KINDERGARTEN GOES TO THE FAIR!
HOW THE WORLD’S FAIR OF 1876 ADVANCED THE
KINDERGARTEN MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

by
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ELIZABETH CORNELIUS PRUETT
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this historical narrative study was to discover how the World’s Fair of 1876 advanced the kindergarten movement in the United States. Historical documents, photographs, and drawings were used as data sources. The following questions guided this study: “What were the purposes of the kindergarten exhibits at the World’s Fair?” “Who were the individuals that demonstrated the kindergarten at the first Centennial World’s Fair and how did they influence the kindergarten exhibits at the next fair in 1893?” and “How did commercialism associated with the fair affect the kindergarten movement?”

The kindergarten exhibits at the Centennial World’s Fair had a profound effect on the way in which Americans viewed the kindergarten. At once viewed as a foreign import, the kindergarten became Americanized and more accepted by the majority of visitors. The fair exhibits also united the kindergarten pioneers in an effort to present an organized exhibit at the World’s Fair of 1893. Even though the proliferation of commercialized kindergarten materials exhibited at the Centennial World’s Fair often distorted the Froebelian kindergarten pedagogy, these materials increased the public’s awareness of the kindergarten movement and all of its benefits.

Keywords: kindergarten, Froebel, Centennial World’s Fair, feminism
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the memory of my father, Edward Paul Cornelius, who instilled in me a love for history.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

For nearly 150 years, World’s Fairs have amazed audiences around the globe. London’s Great Exposition of 1851 was only the beginning. Since then, approximately 90 World’s Fairs have been held in the United States, Canada, and Europe (Bolotin & Laing, 2002). It was not until 1876 that the first fair came to America. Held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, it was called the Centennial World’s Fair. Once introduced, the fairs would change the American landscape and culture introducing generations of Americans to such inventions and innovations as the telephone, X-rays, television, and even Fleischmann’s yeast (Rydell, Findling, & Pelle, 2000). Some, however, found the greatest discovery of all in a little cottage in the corner of the first World’s Fair in America. It was referred to as the Kindergarten Cottage (Brosterman, 1997).

The concept of the kindergarten came to America in the 1850s. In 1856, a German emigrant named Margarethe Meyer Schurz began the first German-speaking kindergarten in Wisconsin (Dombkowski, 2002). Schurz had studied under Friedrich Froebel while living in Germany. Considered by many to be the “father of kindergarten”, Froebel had dedicated his life to developing a curriculum and educational materials to be used to educate young children (Wolfe, 2000). As a devotee to the 19th century Swiss educator Pestalozzi, Froebel believed that all children could be educated. Much like Pestalozzi’s “whole child” point of view, Froebel’s teachings encompassed the child’s physical, emotional, social, moral, and intellectual development.
In 1860, the first English-speaking kindergarten was opened in the United States by Elizabeth Palmer Peabody in Boston, Massachusetts. Miss Peabody read about kindergarten in an article written by Dr. Henry Bernard in the *American Journal of Education* published in 1856. Bernard visited the kindergarten exhibit in England in 1854 as a delegate to the International Exhibit of Educational Systems and Materials and became interested in the kindergarten concept. As editor of the *Journal*, Bernard reported on the exhibit of kindergarten materials that were on display. After reading Dr. Bernard’s report, Miss Peabody became deeply interested in the movement (Vandewalker, 1908).

A chance meeting with Margarethe Schurz in 1859 in Boston, Massachusetts ignited Miss Peabody’s enthusiasm for kindergarten. Recruiting friends’ children, Miss Peabody’s school began with 30 pupils, two assistants, an additional assistant to teach French three days a week, and another assistant to teach gymnastics (Ronda, 1999).

Prior to 1870, there were only 10 kindergartens in the United States. The earliest kindergartens were private and independently owned. In addition to Miss Peabody’s kindergarten in Boston, one was opened in Columbus, Ohio and another in Hoboken, New Jersey circa 1861. Two kindergartens were opened in New York City in 1864, one in West Newton, Massachusetts by Mrs. Louis Pollock, and another kindergarten in Louisville, Kentucky in 1865 (Vandewalker, 1908).

In the 1870s, an organized movement for kindergarten education had taken root in the U.S. By 1890s, kindergartens started to spread across the American landscape (Dombkowski, 2001). Although much has been written about kindergarten in the U.S., little is known about the history of how the kindergarten movement spread to the various regions of the United States (Beatty, 1998).
According to Lascarides and Heinitz (2000), the kindergarten did not initially attract attention and support from the general public. By 1914, however, the kindergarten was widely accepted by “prominent American social reformers, educators and feminists” (Allen, 2006, p. 173). Dombkowski (2001) noted that the kindergarten education movement started in earnest in the 1870s. By the 1890s, the kindergarten could be found in urban public schools, and by 1920, 10% of U.S. schools had a kindergarten (Dombkowski, 2001). Dombkowski (2002) described the years between 1880 and 1920 as a period of great expansion for kindergarten education in the U.S.

The role of women during this 40 year period of time was an important component to the advancement of the kindergarten movement. At the same time the kindergarten movement had reached America, social and political roles for middle and upper class women of this era were being challenged. Specifically, the “feminist movement” was just starting to coalesce. Family prosperity enabled women of means to obtain an education that at one time had not been available to women in the U.S. Subsequently, a growing number of unmarried and well-educated women often found employment in order to support themselves. Empowered by influence and intellect, these women found themselves in the new political and public role of “caretakers of society” (Dombkowski, 2002, p. 475). For the educated middle-class woman, becoming a pioneer in the kindergarten movement (a kindergartener) would provide a respectful paying vocation, and at the same time, provide her with a platform to advocate for child welfare reform.
The Centennial World’s Fair of 1876 offered manufacturers and those with commercial interests an opportunity to introduce their products to a sizeable audience. At the close of the Centennial, nearly 10 million Americans had visited the fair, one-fifth of the total population (Rydell, 1984). This opportunity was not lost on toy manufacturer Milton Bradley, who seized this moment to introduce millions of Americans to kindergarten and its related materials.

Bradley was first introduced to the kindergarten at the height of the toy manufacturer’s commercial success. Bradley learned of Froebel’s gifts and occupations from German emigrant and music teacher Edward Weibe. Weibe had been a student of Froebel’s widow and remembered many of the songs and games that were used. Bradley was approached by Weibe to publish a music collection, *The Paradise of Childhood: A Practical Guide to Childhood*. Although Bradley saw the beauty of the songs, Bradley initially refused to publish the book due to its “difficult and obscure language” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 69).

Bradley’s chance meeting with Elizabeth Peabody, however, had a profound impact. Attending a lecture on kindergarten by Peabody, Shapiro (1983) described Bradley as having an “educational awakening” (p. 69). Bradley agreed to market kindergarten materials and Froebelian literature and to publish Weibe’s *The Paradise of Childhood*, against the advice of Bradley’s partners.

Bradley exhibited “kindergarten blocks” at the Centennial fair to a new American audience. Bradley claimed that these toys not only entertained but educated as well. Bradley was not alone. There were more than 22 other exhibitors at the Centennial fair who demonstrated educational toys and equipment. Among them was German emigrant Ernst Steiger, a New York book publisher who also manufactured educational materials.
and furniture. Both Bradley’s blocks and Steiger’s furniture were featured in the Centennial Kindergarten Cottage (see drawing on page 27).

**Statement of the Problem**

Although much has been written on the establishment of kindergarten in the United States, little has been written about the impact these fairs had on the people who participated in them and how the fairs’ presence aided the growth of the kindergarten movement. This study addressed this missing piece of literature. Specifically, this study described how the proliferation of the kindergarten movement was shaped by the events, people, and commercialism of this time period.

Beatty (1998) suggested that early childhood education has been one of the most under-researched fields in education. It was not until recently that interest in the history of early childhood has increased. Beatty (1998) further identified a continuing need for research to examine historical time periods for lessons from the past that can inform policy today. This research may help “increase public awareness of the importance of early childhood education and elevate the status of early childhood education as a profession” (p. 2). An aim of this study was to revisit the past and those who committed their lives to educating the young so that we can recommit ourselves to the profession.

Several events and people emerged from studying documents and photographs related to the Centennial World’s Fair of 1876. Therefore, including the people and events that influenced their actions increased credibility to the actual happenings at the fair and their relationship to the kindergarten movement. This narrative inquiry study attempted to create a complementary construct regarding the growth of the kindergarten movement throughout the United States.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to discover how the World’s Fairs of 1876 advanced the kindergarten movement in the U.S. Narrative inquiry is a qualitative approach that relies on stories and narratives for meaning. This approach was implemented in order to restory the lives of those who participated in these World’s Fairs (Lichtman, 2013). This investigation also included a review of the social, political, and economic contexts for women of this era and the commercialism associated with the kindergarten movement.

Research Questions

The central research questions for this investigation were: (1) What were the primary factors that contributed to the spread of the kindergarten movement in the United States? and (2) What role did the World’s Fair of 1876 play in advancing the kindergarten movement? The following sub questions emerged from the initial reading of documents:

1. What were the purposes of the kindergarten exhibits at the World’s Fair?
2. Who were the individuals that demonstrated the kindergarten at the first Centennial World’s Fair and how did they influence the kindergarten exhibits at the next fair in 1893?
3. How did commercialism associated with the fair affect the kindergarten movement?
Significance of the Study

This study first sought to highlight the struggles of the past in order to remind us of where we came from as early childhood educators. An examination of the past should encourage current educators to recommit to the purposes of educating all young children. Second, this investigation sought to add to the body of literature regarding how the kindergarten movement advanced in the United States. Third, this study informs early childhood educators, collegiate faculty, and policymakers of the significance of the advent of the kindergarten and how it propelled the progressive movement in U.S. education.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The researcher made limited assumptions about this study. As an investigation, the researcher relied on documents and photographs for much of the data. Since events occurred in the distant past, interviews individuals who were in attendance at these fairs was not possible, thereby limiting the data that could be collected from participants. Many of the reference documents were written as others’ accounts of the fairs (biographies, historical works), therefore, limited data were available through this outlet as well. Finally, this study was limited by access to historical documents since a few of the keepers of these documents were unwilling to provide access to them.
Definition of Terms

Most of the terms used in this study should be familiar to educators. However, to the novice reader the following terms are defined and their meanings explained in relation to this study.

1. African American: African American refers to an ethnicity of people who were born in America with roots and descendants in Africa. This term is used interchangeably in this study with other historical terms such as Colored.

2. Colored: Colored: Colored is defined by Webster as a person of a race other than the white; especially black (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/colored).

3. Feminist Movement: Also known as the Women’s Movement, the Feminist Movement involved middle and upper class women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries who were advocating for the rights of women in a “struggle to advance the power, status, and autonomy of women” (Cordato, 1983, p. 116).

4. Friedrich Froebel: Considered by many to be the “Father of Kindergarten”, Froebel was born in Germany in 1782. Froebel developed a curriculum for young children between the ages of three to seven years old. According to Wolf (2000), the kindergarten curriculum was developed in order to promote a child’s physical, emotional, social, moral, and intellectual development.

5. Froebelian Approach: Froebel’s approach to learning was based on play. Froebel viewed the teacher’s role as the director of child’s play. Froebel’s goal was for children to find joy in learning that would carry over to their attitude toward work and other school activities.
6. Gifts and Occupations: Froebel’s program for young children included gifts and occupations. The gifts were concrete materials that children manipulated in certain ways accompanied by songs and rhymes. Occupations were planned experiences that were designed to enhance the child’s eye-hand coordination. Occupations included activities such as drawing on grid paper, lacing paper strips, and folding and cutting paper into designs (Wolfe, 2000).

7. Kindergarten: In the beginning of the movement, kindergarten included the education of three, four, and five year olds. Currently, kindergarten includes children who are approximately five years old.

8. Kindergarteners: For this study, this term refers to individuals (teachers) who teach kindergarten children.

9. Progressive Movement: This period of time extended from after the Civil War (approximately 1865) until the end of the 19th century. The Progressive Movement engaged a group of psychologists, social workers, economists, and educators who aspired to reshape American society. The education of young children was seen as a means of accomplishing this goal. These reformers “sought to influence the behavior of children directly as individuals rather than as members of families, which had been the previous approach” (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000, p. 215).

10. Transcendentalism: According to Beatty (1985), transcendentalism was a belief held by many American romantics who “worshiped children as godlike beings through whom adults could experience rejuvenation, a second childhood” (p. 28).
Organization of the Study

This study is comprised of five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the study, stated the problem to be studied, provided the purpose of the study, identified the potential significance of the research, listed assumptions and limitations, and provided a brief glossary of terms. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature, including the history of the World’s Fairs, the ways in which kindergarten came to America, the “woman problem” during the mid-19th century, the women who participated in the fair, and the commercialism associated with the kindergarten concept at the Centennial World’s Fair. Chapter 3 describes the qualitative, narrative inquiry design of this study. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the data that were collected in this study through reading and rereading of documents related to the research question. Chapter 5 includes a summary and discussion of the research findings, recommendations for practice, and implications for future research.
Chapter 2
Review of Literature

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature associated with the Philadelphia Centennial World’s Fair of 1876 and the early roots of the kindergarten movement in the United States. It also includes a review of the social, political, and economic context for women of this era and the commercialism associated with the kindergarten movement.

Kindergarten in America

Before the arrival of the kindergarten in the 1850s, there had been early childhood education in various forms. One of the most notable was the infant school that had been imported from England to the United States for children ages five and under. These programs, however, “tended toward the strictly academic and didactically moral in content and method” (Dombkowski, 2002, p. 475). The way in which Americans would educate young children, however, was soon to change.

At this time, family life was also changing for Americans. Although many families in America remained agrarian, there were those who now had fathers who were wage earners working outside the home and mothers who were considered to be homemakers and consumers. This shift in roles, from agrarian to industrial, gave mothers more time to devote to child rearing. While family life was changing, so were advances in printing and the ability to transport newly published information. This opened up
opportunities for mothers to have access to all of the new literature on educating their young children at home (Beatty, 1995).

**Friedrich Froebel.** As Americans were adjusting to the idea of educating their young children at home, a new pedagogy was being developed in Germany by Friedrich Froebel. Froebel was born in 1792 in a wealthy village in the Thuringian Forest that was known for its natural herb remedies. Froebel’s mother died shortly after his birth which left Froebel’s childrearing in the hands of his father, a strict Lutheran minister. Conflicted by the strict religious instruction imposed on him by his father, Froebel sought answers in the woods of the Thuringian Forest where he developed a love for nature. At the age of 15, Froebel began his apprenticeship with a forester (Shapiro, 1983). During the two years spent studying plants and trees, Froebel acquired “the sense of order and harmony in nature that would permeate his educational philosophy” (Beatty, 1995, p. 39).

After numerous attempts to find work that would satisfy his restlessness and curiosity, Froebel enrolled in the Yverdon Institute to study with Pestalozzi. Fascinated by Pestalozzi’s principle of object teaching and how objects can be used to excite a child’s interest in learning, Froebel became an advocate for educational reform (Shapiro, 1983).

Froebel named his innovation *kindergarten*—child garden. Froebel thought that this name best captured the Romantic theory of a new educational institution for young children. Comparable to the American Transcendentalists, Froebel expressed a belief that “the material world was only the outward expression of the inner divinity of all things” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 20).
The principle idea underlying this philosophy was the concept of unity, which Froebel thought young children expressed best through play. To this end, Froebel designed educational play materials, which included geometric building blocks and pattern activity blocks. Froebel also created games and songs that would aid the young child in learning to cooperate and develop self-control, as compared to the more rigid academic instruction. Kindergarten, with its social curriculum, was viewed by many as a “means of fostering social harmony and preventing class conflict” (Beatty, 1995, p. 38).

Froebel’s idea of fostering social-educational reform was not well-received by all. Although Froebel did not consider himself to be a political radical, the term kindergarten became associated with German liberalism. Political reformers viewed the kindergarten as a means of fostering social change. In 1851, a decree was made prohibiting the establishment of the kindergarten. It was viewed “as an agency of atheism and subversion” (Beatty, 1995, p. 49). It was for these reasons that kindergarten was politically banned in Germany.

Shortly before his death in 1852, Froebel set into motion the arrival of the kindergarten in America. With the ban of kindergarten in Germany, many of Froebel’s followers were forced into exile. It was there, in the countries where they took refuge, that Froebelian pedagogy was introduced. Bertha Meyer Ronge and her sister Margarethe Meyer were two of the refugees who moved to Great Britain. While living in Great Britain, Maragarethe met and married another German exile, Karl Schurz. The Schurzes and their children soon immigrated to Wisconsin in 1852. In 1856, in Watertown, Wisconsin, Maragarethe established the first American kindergarten in their family home for her own children and other German-American families (Allen, 2006).
Margarethe put into practice the methods she had learned from Froebel with her two daughters and their four cousins. In the beginning, classes were held in the parlor and on the front porch of the Schurz’s home. As word spread, other German emigrant families requested for their children to join the group. Soon, the kindergarten classes had gotten to be so large that they had to be moved to a small vacant store that was located in the center of the town. Froebel’s gifts and occupations were used as well as his games and songs using their native German language (Weber, 1969).

**Woman “Problem”**

The kindergarten movement would not have flourished in America if it had not been for the patronage of the more affluent young women of the United States. Just as the kindergarten had reached America, social and political roles for middle and upper class women of this era came into question. Women were not only challenging the doctrine of “original sin”, but they were also recognizing and supporting a more positive view of children’s potential than previous generations. These women urged the Church to think of redemption as a social endeavor that needed to be addressed. This “social gospel movement” did much to transform the cultural landscape of religion in America, where Church and State were considered to be separate (Allen, 2006, p. 178).

The question of what to do with “these women” gained urgency among the Church and the elites who recognized and feared the growing number of middle class women who were well-educated and unmarried. While most women of their age were focused on a husband and family, these women were searching for ways to influence change. It became urgent then to find a vocation for these women that would nurture their social and political aspirations and enable them to earn a modest wage. The question of
how best to do this may have been answered with the advent of the kindergarten movement in the United States. Becoming a kindergartener would create a respectable and paid vocation for women and at the same time give them the social and political leverage they sought (Dombrowski, 2002). Beatty (1995) contended that females who followed Froebel’s teaching in the early days of the movement “made the kindergarten one of the first and most popular of modern women’s movements” (p. 40).

The kindergarten movement also filled the void for upper class women in America. These women needed a “cause” to showcase their newfound public and political roles as “caretakers of society” (Dombrowski, 2002, p. 477). Women became supporters of the kindergarten and developed a network of organizations and associations to advance the movement. Groups sought donations, held lectures and demonstration classes, and lobbied school administrators and government policymakers for the sake of making the kindergarten accessible to all young children (Dombrowski, 2002). Therefore, it was not surprising to find that prominent American social reformers, educators, and feminists alike had all embraced the kindergarten movement (Allen, 2006).

**History of the World’s Fairs**

As stated by Rydell et al. (2000), “Long before the internet and the World Wide Web, another network—a veritable web—of world’s fairs ringed the globe, giving form and substance to the modern world” (p. 1). The World’s Fair movement originated in London in 1851 with the Crystal Palace Exhibit. The first world’s fair was conceptualized in America in 1853 by Horace Greely and P. T. Barnum. However, it was overshadowed by growing tension between sections of the United States that a decade later would result in the Civil War (Rydell et al., 2000). It was 23 years later that the first world’s fair was
finally held in America. The fairs, often referred to as international expositions or exhibitions, spread across “the American cultural landscape, defining its form and content and influencing the lives of tens of millions of fairgoers” (Rydell et al., 2000, p. 1).

World’s fairs had a defining effect on the way in which Americans viewed themselves and the world. For example, these fairs influenced the creation of amusement parks like Coney Island and Disney World. In recent years, however, interest in the world’s fairs has decreased. Waning interest is due in part to fairs having to compete with a variety of electronic media and theme parks which, ironically, the world’s fairs helped to nurture (Rydell et al., 2000).

1876 World’s Fair

The setting for this study was the 1876 World’s Fair held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The 1876 World’s Fair, often referred to as the Centennial World’s Fair, was used as a vehicle to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Philadelphia was considered the birthplace of American independence, so it was naturally fitting that it was chosen as the site to hold a “grand commemoration of the centennial anniversary of independence” (Westcott, 1876, p. iii).

At this point in history, the United States of America was trying to regroup after a bitter Civil War. The fair offered an opportunity to bridge the gap between the North and the South. By encouraging participation of all the states, one of the organizers stated that the fair would help to “cement the bonds of a common brotherhood rudely battered by a bloody, fratricidal war” (Gross & Snyder, 2005, p. 8). Accordingly, the fair would give
Americans an escape from the economic and political uncertainties of the Reconstruction years (Rydell, 1984).

Planning for the fair began in 1871 when Congress passed a bill to commemorate the 100th anniversary of America’s Independence. The bill provided for the establishment of committees with delegates from each state to comprise a commission. The bill did not, however, appropriate funds for the exhibition. The cost of financing the fair fell on the city of Philadelphia and its upper class elites (Rydell et al., 2000). Eventually, the United States Centennial Board of Finance sold stock subscriptions to raise the additional funds needed for the fair to occur (Cordato, 1983).

The Centennial World’s Fair opened at 9 a.m. on May 10, 1876, and stayed in operation six days a week for six months, closing on November 10, 1876. Over this period of time, more than 9 million guests attended the Centennial Exposition. Considering the total population of the U.S. in 1876 was only 46 million people, this was indeed a significant number of attendees (Rydell, 1984).
Figure 1. Map of Centennial Grounds. Fairmount Park, Philadelphia. (Hunter, 1876).

Inventions and innovations at the fair. The Centennial Exposition was seen as a turning point for the country’s self-image and the beginning of America’s prominence in the world. Adding credence to this fact were the many modern inventions that were on display. The Corliss steam engine held the attention of most in the Machinery Hall. It being 30 feet tall and having 1,400 horsepower made it the dominant attraction. Other modern marvels on display were the typewriter, the elevator, the gas cooking stove, and Bell’s telephone (Brosterman, 1997).

For some, the Centennial Exposition was a giant party. Although the fair was closed on Sundays and smoking was banned, alcohol could be found readily available. Bandstands, eating establishments, and soft-drink stands offering flavored syrups with
water could be found all over the fairgrounds. A new beverage was even given its own demonstration and manufacturing area. Charles E. Hires was allowed to demonstrate how his new beverage, Root Beer, was manufactured from dried roots and spices (Brosterman, 1997).

Sights at the fair. Fountains and statues that dotted the landscape added to the splendor of the fairgrounds. One fountain, located in the center of the fairgrounds, was referred to as the “Total Abstinence Fountain”. The immense fountain was designed by Herman Kirn and funded by the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America. In the center of the fountain was a statue of Moses surrounded by a 40 foot circular basin feet. Drinking fountains were located around the basin at the foot of marble statues of prominent American Catholics (Rydell, 1984).

One of the most noted statues found at the fair was the Torch of Liberty from the yet unfinished Statue of Liberty (drawing on page 20). At a dinner party in 1865, French sculptor Frederic Bartholdi conceived of the idea of giving the United States a monument to commemorate its centennial celebration. This monument was to be a gift from the French to honor this pinnacle event. At the time of the Centennial Exhibition, only the right hand holding the torch and flame were completed. It was rushed over so it could have a prominent place on the fairgrounds and its previewing would help to raise funds for the remainder of the sculptor (Gross & Snyder, 2005; Rydell, 1984).
Fairmount Park, where the exposition was held, included almost 200 buildings, pavilions, and grandstands surrounded by gardens, ponds, and fountains. A four-mile, asphalt-paved road linked all of this, which was a new discovery to the many visitors from rural America. The one building that would have the greatest cultural impact, however, was also one of the smallest. It was so insignificant among the other grander
buildings that it was not included on the many guide maps sold at the fair. Many considered this modest structure, which was an annex to the Women’s Pavilion, a “revolutionary pipsqueak” called the Kindergarten Cottage (Brosterman, 1997, p. 10).

**Women at the Fair**

Initially, planners of the Centennial World’s Fair planned on having one grand building to house all of the major exhibits, the Main Building. Due to the overwhelming response of exhibitors, it became evident that additional buildings would be needed. The question was how to pay for additional structures (Rydell, 1984). In 1873, the all-male United States Centennial Board of Finance appointed a group of women from across the nation to serve on the Women’s Centennial Executive Committee. By enlisting the aid of women, the Finance committee hoped to raise the funds needed to build additional structures through the sale of Centennial stock subscriptions (Cordato, 1983).

Chosen to be president of the Women’s Centennial Committee was Elizabeth Duane Gillespie, the great-granddaughter of Benjamin Franklin. Through her efficient leadership, the committee sold enough stock subscriptions to raise the additional 1 million dollars needed in a matter of days. In return for their remarkable achievement, the women were to be given ample space in the Main Building to showcase a special exhibit of “woman’s work” (Cordato, 1983, p. 117).

On June 11, 1875, Mrs. Gillespie received two letters. One of the letters was from the Director General of the Centennial World’s Fair explaining that there would not be any space available in the Main Building for their women’s exhibit. The letter went on to say that for $30,000 the women could build a relatively modest building of their own. The other letter was from the Chairman of the Grounds, Plans, and Buildings further
explaining, regretfully, how there was not any more money available to contribute toward this building. Mrs. Gillespie told others later that on that day the “cup of hope was dashed from our lips” (Weimann, 1981, p. 2).

After moments of total dismay, it was said that Mrs. Gillespie’s courage rose “like the thermometer on a warm day” (Weimann, 1981, p. 2). Anger soon replaced the shock of being turned away from the Main Building. Not to be shut-out, the Women’s Centennial Committee began a separate campaign to raise funds for their own pavilion (photo below). Women of the nation solicited local committees of various states and territories and in less than four months they raised the $31,160 needed for construction to begin (Cordato, 1983). Soon exhibit materials, volunteers, and money were flowing into Philadelphia, earmarked for the Woman’s Pavilion (Weimann, 1981).

In keeping with the Centennial’s theme of progress, the Woman’s Planning Committee hoped to exhibit more than the “pretty prettinesses” of woman’s work (Shapiro, 1983, p. 65). What visitors found instead in the Woman’s Pavilion were the many achievements that women had made in the fields of journalism, medicine, science, art, literature, invention, business, social work, and education. A library of books penned by women, an office that published its own newspaper for women, and an “innovative kindergarten annex” were found among the many exhibits in the Woman’s Pavilion (Freedman, 1979, p. 520). The *New Century* was an eight-page weekly paper published there on the premises. The purpose of the paper was to share with other women in the United States the advancements and achievements of American women (Cordato, 1983).
For all their talk about achievements and advancements made by women, there was a segment of the population that was underrepresented, the African American Woman. Hoping to have some recognition of their accomplishments at the Centennial Fair, African American women were sorely disappointed. Having been emancipated from slavery only a decade earlier, their hopes were short lived (Rydell et al., 2000).

Initially, the African American community was told that they would have an opportunity to demonstrate their accomplishments and contributions to America’s historical development. This did not come to pass. The only exhibit related to African Americans was a statue, *The Freed Slave*. African American men were even denied the opportunity to help with the construction of the fair. The only roles African Americans
played, once the fair opened, were as entertainers, waiters, hotel clerks, messengers, and janitors (Rydell, 1984).

In its early days, the Women’s Centennial Committee approached African American women to help them in selling stock subscriptions. After having formed a committee of African American women, these women soon found that they would not have any voice or play any part in local committees. They also discovered that the accomplishments they had hoped to display with those of white women were to be "classed." Accomplishments by African American women would be “confined exclusively among our own color” (Rydell, 1984, p. 28). Their outrage at being manipulated resulted in the executive committee granting the African American Women’s Committee an “honorable discharge” (Rydell, 1984, p. 28).

The Women’s Committee received a good deal of unfavorable publicity over this matter which resulted in the executive committee issuing a public apology to the African American Women’s Committee and an assurance that racial discrimination would not be a part of further fundraising activities. Despite the Women’s Committee suffering the same type of discrimination that was handed to them by the Director General of the Centennial Fair, they ultimately did not allow African American women to have any exhibit space or any recognition in the Woman’s Building (Rydell, 1984).

**Woman’s School House.** The purpose of the kindergarten exhibits at the Centennial World’s Fair was to introduce and demonstrate to visitors from all over the country the idea of kindergarten (Ross, 1976). The Froebel Society of Boston had great hopes of stimulating interest in the kindergarten through the exhibit. Children from an orphan asylum in Philadelphia *The Northern Home for Friendless Children* were used for
demonstration lessons (Baylor, 1965; Peabody, 1876). The model kindergarten was presented for the entire time that the exposition was in progress, three days a week for three hours a day (Vandewalker, 1908).

*Figure 4. The Kindergarten. (The Kindergarten, 1876)*
Eighteen children who were orphaned and living at a local charity institution were chosen for the kindergarten demonstration. These children were from the *Northern Home for Friendless Children* in Philadelphia, as noted in the photograph above (Brosterman, 1997; Shapiro, 1983; Wolfe, 2000). Peabody (1887) often referred to these children as “little orphan inmates” (p. 9). Classes were conducted with these children in front of large audiences each day by Miss Ruth Rose Burritt. Miss Burritt used Maria Boelte methods and Milton Bradley’s kindergarten products, and the children were seen and heard all over the fairgrounds. They could be found marching around and singing Froebelian songs. At other times during the day, they played games and completed hand work, only taking time off for lunch (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000; Shapiro, 1983).

Many were fascinated by the children and their play. One person in particular was Frank Leslie, an entrepreneur and journalist. Using his artists to work jointly on a picture, Leslie created a snapshot of the Fair in less than 24 hours. One such snapshot was the “Centennial Kindergarten”. This picture appeared in Frank Leslie’s newspaper and went on to be included in his *Historical Register of the Centennial Exposition*. The illustration was of a kindergarten lesson in progress with one child holding one of Bradley’s alphabet blocks and seated in Steiger’s furniture (see below).
The illustration also captured the “hushed excitement on the faces of the more than forty adults” who were packed in the Woman’s Schoolhouse (Shapiro, 1983, p. 77).

Other reporters also visited the cottage. The Philadelphia Ledger called it “one of the most interesting displays at the fair”, adding how it had become one of the great discoveries of our day (Shapiro, 1983, p. 77). The Ledger also reported on how the crowd of visitors overflowed the gallery space and even crowded into doors and windows. According to Shapiro, observers were known to stay for hours after the lessons to ask questions.

Although many visitors to the kindergarten exhibit were persuaded to enroll their children in private kindergartens, not all reactions were favorable. The kindergarten exhibits displayed a wide variety of products, theories, and practices. With each
promoting different ideas and methods, observers were soon confused. Many were fearful of the “foreign character” of the kindergarten (Shapiro, 1983, p. 79). One spectator was heard saying that the kindergarten was “a conspiracy to rob mothers of their little ones for the benefit of the kindergarteners” (Peabody, 1876, p. 138).

**Kindergarten Women**

**Elizabeth Palmer Peabody.** Instrumental in bringing the kindergarten exhibit to the Centennial World’s Fair of 1876 was Elizabeth Palmer Peabody. Miss Peabody was born in Billerica, Massachusetts in 1804 to Nathanial Peabody and Eliza Palmer. Peabody’s father was a doctor and her mother was a teacher. She was greatly influenced by her mother’s interest and dedication to education. Miss Peabody was also influenced by the other women in her family who thought that it was important to educate themselves and all of their children (Baylor, 1965).

Patriotism to country was also instilled in Miss Peabody at an early age. Her maternal grandfather was instrumental in America winning its freedom from Great Britain. This love for country was later reflected in Miss Peabody’s insistence on the importance of education for all Americans and her belief that education was needed for a better America (Ronda, 1999).

At the age of 16, Miss Peabody kept a school in a family’s home where she educated her two younger sisters, Mary and Sophia. She later moved to Boston at the age of 18. At this time, Boston had become a literary hub where it was not uncommon for well-educated women to be included. Miss Peabody became acquainted with all of the social and educational reformers of the time. It was in Boston that Miss Peabody met
Horace Mann, who had an enormous influence on her personal philosophy of educating children (Baylor, 1965).

In the 1860s, Miss Peabody and her recently widowed sister organized and conducted a school for young children in Concord, Massachusetts. Here she and Mary (Horace) Mann rediscovered their passion for early childhood education (Ronda, 1999). It was in the home of mutual friends that Miss Peabody and Mary were introduced to the educational reforms of Fredrick Froebel. Margarethe Schurz and her daughter Agathe were visitors in the same home. Their hosts had four children whom Peabody commented on as being “so child-like, yet wise” (Ronda, 1999, p. 273). Mrs. Schurz explained how the children had been brought up in a kindergarten. Peabody was immediately intrigued and inquired about the kindergarten. Mrs. Schurz asked if she had heard of Froebel and explained how she had met him while in Germany. She told of hearing him lecture on kindergartening and of how, when she immigrated to America, she set up a German-speaking kindergarten in her home in Watertown, Wisconsin.

Miss Peabody expressed her interest to Mrs. Schurz and asked Mrs. Schurz to send to her the preface of Froebel’s *Education of Man*. Armed with this new knowledge, Miss Peabody indicated that she had witnessed her first “glimpse of the perfect growth of a child” (Ronda, 1999, p. 273). In 1860, Miss Peabody opened the first English-speaking kindergarten in the United States. Recruiting the children of her friends, Miss Peabody’s school began with 30 pupils, two assistants, an additional assistant to teach French three days a week, and another assistant to teach gymnastics.

Peabody, who considered herself an American Transcendentalist, was fascinated by Froebel’s romantic view of educational philosophy. Transcendentalism was known for its idealized vision of women without any realistic role for women in society. The
kindergarten, however, offered Peabody a respectful and meaningful cause that would hopefully result in “self-respecting, autonomous work” (Beatty, 1995, p. 39). Like many other women with her class standing, if she remained unmarried she would need to find work that would be considered both respectful and worthy of her educational background.

In describing the experience of the kindergarten, Miss Peabody reported it as being “organized play” with little unsupervised play that did not involve the group. She referred to it not as a nursery school or primary school but as “children in society – a commonwealth or republic for children” (Ronda, 1999, p. 274). This reflected her love for democracy which was instilled in her at an early age.

In 1867, Miss Peabody traveled to Germany to study with Baroness Marenholtz-Bulow. It was there that she invited several German kindergarteners to bring their expertise to America. Among those who came were Maria Boelte (later Kraus-Boelte) and Emma Marwedel who went on to train a generation of women in Froebelian kindergartening (Allen, 2006).

At the age of 66, Miss Peabody had not lost any of her energy or spirit in seeing that the kindergarten was brought to all areas of the United States. She thought that the idea of the kindergarten as a means of “regenerating humanity” did not need to be localized but spread to all parts of the nation (Baylor, 1965, p. 101). Miss Peabody used her voice, her writings, and her kindergarteners to spread the message.

Miss Peabody viewed the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 as an opportunity to demonstrate the kindergarten in its “most advanced form” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 73). The kindergarten, she noted, had been represented at previous exhibitions through commercial endeavors beginning with the kindergarten exhibit at the London
International Exposition of 1852. Mrs. Kraus-Boelte and Mr. Hoffman attempted to acquaint the world with the kindergarten system by exhibiting Froebel’s gifts and occupations. Miss Peabody proposed that, if the displays at these fairs had been successful at European exhibitions, how much more successful could an actual demonstration kindergarten be (Shapiro, 1983). In her letter to the Boston Meeting of Kindergartens, Miss Peabody wrote, “I thought it would be much more satisfactory if the children could be seen at their work and play” (Peabody, 1876, p. 237).

In the absence of a national organization to support the demonstration kindergarten, Miss Peabody turned to the Froebel Society of Boston. The purpose of the society was to advance Froebelian ideas through the establishment of private kindergartens and training schools. The Boston Froebel Society also supported the publication of the Kindergarten Messenger, a publication of Froebel’s method edited by Peabody. Through the assistance of the Froebel Society and funds raised through her publication, a “Centennial Kindergarten” was established (Shapiro, 1983).

As the kindergarten movement gained momentum in the U.S., so did its opponents. Many strayed from Froebelian methods and experimented with different methods of their own. One opponent was Susan Blow. Miss Blow opened a kindergarten in St. Louis in 1873. Miss Peabody attributed Miss Blow’s lack of skill to the fact that her “Presbyterian creed clouded her perception of Froebel’s benignant religion” (Baylor, 1965, p. 106).

Hoping to attract followers, Miss Peabody published the Kindergarten Messenger in 1873 to promote the high standards of the kindergarten work and the kindergarten teacher training classes. The magazine also included articles that were intended to educate the audience on Froebelian principles. Miss Peabody ceased the magazine after
only two years of publication since the income generated from subscriptions did not keep up with the cost of publishing. She consigned the *Kindergarten Messenger* to the *New England Journal of Education* but would soon have regrets for ending it as an independent publication (Ross, 1976).

Although she continued to write for the publication, Miss Peabody was met with much criticism when she wrote of the kindergarten exhibits at the Philadelphia World’s Fair of 1876. In her writings, Miss Peabody publicly expressed her dislike of an exhibit entitled “The American Kindergarten”. This exhibit was conducted by Anna Coe (aka Emily Coe). Peabody disapproved of Coe’s exhibit for encouraging activities such as teaching and writing. Miss Peabody feared that these new methods would be spread to other parts of the country since the purpose of the kindergarten exhibits at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition was to introduce and demonstrate to visitors the idea of the kindergarten (Ross, 1976). The editor of the *New England Journal of Education* would not allow Miss Peabody to criticize Anna Coe’s exhibit nor Louisa Pollock’s advertising of her advanced methods and techniques of kindergartening at the Exposition. In protest, Miss Peabody resigned from the *Journal* staff (Ronda, 1999).

Miss Peabody continued lecturing and promoting kindergarten all over the nation and Europe. In 1877, she suffered a stroke and returned home weakened and sick. In 1879, Miss Peabody developed cataracts and suffered a serious fall from which she never totally recovered. By this point in her career, Miss Peabody was legendary for her causes and her forgetfulness. Her lack of concern for her appearance grew more noticeable and humorous causing her family and friends to appoint someone to look after her.

On January 3, 1894, Miss Elizabeth Peabody died while living in Boston. At her funeral, Miss Peabody was eulogized as a brilliant and loving teacher and a ceaseless
advocate for the oppressed in this country and other countries. The service closed with a choir of kindergarten teachers singing “Lead Kindly Light”. Miss Peabody’s body was taken to Concord where she was interred in the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, near the graves of Emerson, Thoreau, and Alcott (Ronda, 1999).

**Ruth Rose Burritt.** The Philadelphia Centennial Exposition acquainted the Quaker City with a new institution, the kindergarten. The Exposition kindergarten was conducted in an annex to the Woman’s Pavilion by Miss Ruth Burritt of Wisconsin. Miss Burritt was chosen by the Boston Froebel Society based on her background as a primary teacher before she became a kindergartener. Burritt was also said to have the manner and insight that would work to gain followers for the new cause (Vanderwalker, 1908). Miss Burritt was living and teaching in Boston in 1874-1876 at the time she was chosen by the Froebel Society to run the Exposition’s Kindergarten Cottage (Brosterman, 1997).

Before the exposition opened, Miss Burritt was asked to move in with the orphans at the Northern Home of Friendless Children. These children would be demonstrating Froebel’s gifts and occupations under Miss Burritt’s direction; therefore, it became necessary to have them well prepared for the task. In addressing the Boston Kindergarteners, Miss Peabody (1876) said that Miss Burritt found it to be “an advantage, for our present purpose, that the children, instead of being petted and amused, had been neglected, repressed, and without pleasures of any kind” (p. 273). After eight months of preparation, the children were readied for the task. Miss Burritt would have them clean and neat in appearance for the three days of the week that they would demonstrate Froebel’s teachings (Beatty, 1995; Wolf, 2000).
Little is known about Miss Burritt’s early years prior to being chosen as the Centennial Kindergartener. Based on the accounts from one interview, she gave up teaching in 1872 intending to pursue another line of work (Vandewalker, 1924). Another source revealed that Miss Burritt had become dissatisfied with the “rigid methods of American common schools” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 75). However, sources indicate that Miss Burritt just happened upon a group of children playing with kindergarten materials in Appleton, Wisconsin, and she followed them into the kindergarten classroom. A temporary teacher was needed at the time so Miss Burritt was offered the position of kindergartener. When discussing this part of her career with Mrs. Baker, Miss Burritt said “I soon found that you could not run a kindergarten without training, arranged for a leave of absence, and started east to take a course in my new work” (Vandewalker, 1924, p. 136).

Miss Burritt further suggested that she did not encounter the first true German kindergarten until she arrived in New Jersey and visited Madame Kraus-Boelte. Miss Burritt’s kindergarten training, however, took place in Columbus, Ohio with Mrs. Ogden. After Ohio, Miss Burritt went to Boston where she met Elizabeth Peabody. Miss Peabody arranged for her to take courses with Miss Garland. After training, Miss Burritt returned to Appleton, Wisconsin to resume her kindergarten work (Vandewalker, 1924).

Miss Burritt was described by many as an energetic, friendly, well-liked, and small in stature with dark eyes (Shapiro, 1983; Vandewalker, 1908). When the school in Appleton, Wisconsin closed in 1874, Miss Burritt accepted an invitation to teach in Boston where she stayed for two years. It was in 1876 that Miss Burritt was approached by the Boston Froebelian Society to take responsibility for the kindergarten that was to be conducted at the exposition in Philadelphia (Vandewalker, 1924).
Being chosen for this position was considered a high honor. Miss Burritt revealed that there was considerable rivalry between schools to have their teacher in this position. When hearing of this conflict, Miss Burritt wrote the following to the Commissioner of Education: “I told him I would be only too glad to give way to someone better fitted for the place” (Vandewalker, 1924, p. 138). The Commissioner responded to Miss Burritt by informing her that she had been chosen and she would stay in that place: “You will stay where you are. That settles it” (Vandewalker, 1924, p. 138).

Teaching at the Centennial was said to have appealed to Miss Burritt. She noted that it was a perfect opportunity to acquaint thousands of American parents and teachers with a way of teaching that was totally different from what they had seen in homes and schools. Miss Burritt viewed kindergarten teaching as a form of emancipation for women; however, these views were not as radical as another feminist group in the Woman’s Pavilion (Shapiro, 1983). Sometime during the Centennial, Miss Burritt was stricken with a “great winter of physical discomfort” (Peabody, 1876, p. 297). She was forced to move out of the orphanage into an area of Philadelphia 15 miles away from the fair where the climate and waters were said to be more conducive to her health.

When the Centennial Exposition ended, Miss Burritt was asked by the Society of Friends, the Quakers, to add a kindergarten class to their schools at 18th and Race Streets in Philadelphia. This evolved into the first kindergarten training school to be opened in Philadelphia. The training school became known as the Centennial Kindergarten Training School of Philadelphia and was in operation for several years. Many notable women were trained under Miss Burritt, including: Mrs. Van Kirk, a noted leader in training other kindergarteners; Lelia E. Partridge, an educational writer; and Mrs. Eliza A. Blaker, one of the presidents of Teachers’ College in Indianapolis, Indiana (Vandewalker, 1924).
In the 1880s, Miss Burritt gave up her work of training kindergarten teachers. She is said to have married, but the marriage ended unhappily. After the divorce, she returned to her maiden name but retained the title “Mrs.”. Not long after her marriage ended, Mrs. Burritt was stricken with asthma so she moved to California in effort to return to her former health. She soon recovered but suffered a fall and broke her hip. The hip did not heal, and she was unable to walk again. Soon after, she also suffered the loss of her eyesight.

Mrs. Burritt died in 1921 in Glendale, California soon after her 89th birthday. She was laid to rest in Pasadena with a service that was worthy of her accomplishments. In attendance were 10 kindergarteners representing local kindergarten organizations, the International Kindergarten Union, and the National Education Association. As a memorial to Miss Burritt, a card was attached to a blanket of flowers that read: “In grateful appreciation of this friend of little children whose loving pioneering for the kindergarten prepared a warm welcome for us who have come after” (Vandewalker, 1924, p. 146).

Susan Elizabeth Blow. In addition to the Centennial Kindergarten, there were four other kindergartens on display. Peabody referred to these as “pretenders at the fair”. One of the most popular was the St. Louis kindergarten exhibit managed by Susan Blow. Blow herself conducted classes in the St. Louis kindergarten exhibit at the fair during the months of June and July, 1876 (Shapiro, 1983).

Susan Blow was born on June 7, 1843, in Carondelet, a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri. She was one of three daughters and two sons born to Minerva (Grimsley) and Henry Taylor Blow. Blow’s father was a wealthy entrepreneur who came from English
ancestry and affluent Virginia forebears. He was also well-educated and a leader in the
St. Louis business and political circles. Blow’s father also served two terms in Congress
(1863-1867). Her mother, known for being deeply pious, was the daughter of a successful
St. Louis manufacturer. Raised Presbyterian, Blow was known as being a thoughtful and
serious-minded young lady. She was educated at home by tutors until she was 16. Blow
was sent to New York City by her family to attend Miss Haines’ School for two years. To
her father’s objections, the remainder of Blow’s education was completed at home
seeking, a worthwhile vocation.

Blow spent two years in Brazil, where her father was a United States minister.
Afterward, while traveling in Europe, she encountered the kindergarten work of Friedrich
Froebel (Ross, 1971). During her time in Germany, Blow spent long hours visiting
kindergarten classes and taking notes. At last she had found what she had been so
desperately seeking before her travels began; kindergarten seemed to fill that void. With
Froebel’s teaching tools in hand, she returned to St. Louis ready to start her own
kindergarten (Ross, 1976).

When the family returned from Europe, Blow initiated her plans to set up a
kindergarten. Although her father offered to finance a private kindergarten, Blow refused
his help. She wanted the kindergarten to be a part of the public school system in St.
Louis. Blow approached the Superintendent of Schools in St. Louis about introducing an
experimental kindergarten. Superintendent William T. Harris and Miss Blow agreed that
she needed further training (Ross, 1971).

In 1872, Blow traveled to New York to study under Maria Kraus-Boelte, a
disciple of Froebel’s widow. Boelte, who was considered to be Froebel’s “spiritual
daughter”, had spent 13 years conducting a free kindergarten for the poor in London.
Boelte had been encouraged by Elizabeth Peabody to come to New York City and teach kindergarten at the Henrietta Haines School. Susan Blow became Boelte’s first kindergarten trainee in the United States (Peabody, 1887; Ross, 1976).

Blow returned to St. Louis in 1873 to open the first public school kindergarten in America. The experimental kindergarten was located at the Des ‘Peres School in the Carondelet section of St. Louis (Ross, 1971, 1976). Per their original agreement, Superintendent Harris provided Blow with a classroom and one paid assistant. Twenty children were enrolled on that first day in September. Due to the overwhelming response, a second class was added in December of that same year. Lacking the needed teachers to meet the demand for more kindergarten classes, Susan Blow opened a public training school for kindergarten teachers in 1874 (Ross, 1976).

The kindergarten teachers spent their mornings in the kindergarten classrooms and their afternoons taking training courses with Miss Blow. She insisted on running the school herself in order to ensure the competence of each kindergartener. Blow did this for 11 years without pay (Wolfe, 2000). By 1879, there were 53 classes and 131 paid teachers. For more than 10 years, St. Louis remained the only city in America with public kindergarten classes (Ross, 1976).

Miss Blow’s St. Louis Kindergarten was also on display at the Centennial World’s Fair in 1876. The St. Louis version of the kindergarten was conducted by Miss Blow herself. Even though Centennial judges bestowed an award on Blow’s exhibit, it received much criticism from others. Specifically, it was said that the handwork on display was too perfect to be completed by kindergarten children (Shapiro, 1983).

In a letter to Elizabeth Peabody, Mrs. Kraus-Boelte reported on Miss Blow’s “school of modeling” that was on exhibit in Philadelphia. This letter, published in the
"Altogether, I have a sad impression of the Missouri kindergarten exhibit, for everything is so very perfect that no one will believe that little children ought to have done such work" (p. 69). The letter continued by describing how Miss Blow defended herself:

If Miss Blow says that she ‘feels no hesitation in saying that hers is the only sequence in modeling, where Froebel’s principles are thoroughly carried out, and his method correctly applied,’ she blinds herself in regard to what she ought to know better. (p. 69)

Miss Blow’s participation in the kindergarten movement was more the result of her earlier studies of philosophies and her desire for service and accomplishment than any real concern for social problems. Accustomed to a commanding social position and known for her strong will, Blow held rigidly to these views throughout her life (Ross, 1971).

Blow left St. Louis in 1888. She was distraught over being challenged by her own kindergartener students with their kindergarten innovations, which were contrary to her orthodox Froebelian views. After relocating to New York and then Boston in 1889, Miss Blow began a career of lecturing and teaching. In 1896, she was offered a position at Teacher’s College, which she held until 1906. During this time, she published many works on child development based on her views of German philosophy and pedagogy (Allen, 1995).

Even though Miss Blow’s early works brought about educational reform, later in life she played a mostly “obstructionist role” (Ross, 1971, p. 183). Unable to abandon her orthodox view of Froebelian theory and practice, she received considerable criticism
from proponents of a more progressive education. It was during this time that she converted to the Episcopal Church and the philosophy embraced by William T. Harris.

Susan Blow died on February 14, 1916, in New York City. She succumbed to heart failure from a long-term heart condition. Her funeral took place at the Christ Episcopal Church in St. Louis. Blow was interred in the city’s Bellefontaine Cemetery. A full-length portrait of Blow and two children inside of a kindergarten classroom hangs in the Missouri state capitol to this day (Ross, 1971). The State Historical Society of Missouri reports that soon after her death, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* reported: “A great commander is gone, but the soldiers will go marching on” (http://shs.umsystem.edu/historicmissourians/name/b/blow/index.html#section5so).

**Louise Plessner Pollock.** Mrs. Pollock was born in Erfurt, Prussia on October 29, 1832. Her father, Frederick Wilhelm Plessner, was an officer in the Prussian army who became interested in literary endeavors upon his retirement from active service. Plessner penned several textbooks in German and French that were used in the Prussian military schools. He began tutoring Louise, who was the youngest daughter, when she showed an exceptional interest in literary pursuits. At the age of 16, Louise was sent to Paris to complete her education of French. While she was studying in Paris she met George Henry Pollock of Boston, Massachusetts (Willard & Livermore, 1973b). At the age of 17, Louise and Henry moved to the United States (Bagley, 1916).

Even at an early age, Louise showed an interest in books that were written on the subjects of infant training, hygiene, and physiology. This interest was renewed later when she, her husband and their five children made their home in Boston, Massachusetts. Mrs.
Pollock was first acquainted with the kindergarten in 1859 when her relatives from Germany began sending her copies of all the writings that were being published on the kindergarten. She thus began her work as an educator with her own family (Willard & Livermore, 1973b).

During this time, her husband suffered from a reversal of fortunes. His investments in a copper mine in the Virginia area proved to be worthless. Mrs. Pollock turned her ability to create literary works into a means to support her family. She translated medical works and historical stories and wrote for several periodicals. Included in the kindergarten works that were sent to her from Germany was a copy of Lena Morgenstein’s *Paradise of Childhood*. The manual was devoted to movement plays set to music. Mrs. Pollock translated it into English and then went looking for a publisher (Willard & Livermore, 1973). According to Elizabeth Peabody, not having much luck on her own, Mrs. Pollock enlisted the aid and influence of Miss Peabody in getting the book published (Peabody, 1877b). A writer to *The New England Journal of Education* reported that Mrs. Pollock’s translation of *Paradise of Childhood* was published in 1864.

According to the article, it was said to be the first English guide book on kindergarten training to be published in the United States (Anonymous, 1877).

Nathaniel T. Allen, principal at a private school in West Newton, Massachusetts, wanted to open a kindergarten in his private school (Weber, 1969; Willard & Livermore, 1973). According to *The Evening Times* (1902), having heard of Mrs. Pollock’s kindergarten teaching of her own children and their playmates and her literary pursuits in kindergarten education, Mr. Allen asked Mrs. Pollack to open a kindergarten class in his school. Mrs. Pollock identified this as the first “pure” kindergarten in the United States (Allen, 1995).
Having sent her daughter, Susan, to Berlin in 1870 to study and take part in the teacher training courses for kindergarten, Mrs. Pollock thought that she also needed more training. In 1874, Mrs. Pollock went to Berlin and studied their kindergarten system (Allen, 1995). Upon her return to the United States, Mrs. Pollock moved the family to Washington, D.C. to be near her daughter, Susan. Susan Pollock had opened a kindergarten in Washington, D.C. in 1870 with another German emigrant, Emma Marwedel (Willard & Livermore, 1973).

Mrs. Pollock and Susan opened the Le Droit Park kindergarten in 1874. While Susan taught the boys and girls, the elder Mrs. Pollock added a training school for teachers with a series of lectures for mothers. Her earliest interests provided the knowledge she needed to create 60 hygienic and 56 educational rules. These rules, accompanied by her lectures, were first published in *The New England Journal of Education* in 1877 (Willard & Livermore, 1973).

It was her background in hygiene and education that gave Mrs. Pollock the fortitude to endure the criticism of her Kindergarten Exhibit at the Philadelphia World’s Fair of 1876. Mrs. Pollock’s exhibit came under attack by Elizabeth Peabody in *The New England Journal of Education*. Miss Peabody criticized Mrs. Pollock’s claim that she had invented and utilized new and different methods and techniques at her training school. Miss Peabody insisted that Pollock’s methods and techniques had “nothing to do with Froebel’s approach” (Ronda, 1999, p. 311).

Even after the close of the World’s Fair, the battle between Peabody and the supporters of Louise Pollock were played out in the *Journal*. Defenders cited the need to Americanize the idea of the kindergarten (Ross, 1976). Others argued that Mrs. Pollock and Miss Peabody became interested in the kindergarten during the same year, 1864.
There were individuals who suggested that Mrs. Pollock would be glad to have Miss Peabody read her lectures but she did not feel that Miss Peabody was any more of an authority on the subject of kindergarten than she herself (Anonymous, 1877). Miss Peabody’s continued criticism of Mrs. Pollock’s exhibit, the criticism of others, and the lack of support over this matter from the editor of the Journal forced Mrs. Pollock to resign her position (Ronda, 1999; Ross, 1976).

Regardless, Mrs. Pollock continued to write for educational publications. In 1880, she published “National Kindergarten Songs and Plays”. During this same time period, Mrs. Pollock began petitioning Congress to appropriate funds for a free National Kindergarten Normal School in Washington, D.C. Although she had the support of President Garfield, who was a patron of Susan’s kindergarten, Mrs. Pollock was still unsuccessful in securing these funds. After repeated pleas to Congress, the Pensoara Free Kindergarten was opened on February 12, 1883. In order to continue to fund the school, a “subscription list” was started. This idea was suggested to Mrs. Pollock by Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes, who was a regular subscriber during her lifetime. The list of subscribers included Presidents and their Cabinet members. In connection with the school, Mrs. Pollock also added the Kindergarten Normal Institute, which was a training class for nursery maids in the care of young children (Willard & Livermore, 1973b).

The altruistic nature of Mrs. Pollock was passed on to her daughters. Some years after the establishment of the Kindergarten Normal Institute for teacher training, The Evening Times reported that Mrs. Pollock and her daughter, Wellesca, organized the first kindergarten class for “colored students” in Washington, D.C. (1902, p. 5). It was reported that Wellesca also conducted training classes for African American teachers who would be needed for the “colored” schools (Kelly, 2012).
According to *The Evening Times* (1902), Mrs. Pollock passed away on July 24, 1902, in Skyland, Virginia at her son, George Freeman Pollock’s, Stony Man’s Camp Resort high in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Her body was brought back to Washington, D.C., and a memorial service was held in All Saints Church. In attendance were her children, grandchildren, and distinguished kindergarteners and educators from around the country. Dr. William T. Harris eulogized Mrs. Pollock by saying that the word “pioneer” was not sufficient in describing her contributions to the kindergarten movement. Harris suggested that “evangel” was more fitting for her great works. Later in the service, letters were read from kindergarteners and educators from around the United States, South America, and Germany.

**Emily M. Coe.** Miss Coe was another educator who exhibited her kindergarten methods at the Philadelphia Centennial World’s Fair in 1876. She was born in Norwalk, Ohio, and in 1853 she graduated with honors from Mt. Holyoke Seminary located in South Hadley, Massachusetts. During her early years, Miss Coe spent her time on oil painting and other artwork for which she possessed a remarkable talent. Miss Coe then turned her talents to teaching. She taught in seminaries and colleges in New England and Pennsylvania (Willard & Livermore, 1973a). Additionally, Miss Coe served on the faculty of Spingler Institute in New York City where she taught “English Branches, Mathematics, and Natural Sciences” (Abbott Memorial Committee, 1912, p. 60).

Through these experiences, Miss Coe came to the conclusion that it was senseless to try to build upon the character of the young ladies whom she taught. She realized that they did not possess the foundation of character which they should have received in their formative years. Miss Coe once stated that teachers at these private female schools “spent
all their time correcting bad habits previously formed” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 80). Miss Coe left teaching and returned to her first passion, painting, knowing all along that “God was fitting her for the great work of the kindergarten” (p. 80). She was now convinced that the only hope was for children to receive the right kind of training in the early years (Willard & Livermore, 1973a).

Miss Coe established The American Kindergarten, the first school of its kind, in New York City. Her American kindergarten system was the result of “more than twenty years of practical work in the school-room” (Willard & Livermore, 1973a, p. 188). In 1872, Miss Coe traveled to Europe where she studied various educational methods. Upon her return, she adapted all of Froebel’s ideas to the needs of Americans with a new system of education and a new set of materials “which is acknowledged by our best educators to be far superior to any other” (Steiger, 1878, p. 47). Miss Coe gave lectures and conducted training classes all over the country. She expanded her kindergarten to include a Normal Training School for kindergarteners in New York City and East Orange, New Jersey (Willard & Livermore, 1973a).

The American Kindergarten, unlike the German, was designed for people who Miss Coe described as “individualistic, religious, and practical” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 80). Miss Coe’s method offered individual instruction as opposed to group games. She also saw the need for religious, “evangelical” lessons from the Bible. Coe redesigned Froebel’s gifts and occupations and created new materials to be used in the kindergarten that included “pencils, slates, and books along with the geometrical forms of the kindergarten” (p. 80). These materials were an adaption to Froebel’s grid paper, blocks, and spheres. Miss Coe authored several books on the American kindergarten system. One book that became popular was the American Kindergarten Material, published in 1877.
Miss Coe also edited and published the “American Kindergarten Magazine” for over 10 years (Willard & Livermore, 1973a).

It was said by some that Miss Coe’s adaptation of Froebel’s methods were an improvement on the original, and this garnered her much criticism at the Philadelphia World’s Fair (McCabe, 1879). At her own expense, Miss Coe erected a kindergarten building on the fair grounds. The American Kindergarten was described by McCabe (1876) as a small frame building lying immediately north of the Carriage Annex to the Main Building. It was given a prime location behind the Main Exhibition Building near the main gate, as photographed below (Westcott, 1976). From this kindergarten building, Miss Coe exhibited her kindergarten materials, which were said to be examined by educators from all over the world (Willard & Livermore, 1973).
Figure 6. American Kintergarten. (Centennial Photograph Company, 1876)
Though the other kindergarten exhibits at the Centennial World’s Fair did not meet Elizabeth Peabody’s expectations of pure Froebelian practices, she was especially critical of Emily Coe’s (aka Anna Coe) kindergarten exhibit. According to Peabody, Coe’s exhibit was a “blatant misuse of the name kindergarten” because it featured the teaching of reading and writing to kindergarteners (Ross, 1976, p. 9). Coe’s advertisement of her American Kindergarten methods and materials at the fair were even more revealing of her deviation from the strict Froebelian ideas: “All the Froebel IDEAS adapted to American Wants” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 81).

Miss Coe defended her methods saying that “parents preferred her American Kindergarten curriculum to a pure Froebelian kindergarten and that her work seemed to be attracting favorable attention” (Beatty, 1995, p. 68). This fact was supported by the editors of the New England Journal of Education who recommended Miss Coe’s exhibit to visitors of the fair (Ronda, 1999). The editors of the Journal also refused to stop their advertisements of Miss Coe’s kindergarten and training school. Elizabeth Peabody was so outraged at the editors for their support of Coe’s and Pollock’s exhibits at the fair that she resigned “in a huff” (Beatty, 1995, p. 68).

The editors of the Journal were not the only ones to recognize the importance of Coe’s American Kindergarten exhibit. Her exhibit was situated near the entrance of the fairgrounds near the Swedish Schoolhouse with a prominent marking on a map created by Thompson Westcott’s company (1876). The Froebelian kindergarten was almost indistinguishable on the map (Brosterman, 1997). Miss Coe’s exhibit was also found worthy by the Centennial Commissioners and Judges. She was awarded a diploma and medal for her American Kindergarten exhibit (Steiger, 1878).
Little else is known about Miss Coe after the close of the fair. According to Willard and Livermore (1973), she remained active in the kindergarten movement. Miss Coe served as president of the American Kindergarten Society, was a member of the Association for the Advancement of Science, and was a lifetime member of the National Teacher’s Association. She was also known as a “very earnest Christian” (p. 188).

Commercialism at the Fair.

The Centennial World’s Fair not only featured commercial and non-profit kindergarten exhibits, it also began a new marketing trend: the kindergarten materials. Two competing supply firms were the main exhibitors at the fair, Milton Bradley and Ernest Steiger. These commercial exhibits “did much to make the kindergarten information and materials accessible to the home market” (Beatty, 1995, p. 69).

Milton Bradley. Toy manufacturer, Milton Bradley, was among those in attendance at the first World’s Fair in the United States. What was his purpose for being at the Centennial World’s Fair of 1876, and what did he hope to accomplish?

Bradley was born in Vienna, Maine in 1836. As a teen, Bradley pursued the printing trade. He bought a lithograph press in Providence, Rhode Island and moved it to Springfield, Massachusetts (Augustyn, 2002). It was in Springfield in 1860 that Bradley began lithographing color pictures of presidential nominee Abraham Lincoln. At first, this was a profitable albeit time-consuming business until an angry customer demanded his money back calling Bradley a fraud. Lincoln, the new president, had since grown a beard and no longer resembled Bradley’s lithographs (Adams & Edmonds, 1977).

Caught with an excessive inventory, Bradley burned the lithographs of Lincoln and turned his attention to an imported game that had been introduced to him by a friend
(Adams & Edmonds, 1977). The hard working Methodist used his idle image-printing press to print an Americanized version of the game – *The Checkered Game of Life*. This moral game was based on ambition, expertise, and chance. The player could either end the game at a Happy Old Age or Ruin, based on lessons learned that “success came through right living” (Augustyn, 2002, p. 6). The game was an immediate success selling over 40,000 copies in the first winter. Thus, the birth of America’s first board game to achieve financial success was born (Adams & Elmonds, 1977).

Shortly thereafter, the Civil War broke out and Bradley joined his town in an effort to supply Union soldiers. Working as a draftsman in the Springfield Armory he developed the Milton Bradley Company’s *Games for Soldiers*. This was a kit that included chess, checkers, backgammon, dominoes, and the *Checkered Game of Life*. The one-dollar kit was made small enough so that it could be carried in a knapsack. Charitable organizations bought large quantities and distributed the kits to Union soldiers generating a sizeable income for Bradley (Adams & Elmonds, 1977).

Bradley was at the height of his career when he had his first encounter with the kindergarten. In 1868, Bradley’s neighbor tried to interest him in the kindergarten. Edward Wiebe, a young music teacher who lived beside Bradley in Springfield, Massachusetts, had once studied under Louis Froebel in Germany before immigrating to the United States (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). Wiebe had tried to interest Bradley in publishing his explanation of Froebel’s system *The Paradise of Childhood* and some of the kindergarten materials (Baylor, 1965).

Bradley’s second encounter with the kindergarten came a year later. Out of sheer curiosity, Bradley attended a lecture by Elizabeth Peabody, founder of the first American
kindergarten, at a local public school. He was stirred by her presentation of the aims and methods of Froebel’s kindergarten and found her enthusiasm contagious (Ross, 1976).

Impressed with Peabody’s passion for the kindergarten, Bradley soon agreed to publish Edward Wiebe’s *Paradise of Childhood*, the first American guide to Froebel’s system of kindergartening (Ross, 1976). Bradley acted upon Wiebe’s recommendation and began to manufacture the kindergarten gifts and occupations materials at a time when no other company would do so (Brosterman, 1997; Ross, 1976). Peabody was once again hopeful that the cooperation of Bradley would “hasten the acceptance of kindergartens and stimulate their rapid growth” (Baylor, 1965, p. 95).

Even though *Paradise of Childhood* became a classic, Bradley’s business partners disapproved of his decision to publish kindergarten materials. Bradley refused to abandon his attachment to the kindergarten cause even when it was evident that the company was losing money on the manufacturing of the kindergarten materials (Ross, 1976). Knowing that there was potentially a large market for kindergarten materials, Bradley began to diversify the line by adding what he considered to be improvements and additions to Froebel’s original gifts and occupations (Brosterman, 1997).

In addition to the publication of *Paradise of Childhood*, Bradley published many books related to Froebel’s kindergarten education with *Paper and Scissors in the Schoolroom*. This book included a guide on the “occupations of paper folding and cutting” (Wolfe, 2000, p. 118). Along with these, Bradley also produced a number of books promoting the use of the six primary colors as part of early childhood education – *Color in the School Room* (1890), *Color in the Kindergarten* (1893), *Elementary Color* (1895), and *Water Colors in the Schoolroom* (1900) (Ross, 1967).
When Bradley and others began to mass manufacture “kindergarten” toys of their own creation, the word kindergarten and Froebel’s name became a generic term for almost anything. Just two years after he first began manufacturing Froebel’s gifts and occupations, Bradley had designed and was selling his own *Kindergarten Alphabet and Building Blocks* (a child is seen holding one on page 25). With such a proliferation of generic kindergarten materials on the market, the Froebel system began to get diluted thus altering the public’s comprehension of the true nature of the Froebelian kindergarten (Brosterman, 1997).

Elizabeth Peabody, who was at first enthusiastic about the explosion of kindergarten materials on the market, spoke out against this trend. She wrote:

> The interest of manufacturers and of merchants of the gifts and materials is a snare. It has already corrupted the simplicity of Froebel in Europe and America, for his idea was to use elementary forms exclusively, and simple materials – as much as possible of these being prepared by the children themselves. (Barnard, 1884, p. 15)

For kindergarteners, the Centennial World’s Fair was a unique opportunity to educate the nation on the educational implications of the kindergarten. For businessmen, it represented a new opportunity to demonstrate toys and equipment. Bradley was among the 22 exhibitors at the fair who demonstrated their toys and equipment to a new American audience. Bradley’s exhibit featured his “kindergarten blocks” claiming the usefulness of his building blocks. He proclaimed that his “occupational material did not merely entertain, it educated” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 71). Bradley provided American parents
at the Centennial an inexpensive opportunity to sample kindergarten materials and education (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000).

**Ernest Steiger.** The Ernest Steiger Company was also an avid supporter and supplier of kindergarten materials. As a German emigrant himself, Steiger had gained fame at the Vienna Exposition in 1873 with his display of American newspapers. As the head of a New York publishing firm, his display consisted of more than 6,000 examples of American journalism. According to Shapiro (1983), it was Steiger’s exhibit that prevented the Americans from being disgraced at the Vienna Exposition.

In 1876, Steiger welcomed the opportunity to display his educational publications and materials at the Philadelphia World’s Fair. He noted that the need for kindergarten was more important in America than elsewhere. Steiger suggested that one had only to look at the number of obese American children to know that the American public schools “lacked the necessary physical, moral, and intellectual discipline” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 72). He saw the kindergarten as a way of correcting these deficiencies. Steiger suggested that by encouraging German-Americans to establish kindergartens and educate their own children, it would somehow influence and improve public schools (Vandewalker, 1908).

Encouraged by Elizabeth Peabody, Steiger aimed his publications of kindergarten materials at a larger American audience by a series of “Kindergarten Tracts”. These pamphlets, published in English, would aid Americans in establishing home or community kindergartens. Steiger made these tracts available free of charge at the Centennial World’s Fair of 1876 (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). He also agreed to supply the furniture that was used in the Kindergarten Cottage near the Woman’s Pavilion free of charge for one year (Shapiro, 1983).
Bradley and Steiger were among the 22 vendors of educational materials and toys who had recognized the opportunities that were available to them at the Centennial World’s Fair. As suppliers of kindergarten materials, both also promoted the educational value of their goods at the Centennial. Bradley claimed to the fair audience that his “Kindergarten Blocks” not only entertained but educated as well. Similarly, Steiger suggested that his home materials, if used correctly, could ease the crisis of the child finding a viable vocation.

Peabody, who had encouraged both Bradley and Steiger to exhibit their kindergarten materials and toys at the Centennial, discovered the psychological price for the commercialization of the kindergarten. The wide variety of kindergarten materials, theories, and practices confused many of those who attended the fair. Bradley and Steiger’s exhibits focused on the home use of the Froebelian materials while others suggested the need for a separate kindergarten outside of the home. Although Americans recognized many commendable attributes of the kindergarten, they were also cautious of its “foreign character” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 79).

The kindergarten, however, had made an impression on the Centennial judges who recognized its appeal to the many Americans who attended the fair. Milton Bradley was awarded a bronze medal for his publication of kindergarten materials. Susan Blow accepted a medal on behalf of the St. Louis public schools for the establishment of the kindergarten in their school system. Additionally, a medal was bestowed upon Emily Coe’s American Kindergarten exhibit (Shapiro, 1983).

In addition to the medal awarded to Miss Ruth Burritt for her Centennial Kindergarten by the judges, she also received a certificate signed by the Boston Froebelian Kindergarten Committee. Miss Peabody suggested, in an article in the
*Kindergarten Messenger,* that this committee knew better than the Centennial judges who was more deserving of an award in exhibiting exemplary kindergarten practices at the fair (Peabody, 1876e).

**Summary**

This chapter provided a review of the literature associated with the Philadelphia Centennial World’s Fair of 1876 and the early roots of the kindergarten movement in the United States. Many of the early pioneers of the movement were presented, as well as the “father of kindergarten”, Friedrich Froebel. This chapter also included a review of the social, political, and economic context for women of this era and how the solution to the “woman problem” of this time period was found in the kindergarten. The commercialism associated with the kindergarten movement and how it changed the way Americans viewed the kindergarten was also discussed.
Chapter 3
Methods

Introduction

Included in this chapter is a description of the philosophical assumptions, qualitative tradition, data set, data analysis, trustworthiness, and the role of the researcher for the study. The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to discover how the World’s Fair of 1876 advanced the kindergarten movement in the United States. Narrative inquiry is a qualitative approach that relies on stories and narratives for meaning (Lichtman, 2013). This approach was implemented in order to restore the lives of those who participated in the World’s Fair. Due to the nature of the study, participant data were not used. Instead, the researcher relied on documents in an effort to make sense of the questions related to the study.

Philosophical Assumptions

Qualitative research is guided by many assumptions. These worldviews, or paradigms, shape and inform the practice of the research (Hatch, 2002). This study was shaped by an interpretive research framework. Interpretive research, often referred to as constructivism, assumes that reality is socially constructed and there is no one reality. Instead, there can be a multitude of realities and interpretations of a single event (Merriam, 2009). Through reading and rereading documents, I reconstructed the meaning that the participants of this World’s Fair placed on the significance of the event.
Qualitative Research and Narrative Inquiry

The purpose of this qualitative study was to provide an in-depth description, understanding, and interpretation of the human experience (Merriam, 2002). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) referred to the qualitative research process as “quilt making” (p. 4). As is true of the qualitative research process, the first rule to quilt making is that there are no absolutes. Merriam (2002) stated that there is not one “fixed, single, agreed upon, or measureable phenomenon” (p. 3). Qualitative research instead is a multitude of perspectives and interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The researcher of this study took the “pieces” of information gathered from documents and photos to weave together an understanding of how the kindergarten movement spread in the United States.

Stories are utilized to make sense of experiences; it is how we communicate with others, and it is how we understand the world around us (Merriam, 2009). Stories, also called “narratives”, have become a much-used source of data in qualitative research (p. 32). Key to this type of qualitative research is the use of stories as data. These narratives may take the form of a biography, an autobiography, a life history, an auto ethnography, or life narrative. Narratives may take many forms and are told in many settings with varying degrees of connection to actual events or persons (Manning & Cullum-Swan, 1994). Denzin (1989) described the biographical method as “the studied use and collection of life documents which describe turning-point moments in individual’s lives” (p. 7). A biographical approach was used to analyze the importance and influence of the persons who attended the World’s Fair of 1876.
Description of Participants

Since there are no living participants of this era, participant interviews were not used for this study. Instead, the researcher had to rely on documents, diaries, letters, and photographs in an effort to make sense of the questions related to the study and to describe the lives of the people involved in the development of the kindergarten exhibits at the World’s fair. Through the use of documents that described participants’ perceptions, such as biographies; photographs; or speeches by participants, the researcher gained insights into the thinking and planning that went into their participation at this fair.

Outline of Data Set

Merriam (2013) described data as the information that is collected as part of a research study. Qualitative research data usually takes the form of words or pictures, and the sources of data may be human and nonhuman (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data collected from human sources may be acquired through interviews and observations. Nonhuman sources include documents and records left behind by individuals that provide insights into their everyday lives.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described documents as “any written or recorded material other than a record” (p. 277). Further, Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that the use of documents to collect data is one of the least accessed resources available and are often ignored in favor of interviews and observations. Letters, diaries, speeches, newspaper editorials, and photographs are all examples of documents.
For the purposes of this study, the researcher used various types of documents to develop an understanding of the study inquiry. In *Learning from the Past*, Wolfe (2000) described how there were at least seven kindergarten exhibits at the Philadelphia Centennial World’s Fair of 1876. Historical documents in the form of diaries, letters, speeches, photographs, and biographical sources were used to learn more about these exhibits. The researcher relied on the diaries, letters, speeches, and photographs of those who were instrumental in bringing the kindergarten exhibits to the fair. Many of the participants wrote letters to friends and family describing the kindergarten exhibits. Others gave speeches in support of the kindergarten movement. Biographical works have also been written on the lives of these individuals that reveal how they participated in this event at some point in their career. Photographs and drawings have also been made that provide a visual understanding of the kindergarten exhibits at the World’s Fair.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), there are many advantages to using documents as a research data source. The most obvious is that they are more readily available than people to interview or events to observe. Most documents are also available at little or no cost. Second, documents are a stable source of data in that they can be collected and analyzed without altering them. Documents are also grounded in their own setting and language. This is an additional help to the researcher insofar as data have not been removed from their context (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Last, the use of documents as a data source may be the only way to study a phenomenon (Merriam, 1988). Discovering how the World’s Fair of 1876 advanced the kindergarten movement in the United States would not be possible without the use of historical documents and photographs. Many of these artifacts were found in *The New England Journal of*
Data Analysis

Restorying was the process used to analyze the lives of participants at the first World’s Fair in the United States. Restorying is a process of reorganizing stories into a framework, which may consist of gathering the stories; analyzing them for key elements (time, place, plot, and scene); and then rewriting the stories to place them in a chronological sequence (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative storytelling is a way of making sense of the data by using other people’s stories to understand an experience (Lichtman, 2013). The plot, or storyline, for this research study included information about the setting and the participants’ experiences at the first World’s Fair in 1876.

Data pieces, or documents, were analyzed by first determining their usefulness as a source of data for the study. As the researcher read through documents, she discovered that many of the same themes were beginning to emerge. The researcher then had to determine whether the document provided insight and information that was relevant to the study. The questions that guided the study were used in order to determine the usefulness of each document. Each document was then analyzed for authenticity. Merriam (2009) noted that determining the authenticity and accuracy of a document is the responsibility of the researcher. If the researcher has any doubts of the documents credibility, the use of other documents or data sources regarding the event or phenomenon being studied can be used to validate the document (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).
Once they were determined to be authentic, documents were read and reread to begin the data analysis phase of the study. The importance of rereading documents became evident as the researcher gained new insights from each new reading. There are several approaches to organizing and analyzing data; content analysis is the technique that was used for this study. Content analysis is “a process aimed at uncovering embedded information and making it explicit” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 203). One of the most obvious sources of data that is appropriate for content analysis is written documents. Written documents allow the researcher to sift through large volumes of material in a systematic fashion. Content analysis enables the researcher to establish his or her own context for inquiry, which may become meaningful by revealing trends, patterns, and differences that may go unnoticed by others (Krippendorff, 1980).

The process of content analysis involves developing rules for the process; that is, what content will be analyzed and what criteria will be used to select content for analysis. There are two sub-processes in content analysis: unitizing and categorizing. Unitizing is the process of identifying the units of analysis in the volume of available data (Krippendorff, 1980). The unit of coded data may be identified by words, phrases, sentences, or even paragraphs. The unit of data must provide the researcher with some understanding of the story, and it must be the smallest piece of information that can stand on its own without other information and an understanding of the inquiry. These units of information serve as the basis for defining categories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this investigation, meaningful words and phrases were compared to other units using a content analysis technique. Coded units were organized into categories of relevance to the study.
Categorizing is the process of organizing the previously unitized data into categories that provide a description or inference related to the inquiry study. Coded units are organized into temporary categories based on some similar characteristic. When a substantial number of units are placed in a category, the researcher begins to write a rule that will serve as the basis for including or excluding data in that particular category. However, the rule is subject to change as new data for that category are considered. The coding process is also termed bracketing (Denzin, 1989). Because there are no boundaries on qualitative inquiry, all data are equally eligible for inclusion or exclusion in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). From the codes, themes were decided.

The next step in the process is drawing conclusions about the meaning of the themes or categories. This step is, perhaps, the most important step in content analysis, and this involves applying the knowledge of the constructed categories to the phenomenon being studied (Krippendorff, 1980).

**Trustworthiness and Validity**

Establishing trustworthiness is the ability to persuade the research audience that the researcher’s findings are worth noting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) listed credibility as a means of establishing trustworthiness. Credibility can be established through prolonged engagement in the inquiry process. As such, sufficient time must be invested in the process to insure the credibility of the study. This study involved numerous hours studying and researching the archives of the World’s Fair of 1876 in the United States. Prolonged hours with the data ensured that the researcher was intimately familiar with the findings and had not overlooked potential, areas of interest. The researcher also utilized triangulation, peer debriefing, an audit trail and was held
accountable to members of a committee who reported to the researcher their ideas and thoughts on how to improve the study.

**Triangulation.** A number of strategies can be used in a qualitative study to increase the credibility of the findings. The most well known strategy used to establish validity is triangulation (Merriam, 2009). Denzin (1978) identified four types of triangulation: use of multiple methods; multiple sources of data, such as documents; multiple investigators; or multiple theories. Multiple sources of data were used for this study. Comparing and cross-checking data found from letters, photos, and other data sources were triangulated. Information from these data sources were used to support a theme. This ensured that the study was accurate in that it drew from multiple sources of information that helped to establish the accuracy of categories and themes for this inquiry.

**Peer debriefing.** Another effective way of improving the credibility of a study is the use of a peer debriefer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Merriam (2009) described a peer debriefer as a colleague with whom the researcher relies on to discuss the process of the study, any emerging findings, and a tentative interpretation of those findings. A peer who may or may not be familiar with the research may conduct such an examination. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained how the peer debriefer should be a noninvolved professional with whom the researcher can have a “no-holds-barred conversation at periodic intervals” (p. 283). The researcher relied on a colleague who is also an early childhood teacher and has obtained an Educational Specialist Degree in Early Childhood Education. The peer debriefer read and reread data that were being coded to establish consensus on its relevance to the study.
Audit trail. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), developing and maintaining an audit trail may be the single most important trustworthiness strategy available to qualitative researchers. An audit trail is a detailed process that describes how data were collected, how categories were selected, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry (Merriam, 2009). The audit trail can be seen as a “log” detailing how the researcher arrived at his or her findings (p. 223). Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified six categories that can comprise an audit trail: raw data, data reduction and analysis, data reconstruction and synthesis, process notes, intentions and dispositions, and instrument development information. An audit trail allows the reader to follow the process of the research as it is being conducted (Merriam, 2009).

The researcher of this study was also held accountable to members of an academic committee. These members read and reviewed each section of the study as it emerged. Committee members reported back to the researcher with ideas and thoughts on how to improve the study and how to proceed from specific points in the research.

Ethical Considerations

Unlike other sources of qualitative data, documents are “unobtrusive” (Fetterman, 1989, p. 68). Collecting data from documents requires little cooperation from persons within a setting being studied. Therefore, ethical considerations for gaining access to sites and participants are not needed when using historical documents as a means of data collection. Due to the nature of this historical study, documents were the best source of data to discover the themes and categories related to the central phenomenon. It was not possible to interview people who were associated with the kindergarten exhibits at the
World’s Fair of 1876. Therefore, it was not necessary to gain approval from participants of a site or from the Institutional Review Board at the researcher’s university.

**Role of the Researcher**

I must preface this study with my own history. As a child, I remember my weekends being spent crisscrossing our state with my father in search of a battle site, a significant historical building, or any other site my father thought important to visit. My father was not only the keeper of our family’s history but also a history major in college. Therefore, instilling a love of history in me was inevitable.

As a veteran kindergarten teacher of 32 years, I have always had an interest in the kindergarten movement in the United States. This interest was piqued when I discovered a picture in a history text (Wolfe, 2000) of a small cottage situated in the corner area of Fairmount Park where the Centennial World’s Fair of 1876 occurred. The caption underneath the picture read: “The Kindergarten Cottage” (p.120). I was intrigued and hooked upon discovering how the World’s Fair advanced the kindergarten movement in the United States. Many historical texts later, I am still peeling away the layers to discover who participated in the Fair, why they were there, and how their presence changed history.

Why study the past? Beatty (1998) explained that there is a continuing need to study the past in order to inform the present. Increasing public awareness of early childhood education can help raise the level of importance of early childhood as a profession and bring about change (p. 2). It has been my experience that early childhood educators have not received the respect that is their due. Revealing such a rich history
that can be found through this study may help to elevate the status of the profession as well as those who work with our youngest citizens every day.

Summary

This chapter discussed the qualitative, narrative inquiry approach method that was used to examine how the kindergarten exhibits at the World’s Fair of 1876 advanced the growth of the kindergarten movement. This chapter also included a discussion of the data collection and data analysis processes and procedures that were used. A discussion was included on how participants were not used to secure data for this study and; therefore, how ethical considerations were not a significant concern. Processes for ensuring the trustworthiness and validity of the data and the role of the researcher were also discussed in this chapter.
Chapter 4
Findings

Introduction
This study was designed to uncover how the World’s Fair of 1876 advanced the kindergarten movement in the United States. Chapter four presents the themes that emerged from the collection and analysis of data. Themes were identified by reading and rereading historical texts, journal articles, and letters, as well as viewing historical photographs and drawings.

Themes
Merriam (2013) described themes as the “central issues or concepts that a researcher identifies based on coding original data” (p. 326). This process entails taking a large amount of data and attempting to make sense of it through coding or bracketing (Denzin, 1989). Codes are assigned to discrete bits of data as they relate to the research questions.

For this study, the researcher collected data from documents and photographs, and codes were assigned based on the research questions. Codes were then grouped together by central issues or ideas that linked together the information. Three themes emerged from the restorying of the lives and events of the late 1800s. The themes were identified and labeled as: the Americanization of the kindergarten, organization of kindergarten groups, and commercialism and the kindergarten movement. These themes can be seen in Figure 7.
Figure 7. Summary of themes and sub themes.
Americanizing the Kindergarten

Vandewalker (1908) suggested that a revolution in the idea of educating young children had to take place before the kindergarten could gain recognition in the United States. Prior to the 1870s, there were only 10 kindergartens in the United States. With the exception of one, all of these kindergartens were established by German immigrants. Kindergartens were intended in part to preserve the German language and culture for the next generation of German-Americans and to promulgate the educational ideas of Froebel (Beatty, 1995). Due to their limited number and scope, it is understandable then that these German-speaking kindergartens gained little attention.

Public exposure of the kindergarten. The one kindergarten established before the 1870s was opened by the American Elizabeth Peabody. It was Peabody’s belief that if Americans became better acquainted with the kindergarten they would want it for their children. Peabody saw a unique opportunity to promote awareness and acceptance of Froebelianism at the Centennial World’s Fair of 1876. Although kindergarten materials and publications had been on display at previous World’s Fairs, Peabody was intent on exhibiting the kindergarten in its purest form with a demonstration kindergarten that would be held on American soil. Aided by the Boston Froebelian Society, Peabody planned accordingly (Beatty, 1995). Peabody wrote the following in the *New England Journal of Education* as an explanation for why it was so important to not only display kindergarten materials but to also demonstrate their use:
To show, therefore, the materials of play, is not enough, without showing how they are used: and that they really do so occupy the child’s fancy and engage his attention, that they serve for all necessary discipline of order. The proof of Froebel’s system is the fact that it does succeed with children, so that they work out what is given them to do, without constraint, -- as it were spontaneously. It was thought that to take a kindergarten bodily into the Exhibition, and let people see that it would go on perfectly, unconscious of surroundings and spectators would demonstrate that the method really does coincide with the laws of things, which are the laws of thought. (Peabody, 1876d, p. 273)

The Philadelphia Centennial World’s Fair of 1876 opened on May 10th and closed approximately six months later in mid-November. During that time, nearly 10 million visitors passed through its gates-making it the most attended fair in any country to date. It was reported that one-fifth of the total United States population attended this fair with every state in America represented (Rydell, 1984). Visitors traveled from all regions of the United States mostly by train and stayed over in one of the fair’s hotels for several days (Gross & Snyder, 2005).

The opportunity for public exposure was not lost on others who hoped to promote the kindergarten movement as well. The purpose of the kindergarten exhibits was to introduce and demonstrate to visitors from all over the country the idea of the kindergarten in its pioneer stage (Ross, 1976). In total, there were five kindergarten displays that were presented by Americans. Exhibitors realized that, among the number of people attending the fair, many might happen upon their display. These encounters
would give exhibitors an opportunity to inform and enlighten the public on the advantages of the kindergarten movement (Shapiro, 1983).

**Foreign influence.** One justifiable reason the kindergarten did not attract much attention before the Centennial World’s Fair was its association with German culture. While many Americans recognized the importance and advantages the kindergarten could afford their child, “they were cautious because they feared the foreign character of the kindergarten” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 79). Perceived as a “foreign importation” (Beatty, 1995, p. 57) by many Americans, the kindergarten required the involvement of American educators to Americanize the kindergarten in order for it to gain broader acceptance.

In 1873, William Torrey Harris, St. Louis School Superintendent, introduced the kindergarten in his schools. Harris wrote to Elizabeth Peabody and noted that the Froebel kindergarten would have to “Americanized” in order to meet the needs of children in the different parts of America (Allen, 1995). The notion of Americanizing the kindergarten fueled a contentious debate between Peabody and St. Louis kindergartener Susan Blow throughout the Centennial Fair of 1876.

Peabody criticized Blow’s kindergarten exhibit, among others, in the *New England Journal of Education*. Peabody found fault in the perfection of the examples of children’s handwork that was on display at the fair. Peabody suggested that the handwork had been “forced” which was not consistent with Froebel’s teachings (Beatty, 1995). Blow’s rebuttal was also found in the *Journal* in which she explained how Miss Peabody did not understand the “vividness of life and energy of Western children” (Peabody, 1876c, p. 105). Peabody compared the clay-work completed by Miss Blow’s students to that of Mrs. Kraus-Boelte’s students; work that was intended to be on display in the
United States building. Unfortunately, or consequently, the clay-work was broken on its way to the fair and could not be displayed.

Emily Coe’s and Louisa Pollock’s kindergarten exhibits were also described as less orthodox versions of Peabody’s Froebelian kindergarten exhibit. Coe’s display at the fair had all the intentions of Americanizing the kindergarten, starting with title of the exhibit, “The American Kindergarten”. Coe was criticized for not only advocating the teaching of reading and writing to preschools but also for incorporating Bible lessons (Beatty, 1995; Ronda, 1999; Ross, 1976). Coe responded to these criticisms by stating how parents preferred her “American Kindergarten” curriculum to that of pure Froebelian. She further noted that, unlike the German kindergarten, her American kindergarten was best fitted to a people who were “individualistic, religious, and practical” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 80).

Many individuals who visited the fair favored the kindergarten displays by Coe and Pollock as compared to the strict Froebelian demonstration found in the “Kindergarten Cottage”. Fair goers were reluctant to accept the foreign influence citing the idea of Americanizing the kindergarten to fit the needs of children and their families in the United States. Peabody ardently disagreed with them maintaining that “Froebel’s method was not the German method but the human method” (Ross, 1976, p. 10).

Others left the kindergarten exhibits confused by the many different theories and practices. Even though the American Kindergarten, the Centennial Kindergarten, and the Saint Louis Kindergarten offered adaptations of their displays to meet the educational needs of American children, the variety of options were befuddling. These differences steered many away from the desire to have the kindergarten brought into their homes or communities (Shapiro, 1983).
**Child-study movement and the kindergarten.** There was little doubt, however, that if the kindergarten was going to take root in America, it would have to adapt to the needs of Americans. With an increased number of immigrants making their way to cities in America every day, there was a real concern for the children who “flooded city streets” (Beatty, 1995, p. 72).

In the 1880s, a new group of enthusiasts of the kindergarten movement joined the pioneers of the movement to emphasize the importance of establishing kindergartens that were free to the public. To alleviate some of the fears of the foreign-influence and generate recognition of the cause, these individuals appealed to the public’s sense of moral and social obligation. As industrialization and immigration increased so did the problems with poverty, slums, and crime. Many middle- and upper-class Americans sought ways to improve conditions in these urban areas (Ross, 1976).

In order for the kindergarten to address these social issues, Froebelian pedagogy had to adapt. Free kindergartens began to spring up in urban areas. In addition to educating children, kindergartners began to attend to children’s physical needs as well. The scientific world turned to the kindergarten for answers, creating the first “scientific critique of Froebelian pedagogy” (Beatty, 1995, p. 72). Although a number of kindergarteners resisted the change, many of the American kindergartners began to modify their teachings. This created a deep divide among the more conservative kindergarteners who believed that scientific theories would “emphasize the child’s animal rather than spiritual nature” (Allen, 1995, p. 93).
Organizing the Kindergarten Movement

One of the many lessons learned from the Centennial was the need for organization. While the majority of kindergarteners wanted a national exhibit at the 1876 World’s Fair, they lacked the time and organizational resources to make it possible. Some were already members of the American Institute of Instruction (AII) and others belonged to the National Education Association (NEA). Neither of these organizations, however, provided representation to the growing number of kindergarteners (Shapiro, 1983).

National Education Association. In an effort to curb the spread of more “pretenders” after the Centennial, Elizabeth Peabody established the American Froebel Union in 1878. The group reorganized in 1882 and become the Froebel Institute of North America. Although Miss Peabody remained its honorary president, William Hailmann became its active leader at the time of reorganization (Weber, 1969).

Hailmann was acquainted with the kindergarten from a visit to his parents’ home in Zurich in 1860. Upon his return to the United States, Hailmann was offered a position at the German-American Academy of Louisville. While there, he encouraged patrons of the kindergarten to raise money for a new building to house the kindergarten. These classrooms became the first of their kind to be specially designed for kindergarten children. Hailmann served in a position at the academy until 1869 (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000).

Reorganization of the kindergarten had become necessary, Hailmann wrote, due to the fact that “the Middle West had practically become the center of the kindergarten movement at this time” (Weber, 1969, p. 66). The first task of the newly organized Froebel Institute was to petition the NEA to add a Kindergarten Department to its
organization. This undertaking was in an effort to bring a national organization to the kindergarten movement, a presence that had been lacking at the Centennial.

Becoming a part of the NEA instead of the AII seemed a more logical choice for the members of the Froebel Institute. As an outgrowth of the National Teachers’ Association, the NEA dealt with more every day issues for teachers than the AII. By the 1870s, the NEA also represented a broader range of beliefs and ideologies concerning American education. In contrast, the AII was an organization that was dominated by men “whose increasingly well-defined sense of group professional identity, however broad and democratic, relegated early education to the woman’s sphere” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 66). The Froebelians were rarely offered an opportunity to address the AII. The NEA, on the other hand, had shown interest in the German innovations of education and encouraged the Froebelians to address the NEA on numerous occasions.

In 1884, the Kindergarten Department of the NEA was formed. This occurred during the second meeting of the Froebel Institute in Madison, Wisconsin. Hailmann was chosen as the first president of the new department. In 1892, Sarah Stewart of Philadelphia proposed the organization of another kindergarten union. Not satisfied with how the crowded NEA agenda left little time to “gather and disseminate knowledge of the kindergarten growth change”, the group broke away from the Kindergarten Department of the NEA (Weber, 1969, p. 66).

**International Kindergarten Union.** On July 15, 1892, the International Kindergarten Union (IKU) was founded. The first meeting took place in Saratoga Springs, New York. The first item on the agenda was to form a committee that would
“act in sympathy and harmony” with the Kindergarten Department of the NEA (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000, p. 595).

From the beginning, it was believed that many of the IKU members were of the Froebelian thought and practice. However, after much discussion members realized that individuals were receptive to other approaches as well. The absence of Froebelian philosophy or any other approach was reflected in the aims that the organization drew up as its list of goals:

1. To gathering and disseminating knowledge of the kindergarten movement throughout the world
2. To bring into cooperation all kindergarten interests
3. To promote the establishment of kindergartens
4. To elevate the standard of professional training of the kindergarteners.

(Snyder, 1972, p. 70)

One immediate purpose for establishing the IKU was to present a kindergarten exhibit at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago (Vandewalker, 1901; Weber, 1969; Weimann, 1981). Knowing that this was to be a fair of great magnitude, IKU members began working with the Board of Lady Managers of the Woman’s Building to devise a plan for the kindergarten exhibition. Having learned the importance of presenting a united front from the Centennial Kindergarten, other kindergarten associations joined the IKU organization.

Leaving nothing to chance, IKU members published a circular that explained to the public their intentions at the Columbian Expo:
Although the world has known many large expositions at various times in its history, in none of these have the interests of children received the full representation that they deserved. Such great progress having been made during the present century in the methods of educating, amusing, and caring, for the physical well-being of the coming men and women, it seems desirable that an illustration of the best methods should be so grouped that they may be easily assimilated by, and made useful to, the vast number of people who will visit the World’s Fair. In many cases it will be impossible for the mothers to visit the exposition without taking their children, and in so doing they will wish the little ones as well as themselves to take the fullest advantages of the educational facilities offered. With the ends in view the Children’s Building has been designed, which will give to mothers the freedom of the exposition while children themselves are enjoying the best of care and attention. (Vandewalker, 1908, p. 74)

**Children’s Building.** The Children’s Building, often referred to as “Children’s Palace” was indeed just that – a palace. Enlisting the aid of the many progressive women’s organizations that “were just thirsting to help and uplift everyone they could” the time for the kindergarten had arrived (Weimann, 1981, p. 334). The Children’s Building, located between the Woman’s Building and the Horticulture Building, opened in June 1893. The building was 150 feet by 90 feet and two stories high. Additionally, the 90 feet by 50 feet interior court opened up to the roof. Much of this space was railed off for a physical education exhibit which children were allowed to use at 10 o’clock each
morning. From the tiniest cradle on the first floor to the playground on the roof, the entire exhibit was designed for children.

Older children were given lectures by trained kindergarteners on the different foreign countries represented at the Exhibition. The kindergarteners would then take the children to visit the exhibits of these countries in small groups. Younger children were led into the “beautiful kindergarten rooms” that had been decorated by the kindergarteners themselves (Vandewalker, 1908, p. 74). Mothers were given an opportunity to see a real kindergarten in operation. The Kindergarten Literature Company also had its headquarters in the Children’s Building, where valuable information about the kindergarten was distributed.

The progress and growing pains that the kindergarten movement had suffered during the time between the Philadelphia Exhibit and the Columbian Exposition was laid to rest by the sheer magnitude of children who were allowed to visit the Children’s Building at the Exposition. It was estimated that over 7,000 children were cared for each day in the kindergarten classrooms (Weimann, 1981). The kindergarten, indeed, had arrived!

In adopting a new constitution, the IKU changed its name to the Association for Childhood Education (ACE) in 1930. This organization represented individuals concerned with educating nursery, kindergarten, and primary age children. A second name change occurred in 1947 to better reflect its roots - the Association of Childhood Education International (ACEI). The ACE also helped individuals create the National Association for Nursery Education (NANE) in 1929. In order to better reflect its membership, this organization changed it name to the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 1964.
Organizing African American women. The World’s Fairs held few opportunities for African American women, as well as African American men, to exhibit their gifts and talents. As demonstrated at the Philadelphia World’s Fair of 1876, the African American community was completely shut out of the exhibits and denied participation of any kind. The Columbian World’s Fair in 1893 saw little change.

At the close of the Reconstruction era, African Americans were struggling with finding ways to become socially self-sufficient in order to help the less fortunate. Some of the organizations African Americans founded to aid the less fortunate were locally based while others had members in several states. The main goal for these organizations was to help widows and orphans, even though there was little money for philanthropic pursuits. African American women formed local clubs in many different cities to support these efforts (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000).

One of these club, the Women’s Columbian Association of Chicago, petitioned the Board of Lady’s Managers of the Woman’s Building to include a “legally empowered black woman in an executive position handling the black exhibits” (Weimann, 1981, p. 103). Under the leadership of Lettie Trent, the group asked (a) to have a separate exhibit from the white women, (b) that the exhibits be selected by a “colored woman”, and (c) that the Lady Managers appoint someone to be on a Committee to represent the “interest of the colored people” (p. 103).

The Civil War had ended 26 years earlier and women from the North and South had finally found a common bond through their work on the Woman’s Building. Some of the more radical women were not sure if the “colored women” should have a segregated exhibit since many of them found it to be unjust that they themselves should have a segregated Woman’s Building from the men (Weimann, 1981).
A counter black group from Chicago, the Women’s Columbian Auxiliary Association, asked for “an integrated exhibit of the work of both black men and women” (Weimann, 1981, p. 104). Led by Mrs. R. D. Boone, their intention was to supplement the work of the white women through the demonstration of their accomplishments since the Emancipation Proclamation. According to historical accounts, Mrs. Bertha Palmer, President of the Board of Lady Managers, did not take kindly to the idea of having her work “supplemented”.

Soon the number of black women’s groups asking for their accomplishments to be exhibited doubled from two to four, and fear rose among the Board of Lady Managers. Many threatened to resign if a black woman was appointed to any position of authority. It was rumored that the Isabella groups were the ones encouraging black women to be persistent with their requests. The Isabella Association, led by Susan B. Anthony, did not want to segregate women’s accomplishments. They petitioned equal rights and competition with men on an equal basis.

The majority of women on the state committees was against “unjust discrimination in color” and believed that both white and black women should be “on the same footing” (Weimann, 1981, p. 111). Another group from the majority however, believed that the exhibits of black women should be treated differently and in a separate area. Interestingly, this is what the black groups wanted for themselves: to have separate treatment and exhibits.

As a result of the back-and-forth negotiations, J. Imogen Howard, a black New York City schoolteacher was appointed to collect artifacts from black women to “form an Afro-American exhibit” (Weimann, 1981, p. 121). In order to show support of the black women, the Board of Lady Managers furnished cases for the exhibit. The cases were
placed in a small corner room on the second floor near an exhibit of Siberian furs and wood designs. A report written by the Board described Miss Howard’s collection of work as follows:

It found that those colored women who had done their most to show their capabilities are teachers, authors, artists, doctors, designers, musicians, nurses (trained), engravers, missionaries, lawyers, inventors, clerks, librarians, bookkeepers, editors, etc. (Weimann, 1981, p. 122)

The black women, not unlike all the women, learned lessons from their poor treatment at the fair. Specifically, it united all of the black women’s clubs. Mrs. Trent and Mrs. Boone, outraged over the treatment of black women at yet another World’s Fair, believed they needed a national organization of their own (Weimann, 1981).

In 1896, The National Association of Colored Women (NACW) was organized. Its purpose was to unite all of the local women’s clubs and the National League of Colored Women as well as the National league of Afro-American Women. The organization’s motto of “Lifting As We Climb” reflected its commitment to service. One of the group’s projects was to raise monies for kindergartens. The kindergarten was seen as a means of “getting to the root of race elevation” (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000, p. 514). The NACW launched a campaign to interest young middle-class African American women in kindergartening. The organization proposed that middle-class African Americans had a “responsibility to use their material and intellectual advantages in order to socially and morally up lift
the African-American community through (among other programmes) the kindergarten” (Dombkowski, 2002, p. 481).

**Commercializing the Kindergarten**

After the Civil War, the United States was propelled into the industrial age with notable discoveries of natural resources such as coal, oil, and iron ore. With investors taking advantage of newly built railroads and telegraphs, there was a significant increase in production of goods and products (Rydell et al., 2000). Increased industrialization resulted in a change in the core of American families. While fathers were seeking employment outside of the family, mothers were becoming a lucrative market for consumerism.

By the 1870s, mothers and young children had become the new targets of manufacturers. Before this time, most simple toys had been hand-made and the fancier toys were imported from Europe, many from Germany. Soon, however, American made toys and educational materials for the home became a thriving business. The market and availability of products expanded greatly as early as the 1870s when the mail-order catalog company of Montgomery Ward began selling toys (Beatty, 1995). Observers have noted that this increased commercialization had both positive and negative effects on the kindergarten movement.

**Popularized the kindergarten movement.** Shapiro (1983) suggested that it was through the efforts of manufacturers that the kindergarten movement gained momentum. The ability to “capitalize on the leisure time of the new urban middle-class” was viewed as one of the most important steps in the popularization of the movement (p. 67).
At the height of his career, toy manufacturer Milton Bradley discovered the kindergarten. Though his association with Elizabeth Peabody, Bradley began manufacturing kindergarten blocks and publishing Froebelian literature at a time when no other companies were doing so (Ross, 1976; Shapiro, 1983).

The Centennial World’s Fair was the first to popularize a new and important trend: the marketing of the kindergarten and kindergarten materials. The Milton Bradley Company and the Ernest Steiger Publishing Company were among the 22 commercial manufacturers who exhibited their kindergarten materials (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000; Shapiro, 1983). Steiger, a New York publisher and German emigrant, and Bradley were at the time the two largest mail-order suppliers of kindergarten materials. With the support of Elizabeth Peabody, Steiger published a series of “Kindergarten Tracts” which were pamphlets designed to inform the reader of how to establish their own home or community kindergarten. Steiger agreed to supply these tracts free of charge to all those attending the Centennial Exhibits (Beatty, 1995; Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000).

The commercial exhibits at the Centennial did much to heighten the public’s awareness of the kindergarten movement. The mother of Frank Lloyd Wright, Mrs. Anna Wright, had an encounter with the kindergarten at the fair that demonstrates the impact exhibits had on many women (Beatty, 1995; Shapiro, 1983; Wolfe, 2000). Described as an energetic woman who was also interested in education, it was said that Mrs. Wright engaged Miss Ruth Burritt in a conversation about the kindergarten after one of Miss Burritt’s demonstration lessons (Shapiro, 1983). As soon as she returned to her home in Boston, Mrs. Wright purchased the kindergarten gifts and occupations that Milton Bradley had advertised at the fair to use with her children at home (Beatty, 1995; Wolfe, 2000).
Years later, Frank Lloyd Wright stated that he attributed his “sense of line, form, and colour to these early experiences” and how these early experiences with the gifts and occupations impacted his life’s work (Wolfe, 2000, p. 122). Specifically, Froebel’s block designs had a great impact on Wright’s architectural designs. In fact, Wright’s Tokyo Imperial Hotel is reminiscent of Froebel’s farmyard block design (Wolfe, 2000, p. 123). When visiting with his father in Tokyo, Wright’s own son, John Lloyd Wright, up with the design of Lincoln Logs based on the techniques used for the construction of the Imperial Hotel. The junior Wright’s Lincoln Logs were first manufactured in 1916 (Wolfe, 2000).

**Distortion of the kindergarten pedagogy.** Elizabeth Peabody spent several months at the Centennial Fair visiting each pavilion and studying the details of the exhibits. In a series of articles “Letters to the Boston Meeting of Kindergarteners”, Peabody “gently chastised Milton Bradley for including alphabetical letters on his blocks” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 81). Those hoping to advance the kindergarten movement soon learned the true price of the popularization of the movement: commercial distortion. Others argued that commercial distortion was a small price to pay for such public exposure.

For every benefit that commercialism brought the kindergarten movement, it also brought problems. One such distortion can be found in the drawing of the Centennial Kindergarten featured on page 27 of this study. The artist, Hyde, took the liberty of adding alphabet letters to a block a child was holding. Alphabet blocks, however, would not have been a part of Froebelian materials (Wolfe, 2000). This suggests a subliminal means of advertising the alphabet blocks manufactured by Milton Bradley.
In an effort to sell their wares, toy makers often overlooked “the finer points of pedagogical correctness” (Beatty, 1995, p. 69). Even though many claimed to have the approval of kindergarteners, these manufacturers took many liberties with Froebel’s materials. When Bradley added alphabet letters to Froebel’s blocks, he completely changed the purpose and use of them. The alphabet blocks became “a didactic teaching device rather than a symbolic play material” (Beatty, 1995, p.70).

In the beginning, Elizabeth Peabody was a champion of the manufacturers and publishers of kindergarten materials but soon became worried about the growth of the industry. In 1879, Peabody wrote the following note to her friend and fellow kindergarten advocate Henry Bernard:

The interest of manufacturers and of merchants of the gifts and materials is a snare. It has already corrupted the simplicity of Froebel in Europe and America, for his ideas was to use elementary forms exclusively and simple materials, ---as much as possible of these being prepared by the children themselves. (Beatty, 1995, p. 70)

Summary

The findings of this investigation were presented in Chapter 4. Themes and subthemes were identified from an analysis of data collected. The use of historical quotes from documents, photographs, and drawings provided thick, rich description of the events and individuals connected to the World’s Fairs and their relationship to the kindergarten movement.
Chapter 5

Discussion

Introduction

This chapter includes a discussion of the research findings, implications for the study, and recommendations for further research. The purpose of this study was to discover how the kindergarten movement advanced in the United States. The central research questions that guided this study were: (1) What were the primary factors that contributed to the spread of the kindergarten movement in the United States? and (2) What role did the World’s Fair of 1876 play in advancing the kindergarten movement? The following sub questions for this study were:

1. What were the purposes of the kindergarten exhibits at the World’s Fair?
2. Who were the individuals that demonstrated the kindergarten at the first Centennial World’s Fair and how did they influence the kindergarten exhibits at the next fair in 1893?
3. How did commercialism associated with the fair affect the kindergarten movement?

Major Findings

Data collected from historical texts, journal articles, letters, photographs, and drawings revealed three themes related to the advancement of the kindergarten movement in the United States. The central question guiding this research, “What were the primary factors that contributed to the spread of the kindergarten movement in the United States?” was addressed within the themes of Americanizing the Kindergarten, Organizing the
Kindergarten, and Commercializing the Kindergarten. The research sub question, “What were the purposes of the kindergarten exhibits at the fairs?” was addressed within the theme, Americanizing the Kindergarten, while the sub question “Who were the individuals that demonstrated the kindergarten at the first Centennial World’s Fair and how did they influence the kindergarten exhibits at the next fair in 1893?” was addressed within the sub themes of Foreign Influence and Child-Study Movement and within the theme Organizing the Kindergarten. The final sub question, “How did commercialism that was associated with the fair affect the kindergarten movement?” was addressed within the theme Commercializing the Kindergarten.

The Centennial World’s Fair of 1876 was not only a turning point for the kindergarten movement but for the United States as a whole. The Centennial Word’s Fair helped to “literally reconstruct the American nation after four years of bloody civil war” (Rydell et al., 2000, p. 19). The world’s fair was seen as a catalyst that accelerated the world’s opinion of the reunified states within the United States. It demonstrated to the world that America had “grown up, arrived at full ‘manhood’, and could take its place alongside the older nations of Europe” (Rydell, 1984, p. 35). This new found place in the world increased foreign and domestic markets and thereby established profitable associations that previously had not been open to the United States. This reemergence on the world stage also ushered in an influx of immigrants to the United States.

The Centennial gave the kindergarten movement the opportunity it needed to advance. Vandewalker (1908) stated, “The Exposition marked an epoch in the advancement of the kindergarten movement, as it marked an epoch in the history of elementary education” (p. 11). The kindergarten, however, did suffer from growing pains over the next several years. It had to adapt to the needs of a new and diverse society,
kindergarten pioneers had to become organized in an effort to advance the movement, and the cost of commercialism had to be taken into account. After many adaptations and transformations, however, the kindergarten has become a staple of the American educational system.

Addressing the Research Questions

Purpose of the kindergarten exhibits. Transforming the kindergarten into an acceptable movement did much to promote its growth. As Vandewalker (1908) suggested, a revolution in kindergarten had to take place before it could be widely accepted in the United States. In 1870, there were less than a dozen kindergartens established in the United States, mostly in the New England area. The Centennial World’s Fair was a unique opportunity for exhibitors to increase awareness and acceptance of the kindergarten to Americans from all over the country.

During the six months that the World’s Fair was in operation, nearly 10 million visitors had passed through its gates at Centennial Park in Philadelphia - making this the best attended world’s fair to date (Rydell, 1984). With railroads stretching across the United States, the opportunity for millions of Americans to visit the fair was not lost on the kindergarteners. Their purpose of exhibits was to demonstrate and introduce the kindergarten pedagogy in its pioneer stage to visitors from across the United States (Ross, 1976).

Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Historical Register of the Centennial Exposition, 1876 (1876) predicted that the “exhibition of the Kindergarten at the Centennial will introduce the system into many cities where it is at present unknown” (p. 158). This prediction came to fruition. By 1880, four years after the Centennial, there were more than 400
kindergartens established in 30 states (Dombkowski, 20002; Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000; Vandewalker, 1924). The rapid spread of the kindergarten during the last half of the 1870s was “the result in part of the larger acquaintance with it for which the Philadelphia Exposition had furnished the opportunity” (Vandewalker, 1908, p. 11).

The publicity that the fair would generate for the kindergarten on both national and international levels was not lost on those in the business world, either. There were over 20 exhibits featuring educational toys and equipment at the fair. While the purpose of exhibitors who sold their educational toys and materials at the Centennial Fair may have been less than altruistic in nature, they were well aware that their success as a manufacturer was directly related to the advancement of the kindergarten movement (Shapiro, 1983).

**The Centennial’s influence on other fairs.** Full acceptance of the kindergarten after the Philadelphia Centennial was not easily accomplished. One justifiable reason the kindergarten had not gained general acceptance before the Centennial was its association with the German culture. Before the early 1870s, most Americans were “ignorant, suspicious, or fearful of sending their children to a German kindergarten” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 44).

The earliest followers of the kindergarten movement were immigrants from Germany, and many had trained directly with Froebel. These individuals were met with resistance when they attempted to open “German Kindergartens” in non-German cities in the United States. Matilda Kriege and Maria Kraus-Boelte had difficulty establishing kindergartens in the United States due to the fear of “the foreign character of the kindergarten” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 79). Left in the hands of German-Americans, the kindergarten continued to be perceived as a “foreign importation”. It took the influence of
American educators to Americanize the kindergarten and make it palatable to American preferences (Beatty, 1995, p. 57).

Shapiro (1983) noted that there were five American kindergarten exhibits at the Centennial World’s Fair in 1876. The literature related to this study could only mapped to four kindergarten exhibits at the Centennial. One was under the guidance and support of Elizabeth Peabody and the Boston Froebel Society. The Centennial Kindergarten exhibit was one of the biggest draws of the fair. Housed in the Kindergarten Cottage, it demonstrated the use of Froebel’s gifts and occupations with 18 children from a local orphan’s home. The children were taught by Miss Ruth Burritt, a former student of Marie Kraus-Boelte (Beatty, 1995).

Peabody argued with many that at this pioneer stage, it was essential that visitors to the demonstration kindergarten not see Froebel’s ideas distorted (Ross, 1976). Peabody’s kindergarten exhibit was a success. She expressed her joy in its success in her publication the *Kindergarten Messenger, 1876* (1876):

> But we are not in the mood for anything but rejoicing, that our plan has had such perfect success in its immediate object. We have yet to hear of an exception to the favorable judgment formed by the visitors, who included, apparently, all our superintendents of education, principals of schools, distinguished scientist, and clergymen, and experienced parents, capable of criticism, who often came doubting to go away believing. (p. 285)

The other Americans exhibiting the kindergarten were Susan Blow, Louise Pollock, and Emily Coe. Miss Blow’s exhibit was considered by some to be the most popular one at the Centennial (Shapiro, 1983). However, Peabody believed that it was not
consistent with Froebel’s teaching. Peabody suggested that the work of Miss Blow’s students was forced and too perfect to have been created by a kindergarten student (Beatty, 1995). Miss Blow argued that Miss Peabody did not understand the “vividness of life and energy of Western children” (Peabody, 1876b, p. 105). In essence, Miss Blow adapted her teachings to the way of life that children in the St. Louis and the Midwest area experienced.

Two other kindergarten exhibits were also available to Centennial visitors; however, they were considered to be “non-authorized” versions (Shapiro, 1983, p. 66). These exhibits belonged to Louisa Pollock and Emily Coe. Louisa Pollock’s exhibit advertised the advanced methods and techniques that had “nothing to do with Froebel’s approach” (Ronda, 1999, p. 311). Pollock claimed to have invented new and better methods and techniques than those of Froebel (Ross, 1976).

Emily Coe’s kindergarten exhibit, however, garnered the most criticism from Froebelian purists. Brosterman (1997) referred to it as a “highly religious bastardization of the kindergarten ideal” (p. 154). Miss Coe’s “American Kindergarten” adapted Froebel’s ideas to the needs of Americans with a new system of education and a new set of materials that were said to be an improvement over those by Froebel (Steiger, 1878). Miss Coe’s claims naturally angered “orthodox Froebelians” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 81).

Many Americans defended Blow, Pollock, and Coe citing a need to Americanize the kindergarten in order to better meet the needs of Americans across the nation (Ross, 1976). As the kindergarten movement grew, some of “Peabody’s old transcendentalist friends began taking Froebelianism to task for its excessive rigidity” (p. 70). The popularization of the kindergarten continued throughout the 1880s and 1890s with
kindergarten exhibits across the country. The need to become more organized in its representation of the kindergarten gained momentum.

**Unifying the kindergarten.** With The Columbian Exposition of 1893 on the horizon, the need to present a unified front was paramount for women in America, especially kindergartners. The advancements that women made since the previous World’s Fair of 1876 can be seen in the buildings that they designed and used for their exhibits. Having learned many lessons from the Centennial Fair, the Board of Lady Managers began by hiring a female architect for the construction of their Woman’s Building. After a national competition, Sophia Hayden of Boston was chosen. The 21 year old Miss Hayden designed Italian Renaissance villas that were described as “delicate and graceful” (Bolotin & Laing, 2002, p. 42).

The Board of Lady Managers also approved the construction of a Children’s Building. Even though a male designed the Children’s Building, much like the Centennial Kindergarten Cottage, this is where the similarity ended. The Children’s Building was much larger than the Centennial Cottage. It was 150 feet by 90 feet and two-stories high with a playground on the rooftop (Weimann, 1981).

The researcher of this study also noticed a difference between the buildings when closely inspecting the Centennial Kindergarten Cottage and the Children’s Building. On the front of the Kindergarten Cottage was a sign that read “The Froebel System Of Kindergarten As Introduced and Carried On At The Northern Home For Friendless Children” (Brosterman, 1997, p. 9). Over the arched entrance of the Columbian Children’s Building was an inscription that read “The Hope of the World is in the Children” (Weimann, 1981, p. 337). The comparison of the two inscriptions reflects a significant shift in attitudes toward children in the latter years of the 19th century.
The Children’s Building was reported to offer the “best thought on sanitation, diet, education, and amusement for children” (Weimann, 1981, p. 332). Not only were kindergarten classes available for young children, but older children participated in lectures and field trips across the fairgrounds. Mothers and others interested in the education of their children were encouraged to attend lectures delivered by a variety of women’s groups. Virginia Thrall Smith, who established the first free kindergarten in Connecticut, gave a lecture on “the value to the community on the investment in kindergartens” (Weimann, 1981, p. 334). Another lecturer, Sarah B. Cooper, founder of the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association of San Francisco, gave a talk on “The Kindergarten as Character Builder” (Weimann, 1981, p. 335). These two women coming together in 1893 is a testament to how a nation once divided had been reunited from sea-to-sea by the kindergarten movement.

However, this cooperation did not happen by chance. By the 1890s, a new generation of kindergarteners had been trained by kindergarteners who had learned techniques from books as compared to those who had learned directly from kindergarten pioneers. This indirect learning may suggest the possibility that “a far deeper comprehension of both the practical and spiritual harmonics of the system” was lost (Brosterman, 1997, p. 40). While unfortunate, it was inevitable that the needs of children were changing at the same rate as the nation. Uniting all of the kindergarten clubs was important to the success of the 1893 Exposition.

This new generation of kindergarteners retained the lessons that were learned by the pioneers of the kindergarten movement who participated in the Philadelphia Centennial World’s Fair. The kindergarteners had not participated at a national level
since the Centennial Fair of 1876, and although they wanted a national exhibit at the Centennial, they had neither the time nor resources to make it a reality.

On July 15, 1892, the International Kindergarten Union (IKU) was established. One immediate purpose of the organization was to present a kindergarten exhibit at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago (Vandewalker, 1901; Weber, 1969; Weimann, 1981). Knowing that this was to be a fair of great magnitude, the members began working immediately with the Board of Lady Managers to devise a plan for the kindergarten exhibition in the Children’s Building. Having learned from the Centennial Kindergarten exhibits the importance of presenting a united front, other kindergarten associations joined the IKU organization.

Vandewalker (1908) described how “the work of the Chicago Exposition for the kindergarten cause was so thoroughly done that succeeding expositions have found it unnecessary to make a corresponding effort in its behalf” (p. 76). The kindergarten did, however, make appearances at other World’s Fairs. By the late 1890s, the kindergarten made its way into the public school system and became a permanent fixture of the American educational system by the 1930s (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). The current researcher found this history to be noteworthy since the addition of kindergarten to the public school system did not become firmly established in the state in which she resides until the late 1970s. At the time this study took place, kindergarten was still not a mandatory requirement before entering first grade.

The influence of the child-study movement was also evident at the Columbian Exposition. At the close of the Centennial World’s Fair, many civic-minded citizens began to establish free kindergartens. For kindergarten to take root in America, however, it would have to adapt to the needs of children in the United States. With industrialization
came an increased number of immigrants making their way to cities in America every day. This resulted in a concern for the children of immigrants who “flooded city streets” (Beatty, 1995, p. 72).

During the 1880s, a new generation of kindergarteners joined with the pioneers of the movement to make public the importance of offering free kindergartens. They appealed to the public’s sense of moral and social obligation. As industrialization and immigration intensified so did the problems of poverty, slums, and crime. Many middle- and upper-class Americans sought ways to improve conditions in urban areas (Ross, 1976).

In order for the kindergarten to attempt to address these social issues, Froebelian pedagogy had to adapt. Free kindergartens began to develop in urban areas, and they began to both educate children and address their physical needs. The scientific world began to look to the kindergarten for answers, creating the first “scientific critique of Froebelian pedagogy” (Beatty, 1995, p. 72). This created a deep divide among the more conservative kindergarteners who were resistant to change and those who promoted the study of the child along scientific lines.

Led by G. Stanley Hall, the child-study movement helped to reform kindergarten education. The intent of the child-study movement, which began between the 1880s and 1890s, was to reconstruct education through the training of parents and educators. The kindergarten, having captured the attention of G. Stanley Hall, was considered to be the perfect arena to study children and to learn how children developed (Vandewalker, 1908).

Hall was the first to recognize that Froebel addressed the “racial recapitulation theory” in 1829. Froebel explained racial recapitulation theory, which was considered a basic tenet of genetic psychology, as the process in which every generation goes through
the same pattern of development as the previous generations. In agreement with Froebel, Hall suggested that each stage of the child’s development should be recognized, respected, and that “educational organizations should take into account” the child’s development (Ross, 1976, p. 68).

This new ideology was advanced by kindergarteners who planned the lectures and exhibits at the fair. The child-study movement found its way into numerous lectures that were given at the Columbian World’s Fair. Talks were given to visitors of the Children’s Building on the development of the child’s mental and moral nature by using improved methods of observations of the child in the home and at school. In addition to lectures, visitors could observe first hand “a living model of enlightened methods of child care and education” (Weimann, 1981, p. 333).

**Influence of commercialization.** The progress that the kindergarten movement made between the Centennial World’s Fair of 1876 and the Columbian Exposition of 1893 and the recognition it received would not have been possible without the commercial endeavors of the manufacturers of toys and materials. Shapiro (1983) suggested that it was through the efforts of manufacturers that the kindergarten movement gained momentum. The ability to “capitalize on the leisure time of the new urban middle-class” was viewed as one of the most important steps in the popularization of the movement (p. 67).

The Centennial World’s Fair was the first fair to exhibit a new and important trend, the marketing of kindergarten materials. Once introduced to the kindergarten by Elizabeth Peabody, Milton Bradley “spotted a new and potentially huge market” (Brosterman, 1997, p. 101). Bradley began to make what he considered to be
improvements to the kindergarten materials. Using the name *kindergarten*, Bradley began manufacturing his own version of Froebel’s gifts and occupations that could be utilized in the home. The home versions of the kindergarten not only caught the attention of Anna Wright but others as well.

Nora A. Smith left the Centennial armed with Bradley’s “do-it-yourself” kindergarten kit and Ernest Steiger’s kindergarten tracts, which he distributed free of charge at the fair. Steiger’s tracts contained just enough instruction and illustration that many, like Mrs. Smith, began conducting classes in their homes. Mrs. Smith became so convinced of her own abilities that she wrote a short manual on kindergartens for use in small towns. In her manual, Smith alluded to the fact that the kindergarten was the most valuable resource a community could possess, even more so than the church (Shapiro, 1983).

Before the Centennial, advertisement of kindergarten materials and prices could be found on one catalog page. By the 1890s, kindergarten catalogs with related materials had become the size of a paperback book. What had started as a trend had “exploded into a fad” (Brosterman, 1997, p. 101). What the demonstration kindergartens could not accomplish in making the kindergarten acceptable to Americans, the toy manufacturers did. However, increased exposure came with a price, namely the distortion of Froebel’s ideas. Many, however, argued that the exposure manufacturers afforded the movement was worth the cost (Shapiro, 1983).

The researcher of this study found it interesting that the marketing of kindergarten materials at the Columbian World’s Fair did not garner much attention. Either the mail-order catalog companies had acquired a monopoly for those interested in the kindergarten or perhaps, having learned from the Centennial not to leave this area of the kindergarten
exhibits to chance, the planners of the Children’s Building would not allow the marketing of materials in their building. The literature does not fully support either conclusion. However, the literature does suggest that without the commercialization of the kindergarten materials and literature the kindergarten might have become a passing fad instead of a permanent educational fixture.

**Implications of the Research**

The purpose of this study was to reveal the rich history that early childhood education has experienced. In order to elevate the image of early childhood as a profession, it is important to understand the struggles of the kindergarten at the pioneer stage. The number of groups that were organized in order to be recognized and represented at these fairs – National Association for the Education of Young Children, Association for Childhood Education International, and National Association of Colored Women - demonstrated the publicity value the fairs afforded. The child-study movement also began in earnest after the 1876 fair as a way to understand and address the needs of all children in the "free kindergartens" not just the needs of the middle and upper class. One could easily make the connection between the free kindergartens and the advent of the socially-popular Head Start Movement.

Had it not been for the fairs and the documentation of individuals who attended these fairs, the history of the kindergarten movement would not have been complete. Having access to primary documents, photographs, and drawings provided a richer image of what it was like as the kindergarten movement grew in the United States. Currently, most states in the United States do not require full-day kindergarten. According to a recent report by the *Children’s Defense Fund* (2012), only 10 states and the District of
Columbia require school districts to mandate publicly funded full-day kindergarten before entrance into first grade. Other states require school districts to offer either full-day or half-day kindergarten but have not made it mandatory for school entrance.

The *Children’s Defense Fund* study also noted that children enrolled in full-day kindergartens were exposed to 30% more instruction in reading and literacy and 46% more time in mathematics than those enrolled in half-day programs. More importantly, children in full-day kindergartens exhibited more independent thinking, positive interactions with peers, and were more reflective in their thinking (CDF, 2012).

The many benefits of kindergarten were first realized by the pioneers of the movement. Over 100 years ago, Susan Blow and Louise Pollock worked tirelessly to make kindergarten equally accessible to all children. It appears that their battle is not yet finished. Families in a number of states must pay tuition to have their children enrolled in a full-day kindergarten program.

When discussing the research findings with colleagues, these educators have been amazed by the rich history of the kindergarten and surprised that no one has ever told the story before now. Why has no one ever told this story? Beatty (1998) suggested that since most historians of the past were men there is a lack of history on early education. Preschool education, primarily viewed as a “woman’s occupation”, has appeared to be less important and less interesting to male historians. The current researcher hopes that this study will recast the image of early childhood education in an effort to raise the quality of professionalism of educators.
**Recommendations for Future Research**

As previously mentioned in the study, the literature suggests that there were five separate kindergarten exhibits at the Centennial World’s Fair (Shapiro, 1983). The researcher was only able to identify four individuals who demonstrated the kindergarten to visitors at the fair. Brosterman (1997) mentioned seven kindergarten exhibits, however, he included the Japanese and Canadian exhibits. Further research is needed regarding the “missing” exhibitor and how she may or may not have contributed to the kindergarten movement.

Not having firsthand accounts by participants and observers at the fair was a limiting factor. Being privy to thoughts and perceptions of the “orphan inmates” who were put on display for the fair visitors would have added greatly to the richness of the story. What happened to them after the fair? What affect did being at the fair have on their lives? The researcher would also like to know if there were any men who were instrumental in the advancement of the kindergarten movement throughout the United States. What role did they play? How did their gender affect their participation? These are all questions yet to be answered.

**Summary**

Chapter 5 began with a summary of the major findings in relation to the data analyzed and described in chapter 4. Implications of the research and recommendations for future research were discussed based on the major findings.

Why study the past? In the forward to Vandewalker’s (1908) *The Kindergarten in American Education*, Amalie Hoffer wrote:
A history of the kindergarten in America cannot fail to widen and deepen the public understanding of this unique movement, to know which, “root and stem, and branch and all,” involves a composite knowledge of philosophies as old as Socrates, psychologies as new as yesterday, and the whole range of habits, activities, sentiments and tendencies native to human life. (p. 2)

That is why this story must be told!
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