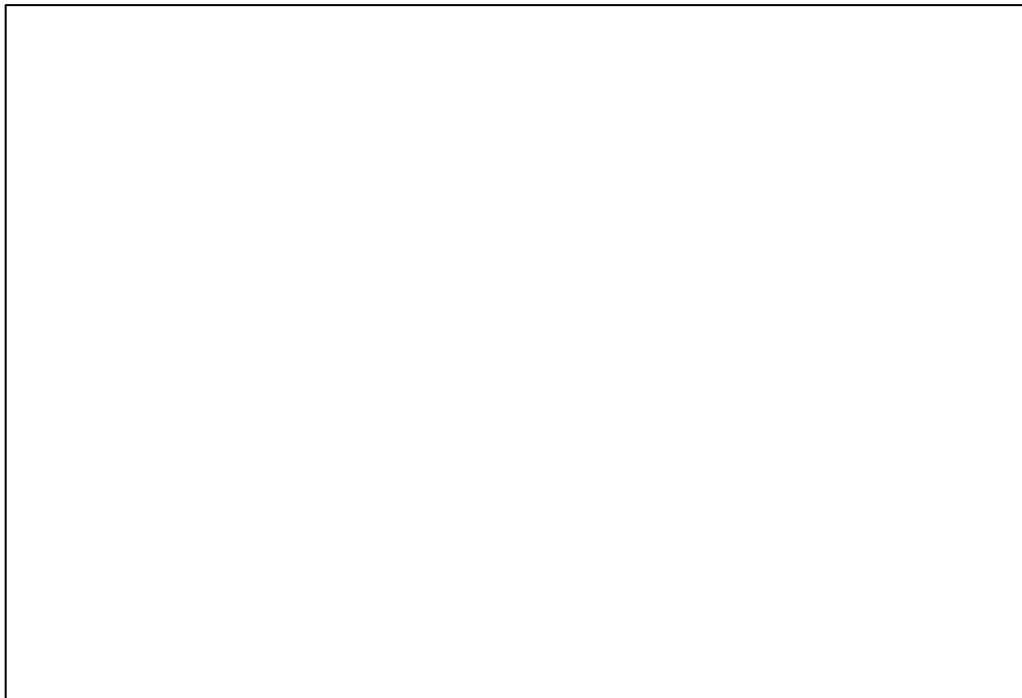


Figure 11: Ladies' rest room at the William McKay Co. Ford & Lincoln Auto Dealership, circa 1929. (Property of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division).

Other Methods

One of the most interesting aspects of ladies' rest rooms in transportation is how their location and use evolved to accommodate new modes of transportation. In addition to rest rooms made for rail and automobile travel, there is also evidence of rest rooms in ocean liners, ferries, and even airplane travel.

Travel by ocean liners was a popular form of passenger transportation since the mid-nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century, many ports of call and the ships themselves installed ladies' rest rooms to accommodate their passengers. Understanding the difficulty of long journey, a port in New Brunswick, Canada, installed a ladies' rest room in 1919. An account of this rest room noted that: "To the tired women, nerve-racked and weary with the discomforts of steerage accommodation on an ocean liner during the winter, the rest with its easy chairs, couch and beds for sleepy babies was a haven of rest and peace."⁵⁷ Ladies' rest rooms were also used in association with shorter water trips. For example, the ferry that traveled between Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, and New Bedford, Massachusetts, in the late 1920s was built with a ladies' rest room and adjoining lavatory facilities.

While the decline of ladies' rest rooms coincides with the emergence of commercial air travel for the public, one of the first airports built, the Boston Municipal Airport, contained a ladies' rest room for the use of passengers waiting for flight departure and arrival. This was the only example of a ladies' rest rooms found in an airport, but its existence illustrates how ladies' rest rooms were used in a range of transportation types.

⁵⁷ Morris, Philip H. 1920. *The Canadian Patriotic Fund: A record of its activities from 1914-1919*, 47.

Increased access to public spaces associated with improvements in travel technology was sometimes problematic for women. Now that women were able to travel farther from their home for longer periods of time, they were more removed from their domestic environments. This problem was mitigated through the use of ladies' rest rooms that gave women a home-like space to rest after long periods of travel. The study of rest rooms in transportation addresses important improvements in travel technology, and increases our understanding of how these improvements affected women and contributed to the changing perception of women in public spaces.

Chapter 4: Second Period Types (Originating Between 1903-1907)

In the years after rest rooms were well established as places where women could rest while away from their home, the function of these rooms began to take on more nuanced roles. Whether it was related to promoting progressive ideals, such as sanitation and education improvement, or marketing to women in their new role as consumers, these types of rest rooms are indicative of the impact of greater social changes on the everyday lives of women. This section details the four types of ladies' rest rooms that appear in the second period, including rest rooms in public comfort stations, educational buildings, retail stores, and civic buildings.

Rest Rooms in Public Comfort Stations

Every women's toilet room should have a rest room with a couch and a lavatory - the room large enough to permit of a surgical operation in case of an emergency.

– Essential Points in Public Comfort Station Design, *Domestic Engineering*, 1911.⁵⁸

During the late nineteenth century there was an increased focus in America on broadly improving sanitation through new technology.⁵⁹ These efforts were especially notable in urban areas through the installation of public sanitation facilities, such as public bathhouses and public comfort stations.⁶⁰ Since public comfort stations were originally established as municipal facilities, the ladies' rest rooms in these examples

⁵⁸ McGonagle, A. R. 1911. Essential points in public comfort station design. *Domestic Engineering* 57 (4) (October 28th, 1911): 79-91

⁵⁹ Lauren Schiszik, "'Simple, Substantial, and Sanitary to the Highest Degree': History and Architecture of Public Comfort Stations in Baltimore, 1908 – 1926" (Paper Submitted for HISP 655: Vernacular Architecture, 2010).

⁶⁰ Glassberg, David. 1979. The Design of Reform: The public bath movement in America. *American Studies* 20 (2) (fall): 5-21.

could be included under the municipal type. In this study, however, they are designated as a single type because of their significance as a likely origin for the term restroom as used today.

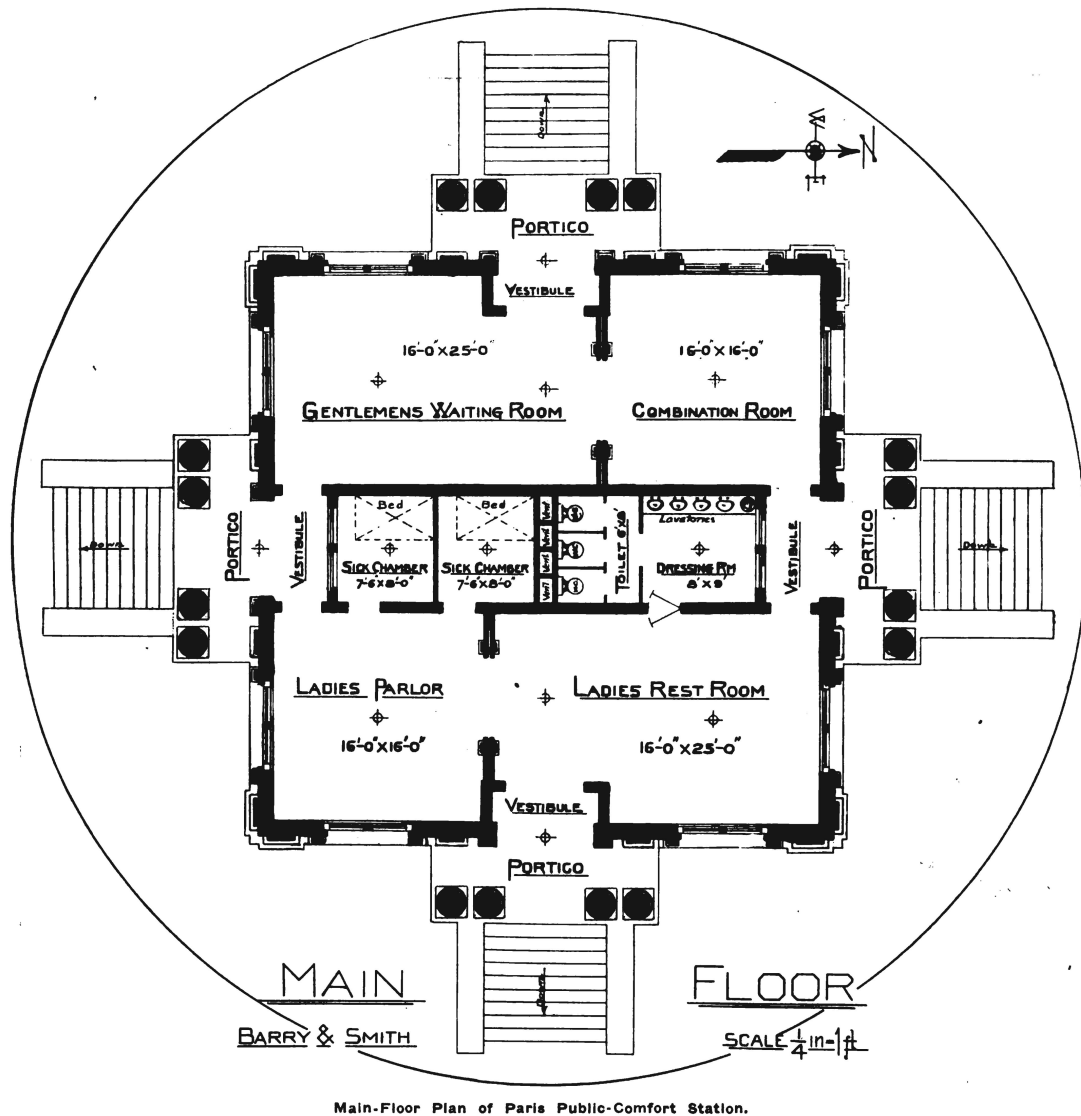


Figure 12: Floor plans showing a ladies' rest room in a public comfort station in Paris, Texas. ("Paris, Texas, is to Build a Magnificent Public-Comfort Station Early Next Year" in *Domestic Engineering*, October, 1911, Vol. 57. No. 4)

The function of a lavatory and a rest room seems to naturally fit together, hence proponents of public comfort stations advocated for the installation of ladies' rest rooms. An article in *Domestic Engineering* from 1908 notes that women and children visiting urban areas for long periods of time became increasingly uncomfortable in these public spaces. The article explores the moral implications for women in a city without public comfort stations, declaring that without access to a lavatory the only readily available alternative is the use of the facilities at a nearby saloon. This was considered quite improper for a lady and was seen as promoting debauched behavior that could lead to alcoholism and even death.⁶¹

Like other types of ladies' rest rooms, the public comfort station was a dedicated space in a public area where visitors, in this case both women and men, could utilize a facility that provided private, home-like amenities. For this reason, ladies' rest rooms were often installed inside larger public comfort stations (Figure 12). Public comfort stations varied greatly in size and function. The most basic examples contained only lavatory facilities, while more elaborate accommodations included ladies' rest rooms, men's smoking rooms, general waiting rooms, and even exhibition galleries. Interestingly, of the comfort stations that had facilities for both sexes, the men's portion was often larger, containing more toilets and sinks, but the women's portions would have additional room for either an attendant or a rest room.⁶²

Trade journals like *Domestic Engineering* advocated for the installation of a ladies'

⁶¹ Allen, K. 1908. Public Comfort Stations. *Domestic Engineering* 45 (8) (November 21, 1908): 204-236.

⁶² McGonagle, A. R. 1911. Essential points in public comfort station design. *Domestic Engineering* 57 (4) (October 28th, 1911): 79-91.

rest room in all public comfort stations, stating that it made the facility complete by not only providing toilet facilities but an area to rest and gain comfort.⁶³

Rest rooms were found in public comfort stations less frequently than other settings, representing only 3 percent of the rest rooms in the survey. Due to this small number, it is difficult to discern any geographical trend, but it is important to note that because public comfort stations were used primarily in urban environments, ladies' rest rooms of this type are found mostly in larger cities. Ladies' rest rooms in these facilities mirror the rise and fall of public comfort stations in general; the earliest example is found in 1908 and the latest in 1921.

Perhaps one of the reasons why so few examples of this type were found is due to the use of the term rest room to refer to lavatory facilities. In fact public comfort stations may be responsible for the new meaning of this term, as seen in trade publications where the names are used interchangeably. The best example of this is in a 1913 article from *Domestic Engineering* highlighting a women's rest room in conjunction with a public comfort station in Pasadena, California (Figure 13). It notes that:

The Women's Rest Rooms, or Comfort Stations, erected in the Pasadena City Parks are modeled along different lines than those usually adopted for this purpose. The object of the city commissioners was to plan buildings that would be rest rooms in every sense of the word.⁶⁴

Because in this facility the rest rooms and lavatory facilities are so integrated, the term Women's Rest Room and Comfort Station are used interchangeably. Another

⁶³ Ibid, 79-91

⁶⁴ Shaver, A. C. 1913. Women's comfort stations at Pasadena, California. *Domestic Engineering* 63 (8) (May 24, 1913): 210-211.

notable feature of the facility is that it is the only example in the survey of a public comfort station for the exclusive use of women.

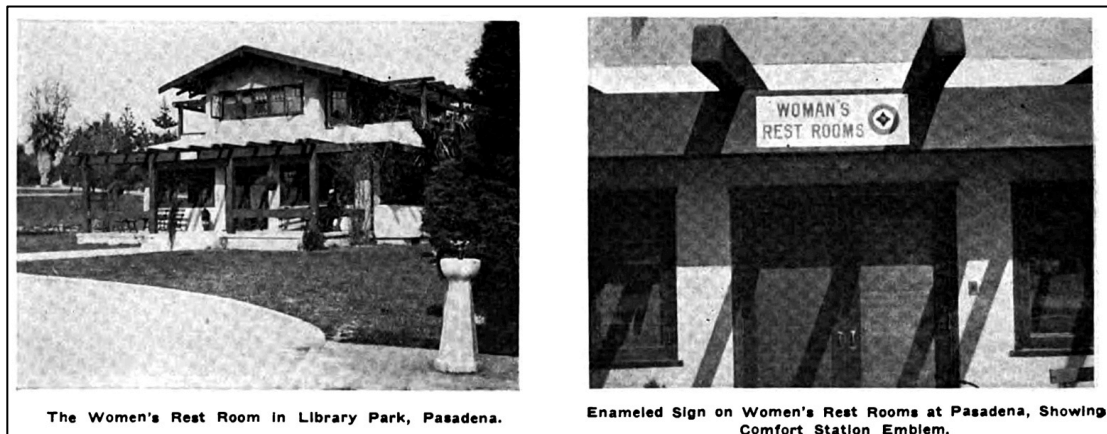


Figure 13: Women's rest room and public comfort station in Pasadena, California.
(From *Domestic Engineering*, May, 1913, Vol. 63 No. 8)

The installation of ladies' rest rooms in public comfort stations is evidence of how these spaces were combined with the Progressive Era movement to improve public sanitation facilities in the city. Furthermore, it is an early example of how public amenities were provided for both men and women, which is indicative of the growing presence of women in public spaces.

Rest Rooms in Educational Buildings

The Public School house has been cleaned and renovated and put in first class condition for the opening of school on September 1st. Some new furniture has been installed and the ladies' rest room has been refurnished with a new couch and other necessary comforts.

—*The Graham Guardian*, August 22nd, 1919.⁶⁵

The Progressive Era ushered in reforms for a wide range of educational institutions. Civic organizations, especially women's clubs, were active in improving

⁶⁵ Thatcher news. 1919. *Graham Guardian SUPPLEMENT* 25 (28) (August 22, 1919): 5.

conditions at primary and secondary schools. At the same time, reformers worked to give women easier access to predominately male colleges and universities.⁶⁶ The installation of ladies' rest rooms at educational facilities is evidence of these reforms in the built environment. In schoolhouses, they were a means of making a more productive and accommodating educational environment for women. At the university level, these spaces not only provided comfort and rest, but they also acted as a mediating space for women who were entering a traditionally male-dominated environment.

Although the number of ladies' rest rooms in educational facilities represented in the survey is small, their impact on society was significant. The earliest examples of these rooms first appear around 1905 and they are found consistently until the 1920s. Ladies' rest rooms in this category can be divided into two subtypes: those in schoolhouses and those in coeducational universities. These two subtypes are described in detail below, along with a brief discussion on how the room's characteristics and presence are indicative of changing gender roles and educational advancement during the Progressive Era.

Rest Rooms in Schoolhouses

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, coeducation at primary and secondary schools was a common practice, but there were still differences in physical accommodations for both sexes.⁶⁷ One result of Progressive Era reforms in schools

⁶⁶ Schneider and Schneider, *American Women*, 97-98.

⁶⁷ Tyack, David B., and Elisabeth Hansot. 1990. *Learning together: A history of coeducation in American schools*. New Haven; New York: Yale University Press; Russell Sage Foundation, 114.

was an increased focus on upgrading school building facilities to improve the learning environment. During this time, numerous newspaper articles announced additions of facilities, such as auditoriums, libraries, music rooms, laboratories, and gymnasiums, to improve school buildings.⁶⁸ Ladies' rest rooms were often included as part of these improvements to both new and existing schools. Often, the ladies' rest room in the schoolhouse was adjoining a library, another room whose use was promoted by women's clubs in the Progressive Era.⁶⁹ The 1920 publication *School Architecture* makes several recommendations for the installation of a pair of rooms for resting in schools, with separate rooms for students and teachers (Figure 14). Although there is no indication in this article that the teacher's rest room was reserved exclusively for one sex, the author remarks that the two rest rooms should be connected so that the teachers may supervise the girls. Furthermore, floor plans and descriptions contain no mention of a rest room for male students.⁷⁰

Occasionally, rest rooms in school buildings were open to the greater public to accommodate more than just students and teachers. Schoolhouses were frequently used as community centers or social spaces during the Progressive Era, part of the movement to create more open, social interactions as a means to improve civic life.⁷¹ Schoolhouses were ideal social spaces because they were typically in a central location and could accommodate large groups of people. As a result, there were also

⁶⁸ Thatcher news. 1919. *Graham Guardian SUPPLEMENT* 25 (28) (August 22, 1919): 5.
To dedicate Wilson school. 1920. *The Hayti Herald* 12 (45) (Sep): 1.

⁶⁹ A Community School Building. 1916. *The American School Board Journal* 53 (2) (August, 1916): 29-64.

⁷⁰ Donovan, John Joseph. 1921. The Administrative Offices in Public School buildings.
In *School architecture; principles and practices*. New York: Macmillan Co. 246-7.

⁷¹ Mattson, Kevin. 1998. *Creating a Democratic Public: The struggle for urban participatory democracy during the progressive era*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 49.

examples of school buildings that had rest rooms that were open to the general public in order to accommodate farmers' wives visiting town.⁷²

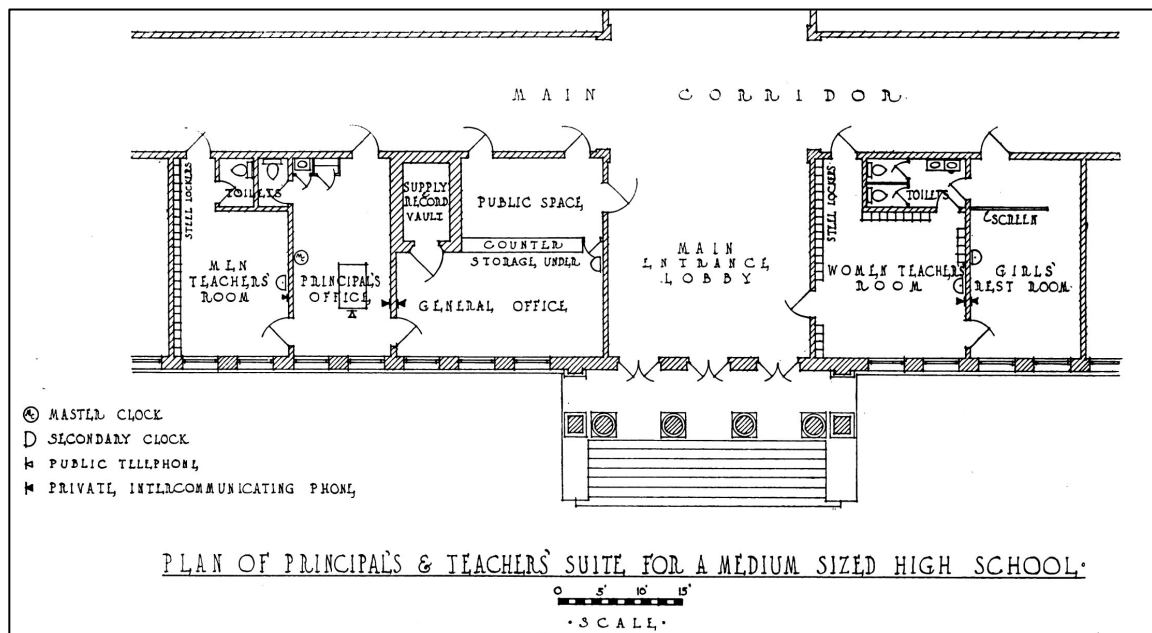


Figure 14: Plans of principal's & teacher's suite for a medium sized high school. (Drawing from *School Architecture, Principles and Practices* by John J. Donovan, The Macmillan Co., 1921)

Ladies' Rest Rooms in Universities

Although most public primary and secondary schools were coeducational by the 1890s, the majority of universities were still gender segregated.⁷³ Through the course of the Progressive Era, aided by changing ideas of gender roles, more four-year colleges began to admit women in addition to men.⁷⁴ One example is the establishment of the Johns Hopkins Medical School in 1893. Women's rights activists Mary E. Garrett and M. Carey Thompson secured most of the funding for the medical

⁷² A community school building. 1916. *The American School Board Journal* 53 (2) (August, 1916): 29-64.

⁷³ Gordon, Lynn D. 1990. *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 6.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 6.

school and they stipulated that the school must also admit women. As such, this was the first medical school in the United States that was open to women and it is indicative of women's entrance into professional training at coeducational universities.⁷⁵ To accommodate the new female medical students, a freestanding building housing a ladies' rest room was constructed in 1917 as a memorial to Mary E. Garrett. The University's Alumni Magazine announced the rest room's dedication and provided a detailed description:

The building contains a main rest room, 18 feet wide by 23 feet long. Low, broad windows let in ample light and sunshine. There is a large fireplace 5 feet wide by 3 feet deep for gas logs. There are stationary bookcases and window seats. The room is attractively furnished with comfortable leather chairs, each with a movable table and reading lamp, lounges, and writing desks.⁷⁶

Regional differences in the emergence of coeducational universities are reflected in the survey of ladies' rest rooms. Since the East Coast had a well-established system of women's colleges, it was more convenient to keep the universities segregated. However, for Midwestern universities, many of which were founded later and in less populated areas than their East Coast counterparts, it was more advantageous to admit both male and female students for financial reasons.⁷⁷ The survey of ladies' rest rooms shows that both Nevada State University and Rogers State University in Oklahoma established ladies' rest rooms between 1910 and 1920 to accommodate women students.

⁷⁵ Brieger, Gert H. 1999. A brief history of the Johns Hopkins medical curriculum. In *The Johns Hopkins University medical school curriculum for the twentieth century.*, ed. Catherine D. DeAngelis, 2. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 2.

⁷⁶ Women's rest room at the medical school. 1917. *The Johns Hopkins University Alumni Magazine* 5 (November, 1916 - June, 1917): 175.

⁷⁷ Gordon 1990, 87.

The use of ladies' rest rooms in educational facilities is reflective of the many changes in education during the Progressive Era. These rest rooms were included as a way to improve the conditions of primary and secondary school facilities by providing female students and teachers a comfortable place to rest during the school day. At the university level, these rooms were installed to give women a place on campuses during a time when female attendance at higher educational institutions rapidly increased.

Rest Rooms in Retail Stores

The roomy, tastefully furnished ladies' rest room has been arranged to assure patrons a cozy, comfortable, home-like place to rest during a downtown shopping period.

– *The Atlanta Constitution*, August 19th, 1939.⁷⁸

The industrialization of the late nineteenth century had a considerable impact on how consumer goods were both produced and purchased. The economy's new efficient production methods offered consumers more choices of commodity goods, and thus retailers needed to find new ways to differentiate themselves in order to attract buyers.⁷⁹ These practices created a new consumer culture where the act of purchasing and owning goods was viewed as a means to achieve happiness and enjoyment in life.⁸⁰ In addition, women's increased access to the public sphere gave them more opportunities to purchase goods. Although women were already tasked with purchasing household goods as a part of their domestic duties, this new

⁷⁸ Haverty reopens beautiful, modern, new furniture store today. 1939. *The Atlanta Constitution (1881-1945)*, Aug 19, 1939, 13.

⁷⁹ Leach, William. 1993. *Land of Desire: Merchants, power, and the rise of a new American culture*. New York: Pantheon Books, 3.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 3.

consumer culture created the image of women shopping as a leisure activity.⁸¹ Retail stores wanted to attract this new type of shopper and were continually looking for ways to market to women who were faced with an unprecedented choice of merchandise. Thus, the use of the ladies' rest room was adopted as a way to attract women into the stores during their shopping trips.

Retail stores are the most common type in the survey, as they accounted for approximately 24 percent of the total. The use of ladies' rest rooms in retail stores first appeared in 1904 and at least one example was found every year until 1926. Like the other types, widespread use of these rooms declined by the mid-1930s, but they did not completely disappear. It is interesting to note that rest rooms in department stores still exist today. For example, many of Nordstrom's Department Stores have a Women's Lounge connected to their lavatory facilities that have layouts and furnishings that are similar to what was used in the ladies' rest rooms of the early twentieth century.⁸²

Generally these types of rest rooms were found near populated metropolitan areas, as this is where most major retailers were located. This is true to a lesser extent for the specialized retail stores, which were also found in smaller towns. Mapping the geographical distribution of ladies' rest rooms shows that fewer examples are found in the western United States. Most of the examples in this region are department stores that were in major cities along the west coast. In this type there are two different subtypes, including ladies' rest rooms in department stores and specialized

⁸¹ Peiss, Kathy L. 1998. American women and the making of modern consumer culture. *Journal for Multi-Media History* 1 (1) (Fall 1998)

⁸² Most Women's Lounges in Nordstrom's have a couches, table, lamps, mirrors and chairs, but are generally less cluttered with furnishings than early twentieth-century rest rooms.

retail. In the next section each subtype is described in detail with emphasis on how each type was used for marketing to women consumers.



*Figure 15: Ladies' rest room in the Owen, Moore & Co. Store in Portland, Maine.
(Board of Trade Journal, November 1909, Vol. 22 No. 7)*



*Figure 16: Image depicting a ladies' rest room in the Gimbel Brothers' Department store in New York. (From *What Eight Million Women Want* by Rheta Childe Dorr, Small, Maynard & Co. 1910.)*

Department Store

Before the advent of department stores, most household goods were purchased at smaller retail shops or dry goods stores. The arrangement of merchandise in these stores was utilitarian; often items were out of customer reach and little thought was given to product display to increase sales.⁸³ The emergence of department stores around the 1870s was a distinct departure from the traditional, personalized selling methods of the dry goods store. During this time there was an increased effort to make the seemingly mundane task of shopping more enjoyable. Department stores furthered this idea by arranging the interior of the store to create a whimsical and fantastic experience for consumers.⁸⁴ In addition to creating a new shopping

⁸³ Leach, *Land of Desire*, 73.

⁸⁴ Leach, William R. 1984. Transformations in a Culture of Consumption: Women and department stores, 1890-1925. *The Journal of American History* 71 (2) (Sep.): p319-342

experience, department stores in general were much larger than dry goods stores offering a multitude of goods and services under one roof.⁸⁵

Department stores were also influential in bringing women into the cities and solidifying their new role as consumers.⁸⁶ These modern stores were designed as feminine spaces, meant to allow women to feel comfortable, and thus more likely to give in to their desire to purchase goods.⁸⁷ Department stores were designed in a way that was inviting to women. On the exterior they brought women onto public sidewalks by encouraging leisurely behavior such as window-shopping.⁸⁸ Once inside, new technologies in lighting and display were used to create a highly ornate and fanciful interior.⁸⁹

There are many reasons why the owners of department stores thought it was a wise business decision to install a ladies' rest room (Figures 15 & 16). First, due the unprecedented variety of goods or merchandize offered in department stores, they were much larger in size than any other retailer.⁹⁰ As such, it was considered advantageous to have a ladies' rest room where women, fatigued from a day of shopping, could go to rest. Storeowners speculated that without a rest room, shoppers might consider leaving before they saw the entire store. With the opportunity to recover in the rest room, however, the owners thought that customers would be more likely to continue shopping. Additionally, ladies' rest rooms were used as tools to

⁸⁵ Leach, *Land of Desire*, 20.

⁸⁶ Sewell, *Women in the Everyday City*, 26.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 29. For more information on window displays and marketing to women see: Sewell, Jessica. 2003. Sidewalks and store windows as political landscapes. *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 9 (Constructing Image, Identity, and Place): 85-98.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 26.

⁸⁹ Leach, *Land of Desire*, 73.

⁹⁰ Benson, Susan Porter, 1986. *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, managers, and customers in American department stores, 1890-1940*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 14.

market to women and encourage them to buy more goods. Trade publications and advertisements suggested that by creating a comfortable and home-like space, women would feel more at ease in the store and therefore be more likely to buy. Recognizing this fact, an advertisement for J.S. Ringwalt's Co. emphasized how important the feeling of home was in their rest room by stating:

We value, probably more than anything else, the note of familiarity and homelikeness that always awaits you at Ringwalt's... It has been furnished with comfortable wicker chairs, an inviting lounge, and a reading table. Everything we have done has been with the idea of making our Ladies' Rest Room restful and attractive, and we hope you will find it so. So come to Ringwalt's whenever you can, and use the rest-room all you can.⁹¹

The amenities offered by ladies' rest rooms were frequently touted by department stores in their newspaper advertisements. Often, there was a brief description of what the rooms contained and from these descriptions the similarities between the rooms in different stores are clear. For example, most advertisements mention rest rooms equipped with stationery, writing desks, chairs, couches, telephone access, and the assistance of a matron. Often these rooms were located adjacent to lavatory facilities. Many of the rooms were installed either on an upper floor or near the rear of the store, indicating that women would have to travel through the store to use the rest rooms. There were also several examples of ladies' rest rooms fitted in mezzanines and balconies, leaving the room more open to the public view (Figure 17).

⁹¹ Advertisement, the J.S. Ringwalt Co. 1919. *The Democratic Banner* (July 29th, 1919): 5.



*Figure 17: Ladies' rest room in Newman's Department Store in Joplin, Missouri, circa 1911.
(Joplin Public Library, Missouri Digital Heritage Collection, JPL10_381_106_a_A)*



*Figure 18: Illustration of women & child resting in a ladies' rest room in a department store.
(New York Tribune, February 19th, 1922, Graphic Section)*

The women shoppers in department stores most likely had some money for discretionary spending. But women of the upper-middle class were not the only ones to occupy the space of the department store. At this time the number of women in the workforce was rapidly expanding and many women found work in the department store as sales clerks who would assist and sell to fellow women. Furthermore, some department stores marketed to women of all classes with the inclusion of the bargain basement, a floor dedicated to sale or lower priced items for those with less income.⁹² Because of this, there was an opportunity for women of different social classes to congregate in the ladies' rest rooms. An example of this is a department store in Omaha, Nebraska, that created a ladies' rest room specifically for the use of shoppers and employees.⁹³

Ladies' rest rooms were a way to bring potential customers into department stores, and therefore they were open to public. Even women not intending to shop were encouraged to make use the rest rooms for both formal and informal meetings. Often furnished with things such as writing desks, stationery, and even telephones, the convenience and utility of these rooms brought women to the department store regardless of their intention to shop.⁹⁴ Of course, storeowners hoped the enticing atmosphere of the department store would convince women to at least browse the merchandise on their way to and from the rest room. Although ladies' rest rooms could be effective in attracting women buyers, storeowners were cautioned not to be

⁹² Leach, *Land of Desire*, 78.

⁹³ Omaha Building Adds Rest Room. 1917. *The Skyscraper Times* 3 (10) (May, 1917): 3

⁹⁴ Advertisement, Dayton's daylight store. 1905. *The Minneapolis Journal*, August 13, 1905 Thursday Evening Edition, 1905. 3.

overly transparent in their intentions of creating a rest room to bolster sales. A 1907 article in *Salesmanship and Office Methods* warns merchants that:

The fact that hospitality is freely offered -- that no one is made to feel under obligations to buy as a return for the privileges of the rest room, is a great point in favor of the plan. Those who would stay away if they were expected to spend a dime will come with the intention of spending nothing, and once inside the place, will be attracted by the goods displayed and often end by spending many dollars.⁹⁵

Specialized Retail

In addition to department stores, shopping districts in urban areas offered a myriad of specialty stores that sold specific items, such as clothing, groceries, furniture, stationery, and luxury goods.⁹⁶ Specialty stores found in the survey of ladies' rest rooms sold drugs, pianos, furniture, stationery, hardware, and electrical appliances (Figures 19 & 20). There are fewer examples of rest rooms in specialty stores than in department stores, but the reasons for establishing these rest rooms are similar. Like department stores, these retailers established ladies' rest rooms to encourage women to shop in their stores. However, the use of rest rooms in specialized retail stores was not limited to larger cities as seen in this advertisement for a grocer in a small Missouri town:

Another good example of the awakening which has come recently to the country merchant is to be found in Richmond, Missouri, a town of five thousand where the local grocer I.C. Snowden, has furnished his store with a model rest room, productive not only of comfort to his guests, but directly of substantial profit to himself.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Knowles, Frank M. 1907. Actual ways of assisting dealers. *Salesmanship and Office Methods* 9 (3) (September, 1907): 70

⁹⁶ Sewell, *Women in the Everyday City*, 30.

⁹⁷ Moorehead, Frank G. 1916. Waking up the country merchant. *Illustrated World* 25 (1) (March, 1916), p.70.

The Quality Store That Sells Everything at Popular Prices

Monday Marks the Opening of the Most Delightful Ladies' "Rest-Awhile" Room In the City

MUSIC FROM 7 TO 11 P. M.
SOUVENIR FOR EVERY VISITOR

WASHINGTON now has a Stationery, Engraving and Novelty Shop second to none either in the extent and quality of its stock or in the conveniences afforded shoppers. Especially has the comfort and convenience of lady shoppers been provided for.

To the rear of the store lady visitors will find the most delightful "Rest-Awhile" Room imaginable, beautifully finished and furnished in mission. Cozy chairs, writing desks with an abundance of stationery, a piano and music rack piled high—all at the disposal of mi-lady. Here one may arrange "down town" appointments, rest awhile read or write. Just beyond the Resting Room is a Ladies' Retiring Room.

Now as to the STOCK, and to the PRICES—the main purpose of this store. The House of Andrews is the largest wholesale establishment of its kind south of New York. This fact enables it to furnish retail purchasers with the very newest and best stock the markets of the world afford at about the same prices other dealers have to pay—lower prices than you have been paying for the mediocre.

WE FEATURE A FEW OPENING SPECIALS IN

STATIONERY	ENGRAVING	NOVELTIES
Club Lawn Paper <small>Pearl Stone</small> 20c the pound	50 Cards <small>And Plate Engraved in Script.</small> 70 Cents	Hand Painted JAPANESE CHINA 25% less than regular price for Opening Week
Envelopes to Match <small>9c the Package</small> <small>25c for Three Packages</small>	50 CARDS <small>And Plate Engraved in Roman or Gothic.</small> \$1.50	<small>You will find our stock complete in daintily designed and decorated pieces of this most desirable ware. An inspection will disclose prices as attractive as the China itself. Among the many inexpensive pieces you are bound to locate something that will greatly add to the attractiveness of the China Closet at home.</small>
Box Paper <small>48 Sheets—48 Envelopes</small> <small>A Regular 50c Value</small> For 35c	50 CARDS <small>And Plate Engraved in Old English.</small> \$1.75	
	100 CARDS <small>Engraved From Your Plate.</small> 65 Cents	

R. P. ANDREWS STATIONERY COMPANY, 913 F Street N. W.

Figure 19: Advertisement for the R.P. Andrews Stationery Company, promoting the use of the Ladies' Rest-A-While Room.

(The Washington Times, October 17, 1909, Sunday Evening Edition, p. 6)

Another difference between these two subtypes is that in specialty stores marketing of specific products to ladies' in the rest rooms was more explicit. For example, the Cleveland-Manning Piano Co. in Atlanta, Georgia, advertised a ladies' rest room where women could rest and be entertained by one of their many pianos.⁹⁸ As a further example of product placement, one trade journal from 1920 suggests that sales representatives will increase their sales by leaving samples of electrical products in already existing ladies' rest rooms around their community.⁹⁹ This demonstrates how a ladies' rest room eventually became an effective marketing tool, even if it was

⁹⁸ Advertisement, the Cleveland Manning Piano co. 1912. *The Atlanta Constitution* (1881-1945), Apr 25, 1912, 4-4.

⁹⁹ The Appliance Saleswoman. 1920. *Electrical Merchandising* 24 (1) (July, 1920): 37

Like department stores, some specialty retailers established ladies' rest rooms for the use of their employees. The most interesting example of this is the ladies' rest room in the Winchester Store, a hardware and sporting goods store in Providence, Rhode Island. Although hardware and sporting goods are items not typically marketed to women, a rest room was installed in the Winchester Store to accommodate female employees and customers. An article in the *Hardware Review* remarks:

You rarely will find a woman clerk in a hardware or sporting goods store, yet in this store there are three women clerks, for it is the intention of the Winchester Repeating Arms Company to cater to the women as well as the men. With this idea predominant, a ladies' rest room is to be found on the balcony. This is something you will find in very few hardware stores. It is an unusual feature and should appeal very much to the women. The rest room is beautifully furnished in wicker with a settee and comfortable chairs and the latest magazines, with desk, stationery, and pen and ink. Winchester service all the way through.¹⁰¹

It is evident that Winchester Repeating Arms saw the value of being more inclusive of women, both as employees and customers. One can further surmise that a ladies' rest room was used to facilitate this transition, establishing a comfortable, designated area to make the traditionally male dominated hardware and sporting goods store more inviting towards women. More importantly, this demonstrates how by 1920 Winchester, a retailer that typically sold products targeted towards men, differentiated themselves as a superior hardware store because they also catered to women. In the late nineteenth century women, would not feel welcomed in a hardware store. By 1920, however, the same year that women were granted universal suffrage, changes

¹⁰¹ Carney, Peter 1920. The First Winchester Store. *Hardware Review* 26 (3) (May, 1920): 35

in the physical environment increased women's access to male spaces and activities. In this Winchester Store, the interior space was changed to carve out a comfortable space for women in a traditionally male-dominated space and this change is indicative of broader concurrent social changes.

The advancements of women's rights during the Progressive Era are most frequently associated with the political rights women gained during this time. However, the study of ladies' rest rooms in retail stores shows that the progression of women in society happened in various aspects of women's everyday lives. Although the primary reason for merchants to establish these rooms was most likely to encourage consumption, and not to make public spaces more accommodating for women, this enabled women increased buying power in the public sphere.

Rest Rooms in Civic Buildings

During the Progressive Era, it was widely thought that civic life could be improved through participation in public discourse and social meetings. Thus, progressive reformers, such as Charles Zueblin and Edward Ward, advocated for the creation of open social spaces for citizen assembly. These social spaces were typically financed through taxation and other public funds, unlike the community buildings in the following section.¹⁰² Civic groups, especially women's clubs, were instrumental in the organization of events and establishing dedicated social spaces in public buildings. Public buildings that housed these social centers included courthouses, schoolhouses, libraries, city halls, and other municipal buildings (Figure

¹⁰² Mattson, Kevin. 1998. *Creating a Democratic Public: The struggle for urban participatory democracy during the progressive era*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 54.

21). These social spaces were not only for men, as women actively participated in civic events despite their disenfranchisement. The presence of ladies' rest rooms in these social spaces is evidence of both women's increasing civic engagement and the improvements to everyday life that these social gatherings sought to accomplish.

Ladies' rest rooms of this type emerged around 1905 and were in continual use through the 1930s. Furnishings were similar to other types, but they were often purchased using public funds and in the case of municipal buildings, resources were allocated for these rooms by legislative acts. An interesting example of this is found in Chapter 265 of the Oklahoma State Laws for 1921, where a legislative declaration was made to ensure the furniture appropriated for the ladies' rest room was used solely for that purpose. The declaration stated:

Whereas During the month of June, 1917, the State Board of Public Affairs purchased for the use of the Ladies' Rest Room, in the Capitol building an adequate supply of easy chairs, couches, and at different times other furniture, for Room 418, in the Capitol building, assigned for the purpose of and known as the Ladies' Rest Room; and, Whereas, Practically all of said easy chairs, couches, and other furniture has been scattered through the building, and is not available for the uses and purposes for which it was purchased; Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved By The Senate, That, the State Board of Public Affairs and Superintendent of Buildings be and they are hereby directed to re-assemble all of the furniture, originally used for this purpose, and return the same to Room 418, for the use of the lady officers and employees in the Capitol.¹⁰³

Another notable feature of this type is that the rest rooms are often found in the basements of both libraries and municipal buildings. Perhaps this is to keep the primary functions of the building on the main floor and secondary functions on other, less visible floors. There are two subtypes in this category, including rest rooms in municipal buildings and the more popular of the two, rest rooms in public libraries.

¹⁰³ No Rest for the Ladies. 1922. *Law Notes* 26 (12) (December): 179.



FIG. 1.—REST ROOM IN COURTHOUSE AT NORWALK, OHIO.

A woman's organization was allowed \$100 from county appropriations to buy the furniture for this room.

*Figure 21: Ladies' rest room in the Norwalk, Ohio, courthouse. Note that a women's organization worked with the county to furnish the rest room.
(Yearbook of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1917)*

Municipal Buildings

Ladies' rest rooms were often installed in public buildings, such as courthouses, city halls, and state capitols. Oftentimes civic groups, especially women's clubs, conducted the day-to-day operation of the rest rooms, but the spaces were publicly-funded. Because of its importance to civic life, the rest room was most often established in courthouses. The use of ladies' rest rooms in the courthouses of Texas was so popular that in 1925 a law was passed allocating funds to each county seat to establish a rest room; the funding amount was based on the population of the county. The law, Article 2371 Rest Room, stated that:

the Commissioners Court in each county in this State may maintain a rest room for women in the Courthouse, or if for any reason a suitable rest room at some convenient place near the courthouse. The rest room may be comfortably furnished with lounge, chairs, mirror, lavatory, tables, and such other furnishings as may be needed to make the room attractive and comfortable for women who may be in attendance on the Court or who may be for other reasons in town.¹⁰⁴

The use of these rest rooms was not limited to those who had to attend court, but open to any women visiting the county seat. This example is important because it documents allocation of public funds to provide women with their own space. This enabling legislation suggests that ladies' rest rooms were not just a convenience space, but actually a publicly-funded necessity.

Ladies' Rest Rooms in Libraries

Ladies' reading rooms were a popular feature of libraries during the Victorian Era. Late nineteenth-century libraries were typically male-dominated spaces that were not accessible to the general public; hence a separate reading room was installed when women began to use the library.¹⁰⁵ By the early twentieth century, segregated reading rooms were less common than ladies' rest rooms. Perhaps this is because by this time women had more access to the main reading rooms.

The construction of free public libraries was an important result of the Progressive Era reforms and between 1890 and 1920 there was a drastic increase in this building type. Philanthropists, such as Andrew Carnegie, provided funds for the

¹⁰⁴ Gammel, Hans Peter Mareus Neilsen. *The Laws of Texas, 1937-1939 [Volume 31]*, Book, 1939; digital images, (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph18824/> : accessed March 30, 2012), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting UNT Libraries, Denton, Texas, 1811.

¹⁰⁵ Van Slyck, Abigail A. 1996. The Lady and the Library Loafer: Gender and public space in Victorian America. *Winterthur Portfolio* 31 (4, Gendered Spaces and Aesthetics) (Winter): 221-242.

construction of libraries that were accessible to everyone regardless of class or gender.¹⁰⁶ As a result, the interior spaces of these buildings reflected the accommodation of both men and women (Figure 22).

Like other rest room types, the rest rooms in public libraries were not limited to the exclusive use of library patrons. For example, the ladies' rest room in the Syracuse Public Library was for the use of patrons and female employees, and the ladies' rest room in the basement of a Carnegie Library in Zumbrota, Minnesota, was established by local businessmen for the use of rural women who were traveling to town.¹⁰⁷

The use of ladies' rest rooms in libraries is one way in which the Progressive Era objective of making libraries open to the general public was realized. During this time there was an increase in the number of women library users. Simultaneously, librarianship was becoming a more formalized profession and the daily work of running a library was frequently left to women.¹⁰⁸ Given this shift in library users and employees, the buildings themselves had to become more accommodating to women through the use of the ladies' rest room.

¹⁰⁶ At this time most libraries were still racially segregated.

¹⁰⁷ Minnesota Public Library Commission. 1908. News of Minnesota libraries. *Library Notes and News* 2 (7) (September, 1908): 142.

¹⁰⁸ Van Slyck, Abigail A. 1995. *Free to All: Carnegie libraries & American culture, 1890-1920*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 166.

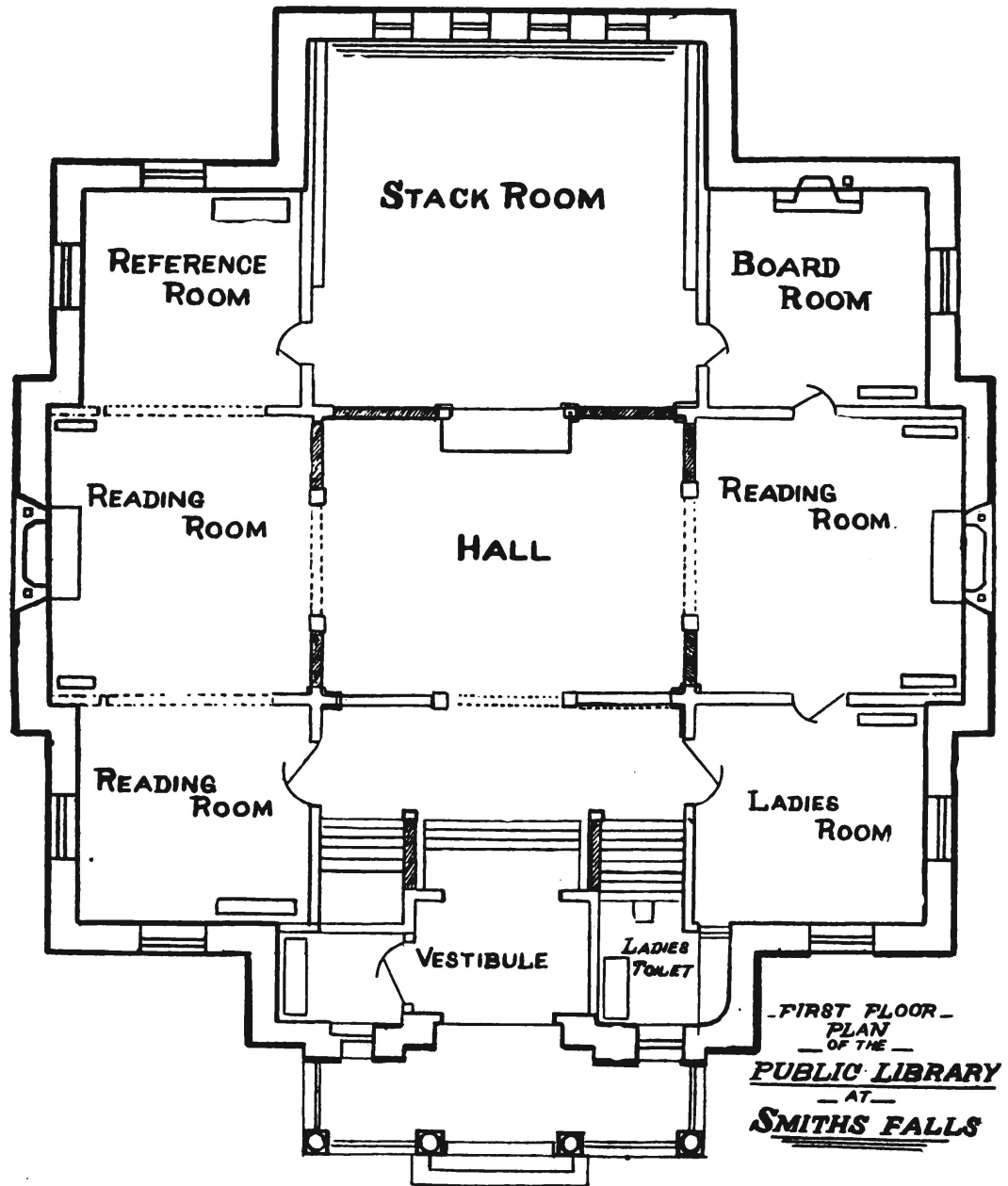


Figure 22: Ladies' rest room in the Smith Falls Public Library, a Carnegie library, in Ottawa, Canada. Although this is a Canadian example, it shows how many Carnegie libraries incorporated ladies' rest rooms into their design.

(Report Upon Public Libraries, Literary and Scientific Institutions, Ontario Canada, 1906)

Chapter 5: Third Period Types (Originating Between 1908-1912)

Later examples of ladies' rest rooms demonstrate how ubiquitous these rooms came to be. As the use of rest rooms became more popular, they were adopted by more and more organizations to provide women a private place to rest and appeal to them as consumers. Given this, these rooms had a presence in many aspects of everyday life, including community living, entertainment, and family finances. This section will describe the later examples of ladies' rest rooms including those in community buildings, banks, and theaters.

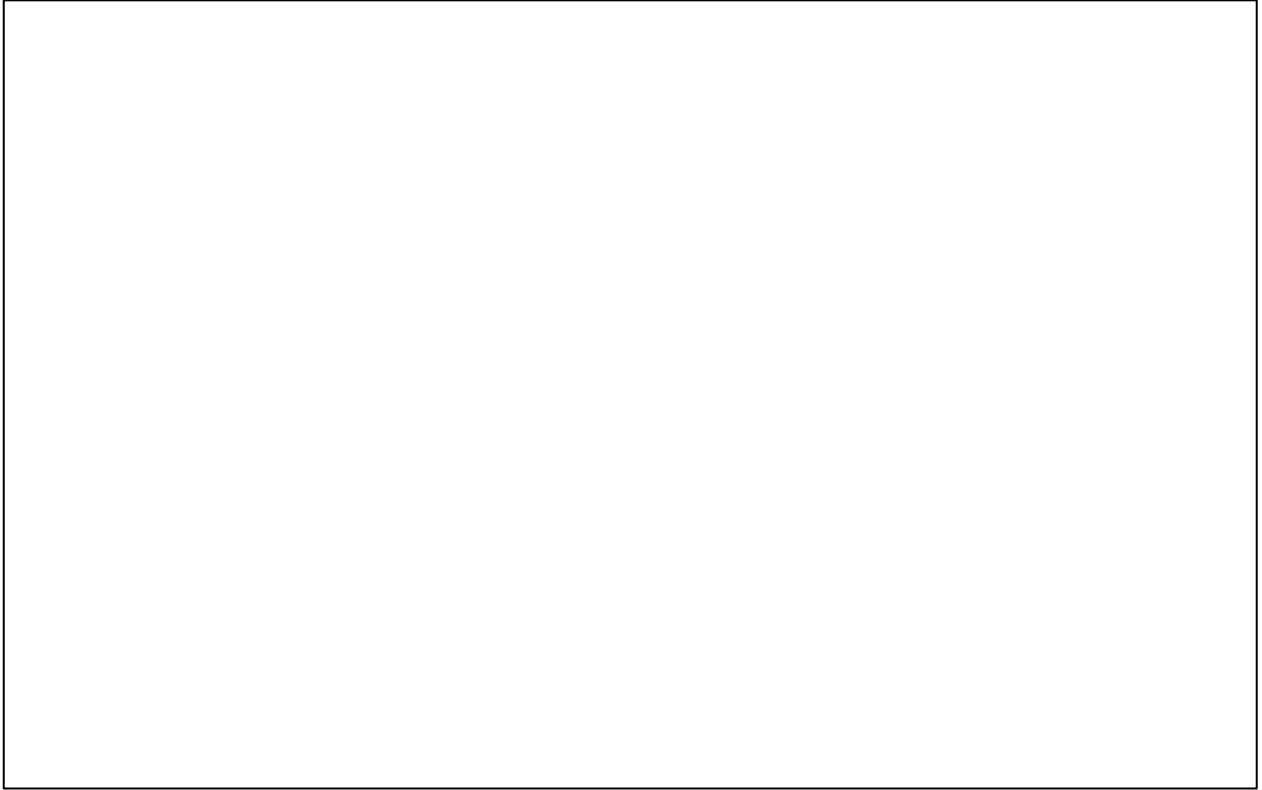
Rest Rooms in Community Buildings

This room, which is left of the main entrance to the building, will be fully furnished and appointed with all conveniences, and will be offered to the ladies of the state to used as headquarters while in Atlanta.

– *The Atlanta Constitution*, September 6th, 1922.¹⁰⁹

In addition to work done by civic groups to improve everyday life, there was also an interest from other local organizations in improving living conditions. Community buildings were established by private interest groups, such as churches or community associations with no financial support from governmental institutions, to serve members of the local community. Ladies' rest rooms were often included as a component of these community buildings to aid women traveling into these communities and as a recruitment tool for these private interest groups (Figure 21).

¹⁰⁹ Local Chamber Plans Rest Room for Women. 1922. *The Atlanta Constitution (1881-1945)*, Sep 6, 1922, 3.



*Figure 23: Postcard depicting a ladies' rest room in North Canton, Ohio.
(Penny Postcards from Ohio: <http://www.usgwarchives.org/oh/stark/postcards/restrm.jpg>)*

This type represents 13 percent of ladies' rest rooms found in the survey and there are two primary subtypes: community centers and religious organizations. The earliest example is found in 1907 and the latest in 1943. The descriptions of ladies' rest rooms in community buildings were similar to those found in other types and included furniture such as chairs, couches, and desks. There are a few differences between the subtypes. For example, rest rooms in community centers were often more elaborate and sometimes included a paid matron, whereas those run by religious organizations were managed by women of the congregation. Another difference between the two subtypes is the location within the larger building. Rest rooms in community buildings were often located near the dressing room or lavatory facilities,

whereas those in religious organization, especially in church buildings, were typically in a basement or annex, away from designated worship spaces.

Community Centers

During the early twentieth century, the establishment of community buildings by different groups proved to be useful, especially in rural towns. These buildings were intended to improve the lives of all citizens. In these centers local residents could gather for a variety of reasons including recreation, educational experiences, political meetings, and cooperative business ventures. Although the exact layout of community centers varied by size and amount of funding available, they typically contained amenities, such as an auditorium, gymnasium, dance hall, library, men's smoking room, and ladies' rest rooms (Figures 24, 25, & 26).¹¹⁰ Both local women and visitors from out of town could make use of the ladies' rest rooms in community buildings. The description of these rooms is similar to other types of rest rooms, as they were often furnished with couches, chairs, and writing desks. In addition to these amenities, there were a number of rest rooms in community buildings that offered childcare services from a hired matron.

¹¹⁰ Nason, W. C. 1920. Rural community buildings in the United States. *Bulletin of the U.S. Department of Agriculture* 852 (January 30, 1920), 1.

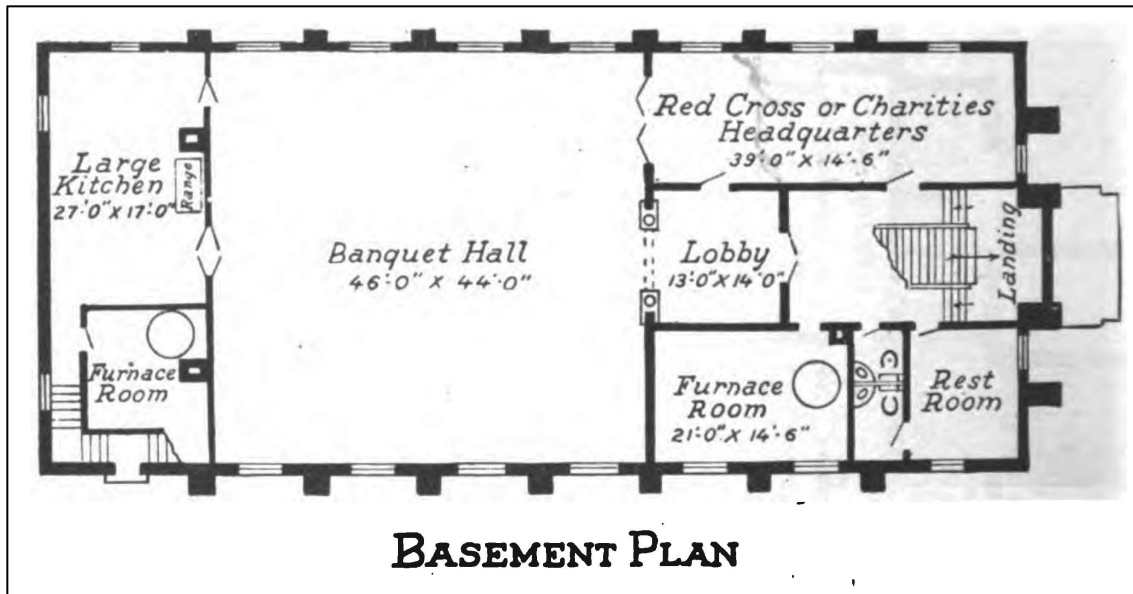


Figure 24: Floor plans for a rural community building in McLean, Illinois.
(From *The Farmers' Bulletin* 1173, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1922)

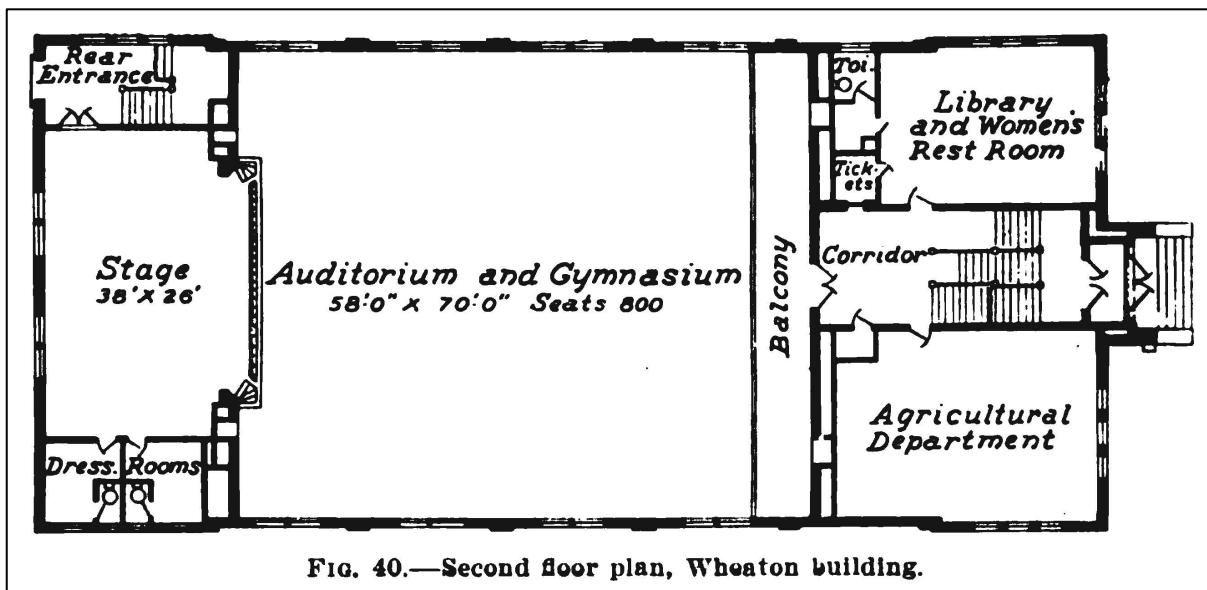


Figure 25: Community building in Wheaton, Minnesota, with a ladies' rest room and library combined in one room.
(From *The Farmers' Bulletin* 1173, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1922)

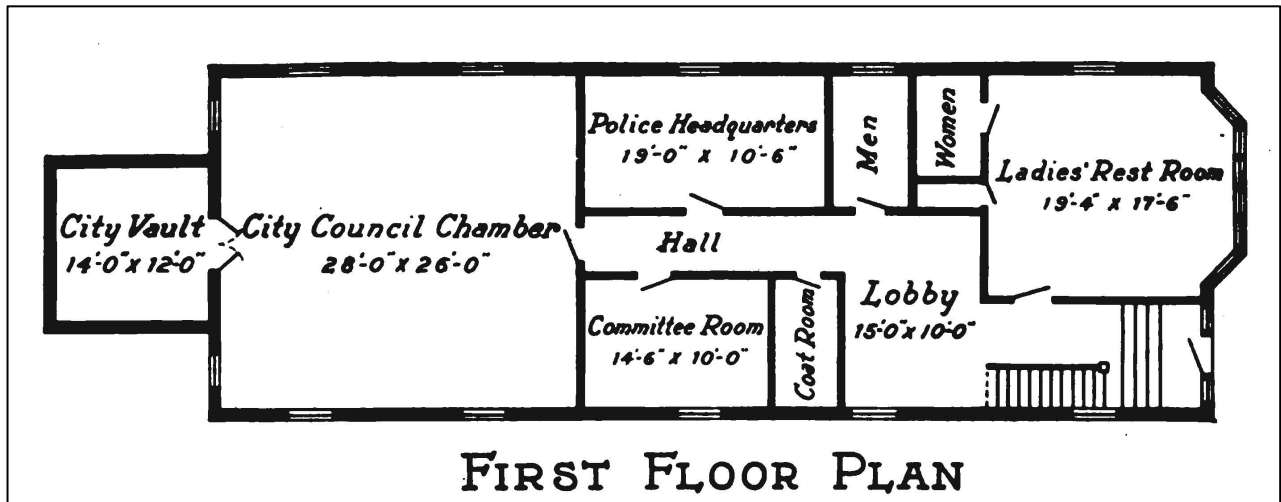


Figure 26: In this example community groups, civic associations, and town officials worked together to found this community building in Northfield, Minnesota.
(From *The Farmers' Bulletin* 1173, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1922)

After World War I, it was popular to rename community buildings as Liberty Buildings to memorialize soldiers who were killed in service.¹¹¹ It was thought that these buildings were perfect memorials to the men who lost their lives in conflict because they embody the values of civic and social responsibility. An article in the *Indiana Farmers Guide* from 1920 summarized the significance of these buildings:

The building, however, whether it is a cottage or coliseum is, after all, only the physical shell in which the spirit of service is to be harbored. Once the "house" is erected, then the rich as well so the poor must see that their gift is made a living reminder of those who gave.¹¹²

One such example is the Illinois Liberty Building in Elgin, Illinois. This community building contained many amenities, such as an auditorium, gymnasium, banquet hall,

¹¹¹ Community houses: Homes of democracy. 1918. *The Playground* 12 (1) (April, 1918), p511-2.

¹¹² Why not a community house as a war memorial? 1920b. *Indiana Farmer's Guide* (1918-1922). Feb 7, 1920

and a ladies' rest room. The rest room was open seven days a week and proved to be valuable to the farmer's wives.¹¹³

Religious Organizations

Both formal congregations and religious organizations, such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), installed ladies' rest rooms at their facilities. In most of the descriptions for the rest rooms in church buildings it seems that the rest room was used as a resource for the women in the congregation and visitors to the town and not as a means of proselytizing. Most of these rooms were listed as improvements to existing church facilities and were described much like the ladies' rest rooms in the community buildings. However, the WCTU actively used the rest rooms as a spaces to educate women about the temperance movement. The WCTU installed ladies' rest rooms at special events and would often have literature in the room for the resting women to read. One WCTU group even decorated the rest room with inscriptions that promoted temperance as described below.

At the Fourth of July celebration, 1905, the WCTU conducted a rest room for ladies and children. The room was made cozy with easy chairs and sofas and bright with flowers. Beautiful temperance mottoes and pictures adorned the walls, so that while they were resting a little bit of sentiment might be created.¹¹⁴

This is an interesting use of a ladies' rest room to influence behavior in women, because instead of convincing women to buy consumer goods, like those found in retail stores, this particular rest room is persuading women to exercise temperance.

¹¹³ Ibid. 4.

¹¹⁴ *Report of the Seventh Convention of the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Movement*. 1906. Boston, MA, 68.

Rest Rooms in Banks

Our Ladies' Rest Room - We wish to announce that we have just completed the installation of a roomy, comfortable rest room for ladies, and we invite the ladies of the community to make use of it when in the city or down town shopping. Whether you are customer of the bank or not, you are welcome to make use of the newest adjunct of this bank.

– Advertisement, *The Durant Weekly News*, December 3rd, 1920.¹¹⁵

One result of the women's rights movement in the early twentieth century was an increase in women's ability to control family finances in the public realm. The number of banks that adopted ladies' rest rooms and the evolution of the function of these rooms over time is evidence of this shift. The nature of women's control of family finances during this time is complex and contingent on numerous factors.¹¹⁶ Although it was common for women to manage household finances, men could still control financial matters by controlling the distribution of their wages.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, some women and children supplemented men's working wages either by working from home or earning formal wages.¹¹⁸ During the Progressive Era, many home economics experts advocated for more equitable control of family finances between men and women.¹¹⁹ As a result, there was an increase in the number of women banking for themselves and many banks saw a shift in the demographics of their customer base. Ladies' rest rooms in banks reflected this shift through their dual

¹¹⁵ Advertisement for the Commercial National Bank. 1920. *The Durant Weekly News*, December, 3rd, 1920

¹¹⁶ Zelizer, Viviana A. 2002. The Social Meaning of Money. In *Readings in economic sociology*, ed. Nicole Woolsey Biggart, 315-318. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 321.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 317.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 320.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 319.

purpose in accommodating women in the male's sphere of banking and as a means of attracting new clientele (Figure 27).



**20,000 WOMEN
HAVE SAVINGS ACCOUNTS
IN THIS BANK**

LADIES REST ROOM — SECURITY SAVINGS BANK

These practical women include housewives, school teachers, bookkeepers, stenographers, nurses, dressmakers, clerks, factory workers, professional and society women. The ownership of an interest-bearing savings account gives to these women a feeling of financial security—a keen sense of independence.

A Savings Account in a bank with the financial strength, facilities and advantages of this institution is the **ONLY LOGICAL INVESTMENT FOR A WOMAN.**

It is non-assessable—non-taxable—there are no enforced installment payments—no worry—no risk—your money is always available. Unlike real estate, stocks and scores of other investments, it is not affected by panics, market fluctuations or other conditions.

Backed by Resources of \$25,250,000.00 and a Capital and Surplus of \$1,350,000,000, a Savings Account in this bank is an investment that has naturally appealed strongly to our twenty thousand women depositors.

The commodious, light and airy quarters of this bank—with every convenience—the two handsomely appointed ladies' rest and reading rooms, the easy chairs, the public telephones and the many writing tables, all combine for the genuine comfort of our women patrons.

Call or write for our handsome new booklet, "A Bank for Women."

4 Per Cent On Term Accounts
3 Per Cent On Special Savings Accounts

**OLDEST &
LARGEST
IN
SOUTHWEST**

**SECURITY
SAVINGS BANK**

**SECURITY
BUILDING
FIFTH &
SPRING**

Figure 27: Advertisement for a bank with a ladies' rest room.
(Los Angeles Herald, September 29, 1909, Morning Edition, p. 5)

Ladies' rest rooms in banks are the fourth largest type in the survey. This is significant since this category is limited to a building type with a specific function and no subtypes. Although examples of rest rooms in banks do not appear in the survey until 1910, they are found consistently until the 1930s. After this time they become less prevalent, but they do not completely disappear as a bank advertising its ladies' rest room was found as late as 1953.

Research shows that ladies' rest rooms in banking institutions had two primary purposes. The first function was to provide designated spaces where women could rest and wait while their husbands took care of the family's finances. This is similar to rest rooms established by civic groups for farmer's wives. The second purpose was to provide special accommodations to attract women as banking customers, much like the rest rooms in retail stores.

Although women gained more financial control outside of the home by the early twentieth century, banks were still considered predominantly male spaces. Thus, ladies' rest rooms were established to give rural women a space to wait while their husbands conducted banking business. An article in the *Indiana Farmer's Guide* written in 1921 described the purpose of a ladies' rest room in a bank: "There is a ladies' rest room adjoining where the farmer's wives can visit and gossip while the men folk trade horses and talk politics on the street."¹²⁰ As such, the inclusion of a ladies' rest room was also an attractive bank amenity to families traveling to the city

¹²⁰ Indiana bankers are active in promoting agriculture: What some of them are doing. 1921. *Indiana Farmer's Guide* 33 (3) (January 15, 1921), 3.

from their rural homes. An article in the *Reclamation Record* from 1923 writes of how a ladies' rest room led to the success of one Wisconsin bank:

Many years ago, back in a little town in Wisconsin, a clever bank official nearly put many other banking concerns in the county out of existence, while his own institution waxed strong and prosperous, all as the result of establishing a rest room in back of the main bank room. This was at that time an unheard of innovation and spurred on by the success of his venture he branched into many other experiments made his bank headquarters for farmers' families for miles around.¹²¹

Ladies' rest rooms were not only used to appeal to farmers and their families.

About the same time, banks began to notice a growing number of women patrons and worked to find novel ways to reach out to this new customer base. An advertisement for the Second National Bank in Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, proclaimed that it had a dedicated ladies' rest room since the "ladies have proved themselves as shrewd buyers, they can greatly aid themselves with a bank account of their own."¹²² Like retail stores, the cost of maintaining a ladies' rest room was justified for banks, as it attracted new female customers and created new avenues for advertisements through bank literature left in the rest rooms.

In addition to having a room for resting, women were given special treatment when they attended to their personal banking. For example, one bank gave female customers new bills and special checks with the words "Women's Department" stamped on the corner to connote that the transaction would be posted in a timely manner.¹²³ Some institutions took this concept further by installing

¹²¹ Littlepage, Louella. 1923. Projects for women and their interests. *Reclamation Record* 14 (7) (July, 1923), 241.

¹²² T.D. MacGregor, *Bank Advertising Plans* (New York: The Bankers Publishing Co., 1913), 18.

¹²³ A. W. Shaw Company, *The Shaw Banking Series: Building, Equipment and Supplies*, Vol. 5 (New York: A. W. Shaw Company, 1919).

entire departments dedicated to women (Figure 28). In 1907, the Crown Bank of Canada created a dedicated “Women’s Room” in addition to the rest room in order to better serve their women customers.¹²⁴ Such a room included a teller window, as well as dressing and sewing areas. Furthermore, the article recommends using only tellers of the same sex to serve customers in order to form a familiar connection between bank and customer. As such, many banks began to employ women as tellers and clerical staff. With the growing number of women as bank employees and customers, their interaction with the space became more commonplace and accessible. However, the use of a ladies’ rest room allowed a subtle division between women and business to remain. An article from *Bankers Magazine* describes the state of women in banking in 1908:

A rest-room should be restful; a banking-room should be business-like. Rooms that are to be used exclusively for women should be furnished by women and not given into the hands of expensive decorators who know what the latest style is but have no idea what a tired woman longs for when she allows herself half an hour’s rest.¹²⁵

This quote demonstrates how adding the rest room gave women who were conducting banking business an escape from the world of commerce. In this example a ladies’ rest room is used to provide a feminine and restful space for women who now found themselves participating in the traditionally male-dominated activity of banking.

¹²⁴ E. B. B. Ressor, “How to Get Women at Your Bank,” *The Bankers’ Magazine Consolidated Index*, January-June 1907: 951-962.

¹²⁵ Ressor, E. E. B. 1908. Women in Banking. *Bankers’ Magazine (1896-1943)* 76 (1) (Jan 1908), 59-64.

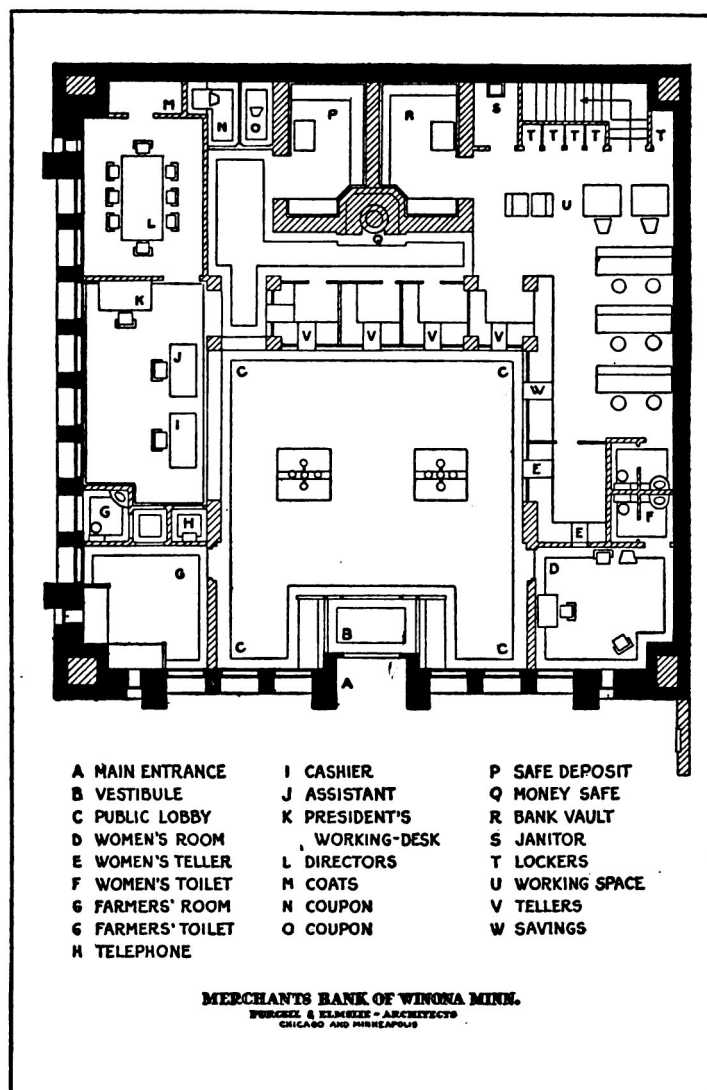


Figure 25: In this plan you have the layout of the bank shown in Figure 21. Not only is a women's room provided for, but a farmers' as well. This is, of course, important in rural communities. A number of other worth-while construction features are readily apparent.

*Figure 28: Floor plans for the Merchants Bank of Winona, Minnesota.
 (The Shaw Banking Series: Buildings, Equipment, and Supplies, A.W. Shaw Co. 1919)*

Ladies' rest rooms in banks were used as both a place for women to rest while the men attended to financial affairs and as a place for women to receive special treatment as customers. The fact that bankers used ladies' rest rooms to appeal to women as both visitors and users highlights the gradual increase of women's control over their own finances. The ladies' rest room was used as a

transitional space where women could participate in banking activities in the comfort of a room that was accommodating for women.

Rest Rooms in Theaters

Unique lighting effects, ladies' rest room with matron in attendance, etc. will all go to make for the comfort and pleasure Regent patrons.

– *The Moving Picture World*, September 9, 1916.¹²⁶

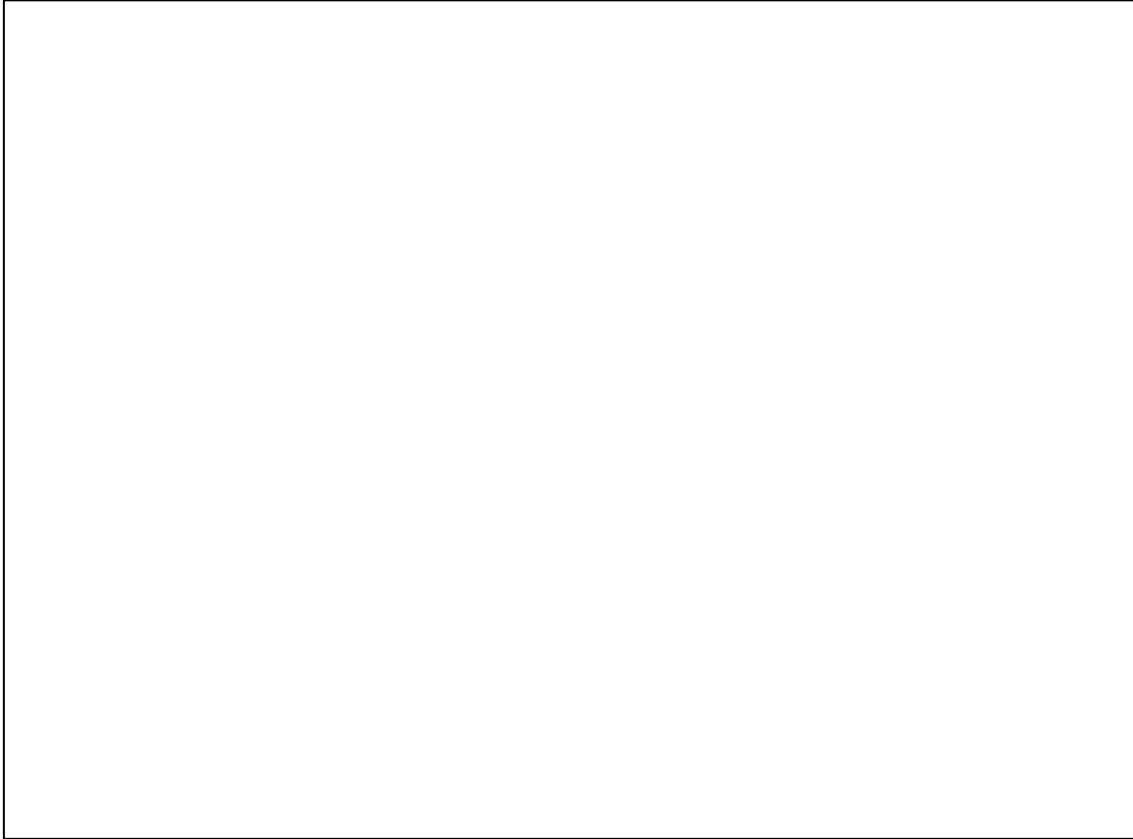
During the early twentieth century there were also notable shifts in entertainment, specifically in the theater. The advent of motion pictures and the nickelodeon, along with transformations of vaudeville performances, opened the theater to a broader class of patrons.¹²⁷ These changes resulted in theaters becoming less expensive and more inclusive to a wider range of patrons, including women.¹²⁸ The use of ladies' rest rooms in theaters is one way in which this building type evolved to accommodate its changing clientele.

The earliest example of ladies' rest rooms in theaters appears in 1912, which is late compared to other types. However, like other types, the use of ladies' rest rooms remains consistent through the late 1930s. The furnishings of ladies' rest rooms in theaters is similar to other types, including chairs, couches, and tables (Figure 29). One difference is that the rooms in theaters lack writing desks and other supplies for errands. This could be because the theater is a place of entertainment and leisure that involved shorter trips away from home.

¹²⁶ L.H. King to Manage Regent. 1916. *Moving Picture World* 29 (September 9): 1722.

¹²⁷ Sewell, *Women in the Everyday City*, 96.

¹²⁸ Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*, 149.



*Figure 29: Ladies' rest room in the Strand Theater, Shreveport, Louisiana, circa 1925.
(Louisiana State University in Shreveport Noel Memorial Library Archives and Special Collections)*

Theaters are a distinct type of building and their interior arrangement is predicated on the need to accommodate large crowds of people at one time. Because of this, the ladies' rest rooms were often side rooms that were attached to the main lobby in order to give women a place to escape from the larger crowds. The room could be used as an additional waiting room for women to socialize before seeing a film or performance. Often, descriptions of theaters with a ladies' rest room include a men's smoking room that also adjoins the lobby (Figure 30).

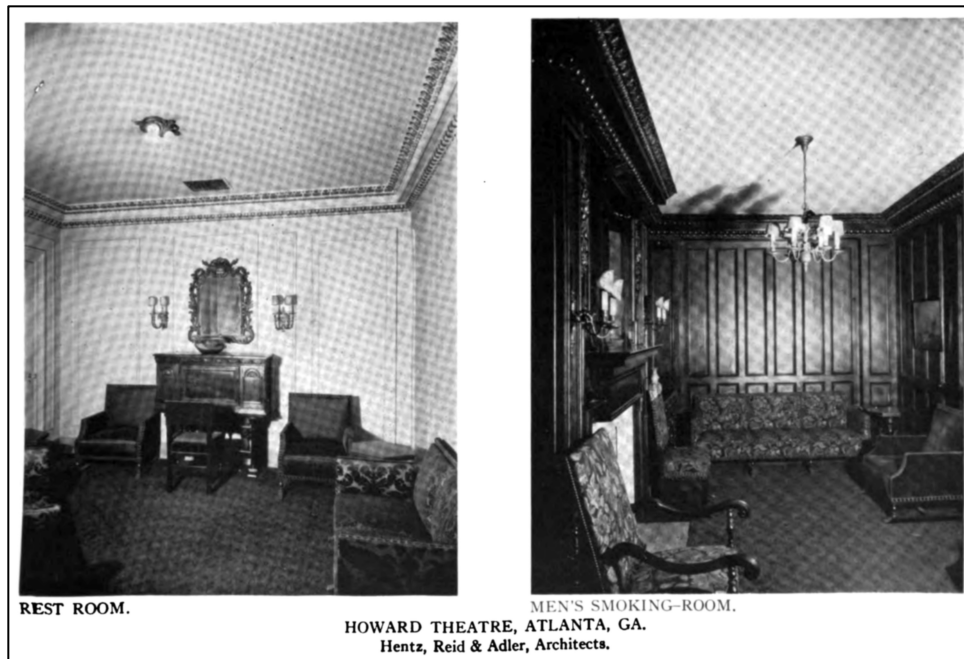


Figure 30: Ladies' rest room and men's smoking room in the Howard Theater in Atlanta, Georgia.
 Many theaters that had ladies' rest room facilities also had a men's smoking room.
 ("Howard Theater, Atlanta, Georgia" in *Architecture*, September 1913, Vol. 44 No. 3)



Figure 31: Elegantly decorated ladies' rest room in the Loew's Theater, in New York.
 (*Architecture and Building*, October, 1921, Vol. 53 No. 10)

Many sources provided detailed descriptions of the decoration of the rest rooms in theaters. The interior of the ladies' rest room at Loew's State Theater in New York City was described as: "delicate green silk covers the walls of a second ladies' rest room while the furniture is of the Louis XVI period upholstered in green and ivory brocade."¹²⁹ The photograph of this room in Figure 31 shows how finely decorated the room compared to ladies' rest rooms found in other types. The Howard Theater in Atlanta, Georgia, is another example of a theater with a finely appointed ladies' rest room. Here both the men's smoking room and the ladies' rest room are described:

On either side of the promenade are the women's rest-room and the men's smoking-room, with lavatories adjoining. These rooms are designed in the seventeenth century English Renaissance, panelled to the ceiling with heavily ornamented cornices and wood mantels. The smoking-room is finished in dark oak, and the women's rest room is finished in natural birch.¹³⁰

From these descriptions it is evident that attendance at a theater was meant to be a special occasion where visitors' experiences were enhanced by elegant decoration in the ladies' rest rooms.

Although theater was already a popular form of entertainment, changes during the early twentieth century made it more accessible to the general public.¹³¹ Ladies' rest rooms in theaters was one way in which physical buildings were modified to make them more accommodating to women. As the latest type to develop, ladies' rest rooms in theaters also underscore just how diverse the types of ladies' rest rooms came to be over time.

¹²⁹ Comstock, William 1921. Loew's state theater, New York. *Architecture and Building* 53 (10) (October, 1921), 103.

¹³⁰ Howard Theater, Atlanta, Georgia. 1921. *Architecture* 54 (3) (September, 1921), 281.

¹³¹ Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*, 143.

Chapter 6: Summary & Analysis

Ladies' rest rooms began as simple rooms set aside to accommodate farmer's wives traveling from their rural homes into the city center. The idea of providing an accessible, comfortable, and home-like room in a public setting became popular during the Progressive Era, as various groups and institutions adopted its use. These rooms were established to give women a designated space and to attract women to places selling goods and services. The variety of types of ladies' rest rooms presented in this study illustrates how ubiquitous these spaces became during the early twentieth century in the United States. Drawing on Chapters 3-5, this section examines the room types as a whole, focusing on both common features and differences.

One notable similarity found in all types is the basic furnishings included in the rest rooms. Regardless of the room type, all descriptions included at least chairs and couches, and these furnishings were also prominently displayed in graphic depictions of ladies' rest rooms. As a result, when one examines the photographs and illustrations of these rooms without any context or captions, it is difficult to discern which type is depicted. Yet there were still minor variations based on the type's function. For example, ladies' rest rooms in department stores occasionally had changing screens so that women could try on merchandise. Likewise, rest rooms in banks almost always included a writing desk to give women a place to balance an account, or to write a check or correspondence. There was slightly more variation between types in terms of interior decoration, such as inclusion of decorative art on the walls. Smaller rooms established by civic groups, community organizations, and municipalities often had less elaborate interiors, whereas the rooms in theaters and

department stores placed more emphasis on elegant interior decoration. Regardless of type, there was often an effort by the founding organizations to ensure that the interior decoration added to the feeling of comfort and rest in the room.

Ladies' rest rooms varied greatly in both size and scale. Some of the simplest examples are small rooms furnished with a few chairs, whereas more elaborate examples could occupy entire buildings and could even include amenities such as a full-time matron or daily lunch service. Furthermore, there were variations in the physical enclosure of the room. Most rest rooms were rooms in a larger building; however, there were a few examples of a buildings dedicated entirely as a ladies' rest room. There were also several instances where the ladies' rest room was installed in a partially open area, such as a mezzanine or balcony.

The specific location of the rest room within the building is another variation. There were no recognizable patterns of room location within each type. Some rest rooms were added to existing buildings, whereas others were included in plans for new building construction. The inclusion of ladies' rest rooms in plans for new construction was seen most often in libraries, schools, and other institutional facilities, which is evidence of Progressive Era reforms in such institutions. In the survey, ladies' rest rooms were found on all floors, from the basement to upper stories in taller buildings, such as offices and department stores. Occasionally there was a similar room for men nearby, but it often had another name, such as a men's smoking room or lounge. Interestingly, these variations in size, scale, and location are apparent when examining each type separately, as well as when looking at ladies' rest rooms as a whole. This is likely because these factors such as size, scale, and location of the

rest room, were influenced by financial and spatial constraints of the founding organization.

Ladies' rest rooms were created to give women a designated place to rest in public, but the motives for establishing this type of space varied. Some were created for the genuine improvement of women's lives by making public spaces more accommodating, like those created by civic groups. Others were created to promote a specific cause, such as the rest rooms established by the WCTU to advocate for prohibition. As the use of the room evolved, many rest rooms were used to further commercial interests as a means of attracting women into the store and encourage them to purchase goods. In reality, the reasons for creating a rest room were likely a combination of these three factors. For example, a women's club could make an agreement with a local merchant to establish a ladies' rest room. Both parties benefit in such an arrangement: the women's club provided a comfortable space for women visiting the town, and the vendor benefited from increased traffic through their store.

There are many different factors that influenced the characteristics of a ladies' rest room. However, regardless of differences, almost all of these rooms were established for the purpose of creating a comfortable space for women to rest while venturing into the public realm. While the motivations for establishing such a room may have also varied, one thing that is certain is that these rooms were used as a gateway to make public space more accessible to women during the early twentieth century.

Chapter 7: Preservation of Ladies' Rest Rooms

This study demonstrates that ladies' rest rooms are informative of women's expanding public roles in early twentieth-century America. Although these rooms were once commonplace, little is known of their existence today. This section explores possible reasons for this and examines how the practice of historic preservation has contributed to this lack of awareness. I look specifically at the challenges of preserving ladies' rest rooms using traditional approaches for evaluating historic properties. I then conclude with thoughts on what preservationists can do to ensure that the evidence of women's history within these spaces is not lost.

One of the obvious reasons why ladies' rest rooms are so unknown today is the rapid decline of the room's use after the late 1930s. This decline could be attributed to several factors. Foremost is that this time period coincides with the dissolution of the formal women's rights movement.¹³² This movement granted women more rights in the United States, causing them to be perceived more as equals in public areas. Furthermore, the economic collapse from the Great Depression in the 1930s meant that there was less of a need to market to women, and thus the ladies rest room was seen as an unnecessary business expense. Lastly, as America went to war in the early 1940s, more women gained access to employment outside of the home to compensate for the shortage of male labor. Because of these changes, the presence of women in public spaces became more acceptable and therefore a need for segregated space for women rapidly decreased.

¹³² Freedman, Estelle. 1979. Separatism as strategy: Female institution building and American feminism, 1870-1930. *Feminist Studies* 5 (3, Toward a New Feminism for the Eighties) (Autumn):512-529.

Another likely reason for the obscurity of ladies' rest rooms is the fact that the term "restroom" became an American euphemism for public lavatory facilities. There are many examples of ladies' rest rooms that were located adjacent to lavatories and in public comfort stations. The term "restroom" was a polite way for women to refer to public lavatory facilities in conversation. Over time, the term's definition changed to refer to a different type of room.

Since the need for a ladies' rest room declined after the 1930s and most of these rooms eventually were used for another function, there are few examples of ladies' rest rooms preserved today. Further contributing to this problem are the inadequacies of the traditional approaches to historic preservation in regard to interior spaces. The decision of what to preserve in the United States is often based on both the significance and integrity of the structure. In the past, a building or site was considered significant due to a fixed association with a historical event or person, or for its architectural style during a specific time period. More recent scholarship in historic preservation is critical of this concept and recognizes that a site's significance is not static.¹³³ Given this contemporary view, one could argue that ladies' rest rooms are significant elements of the built environment since they are indicative of broader patterns of women's history in the United States. This is especially important since these rooms illustrate the realities of women's gradual entry into male-dominated public spaces in a way that is not readily apparent through the study of any other historic resources. Although ladies' rest rooms are significant, many of these sites lack integrity due to the gradual change in the room's function over time. A ladies'

¹³³ Mason, Randall. 2004. Fixing historic preservation: A constructive critique of "significance". *Places* 16 (1), 64.

rest room could easily be converted to accommodate another function, leaving little evidence of their original use. For example, a ladies' rest room on the first floor of a courthouse in Texas was converted to a jury room in 1977 simply by moving the furniture into the basement. Integrity is the degree to which a historic property retains certain qualities that make it significant, including: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.¹³⁴ Evaluating historic resources based on their significance and integrity is useful because it provides a practical framework that facilitates objective assessments of which resources to preserve. Yet, as evident by this study, the challenge of a universal application of these criteria becomes apparent when significant sites have no integrity.

Another reason why there are few examples of ladies' rest rooms is due to traditional approaches to preserving historic interiors. For most of its history, the preservation movement in the U.S. was primarily focused on the exteriors of historic buildings. Although there has been much debate about preserving the interior of buildings, it happens only in exceptional cases where the building's interior will also be interpreted, such as with a house museum.¹³⁵ When historic interiors of buildings are ignored, an opportunity is lost to understand the daily lives of women outside of the domestic sphere.¹³⁶

Many structures that once housed ladies' rest rooms still stand, but there is little evidence that remains of these rooms today. As a result, the opportunity to have

¹³⁴ U.S. Department of the Interior - National Parks Service. 1997. *National register bulletin 16a: How to complete a National Register registration form*.

¹³⁵ Andre, Kelly. 2010. Editor's notes. *The Minnesota Preservationist* 13 (1) (January-February), 2.

¹³⁶ Van Slyck, Abigail A. 2003. On the inside: Preserving women's history in American libraries. In *Restoring women's history through historic preservation*, eds. Gail Lee Dubrow, Jennifer B. Goodman. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press

an understanding of the experience of women in public during this time period is lost. Therefore, it is the task of the preservationist to adapt their methods to ensure that the experience of the ladies' rest room is remembered. This can be accomplished in several ways. First, efforts must be made to preserve ladies' rest rooms that are still intact within the existing preservation framework. The listing of the Ladies' Rest Room in Lewisburg, Tennessee on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is a good example of this. Although this listing on the NRHP does not completely protect the resource from demolition, it increases public awareness. Interpretation is another method that can be employed at sites of converted ladies' rest rooms. For example, the Garrett Memorial Room at John's Hopkins University is one potential candidate for this approach of creating awareness of the room's original function. This particular room was originally constructed to memorialize Mary E. Garrett and is still used today as a study center and social space managed by the university's Women's Medical Alumnae Association.¹³⁷ The room contains an interpretative sign that prominently displays Garrett's life's work, but there is no mention of why the room was set aside as a ladies' rest room. By including information about the room's founding and original function, a connection can be made between current female students with the women who were pioneers in the male-dominated medical school.

Although it is too late to preserve many of the once extant ladies' rest rooms exactly as they were, the study and documentation of these rooms is still informative. The research done in this study presents a broad overview of this room type and is only the first step to understanding their true nature and purpose. A more thorough

¹³⁷ Women's room. 2005. *DOMÉ: A Publication for all the Members of the Johns Hopkins Medical Family* 56 (4) (May)

analysis of specific ladies' rest room will provide additional insight on this time period marked by transitioning gender roles. Listing, interpreting, and documenting historic resources are all techniques that are used by preservationists to study and preserve various types of built structures. Adapting these methods to the study of this smaller, ephemeral room type will ensure that the complex experience of women's everyday interactions with public places in the early twentieth century will not be forgotten.

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Ladies' Rest Rooms by Year

Rest Room Name	City	State	Country	Year	Type
Rochester Ladies' Rest Room	Rochester	Minnesota	USA	1896	Civic Group
National Cash Register	Dayton	Ohio	USA	1899	Workplace
Sheldon Circle Rest Room	Burlington	Iowa	USA	1901	Civic Group
Midday Rest Room (Daughters of the King)	San Francisco	California	USA	1901	Civic Group
Coalfax Rest & Reading Room	Coalfax	Washington	USA	1901	Civic Group
The Women's Federation of Clubs of Minnesota		Minnesota	USA	1901	Fair
Marquette Station	Marquette	Michigan	USA	1901	Transportation
The Ossoli Circle of Knoxville	Knoxville	Tennessee	USA	1902	Civic Group
The Women's Rest Room	Houston	Texas	USA	1903	Civic Group
Walker Building (MIT) (Old Demolished)	Boston	Massachusetts	USA	1903	Education
Taylorville Public Comfort Station	Taylorville	Illinois	USA	1903	Public Comfort Station
Ohio State Building	St. Louis	Missouri	USA	1904	Fair
Dodge Manufacturing Co	St. Louis	Missouri	USA	1904	Fair
Illinois State Pavilion St. Louis World's Fair	St. Louis	Missouri	USA	1904	Fair
Leavenworth Mercantile Store	Leavenworth	Washington	USA	1904	Retail Store
May's Company Dry Goods Store	Madison	Illinois	USA	1904	Retail Store
Pomona Library	Pomona	California	USA	1905	Civic Building
Syracuse Public Library	Syracuse	New York	USA	1905	Civic Building
Van Zandt School	Van Zandt County	Texas	USA	1905	Education
Dayton's Store	Minneapolis	Minnesota	USA	1905	Retail Store
LA Times	Los Angeles	California	USA	1905	Workplace
Ottawa Public Library		Ottawa	Canada	1906	Civic Building
Taylor Woolfenden Co.	Detroit	Michigan	USA	1906	Retail Store
Ernest F. Elmburg's Store	De Kalb	Illinois	USA	1906	Retail Store
O'Leary & Bowser	Bemidji	Minnesota	USA	1906	Retail Store
El Centro Department Store	El Centro	California	USA	1906	Retail Store
Stewart & Co.	Baltimore	Maryland	USA	1906	Retail Store
Smith & Higgins	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1906	Retail Store
Chicago Railroad Station	Chicago	Illinois	USA	1906	Transportation
Santa Monica Carnegie Library	Santa Monica	California	USA	1907	Civic Building
Pullman Ladies' Rest Room	Pullman	Washington	USA	1907	Civic Group
Ionia Methodist Church	Ionia	Michigan	USA	1907	Community Building
Fall Creek Sheep Co.	American Falls	Idaho	USA	1907	Retail Store
Greenber, Bond, & Bloomfield Funeral Home	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1907	Retail Store
Shepard Norwell Company	Boston	Massachusetts	USA	1907	Retail Store
Carnegie Library	Zumbrota	Minnesota	USA	1908	Civic Building
Greeneville TN Rest	Greeneville	Tennessee	USA	1908	Civic Group
General Methodist Conference	Baltimore	Maryland	USA	1908	Community Building

Rest Room Name	City	State	Country	Year	Type
Baptist Convention	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	USA	1908	Community Building
Elton & Herrick	Muskogee	Oklahoma	USA	1908	Retail Store
Joe Myers & Sons	Salem	Oregon	USA	1908	Retail Store
Owen, Moore & Co.	Portland	Maine	USA	1909	Retail Store
Fred Glass Drug Co.	Petoskey	Michigan	USA	1909	Retail Store
R. P. Andrews Stationary Co.	Washington	DC	USA	1909	Retail Store
Edgefield Corner Store	Edgefield	South Carolina	USA	1909	Retail Store
Penn Mutual Life Insurance Co.	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	USA	1909	Workplace
Valley Bank	Phoenix	Arizona	USA	1910	Bank
Freeport Rest Room	Freeport	Illinois	USA	1910	Civic Group
Melita Rest Room	Melita	Manitoba	Canada	1910	Civic Group
YMCA	Columbus	Nebraska	USA	1910	Community Building
City of Alameda School	Alameda	California	USA	1910	Education
Rogers State University	Claremore	Oklahoma	USA	1910	Education
Newman's	Joplin	Missouri	USA	1910	Retail Store
Mollrings Department Store	Omaha	Nebraska	USA	1910	Retail Store
Gardiner & Adams Co.	Salt Lake City	Utah	USA	1910	Retail Store
Ford Assembly Plant	Highland Park	Michigan	USA	1910	Workplace
Old National Bank	Spokane	Washington	USA	1911	Bank
Plainview Public Library & City Hall	Plainview	Minnesota	USA	1911	Civic Building
Roxbury YMCA	Roxbury	New York	USA	1911	Community Building
LA Public Comfort Station	Los Angeles	California	USA	1911	Public Comfort Station
H.S. Daniels' Hardware	Jerseyville	Illinois	USA	1911	Retail Store
White's Department Store	Augusta	Georgia	USA	1911	Retail Store
The W.G. Reynolds Co.	Burlington	Vermont	USA	1911	Retail Store
E.J. Fenton Co.	Brattleboro	Vermont	USA	1911	Retail Store
Bell Auto Company	Dodge City	Kansas	USA	1911	Transportation
Hartford National Bank	Hartford	Connecticut	USA	1912	Bank
Third National Bank	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1912	Bank
Port Clinton City Hall	Port Clinton	Ohio	USA	1912	Civic Building
Mercer County Fair	Princeton	New Jersey	USA	1912	Fair
Fauquier County Fair	Marshall	Virginia	USA	1912	Fair
Decatur Public Comfort Station	Decatur	Illinois	USA	1912	Public Comfort Station
Paris Public Comfort Station	Paris	Texas	USA	1912	Public Comfort Station
Arnold Brothers	Allison	Iowa	USA	1912	Retail Store
Barnes, Cowan & Co.	Earlington	Kentucky	USA	1912	Retail Store
Cleveland Manning Piano CO	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1912	Retail Store
Company G Armory	Princeton	New Jersey	USA	1912	Theater
West Broadway Garage	Onawa	Iowa	USA	1912	Transportation
The Oldest & Newest Garage	Defiance	Ohio	USA	1912	Transportation
LaSalle St Railstation	Chicago	Illinois	USA	1912	Transportation
Central State Bank	Des Moines	Iowa	USA	1913	Bank
Dime Savings Bank	Detroit	Michigan	USA	1913	Bank
Second National Bank	Meyersdale	Pennsylvania	USA	1913	Bank

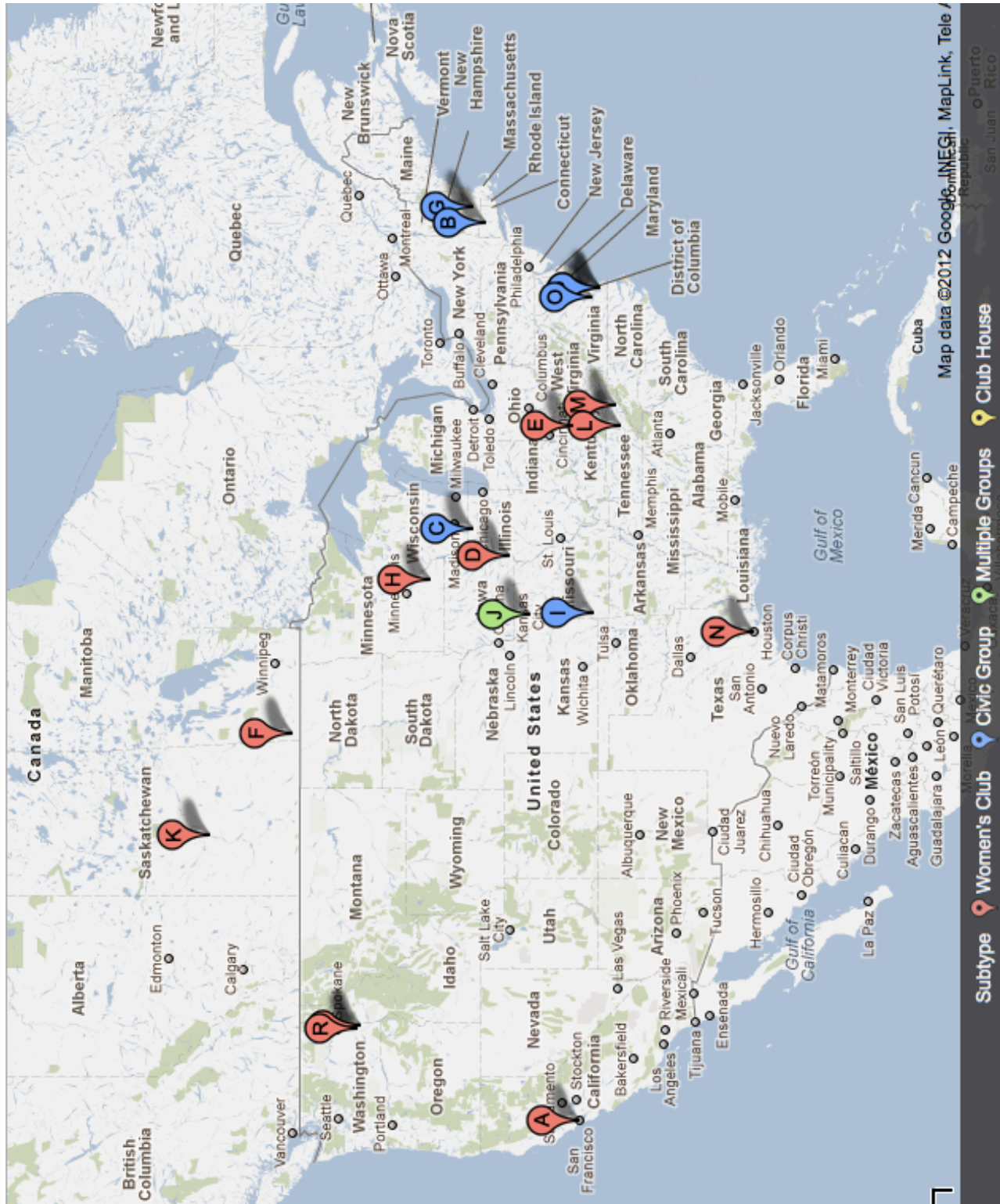
Rest Room Name	City	State	Country	Year	Type
The People's Bank	Sumter	South Carolina	USA	1913	Bank
Chicago Criminal Court Building	Chicago	Illinois	USA	1913	Civic Building
Virginia Park	Hopkinsville	Kentucky	USA	1913	Civic Building
Good Roads Club Rest Room	Carthage	Missouri	USA	1913	Civic Group
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church	St. Louis	Missouri	USA	1913	Community Building
King County Fair	Seattle	Washington	USA	1913	Fair
Pasadena City Parks	Pasadena	California	USA	1913	Public Comfort Station
Fairgrounds Park Women's Comfort Station	Dallas	Texas	USA	1913	Public Comfort Station
Green Cove Springs Rail Station	Green Cove Springs	Florida	USA	1913	Transportation
Public Service Company	Jersey City	New Jersey	USA	1913	Workplace
Ashland Christian Church	Ashland	Missouri	USA	1914	Community Building
J. Fay Reed Co. Women's Furnishings	Fayetteville	Arkansas	USA	1914	Retail Store
Ragan Malone Dry Goods Store	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1914	Retail Store
Alhambra Theater	El Paso	Texas	USA	1914	Theater
Barringer Garage Co.	Charlotte	North Carolina	USA	1914	Transportation
Pocatello Station	Pocatello	Idaho	USA	1914	Transportation
Missouri, Texas & Kansas Rail Station	Houston	Texas	USA	1914	Transportation
Walk Over Shoe Co. Club House	Brockton	Massachusetts	USA	1914	Workplace
Merchants' National Bank	Vicksburg	Mississippi	USA	1915	Bank
German Savings Institution	St. Louis	Missouri	USA	1915	Bank
United States National Bank	Omaha	Nebraska	USA	1915	Bank
The First National Bank	Youngstown	Ohio	USA	1915	Bank
Methodist Episcopal Church of Hopkinsville	Hopkinsville	Kentucky	USA	1915	Community Building
James H. Mead Club	Sheboygan	Wisconsin	USA	1915	Community Building
Greensburg YMCA	Greensburg	Indiana	USA	1915	Community Building
Arizona State Fair	Tombstone	Arizona	USA	1915	Fair
The Hoo Hoo House	San Francisco	California	USA	1915	Fair
Chappel Drug Co.	Billings	Montana	USA	1915	Retail Store
Robinsons Dry Goods Store	New York	New York	USA	1915	Retail Store
Edison Building	Chicago	Illinois	USA	1915	Retail Store
Center Market	Washington	DC	USA	1915	Retail Store
J.W. Robinson's Store	Los Angeles	California	USA	1915	Retail Store
Buick Headquarters	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1915	Transportation
United Railway	Detroit	Michigan	USA	1915	Transportation
Central State Bank	Jackson	Michigan	USA	1916	Bank
Lutheran Brotherhood Center	Woodland Heights	Illinois	USA	1916	Community Building
Community School Building	Wheaton	Minnesota	USA	1916	Education
University of Nevada	Reno	Nevada	USA	1916	Education
Tobacco Fair	Maysville	Kentucky	USA	1916	Fair
John D. Van Allen & Sons	Clinton	Iowa	USA	1916	Retail Store
Snowden's Grocery	Richmond	Missouri	USA	1916	Retail Store
Brokaw Brothers Store	New York	New York	USA	1916	Retail Store

Rest Room Name	City	State	Country	Year	Type
The Piedmont Theater	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1916	Theater
Coliseum Photo Playhouse	Seattle	Washington	USA	1916	Theater
Willys-Overland Auto Distribution Center	Kansas City	Kansas	USA	1916	Transportation
Don Riley's Motor Inn.	St. Joseph	Missouri	USA	1916	Transportation
St. Cloud Train Depot	St. Cloud	Florida	USA	1916	Transportation
New York Telegraphers' Aid Society	New York	New York	USA	1916	Workplace
Ithaca Gas & Electric Corp	Ithaca	New York	USA	1916	Workplace
Capitol Building	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	USA	1917	Civic Building
Mt. Sterling Ladies' Rest Room	Mt. Sterling	Kentucky	USA	1917	Civic Group
Wheatland Rest Room	Saskatoon	Saskatchewan	Canada	1917	Civic Group
Butler Community Building	Butler	Pennsylvania	USA	1917	Community Building
Illinois Liberty Building	Joliet	Illinois	USA	1917	Community Building
Elgin Community Club	Elgin	Nebraska	USA	1917	Community Building
John's Hopkins Medical School	Baltimore	Maryland	USA	1917	Education
The Woodmen of the World Building	Omaha	Nebraska	USA	1917	Retail Store
Rich's Department Store	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1917	Retail Store
Brandsetters Garage	Gray Lakes	Illinois	USA	1917	Transportation
Ideal Garage Co.	Frederick	Maryland	USA	1917	Transportation
Cut Rate Shoe Factory	Oakland	California	USA	1917	Workplace
Dunseith Community Building	Dunseith	North Dakota	USA	1918	Community Building
Essex County Club	Manchester	Massachusetts	USA	1918	Community Building
Harrod's		London	UK	1918	Retail Store
The Regent	Bay City	Michigan	USA	1918	Theater
McFall Garage	Stockton	California	USA	1918	Transportation
Davis Motor Co.	Macon	Georgia	USA	1918	Transportation
The Standard Garage	Toledo	Ohio	USA	1918	Transportation
Standard Garage	Toledo	Ohio	USA	1918	Transportation
Underwood Typewriter Co.	New York	New York	USA	1918	Workplace
Richmond Brothers Company Factory	Cleveland	Ohio	USA	1918	Workplace
Franklin Trust Company	New York	New York	USA	1919	Bank
Des Moines YMCA	Des Moines	Iowa	USA	1919	Community Building
Public School House	Stafford	Arizona	USA	1919	Education
The J.S. Ringwalt Co.	Mt. Vernon	Ohio	USA	1919	Retail Store
The Woman's Store	Klamath Falls	Oregon	USA	1919	Retail Store
Roy R. George Drug Co.	Gainesville	Georgia	USA	1919	Retail Store
Willard's	San Francisco	California	USA	1919	Retail Store
Sage Allen & Co.	Hartford	Connecticut	USA	1919	Retail Store
Sheehan's Garage	Washington	DC	USA	1919	Transportation
Riverside Club - Waltham Watch Co.	Waltham	Massachusetts	USA	1919	Workplace
Strathmore Paper Co.	Holyoke	Massachusetts	USA	1919	Workplace
Liberty National Bank	Washington	DC	USA	1920	Bank
The Commercial National Bank	Durant	Oklahoma	USA	1920	Bank
Stone County Court House	Galena	Missouri	USA	1920	Civic Building
Colorado State Library	Denver	Colorado	USA	1920	Civic Building

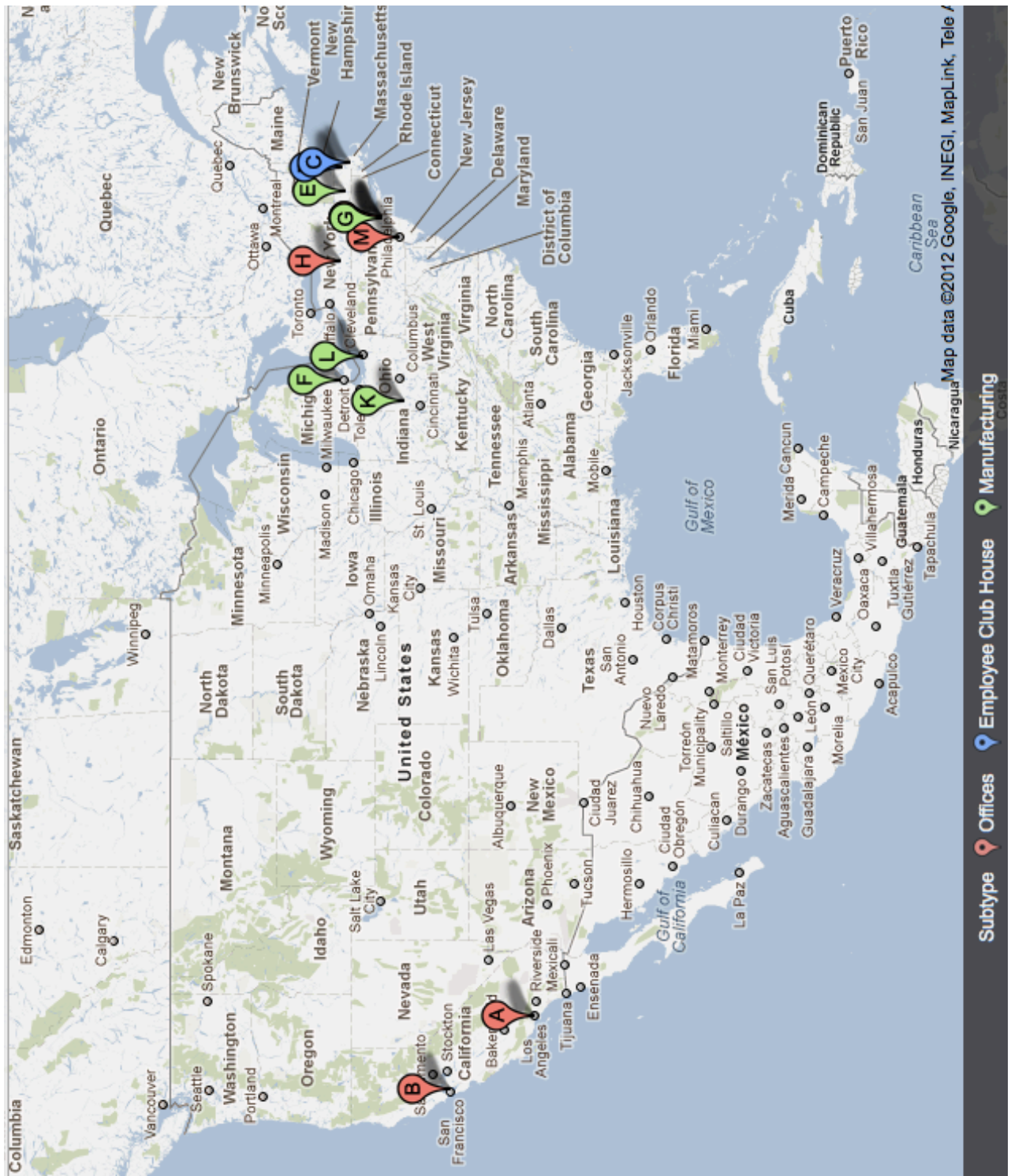
Rest Room Name	City	State	Country	Year	Type
Board of Water Commission	Detroit	Michigan	USA	1920	Civic Building
The Wilson School	Hayti	Missouri	USA	1920	Education
The Winchester Store	Providence	Rhode Island	USA	1920	Retail Store
Welsh Motor Car Co.	Welsh	Louisiana	USA	1920	Transportation
Willett Brothers Garage	Colville	Washington	USA	1920	Transportation
Martin's Garage	Pullman	Washington	USA	1920	Transportation
Lake Shore Trust and Savings	Chicago	Illinois	USA	1921	Bank
Merchants' National Bank	Muncie	Indiana	USA	1921	Bank
American National Bank	Nashville	Tennessee	USA	1921	Bank
Planters National Bank	Richmond	Virginia	USA	1921	Bank
Centralia Ladies' Rest Room	Centralia	Missouri	USA	1921	Civic Building
Maysville Rest Room	Maysville	Missouri	USA	1921	Civic Group
State Fair Grounds	Huron	South Dakota	USA	1921	Fair
Hampton Beach Public Comfort Station	Hampton Beach	New Hampshire	USA	1921	Public Comfort Station
Dickens & Jones	London	England	UK	1921	Retail Store
Baker Brothers Druggists	Tulsa	Oklahoma	USA	1921	Retail Store
New Castle Building	Tulsa	Oklahoma	USA	1921	Retail Store
Barmans	Colville	Washington	USA	1921	Retail Store
Howard Theater	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1921	Theater
Derby Oil Co.	Wichita	Kansas	USA	1921	Transportation
Anderson Filling Station	Albany	Kentucky	USA	1921	Transportation
Arrow City Garage	Cedar City	Utah	USA	1921	Transportation
City National Bank	Tuscaloosa	Alabama	USA	1922	Bank
Union Bank and Trust Company	Los Angeles	California	USA	1922	Bank
Cleveland Discount Company	Cleveland	Ohio	USA	1922	Bank
The Rest House	Jamestown	Virginia	USA	1922	Civic Group
Atlanta Chamber of Commerce	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1922	Community Building
The Jones Store Co.	Kansas City	Kansas	USA	1922	Retail Store
Jackson's	Oakland	California	USA	1922	Retail Store
Gordon's Theater	Boston	Massachusetts	USA	1922	Theater
The Aldine Theater	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	USA	1922	Theater
Herbert Atkins Service Station	Shreveport	Louisiana	USA	1922	Transportation
Crew-Levick Oil Company	Beaver	Oklahoma	USA	1922	Transportation
John G. Keys & Sons Service Station	Winters	Texas	USA	1922	Transportation
Kenosha-Lockwood Oil Co.	Kenosha	Wisconsin	USA	1922	Transportation
Alva Rest Room	Alva	Oklahoma	USA	1923	Civic Building
Norfolk City Market	Norfolk	Virginia	USA	1923	Civic Group
Yankee's Stadium	New York	New York	USA	1923	Community Building
Wiley Jones Furniture Co.	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1923	Retail Store
Chas S Robins Furniture Store	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1923	Retail Store
Shore Line Filling Station	South Weathersfield	Connecticut	USA	1923	Transportation
American Accessories Co		DC	USA	1923	Transportation
E. Sponsler Service Station	Carbondale	Illinois	USA	1923	Transportation
First Columbian National Bank	Columbia	Pennsylvania	USA	1924	Bank
J.M. High Company	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1924	Retail Store

Dime Savings Bank	Hartford	Connecticut	USA	1925	Bank
Millville National Bank	Millville	New Jersey	USA	1925	Bank
Dorchester Court House	Dorchester	Massachusetts	USA	1925	Civic Building
Worcester Oddfellows Lodge	Worcester	Massachusetts	USA	1925	Civic Group
New Bethel Baptists Church	Winston Salem	North Carolina	USA	1925	Community Building
The Strand Theater	Shreveport	Louisiana	USA	1925	Theater
Episcopal Diocese House	Boston	Massachusetts	USA	1926	Community Building
Plotkin Brother's Store	Boston	Massachusetts	USA	1926	Retail Store
Lincoln Trust Company	Jersey City	New Jersey	USA	1927	Bank
Covington Library	Covington	Georgia	USA	1927	Civic Building
Union Station	St. Louis	Missouri	USA	1927	Theater
Candler Building Garage	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1927	Transportation
Banker's Exposition	New York	New York	USA	1928	Bank
Boston City Hall	Boston	Massachusetts	USA	1928	Civic Building
Warracknabeal Ladies' Rest Room	Warracknabeal	Victoria	Australia	1928	Civic Building
Peachtree Arcade Building	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1928	Community Building
Old Kansas Theater	Coldwater	Kansas	USA	1928	Theater
Pocahontas Theater	Welch	West Virginia	USA	1928	Theater
Nantucket Steam Ship	Nantucket, New Bedford	Massachusetts	USA	1928	Transportation
Peoples Bank & Trust Company	Nashville	Tennessee	USA	1929	Bank
Boston Municipal Airport	Boston	Massachusetts	USA	1929	Transportation
Olympian of the Chicago	Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad	Wisconsin, Minnesota	USA	1929	Transportation
Fenway Theater	Boston	Massachusetts	USA	1930	Theater
Hartford Board of Education	Hartford	Connecticut	USA	1931	Civic Building
Business and Professional Women's Club	Hartford	Connecticut	USA	1932	Civic Group
Nonpareil Club House	Norfolk	Virginia	USA	1932	Civic Group
Mt. Olivet Baptist Church	Newport	Rhode Island	USA	1932	Community Building
Egyptian Theater	Brighton	Massachusetts	USA	1934	Theater
Chicago Theater	Chicago	Illinois	USA	1937	Theater
Havarti's Furniture Store	Atlanta	Georgia	USA	1939	Retail Store
Mt. Olive Baptist Church	Clarksville	Tennessee	USA	1943	Community Building
Dearborn Rail Station	Dearborn	Michigan	USA	1943	Transportation
Hartford Connecticut Trust Co.	Hartford	Connecticut	USA	1953	Bank

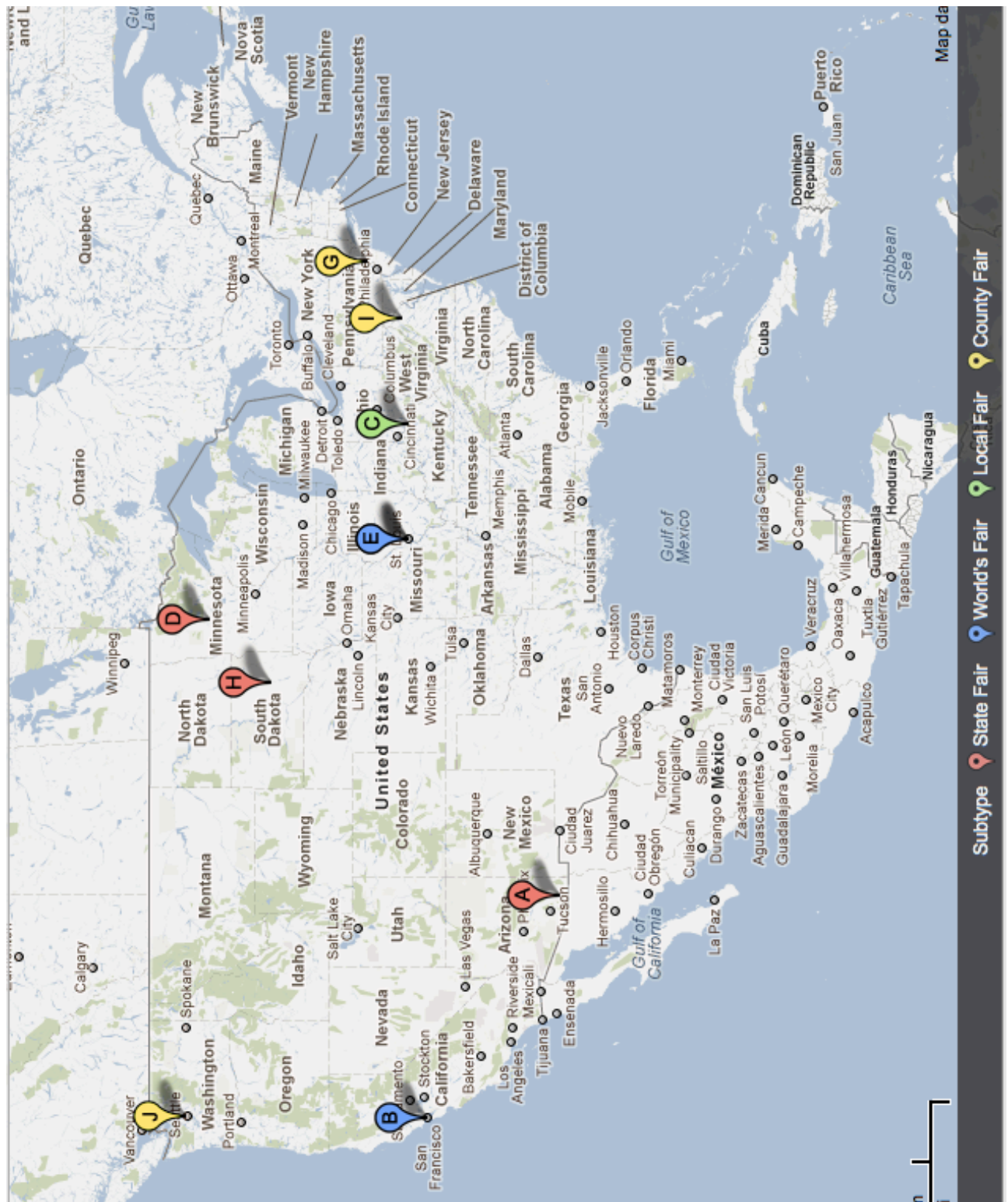
Established by Civic Groups



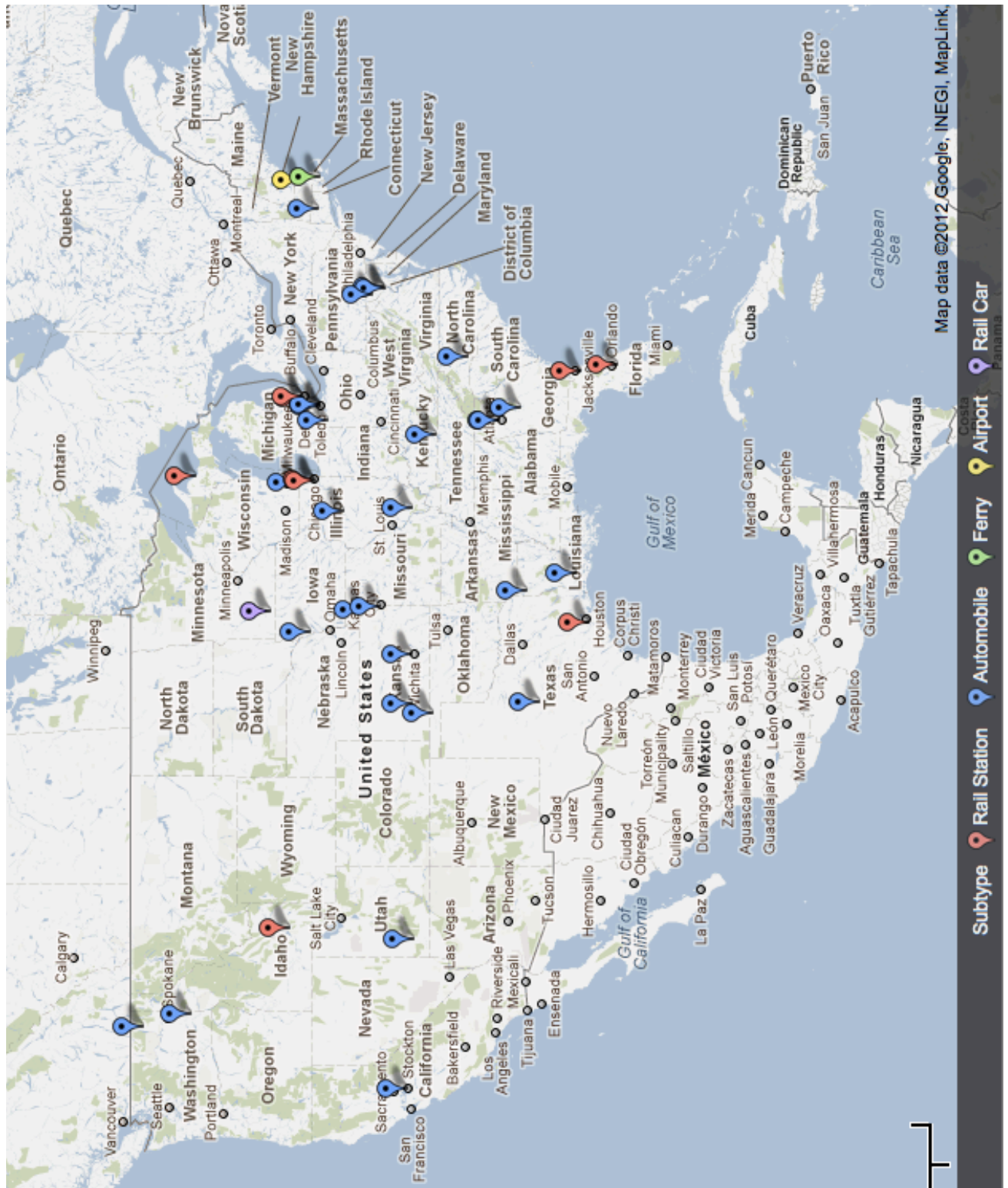
Workplace



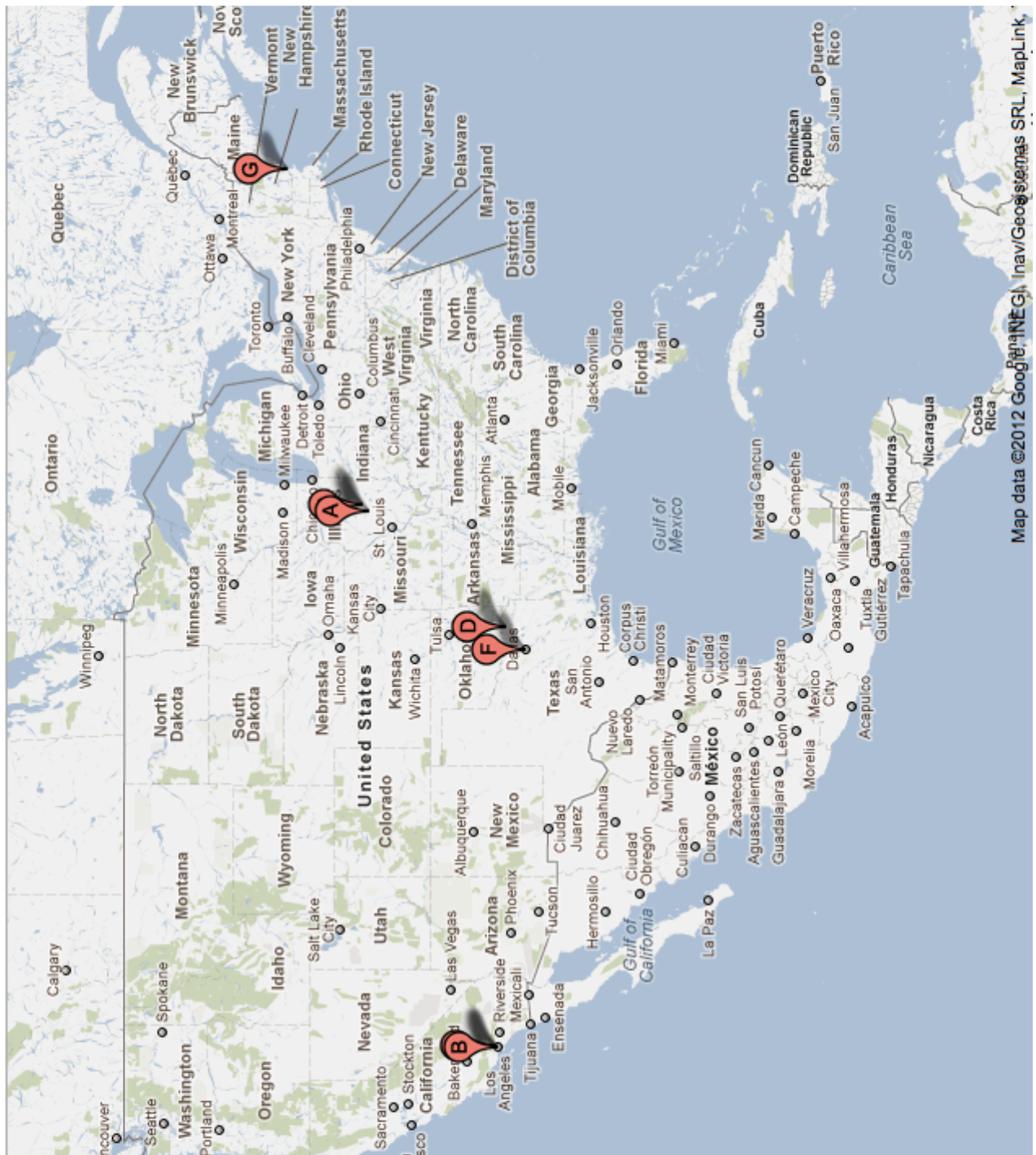
County, State, & World's Fairs



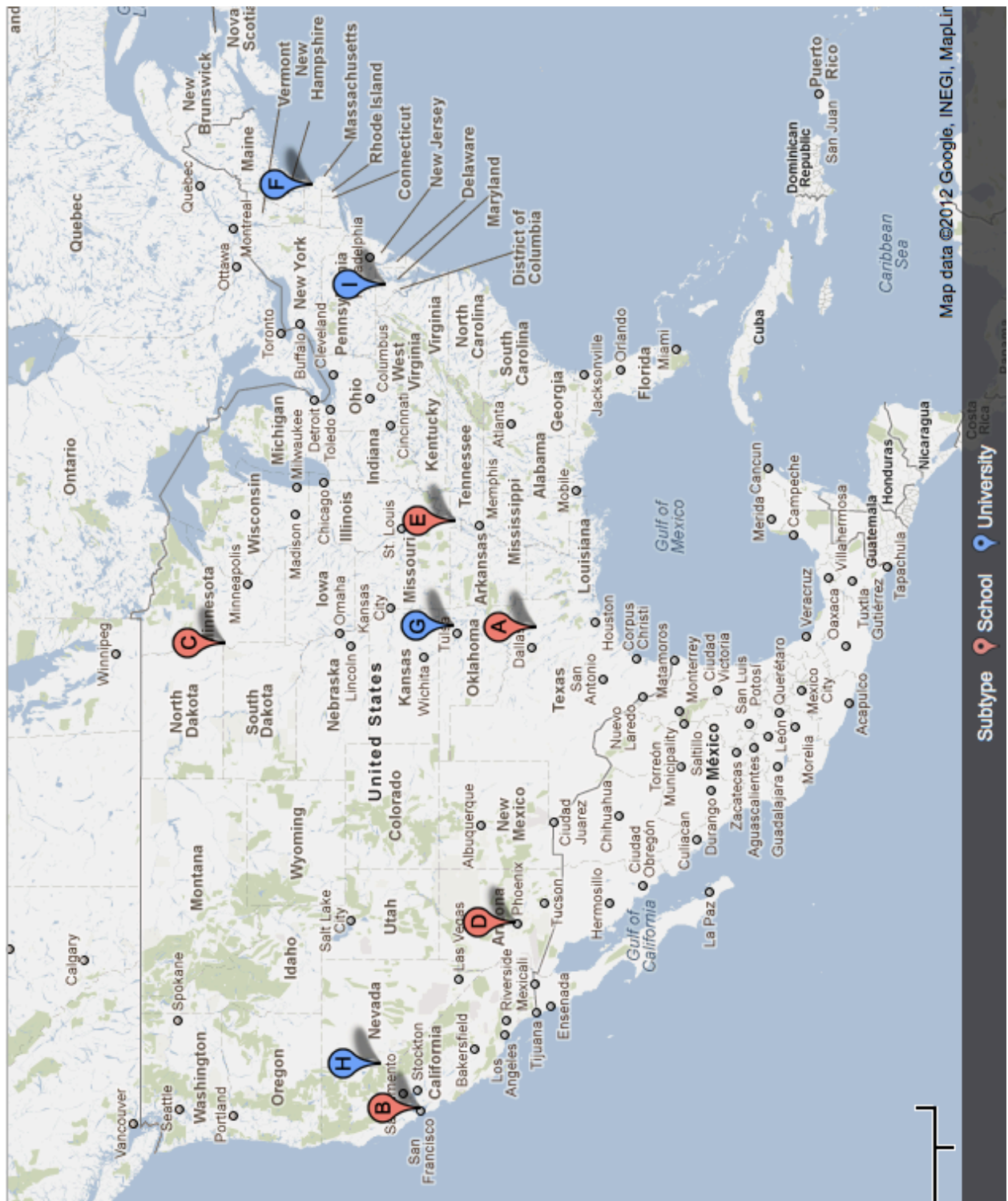
Transportation



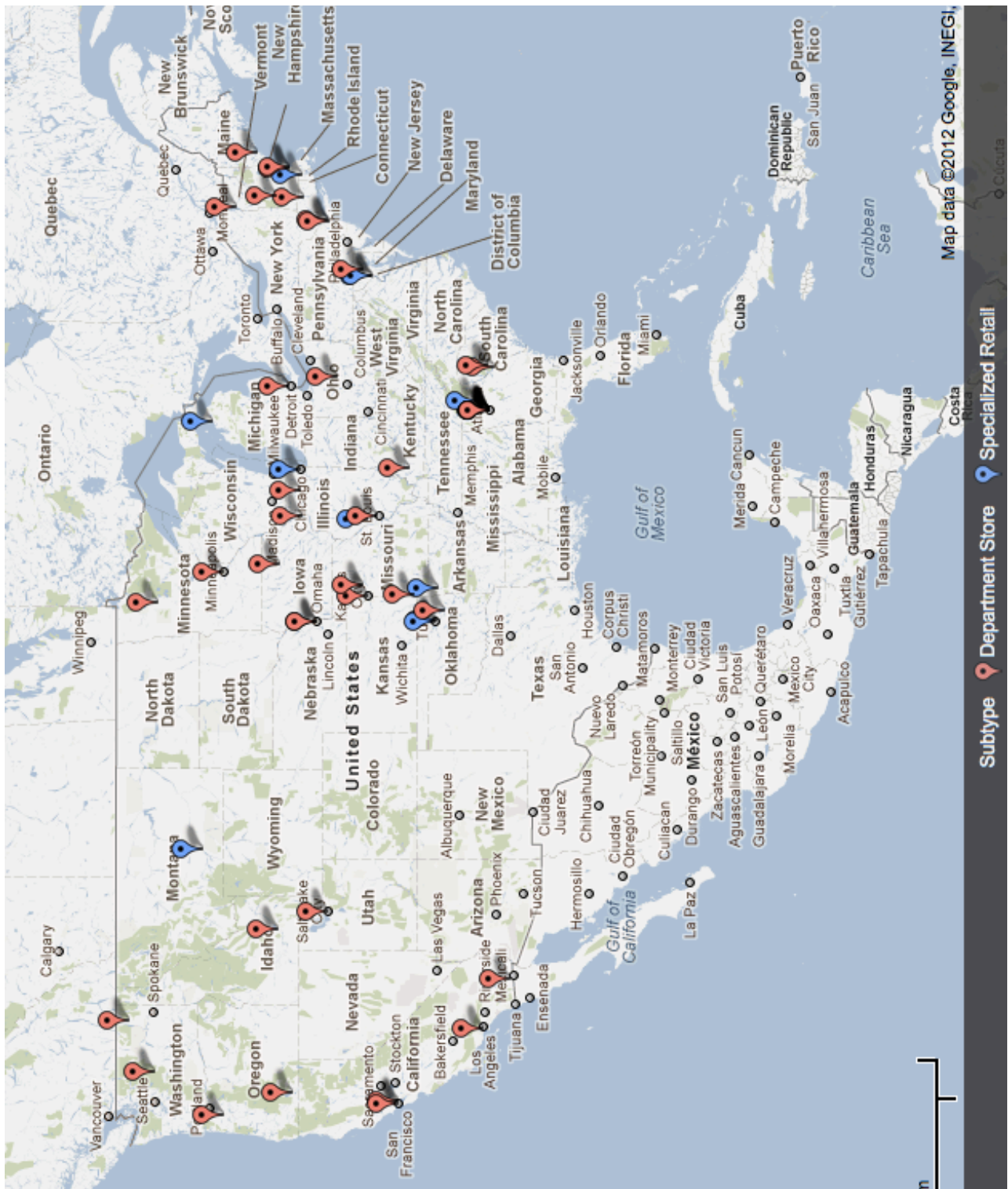
Public Comfort Stations



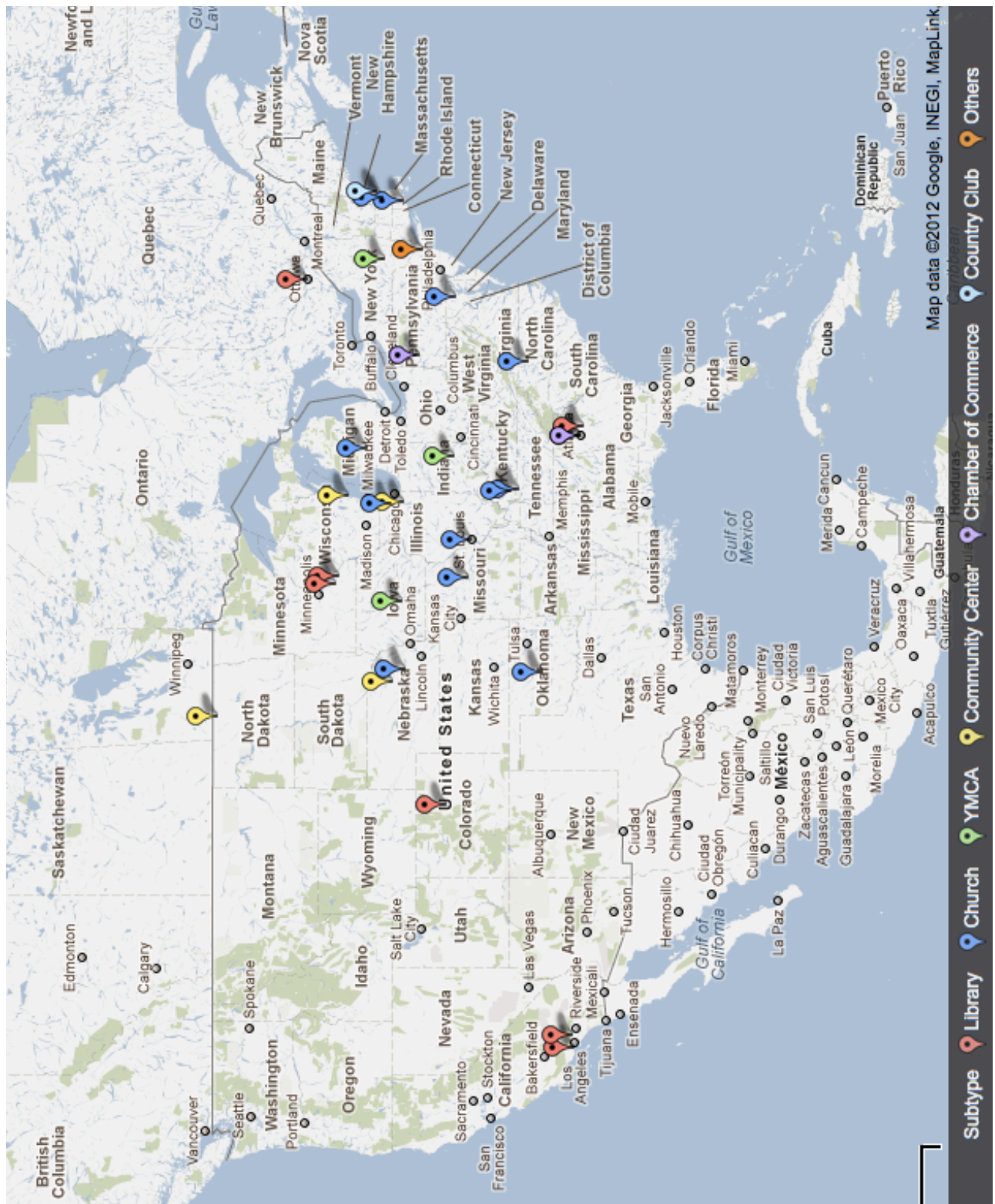
Educational Facilities



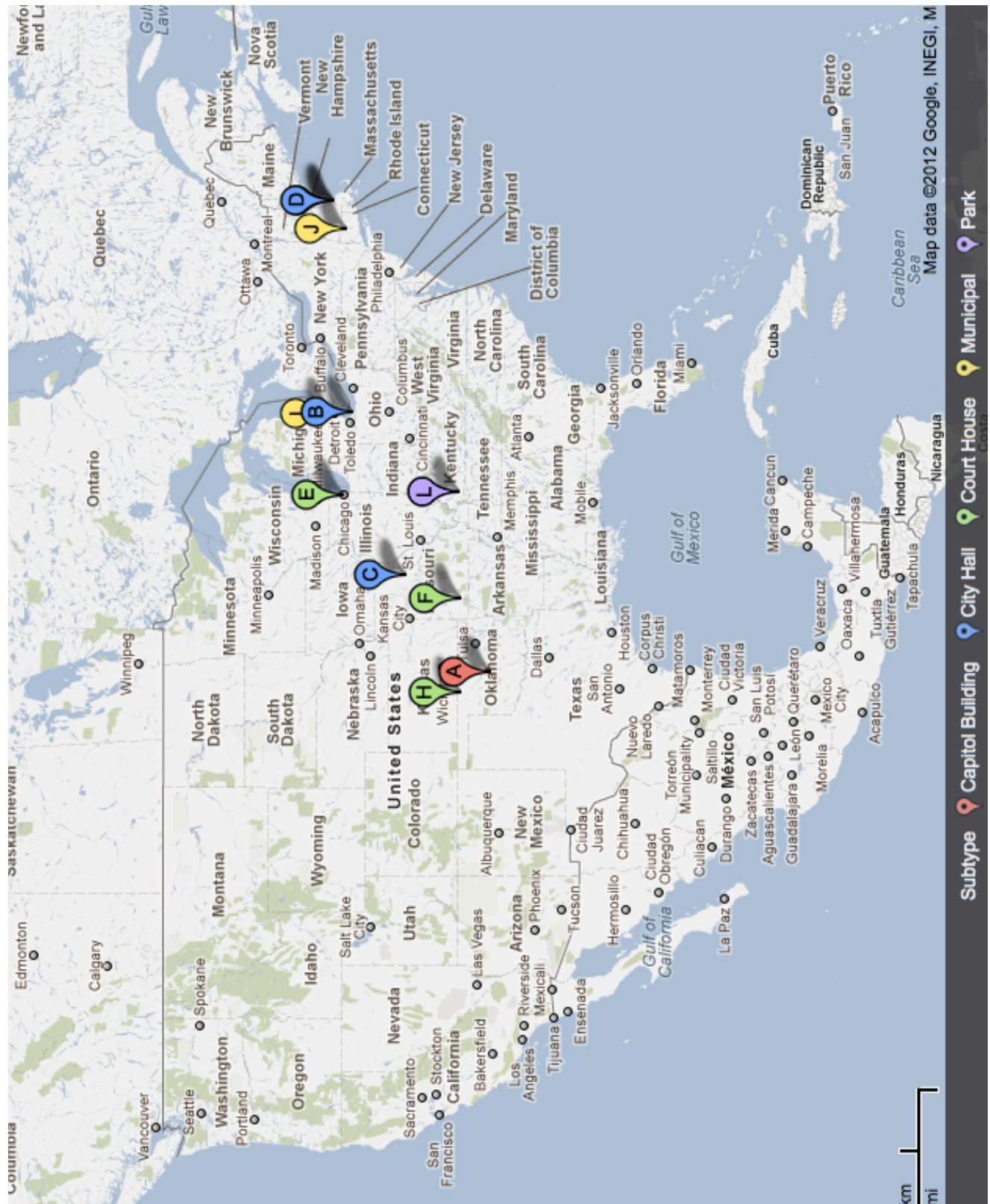
Retail Stores



Community Buildings



Civic Buildings



The map displays the distribution of the invasive species across North America. Red pins indicate the locations where the species has been found. The distribution is widespread, covering the Pacific Northwest, the Great Lakes region, the Northeast, and the Gulf of Mexico. The map also shows major cities and bodies of water.

Key locations marked with red pins include:

- British Columbia: Vancouver, Seattle, Portland
- Washington: Spokane
- Oregon: Eugene
- California: San Francisco, Sacramento, Stockton, Los Angeles, Riverside, Tijuana, Bakersfield
- Nevada: Las Vegas
- Utah: Salt Lake City
- Wyoming: Cheyenne
- Montana: Billings
- Idaho: Boise
- Nebraska: Lincoln
- Kansas: Wichita
- Colorado: Denver
- North Dakota: Grand Forks
- South Dakota: Pierre
- Minnesota: Minneapolis
- Wisconsin: Madison
- Illinois: Chicago
- Indiana: Indianapolis
- Ohio: Columbus
- Michigan: Detroit
- Wisconsin: Milwaukee
- Illinois: Springfield
- Missouri: St. Louis
- Kansas: Topeka
- Nebraska: Omaha
- Iowa: Des Moines
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- Missouri: Kansas City
- Kansas: Lawrence
- Nebraska: Omaha
- Iowa: Des Moines
- Minnesota: St. Paul
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- Wisconsin

A map of the United States and Mexico with 12 lettered pins (A-L) indicating locations. The pins are: A (New York), B (New Mexico), C (Tennessee), D (Vancouver), E (Michigan), G (Maine), I (Oklahoma), J (St. Louis), K (Kansas), L (Columbus), and others. The map shows state and national boundaries, major cities, and geographical features like the Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf of California.

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