Craft, Class, and Acculturation at the Greenwich House Settlement

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Abstract

This article considers the Greenwich House Handicraft School as an example of a craft workshop that was shaped by contradictory Craftsman and Settlement House ideals, and suggests this duality may account for its longevity. Greenwich House’s founder, social reformer Mary Kingsbury Simkhovitch, believed that exposure to and instruction in the arts was an effective way to inculcate a sense of community among the diverse population of recent immigrants that Greenwich House served. The Pottery’s first program director Maude Robinson (who reported to Simkhovitch) and its lace-making teacher Katharine Lord wanted Greenwich House to operate at a high professional level, and did not share Simkhovitch’s sense that art was important at Greenwich House primarily as a means to a social end rather than on its own terms. While other craft schools established at the turn of the century eventually collapsed during the Great Depression, Greenwich House Pottery emerged after the Second World War as the only visual arts program remaining at the settlement house.

Keywords: needlework, sewing, pottery, settlement house, social reform, New York City, Greenwich Village, immigrants.
Fig 1 Greenwich House Settlement’s original location at 26 Jones Street, New York City, c. 1903, prior to the street being paved. © President and Fellows of Harvard College. Harvard Art Museum/Fogg Museum, on deposit from the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Social Museum Collection.
Established in 1905 by social reformer Mary Kingsbury Simkhovitch and lace-maker Katharine Lord, New York’s Greenwich House Handicraft School has a direct descendant in Greenwich House Pottery, the storied ceramics studio on Jones Street where a young Peter Voulkos gave a series of famous workshops in the 1960s (Figures 1 and 2). Although the Pottery is currently Greenwich House’s only standalone visual arts program, it was once part of a constellation of craft offerings that, by the 1920s, included woodworking, lace-making, weaving, and stone carving. Two opposing ideals, professionalism and a desire to democratize art education, shaped the programming of the Greenwich House Handicraft School in its first decades. The early history of the school presents an intriguing case study of Arts and Crafts
values at work in an urban settlement house context. Its legacy is unusual enough to merit investigation: unlike so many of the mission-driven craft schools founded in the United States at the turn of the century, such as the Marblehead or Paul Revere Potteries, most of which later collapsed under the financial strain of the Great Depression, Greenwich House Pottery still thrives today.¹

The institution that began as the Greenwich House Handicraft School has adapted numerous times in order to survive changing circumstances. Even in its early decades, the scope of Greenwich House’s offerings spanned multiple craft genres. Like many craft studios of the era, the Handicraft School was motivated by concerns about the degrading impact of industrialization: specifically, the grueling conditions of sweatshop labor and the way that home-work among immigrant women and children was affecting domestic life in the tenements. When Greenwich House began offering classes in lace-making, it positioned its new Handicraft School as a resource for immigrant women who were already skilled, but who needed materials and access to a network of potential customers.

Greenwich House founder Mary Kingsbury Simkhovitch, a social reformer who studied with Franz Boas and John Dewey, advocated craft instruction as a method of acculturating new immigrants and promoting a sense of community in their neighborhoods. Lace-maker, writer, and Handicraft School director Katharine Lord acted as a kind of cultural interlocutor between her students and the wider world of New York consumers: she saw it as her duty to teach immigrant women in need of income how to make lace that would sell to American women. Maude Robinson, who ran the Greenwich House Pottery from 1911 to 1941, sought to create a ceramics guild of the highest order, sacrificing nothing on the altar of acculturation, nor brooking any kindhearted acceptance of “mixed abilities” in a community studio. A complete history of Greenwich House is beyond the scope of this essay, but an analysis of the diverse impulses that governed craft education there will contribute to the existing scholarship on the cultural impact of American settlement houses, and their role in the American Arts and Crafts movement. This essay identifies the disparate values that motivated Simkhovitch, Lord, and Robinson—the three women who were most instrumental in shaping Greenwich House’s craft education programming—and locates them within larger social and artistic trends of their time.

Roots in Victorian Britain

The Settlement House and Arts and Crafts movements are in a sense separated at birth. Both were efforts on the part of well-educated men and women to remedy social ills associated with industrialization in mid-nineteenth-century Britain. Both were deeply concerned with the dignity of the individual, and both advocated humane conditions for workers. Education, labor, and spirituality were conceptually linked in the Settlement House movement, which had its roots in Christian Socialism.² Settlements were established in poor neighborhoods where educated middle and upper class young people would move in with the hope of fostering “class exchange” with their new neighbors. These reforming “settlers” aimed to share their educational and cultural advantages, usually in the form of classes and
club activities, with the neighboring poor. The Ruskinian idea that art education promoted morality and spiritual uplift was key to its inclusion in settlement work. Ruskin himself taught drawing at the Working Men's College, England's first adult education program, from 1855 to 1860, where he advocated art training as a way for students to appreciate God's design of the natural world. Though not technically a settlement, the Working Men's College presaged Toynbee Hall, the first University settlement house, founded in 1884. Inspired by Ruskin, furniture designer Charles Robert Ashbee established the Guild School of Handicraft in 1888 while a resident at Toynbee Hall. When Ellen Gates Starr and Jane Addams, founders of Chicago's Hull House, visited Britain in the 1880s, they were deeply impressed by what they saw at Toynbee Hall. Though Ashbee's Guild School was short-lived, it provided the organizational model on which Hull House's successful craft program was based a decade later.

While British settlements targeted poverty in purely economic, rather than ethnic, terms, American settlements had a more specific cultural agenda because the populations they served were comprised primarily of new immigrants. American settlement houses are symbolic of the ideals of the Progressive era, broadly defined as the period between the 1890s and the 1920s—not coincidentally overlapping with the Gilded Age—during which American social reformers sought to improve daily life for the working poor, increase government regulation of food and healthcare, and fight government corruption. The gendered character of Progressive reform runs through many of its varied chapters. Suffrage, prohibition, and education movements were all spearheaded by women, and settlement houses were run almost exclusively by them.

Settlement workers believed that immigrants needed object lessons in American customs and ideals, and the religious and cultural differences they brought with them were a threat to what had been a fairly homogeneous Protestant population. The new wave of immigrants in the late nineteenth century was strongly associated with urban ills like crime and poor hygiene, which, because of the close living conditions in American cities, were problems for all inhabitants. There was a strong moral overtone in commentaries about this new population; one writer complained in 1894 that immigrants “took their pleasures in eating, drinking, smoking, and society of the other sex, with dancing, music of a noisy and lively character, spectacular shows, and athletic exhibitions.” Even in the pages of The Craftsman, thinkers and writers sounded alarm at the social ills that could result from long years of factory work. Syracuse Professor of Art History Irene Sargent wrote an essay for the magazine in 1901 warning of crime and urban violence resulting from repetitive work, making particular note of the urban threat posed by Jewish and Italian immigrants. Yet, at the turn of the century, there was increasingly a sense that such prejudices about “immigrant types” were unjust. Settlement workers thus had to strike a balance between their desire to instill “high culture” in their neighbors and a less hierarchical, essentializing attitude.

Though it had the outward appearance of a real workshop, with artisans making high-quality lace to sell (Figure 3), a pamphlet printed by Greenwich House Handicraft...
School in April 1906 described it as “a centre of information in regard to local hand-work conditions among women and children.” This seems a curious mission statement for an educational institution or a craft studio, but it aligns perfectly with the settlement house goals of alleviating urban poverty by establishing meaningful connections between the poor and the well-to-do. In their classes at Greenwich House, women students learned to refine their techniques using the best materials the school could afford. They were taught to adopt what their teachers perceived as an American eye for good design and marketability, and through their participation in the school they had opportunities to exhibit their work at local gallery shows in Greenwich Village, as well as at elite venues such as the Colony Club, thanks to the social clout of Greenwich House’s leaders.

Greenwich House thus attempted to create a professional world for the women they served that could not exist in the free marketplace. The school’s mode of operation in its first decades exhibited a distinctly middle-class, Progressive vision of what paid work for women should, or could, look like. In her influential study *Home to Work: Motherhood and the Politics of Industrial Homework*, historian Eileen Boris frames the struggle to regulate tenement sweatshop labor in American cities as a prism through which to explore evolving attitudes toward American women and their labor, particularly where domesticity—a labor of love, or at least filial duty—overlaps with paid work performed from home. Boris’s other seminal
work, *Art and Labor: Ruskin, Morris, and the Craftsman Ideal in America*, explores the culture of the handmade in turn-of-the-century American society, particularly as its values shaped public education. The use of craft education in settlement houses sits right at the intersection of these two areas of inquiry. By the 1870s, art education had entered the American Common School curriculum for practical reasons, but educators also embraced Ruskin’s view that art training had benefits beyond the provision of a marketable skill.\(^{11}\) Art education in the United States has a very different history from that of Europe, with its tradition of royal and ecclesiastical patronage and its system of artists’ guilds. As Boris notes in *Art and Labor*, compulsory public education for a growing immigrant population made schools an important locus of cultural and social influence in the 1870s, and by the 1880s, American educators were well versed in Ruskinian ideals, placing a strong emphasis on art training as a way to instill an appreciation of beauty.\(^{12}\) The “craftsman ideal” was instrumental in reuniting disciplines of drawing and shopwork with other arts and crafts traditions out of a desire to desegregate the practical from the romantic.

In *Thinking Through Craft*, Glenn Adamson draws an important distinction between true vocational training and what we might consider “liberal arts” craft classes influenced by educational theories such as Educational slöjd (the Scandinavian term for “handcraft”), which was developed in the late nineteenth century by Uno Cygnaeus in Finland and Otto Salomon in Sweden.\(^{13}\) Theorist John Dewey espoused slöjd for its emphasis on process rather than product: the value in crafting is in the experience of intellectual and physical training and coordination that it gives the maker, rather than the object produced. This view influenced Felix Adler, who established the Workingman’s School in New York City (which operates today as Ethical Culture, a private day school) in 1878, and who was a colleague of Simkhovitch’s, serving on the Greenwich House Board from its founding in 1902.

The fact that much workshop training in this period was designed to be experiential and character building (rather than to constitute real professional training) makes the gender division of craft education appear socially mandated rather than practical. Boris makes a crucial observation connecting these two topics: because the tasks of low-wage female labor share certain superficial qualities with some Arts and Crafts practices (making garments or lace by hand, for example), there was a special alliance between the sweatshop seamstress and the parlor craftswoman. This connection may partly explain why craft practice was so often a focus of settlement house cultural work: it was a common language shared by the female social workers and the women they sought to help. As Boris explains in her essay “Crafts Shop or Sweatshop?,” the use of handicrafts allowed reformers to recast unsavory labor in the sweatshops or repetitive home-work as a middle-class activity suitable for women.\(^{14}\) Living history displays such as the Labor Museum at Hull House demonstrated the craft practices of immigrant women—Syrian, Italian, Irish, and Russian—in the interest of cultivating a sense of sisterhood between craftswomen from abroad and the native-born women who populated the reformer class. The Scuola d’Industrie Italiane was
established at New York’s Richmond Hill House by an Italian aristocrat, Countess Amari, who taught lace-making to Italian immigrant women in an effort to revive traditional techniques. In Boston, the North Bennet Industrial School (now the North Bennet Street School) offered an array of services similar to those offered by Greenwich House, including a day nursery. Founded in 1885 by Boston socialite Pauline Agassiz Shaw, North Bennet was also heavily influenced by slöjd philosophy. It was home to the Paul Revere Pottery, which established a weekly gathering of young immigrant women called the Saturday Evening Girls, who decorated pottery for sale.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the United States absorbed the vast changes wrought by industrialization and by immigration from new ethnic groups simultaneously. The immigrants who arrived in large eastern cities during this period hailed primarily from Eastern Europe, Italy, and Ireland, and for the most part they came from poor rural areas. Settlement work during the Progressive era sought to establish connections between the classes, but in fact they were already deeply intertwined by trade. In urban centers at the turn of the century, people of means now consumed what they would have produced themselves in the first half of the nineteenth century, while low-wage workers produced goods they themselves could not afford to consume.

Immigrants’ farming background would have prepared them well for life in the American colonies had they arrived centuries earlier; but in a rapidly urbanizing America, they were woefully unprepared. The primary challenge they faced was the need to earn enough income required to support the large families that had been assets on family farms but became liabilities in tightly packed urban areas. In the rural contexts of Italy and Eastern Europe, labor on the farm and in the household was interconnected—men, women, and children all helped to keep the farm afloat in a household division of tasks. The notion of a man selling his labor to support a family was unusual, and for a woman to do so was unheard of. Immigrant women faced contradictory pressures in America. On the one hand they felt compelled to hew to the cultural expectations of both their native and adopted countries and focus their efforts on traditionally feminine labors of keeping house, cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children. On the other hand, urban life necessitated income on a scale that most fathers could not earn alone. Thus immigrant women and girls began earning money by working in garment sweatshops and by producing goods at home. Home-work in particular muddied the waters of domesticity, family life, work, and gender so profoundly that it became one of the primary concerns of urban social reformers. Reformers attacked home-work in the tenements for disrupting family life, distracting mothers from caring for their children, and preventing child workers from attending school.
Women’s Work

Though they came from starkly different backgrounds and led very different lives, the settlement workers and the immigrants they served were natural allies. In addition to aiding the disenfranchised, settlement work also significantly benefited the women who chose it as a vocation. Because they operated outside the sphere of established institutions with long-entrenched gender barriers, settlements afforded well-educated women rare opportunities for administrative and intellectual leadership. Victorian women were the accepted guardians of virtue, and they wielded this influence in public schools, settlement houses, clubs, societies, and above all, at home.19 Some settlement workers adopted a paternalistic view of the families, and particularly the young women, they served. Concerned that families were unable to adequately police their children’s activities, Mary Simkhovitch remarked that “the community itself must become foster mother and father.”20

A social reformer who was educated at Boston University, Simkhovitch established the Greenwich House Settlement at 26 Jones Street in 1902 (Figure 1). She was raised outside Boston by well-educated, prosperous parents who had opposed slavery during the Civil War. She met her husband, Russian-born economist Vladimir Simkhovitch, while studying social sciences in Berlin.21 In 1902, when Simkhovitch founded Greenwich House, Jones Street was an overcrowded, unpaved street populated predominately by immigrants from Ireland, Italy, and the Middle East. The settlement had fifteen residents in its first year; in addition to Mary, Vladimir, and their two young children.22

Simkhovitch had the benefit of working directly with Columbia University anthropologist Franz Boas, a pioneering advocate of cultural relativism, who served on Greenwich House’s Committee on Social Investigations at the turn of the century.23 She was also deeply influenced by the work of educator John Dewey, who headed the Education Committee at Greenwich House for several years.24 Dewey argued for an understanding of art and aesthetic experience as part of an integrated life, rather than an ornamental or auxiliary experience—a necessity rather than a luxury.25 In her first annual report Simkhovitch presents the scope of Greenwich House’s activities with a clear emphasis on the importance of cultivating a robust community social life. Her understanding of the benefits of social reform had a decidedly patriotic bent, immediately evidenced by the frequent appearance of the terms “democracy” and “citizen” in her writing. At the time of her education in social work in the 1890s, the United States was absorbing an unprecedented volume of new immigrants from places that had never before been significantly represented on the American demographic map.26 “The democracy,” she wrote in 1906, “to which we as Americans are pledged, demands cultural advantages for all, and this is impossible without a larger industrial opportunity.”27 Simkhovitch draws a connection between effective participation in democracy and “cultural advantages,” but nowhere in her writings is there evidence that she was concerned with profit—that is, she viewed the process of making things as an end unto itself, and did not regard the end products as potential sources of revenue for
the women that Greenwich House served. Simkhovitch’s two primary goals for arts programming were to acculturate the Jones Street residents through activities, club life, and classes, and to curtail vice by providing them with attractive alternatives to the saloon and the dance hall.

The programs of Greenwich House were played out on a stage that social reformers referred to as “club life.” Clubs formed the network of social and educational activity that enabled settlement workers like Simkhovitch to work closely with young people and to supervise their working together. The exercises in cooperation and group governance afforded by club activities were as much part of the agenda as the activities themselves. Simkhovitch wrote in 1911: “The purpose of these clubs is training for community life. Democracy has to be worked for. The constant fights, struggles, readjustments, co-operation, building up of standards that make up club life is the most valuable training possible.”

The crafts were taught alongside an array of acculturating activities that ranged from patriotic pageants, lectures, dances, concerts, performances of Shakespeare, and practical services like milk sterilization and medical care.

While Simkhovitch was focused on process and experience above all else, her colleague Katharine Lord was more pragmatic and determined to help the women in her classes earn money by making and selling lace when she established the Handicraft School in 1905 (Figure 4). Lord was a native of Burlington, Vermont, a graduate of Wellesley College, and had pursued graduate work at Bryn Mawr. A brochure written by Lord, published the year of the school’s founding, describes the goal of the program as the training of women and girls in “lace-making, weaving and allied crafts, and to develop an appreciation of the beautiful.” Lord wrote a lengthy article about the Handicrafts School for The Craftsman in 1908, which expands on these goals. The program, she wrote, “was established to meet the needs of two classes of women: foreigners skilled in some form of hand-work who needed direction in design and choice of material, and girls and women physically unfit to enter the regular industrial field; and to foster and develop a love of the beautiful, and encourage its application to daily life.”

Lastly, Lord notes: “[w]orkers among our foreign population are constantly meeting women who have been trained in some of the hand industries of Europe, especially lace making and embroidery, for whose skill there is practically no employment in America.” Lord’s view differs strongly from that of Simkhovitch in terms of both professionalism and her evaluation of the relative marketability of lace-work. While Simkhovitch seems to have been primarily interested in the welfare of individual students, Lord was concerned with the larger economic context of their labor.

Tenement lace was one of the primary manifestations of a trend during this period known as “immigrant gifts.” Hull House founder Jane Addams, concerned with alienation between foreign-born mothers and American-born daughters, saw the production of traditional lace and textiles (Figure 5) as a tool for conveying cultural pride between the generations and promoting the benefits of a society that embraced new cultures. She sought to “Americanize” new arrivals, but also to...
make them feel comfortable with their own cultural background rather than attempting to erase that identity.\textsuperscript{32} This point of view, Boris asserts, is a peculiarly American incarnation of the Ruskinian romantic ideal, wherein the proverbial "medieval craftsman" is replaced by an Italian or Irish woman possessed of centuries-old patterns and techniques.\textsuperscript{33} Addams went so far as to establish the Hull House Museum, which featured exhibits of various articles of traditional weaving and spinning equipment from Eastern Europe, Ireland, and the Middle East alongside live demonstrations of techniques, recalling a world’s fair display. Numerous similar workshops sprang up in east coast and mid-western cities, but none of them, even the well-organized and ambitious South End House lace workshop in Boston, managed to enable individual workers to earn enough to make the enterprise economically worthwhile. If the "immigrant gifts" movement had value, it was in consciousness-raising rather than in the

facilitation of entrepreneurship for immigrant women. 

Lord betrays some cultural arrogance with regard to her charges when she writes that, although many of the immigrant women are “endowed with natural taste capable of development, without the knowledge of what is good, or even practicable in design, unable to obtain proper materials, these women spend many hours upon articles which are utterly worthless when complete. Many such pieces of lace and embroidery have been brought to residents of Greenwich House, often with a pathetic certainty that the teacher will be able to find a market for them.” Lord is not without hope for her students, however: “And yet many of these women have the talent, originality and instinct for beauty which make ordinary factory work distasteful to them. With proper materials, with instruction and direction in form and design, they are very
soon able to produce laces of the highest grade of excellence. Several such women have been earning steady incomes since their entrance into the school, and their pleasure in their work and the improvement in their general condition shows that the school is filling a real want.” Lord’s views suggest an uneasy balancing act between a traditional, Victorian understanding of high culture and a social worker’s desire to impart standards and an appreciation of “beauty” (objectively defined) with a genuine desire to help the lace-makers find a receptive audience for their designs.

Although the Pottery began with a social agenda similar to that of the lace-making program, there was no equivalent of sweatshops for ceramics in turn-of-the-century New York City. Thus the program lacked the moral imperative to “correct” a social ill. Under the leadership of professional potter Maude Robinson, it operated less like a social experiment and more like a professional guild, attracting prominent architects and interior designers as clients and some of New York City’s most prominent arts patrons as supporters. The desire to educate, acculturate, and assimilate immigrants through crafts might not turn a profit, but Pottery director Maude Robinson knew what would accomplish that goal, and she ignored the agendas of the social workers who had originated the Handicraft School. The Pottery was established as a distinct program in 1911 and Robinson ran it until 1941.

Robinson was brought up in an upper-middle-class family not unlike that of Simkhovitch. She was born in 1880 in Corning, New York, where her father was a dry goods merchant. She studied at the Art Students League in New York City for three years before attending Newcomb Art School in New Orleans, Louisiana (the antecedent of the renowned Newcomb Pottery). Rather than focusing on the social aims of the settlement as Simkhovitch and Lord did, Robinson approached her work at Greenwich House from the perspective of her own training, which was as a professional studio potter (Figure 6). She came of age during a period when opportunities for American women in ceramics were opening up, and long-held gender barriers were beginning to fall away. The cliché of women painting china at home as a “parlor craft” was well entrenched during her lifetime. In commercial potteries, both in Britain and America, there existed a belief that men were suited to making pots while women, due to their supposed aptitude for delicate, repetitive work, were better suited to decorating them—a division of labor that persisted until the turn of the century. It was not until the early 1900s that female studio potters like Mary Louise McLaughlin began to prove that women had both the aesthetic skill and technical aptitude to master both the scientific and artistic aspects of studio pottery.

From her earliest writings, Robinson’s focus is the quality and critical reception of the work produced in the Pottery’s workshops—nowhere is a reference to John Ruskin or the reunification of mind and hand to be found. A summary that she prepared for a Greenwich House Annual Report conveys obvious pride that some of her students have found gainful employment at a commercial pottery, and that pieces made at Greenwich House were purchased by the New York Public Library.
and the National Society of Craftsmen. She describes field trips to view ceramics at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a visit from a Columbia University ceramics professor, and robust sales. A similar summary from 1918 details an extraordinarily impressive roster of clients for Greenwich House wares, far exceeding the prestige of a local craft sale: Delano and Aldrich, the A.B. Houghton estate at Corning, New York, and the Chicago architect David Adler.39

In later years, no less a patron than J.P. Morgan commissioned white garden urns from Greenwich House Pottery, as did the Garden Club of America. Pots by the Greenwich House Potters and Sculptors, as the emerging professional group called themselves, found their way into the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Newark Museum, and won prizes such as the Art Institute of Chicago Prize of 1924 (Figure 7).
In addition to securing patrons for the pots, Robinson succeeded in finding support for the studio itself. Contributions from Marshall Field, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, and John D. Rockefeller Jr. allowed the Pottery to purchase a state-of-the-art electric kiln in 1929. As early as 1919, Robinson used the language of a small boutique firm to describe the Pottery’s activity; in a letter sent to the offices of Delano and Aldrich in response to a complaint from a client, she wrote: “The Pottery Department at Greenwich House is working strictly on a business and professional basis not as a charity institution.” In this letter, Robinson refers to consultation with experts and emphasizes her own expertise, a major departure from the experiential focus of Simkhovitch and the conscious-raising efforts of Katharine Lord.

**Improbable Survival**
The lace-making and other crafts programs at Greenwich House collapsed during the Depression, and the organization’s leaders eventually found that they could not manage the business side of the Handicraft School nor provide a source of
significant employment for women in the neighborhood. The Handicraft School was succeeded by the Neighborhood Art School and the Pottery was the only program that resumed operation after the Second World War. Although Maude Robinson’s approach lacked the moral imperative of Simkhovitch and Lord, Greenwich House Pottery’s continued existence may be a credit to her pragmatism. When Greenwich House and other settlement house craft programs were established at the turn of the century, art instruction was rare even in universities and rarer still outside of the academy. In the century since its founding, instruction in fine art and studio crafts has pervaded universities (and not without considerable debate about its place in higher education). After the Second World War, when craft education in the US gravitated to the university on the strength of the GI Bill, neighborhood and settlement house art and craft programs took on a new supplementary role. Most of the modern craft centers to which Greenwich House Pottery is usually compared, like Penland, Philadelphia’s Clay Studio, or Minnesota’s Northern Clay Center, were founded well after the Second World War; with an educational model that acknowledged the primacy of craft education in the university system.

What sets the Greenwich House Pottery apart is that, as craft education gained a foothold in academia in the 1940s and 1950s, it was able to remain viable by combining a serious focus for a small number of distinguished emerging professional artists with a broad emphasis on community education and enrichment. The Pottery thus attained a base of ongoing support as well as broad credibility in the field, in a sense retaining the heritage of both the settlement ideals embodied by Simkhovitch and Lord, and the professional focus of Maude Robinson. By the time Alfred-trained ceramist Jane Hartsook became director in 1945, the Pottery was poised to become an incubator for talent within the rich cultural fabric of postwar Greenwich Village (Figure 8). The multi-faceted agenda of its founders, which inadvertently combined a focus on quality of craftsmanship with a desire to make available the social benefits of craft instruction, may be the source of Greenwich House’s enduring strength.

Notes

1 As it functions today, the only surviving program—Greenwich House Pottery—balances an emphasis on the use of craft as a tool for personal enrichment for the majority of its adult students, with providing opportunities to a small cohort of emerging and established professional artists. One could not exist without the other: buoyed by the tuition revenue and community support of its student population, the residency program and gallery can provide valuable opportunities to professional ceramists, the notoriety of which in turn helps Greenwich House marshal financial support for all the Pottery’s programs.


5 Ibid.


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**Fig 8** Eva Zeisel (second from left) and Aileen Osborn Webb (far right) visit Greenwich House Pottery during a benefit event organized with *Gourmet* magazine in 1955. Greenwich House Pottery Archives.


26 Macfarland, p. 62.


31 Ibid.


33 Boris, *Art and Labor*, p. 130.


40 Letter from Pottery Department to Messrs. Delano & Aldrich, January 18, 1919, Series V: Pottery School, Box 60, F. 5, Greenwich House Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University, Microfilm R-7088, Reel #43.

41 Hull House in Chicago, once famous for its ceramics program, continues to offer arts instruction today, but only for school-age children—no residencies or other professional opportunities are available for adults. Very few settlement houses currently offer serious classes for adults or studio-based residency programs; among the few are Greenwich House and the Henry Street Settlement. It is probably no accident that both Greenwich House and Henry Street operate in the artistic hub of lower Manhattan.