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G. Stanley Hall, Child Study, and the American Public

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ABSTRACT

In the final decades of the 19th century psychologist Granville Stanley Hall was among the most prominent pedagogical experts in the nation. The author explores Hall's carefully crafted persona as an educational expert, and his engagements with the American public, from 1880 to 1900, arguably the height of his influence. Drawing from accounts of Hall's lecture circuit in the popular press, a map of his talks across the nation is constructed to assess the geographic scope of his influence. These talks to educators on the psychology underlying childhood and pedagogy, and his views and research on child life more generally, were regularly discussed in newspapers and popular periodicals. The venues in which Hall's ideas were disseminated, discussed, and in some cases, dismissed are described. His efforts to mobilize popular support for, and assistance with, his research endeavors in child study are also discussed. Such efforts were controversial both within the burgeoning field of psychology and among the public. Through his various involvements in pedagogy, and concerted efforts to engage with the American public, Hall helped establish psychology's relevance to parenting and educational practices.

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Upon his arrival in San Francisco at Christmastime 1898, Granville Stanley Hall was lauded by the press as “the most famous exponent of pedagogy in America with a reputation that extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific shores” (G. Stanley Hall is here, 1898; Figure 1). Passing through San Francisco on the way to an educational conference north of the city in Santa Rosa, Hall was credited with possessing unique insight into the needs of students, a reputation predicated on his qualifications as one of the new scientific psychologists. His expert standing in pedagogy began in the early 1880s, forged through what would prove to be an extensive series of public lectures on pedagogy, which were regularly documented in the press, as well as periodic writings in a variety of popular print periodicals. Reaching out to the American populace through a variety of avenues, Hall crafted a persona as a public intellectual, one uniquely qualified to comment on and guide the progress of educational practices in the country.¹ By engaging with the public in this way, Hall ensured psychology a place at the table in the national conversation about child development and education, a state that continues through the present day.

Hall was one of the first of a new breed of scientific psychologists, but his work was just as often geared toward parents and educators as psychologists (Ross, 1972). On his 1898 visit to the West Coast he gave several public lectures on education, some of only the dozens he delivered in the final decades of the 19th century. Many of these lectures took place closer to Hall's home in the Northeastern United States, but as his visit to California attests, he also ventured further afield to spread his pedagogical gospel. Hall's lectures and the spread of his brand of developmentalism more generally, helped establish and cement his status as pedagogical and parenting expert, but they also allowed him to mobilize support for and, perhaps more importantly, assistance with his research endeavors in child study. This orientation

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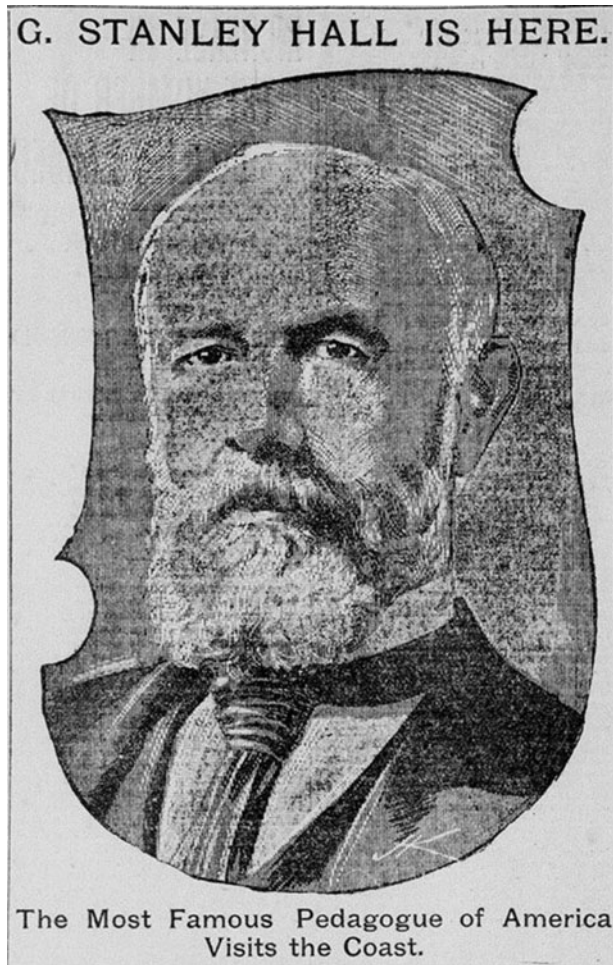


Figure 1 Image accompanying the announcement of Hall's 1898 visit to San Francisco from *The San Francisco Call* (G. Stanley Hall is here, 1898, p. 9).

toward applied work helped the burgeoning field of psychology gain cultural authority, but also provoked controversy among other psychologists who saw the methods adopted in Hall's child study investigations as a threat to psychology's scientific standing.

Ascertaining the exact scope of Hall's influence among the American public is challenging, but one indicator of such are popular writings on Hall and his work from 1880 to 1900, arguably the height of his influence within child study circles. During this period Hall lectured extensively before educational, child study, and other organizations across the nation. In addition to his in-person proselytizing to the American public, details of his talks were regularly reported on in the nation's newspapers. His pedagogically relevant research findings also periodically garnered attention in the popular press. Moreover, Hall himself also wrote a number of articles for nonspecialist audiences in popular periodicals. The appearance of psychology, of its various forms, in the nation's newspapers was by no means unique during this period (see Dennis, 2011), but Hall's persona as educational expert made him, as much as his ideas, the subject of much press coverage. Although garnering attention, the public response to Hall and his ideas, as will be discussed, was not uniformly positive. Nonetheless, Hall's status as pedagogical expert received recognition across the country and helped established psychology as a discipline with much to contribution to parenting and educational practices.

After outlining how Hall established himself as an authority on pedagogy, I explore various engagements of Hall and his ideas with the American public in the final two decades of the 19th century.

First, using a search of historical newspapers and mapping the resulting data, Hall's lecture circuit to educationalists across the United States is described. In mapping Hall's lecture circuit in this way provides some indication of the geographic scope of his in-person proselytizing on pedagogy. This is followed by a related discussion of the press's dissemination and reception of Hall's ideas, either as they had been presented in person on his lecture circuit or through his own writings, popular and otherwise. Finally, the use of public lectures and the popular press as venues for encouraging the public to participate in child study is discussed. Not only were Hall's views on childhood and pedagogy regular features in the popular press, but also his work periodically spurred further research undertakings on the ground.

Hall as pedagogical expert

So far as Hall was concerned "the one chief and immediate field of application for ... [psychological] work is its application to education, considered as the science of human nature and the art of developing it to its fullest maturity" (Hall, 1894b, p. 718). The new scientific psychology was thus almost immediately and emphatically an applied science, one with concrete benefits for parents and educators. This vision of psychology was a highly pragmatic for Hall. His own involvement with the field of education was longstanding. Before earning his doctorate with William James at Harvard in 1878, he supported himself by working as a teacher. Following his time at Harvard he ventured to Germany for further philosophical and scientific training, including a visit to Wilhelm Wundt's newly established psychological laboratory. Returning to the United States in 1880, and unable to secure a fulltime academic appointment in the new scientific psychology, he obtained a position as a lecturer on pedagogy and history of philosophy at Harvard (Ross, 1972).

As the *Harvard Register* reported, Hall's talks on pedagogy took place in Boston proper "before a large audience of teachers, superintendents, and school-committee men" ([Untitled], 1881, p. 107), each of whom had paid a small fee to attend. These kinds of public lectures were "a new experiment for the University" ([Untitled], 1881, p. 107), one that proved successful. This was particularly the case for Hall's lectures on pedagogy in the winter of 1881, which were so well received that Harvard reappointed him to a lectureship for two additional years (Ross, 1972; The past year at Harvard, 1883). Lectures of this kind were the first of many for Hall, setting the stage for his extensive pedagogical exploits in later years, including further lectures across the nation. Hall further cemented his pedagogical authority during the early 1880s by publishing two articles on education in the *Princeton Review* (Hall, 1882b, 1883).

The Harvard lectures on pedagogy, together with his psychological training, allowed Hall to craft a public persona as an educational expert within the nation's burgeoning child study movement, which sought to study children in order to improve educational and parenting practices (Davidson & Benjamin, 1987). Massachusetts was particularly fertile ground for such discussions, given educational innovations in the state over the preceding decades, including Francis Parker's Quincy system of education, the spread of free schooling, and the rise of compulsory education. With these educational reforms came an interest in, and spread of, professional training for teachers through a system of normal school training, which proliferated in educationally oriented Massachusetts in the 19th century. Hall capitalized on this interest, offering not only his own romanticized vision of childhood in keeping with the reformist zeal of many, but also a putatively scientific basis for his educational views. As Ross (1972) noted, Hall's talent in mobilizing child study was a function of his to appeal to "both the enlightened yearnings and the conservative sympathies" (p. 290) of educationalists. His conviction that the child's nature should dictate pedagogical practices at once offered a counterpoint to traditional educational methods, while also positioning scientific practice—particularly the new scientific psychology—as the means of elucidating childhood. Founded on an understanding of the nature of childhood, a reformed system of education would ensure children matured into healthy, productive, adult members of American society.

So successful were Hall's public lectures in Boston that he made a similar series of eight public talks on pedagogy in Baltimore in the winter of 1883 (Baby education, 1883). At this time he had been appointed to teach at Johns Hopkins University during the spring term (Ross, 1972). He continued to lecture on education after he was appointed full professor of psychology and pedagogy at Johns Hopkins in the

following year (Work at Johns Hopkins, 1884). The inclusion of pedagogy in Hall's title was a deliberate effort on the part of the university to foster goodwill in the local community, as educational issues immediately positioned the university's activities as of interest to a broad swath of individuals outside its walls. This strategy and his title notwithstanding, Hall's public lectures on pedagogy have halted for a time in the mid-1880s as he sought to establish Johns Hopkins as a center for the new psychology (Ross, 1972).

With his move to Worcester, Massachusetts, in the late 1880s, as president of the newly established graduate education only Clark University, Hall employed a similarly pragmatic approach to pedagogy as a means of securing favor with the local community. Graduate education in pedagogy was available at the University from the beginning, though it was initially positioned as a high-level endeavor largely divorced from educationalists on the ground (Clark University, 1889). Following difficulties with the institution's benefactor and faculty members, the latter largely self-imposed, Hall sought to curry favor locally by engaging more directly with the broader educational community. To this end, in the early 1890s he instituted summer schools for educators at the University and founded a new journal, *The Pedagogical Seminary*, now *The Journal of Genetic Psychology* (Ross, 1972; Young & Green, 2013). He also initiated a new program of research on childhood.

From very early on Hall's lectures on pedagogy were peppered with the results of his research on children. Although trained in, and an advocate for, the new scientific psychology which emphasized the use of experimental methods and firmly located itself within laboratory spaces (Capshew, 1992; Coon, 1993; Kroker, 2003; Morawski, 1988), Hall's inquiries into childhood eschewed these qualities. Instead, to ascertain the nature of childhood Hall employed topical syllabi, or questionnaires. His initial research in this vein was conducted in Boston schools in the fall of 1882, with the aim of ascertaining the contents of children's minds upon their initial entry to the city's schools (Hall, 1883, 1893b). This kind of research on children and educational matters, much like his public lectures, largely stopped during his time in Baltimore. At Clark, Hall once again took up this kind of work as part of his outreach efforts to the local community, initiating an extensive series of research projects in the form of topical syllabi, for which he sought the participation of parents and educators (see Young, 2012, 2014). As Hall's biographer Dorothy Ross noted, "the chief strength Hall brought to this educational scene, and the first new factor he contributed to it, was the authority of science" (Ross, 1972, p. 118). Trading on this authority, Hall was able to garner the support, and, more importantly, the cooperation of educators and parents across the nation in his research on children and pedagogical matters more generally. The ultimate result of this program of research was, Hall hoped, an improved system of education and child rearing.

Mapping Hall's lecture circuit

Digital approaches to historical inquiry have gained ground within the history of psychology in recent years (e.g., Benjafield, 2016; Green, 2016; Green & Feinerer, 2015; Green, Feinerer, & Burman, 2013; Pettit, 2016; Pettit, Serykh, & Green, 2015; Young & Green, 2013), seeking to assemble, analyze, and depict a bulk of historical data. In this vein, in an effort to assess the scope of Hall's geographic reach and influence during the latter decades of the 19th century, a map of his travels during this era was constructed on the basis of newspaper coverage of his lectures. Accounts of Hall's lecture circuit were located through a search of the Library of Congress's freely available database of historic newspapers, *Chronicling America* (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>). This database includes digitized copies of newspapers from across the United States, with coverage that extends from the 1780s through the 1920s, and includes many smaller, now defunct presses. To supplement these materials, reports on Hall and his travels were also collected from a ProQuest database of historic newspapers, such as the *The New York Times*, as well as a number of popular magazines and periodicals. The *Harvard Crimson* and *Baltimore Sun* were also consulted, given their ready availability and proximity to Hall's known locales.

From this survey 84 lectures given by Hall between 1880 and 1900 were located from some 150 articles, a number of which reported the same talk. The vast majority of these lectures were to educational associations on explicitly pedagogical matters of one kind or another. There were, however, a few talks of a decidedly non-education-related scientific character, such as a lecture on the "Localization and Recent

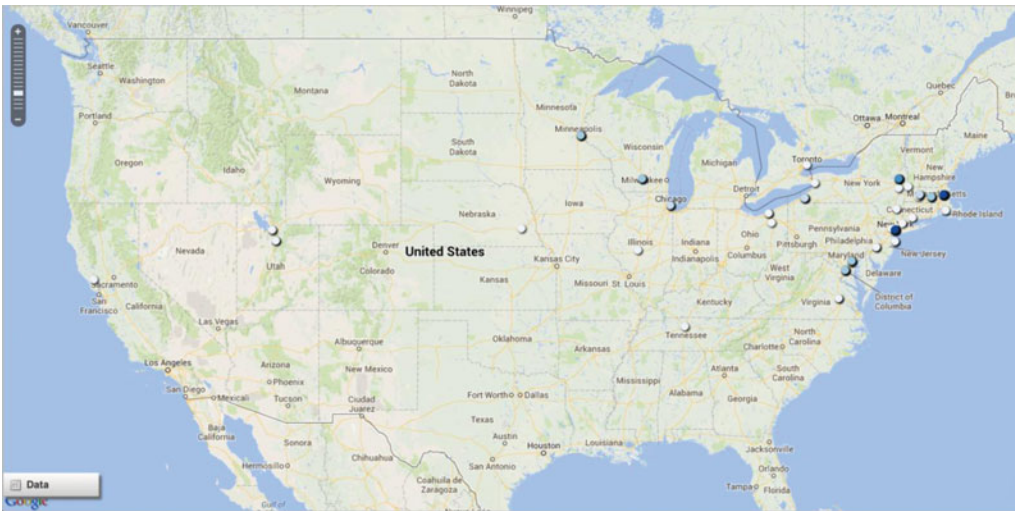


Figure 2 Map of Hall's North American lectures 1880–1900. Blue circles indicate the locations of talks, with darker shades of blue indicating greater numbers of lectures in a given location. Created with geocommons (ArcGIS, Arlington, VA; <http://geocommons.com>).

Physiology of the Brain” before the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland, in Baltimore the mid-1880s (Medical and chirurgical faculty of Maryland, 1884). The line between talks on educational issues, and those on more “scientific” matters is, of course, not absolute. These talks are also almost exclusively limited to the United States, with the single exception of a talk on “The School of the Future” given in Toronto, Canada, in 1891 as part of the National Education Association (NEA) meeting held in the city (N., 1891).

Using these data, a map of Hall's lecture circuit was then constructed with the freely available mapping tool geocommons (ArcGIS, Arlington, VA; <http://geocommons.com>). The map visually documents the geographic reach of Hall and his ideas during the final decades of the 19th century, with darker blue markers indicating locales in which he lectured on multiple occasions (Figure 2). By no means, however, is this map a complete accounting of Hall's movements and influence during these years. Even if one were to make the—almost certainly erroneous—assumption that the press at this time reported on each and every one of Hall's lectures, the built-in limitations of the databases consulted, as well as well-recognized errors in rendering text from digitized sources, ensure that this map is at best a partial picture of the territory traversed by Hall.² These caveats notwithstanding, this geographical visualization provides a glimpse into Hall's movements during the final decades of the 19th century, while indicating at least some of the locales in which his psychologically informed pedagogy was directly disseminated. Turning to a closer reading of some of the mapped newspaper accounts of these talks provides an indication of where Hall's ideas were disseminated, discussed, and in some cases, dismissed. Although it is clear that Hall's form of psychologically oriented pedagogy may have received its greatest audience in the Northeastern United States, it was not limited to this locale. Hall himself ensured this with a lecture circuit that spanned the nation.

Geography of influence

Given Hall's places of residence during the final decades of the 19th century—first Cambridge, then Baltimore, and finally Worcester—and the relative challenges of long distance travel during this period, it is perhaps unsurprising that the majority of his lectures took place in the Northeastern United States. From the assembled accounts of his lectures, New York City was the site of the greatest number of talks, with 10 delivered here between 1880 and 1900. Nine were given in Boston, with an additional two in nearby Cambridge, whereas a total of 21 talks were identified as taking place in Massachusetts as a whole.

Although the bulk of Hall's public lectures occurred in this region of the country he did periodically venture further afield. One abiding motive to travel was participation in NEA meetings. After speaking at his first NEA meeting in Washington, DC, in 1882 (Hall, 1882a; see Ross, 1972) Hall traveled to Saratoga Springs, New York, the following year (Saratoga, 1883), before journeying westward to Madison, Wisconsin, in 1884 (Convention news, 1884, Educational association, 1884, Educators in convention, 1884; C., 1884). Returning to educational circuits five years later, NEA meetings drew him first south to Nashville, Tennessee (National educational meeting, 1889), and then north, beyond the border of the United States, to Toronto, Canada (N., 1891).

Hall was also a recurrent visitor to Illinois, itself the site of a vibrant educational scene that fostered the formation of a state society dedicated to child study (Bryan, 1894; Ross, 1972). Throughout the 1890s Hall lectured in the state at educational meetings both big and small. As part of educational congresses held in Chicago in conjunction with the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, Hall distinguished his psychologized approach to education from that of more traditional educationalists who were meeting under the banner of "Rational Psychology in Education." Forming his own congress devoted to "Experimental Psychology in Education," he devoted the meeting to matters of child study (Hall, 1893a, 1893c; see Ross, 1972).³ That same year he spoke at the meetings of the Illinois State Teachers Association (Today's events, 1893). He returned to the state to address the Illinois Society for Child-Study in April 1897 (Child study congress to be held, 1897) and to speak at the Chicago Kindergarten college course in 1899 (Fad of symbolism, 1899, Strange gospel of violence, 1899).

In addition to lecturing before national organizations Hall also spoke before smaller regional organizations. These kinds of talks often took place locally on the east coast (e.g., Massachusetts schoolmasters dine, 1895), but also drew him to the Midwestern United States. At various points in time he spoke at the Nebraska State Teachers Association meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska (Nebraska state teachers, 1893) and to public school teachers in Akron, Ohio (Late locals, 1900). In St. Paul, Minnesota, his lecture served as part of the local teachers association's fundraising effort for a new library (A new library, 1895), and two years later he returned for further lectures in the city (Dr. Hall to lecture here, 1897). Excursions further west still were extended enterprises in which Hall delivered multiple lectures, such as his more than month long visit to Utah in 1897 wherein he lectured repeatedly before both the Utah county summer school (Dr. Hall at Provo, 1897) and the Brigham Young Academy Summer Institute (At the tabernacle, 1897, B. Y. Academy Summer Institute, 1897; Hall, 1897; Utah's educators meet, 1897). Similarly, during his extended visit to the west coast the following year he spoke repeatedly at the California State Teachers' Association convention (Business and pleasure for teachers, 1898, G. Stanley Hall is here, 1898).

The popular adult education initiative known as the Chautauqua movement also provided Hall with a venue in which to spread his pedagogical gospel among the American public (Gould, 1961). His participation in the Chautauqua program was varied (Schools at Chautauqua, 1899, The Chautauqua Assembly of 1897, 1897; Vincent, 1886), though in at least one instance he lectured directly before the Department of Pedagogy at Chautauqua (The Chautauqua season, 1895).

Reception in the press

Reports of Hall's visits to locations across the country were regularly met with adulation. He was variously referred to as "the greatest American authority on child study" (Officers chosen by the teachers, 1898, p. 5), "one of the foremost educators of the country" (Round table sessions held in churches, 1898, p. 5), "the most eminent master of the child study movement" (Dr. Hall to lecture here, 1897, p. 8), and "the foremost authority on educational questions in this country – a man of impressive appearance, unassuming and delightful manner, who commands his audience whenever he speaks" (The university convocation, 1891, p. 127). Even his lectures closer to home provoked excitement. A talk at Amherst College on the relation of adolescence to morality and religion, led the press fawned to it "ought to be heard, not only by every parent, but also by every teacher and preacher" (The religious world, 1897, p. 658).

Extended stays in faraway locales like Utah and California attracted significant attention, with the press reporting regularly on Hall's comings and goings (At the tabernacle, 1897, Business and pleasure

for teachers, 1898, B. Y. Academy Summer Institute, 1897; Hall, 1897; Park City personals, 1897, President Hall here, 1898, Round table sessions held in churches, 1898, Utah's educators meet, 1897). On such visits he was regularly venerated by the press, described as "among the very foremost of American educators, and is the greatest authority on child study in the United States, if not in the world" (Dr. Hall at Provo, 1897, p. 4). Local educators were informed of his visit, "it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that it presents the opportunity of a life time" (Dr. Hall at Provo, 1897, p. 4). In person, adoration could precede his lectures, as his mere entrance to an auditorium was met with a standing ovation (Utah's educators meet, 1897) and at times his talks were standing-room-only affairs (Officers chosen by the teachers, 1898).

This kind of reverent reception was predicated as much on Hall's religious sentiment as much as his scientific credentials. *The Salt Lake Herald* recognized this explicitly when it noted that although Hall was "a careful student of Spencer, Huxley, Darwin and Tyndale" it was not this fact, but rather that "he is imbued with a religious feeling which puts him in harmony with the popular sentiment" (Educators visit Saltair, 1897, p. 6). This is not to say that Hall was uniformly praised in the press. As discussed subsequently, Hall's specific ideas about childhood and education were at times contentious.

Disseminating and disputing Hall's pedagogical vision

Hall's in person lectures across the country were one arena in which he broadcast his vision of childhood and education, but his ideas also traveled beyond the lecture hall. Mentions of Hall in newspapers at the end of the 19th century reported where, when, and on what topic he was to lecture, but also discussed the contents of these lectures after their occurrence, as well as his work and research findings more generally. In addition to these kinds of secondhand reports in the press, Hall also crafted accounts of his work specifically for public consumption during this era, penning pieces in the popular periodicals including *Forum* (Hall, 1890, 1900, 1901) and *The Youth's Companion*, a children's magazine (Hall, 1892, 1894a, 1895b).⁴

Among the ideas disseminated in the popular press were Hall's recapitulationist notions about child development (Bederman, 1995; Green, 2015). According to this understanding of childhood the child's psychological development repeats that of the species over evolutionary time. Under this scheme young boys were analogous to less evolved savage races and proper development necessitated an embrace of their primitiveness through practices such as boxing (Bederman, 1995). As described in Nebraska's *The McCook Tribune*, "every child is a little savage...he must have these traits of the savage if he is to live and grow to the full vigor of his possibilities" (Nature and myths, 1895, p. 7). In similar terms the press reported Hall's stance that "childhood should be kept alive in the human race as long as possible. All history, he said, teaches that precocity leads to the fall of empire" (Motherhood is made a science, 1899, p. 3). Elsewhere the public was presented with Hall's contention that "children are demoralized or made weak by too careful or too much attention. The effect of good rough handling and frequent cold water baths in many cases tend to make the child manly and better able to cope with the future problems of life" (Watch how the baby grows, 1894, p. 8). This kind of rough treatment in childhood, rooted in recapitulationist ideas of development, was meant to ensure young boys grew into vital adult males immune from the weaknesses too often associated with modern, civilized society (Bederman, 1995).

All this is not to say that Hall and his views were uniformly received positively or uncritically. He was at times called out for "wanting in humility" and for possessing an "undue assertion of self-importance" (Convention news, 1884, p. 3). Personality aside, his educational ideas were also divisive at times. For instance, his suggestion that the American educational system could benefit from adopting the German system of professional training of teachers received a largely negative response in the press, which sided nationalistically with the existing American system (The public school system, 1891, Too much pedagogy already, 1891). His views were also periodically at odds with other popular educational schemes of the era (Ross, 1972). In an 1899 talk in Chicago, Hall contended that young children do not comprehend symbolism, contra the fashionable Froebelian kindergarten system, a position the local press emphatically dismissed: "all of this is the rankest heresy. Children do comprehend symbolism. No trained kindergarten doubts this" (Fad of symbolism, 1899, p. 4).

Among Hall's work that on the nature of children's fears was an especially popular topic of discussion in the nation's newspapers (Hall, 1897; see also Hall, 1895a). The press's response to his project on the subject varied. Some simply reported Hall's findings about which items provoked the greatest fear in children, notably thunder and lightning ("Fright among children, 1897; The talk of the day, 1897), whereas others dismissed Hall broader conceptualization of children's fears as originating in the evolutionary past, in keeping with his more general recapitulationist position on child development. Reporting that Hall held "the child's remote ancestors in prehistoric times had to contend with beasts having big eyes and big teeth and this fear in the baby was the result of heredity" (The time not propitious, 1897, p. 4), *The Richmond Dispatch* responded with great sarcasm

No doubt of it. We have never for a moment questioned that this was the true solution of a baby's crying when you made a face at it. And yet, with such an absolutely logical and scientific demonstration before them, there are many persons who cannot be convinced that babies have colic, because, for generations, wind-mills have been popular in Holland. (The time not propitious, 1897, p. 4)

Further ridicule of Hall's accounting of children's of fears was expressed by Nebraska's *Valentine Democrat*, which offered as its parting word on Hall and his work: "if G. Stanley Hall and a fool were born twins it was not the latter who died" ([Untitled], 1897, p. 8).

Mobilizing child study

Discussed and, at times, dismissed in the press Hall ideas about pedagogical and child rearing practices were often intimately linked with his child study efforts. His research under the umbrella of child study took a variety of forms, spanning his early inquiry into the contents of children's minds on entering school (Hall, 1883), a program of topical syllabi instituted at Clark University in the 1890s, and more general entreaties that parents and educators observe and record the lives of children. Circulating information about these kinds of projects in as many venues as possible was crucial to Hall's research success. Not only did discussion of his child study findings further bolster his persona as an educational expert, but press coverage of his work also aided in forming a network of contributors to these ongoing investigations. Thus, public lectures, and the media attention they garnered, along with articles by and about Hall in popular periodicals, were valuable means of outreach to potential collaborators, ones necessary for the form of child study he practiced.

Hall's investigation of children's fears was emblematic of this approach to child study. Findings regarding children's fears that circulated in the press were the result of his newly enacted program of topical syllabi, or questionnaire research. Hall collected data on fears using a questionnaire on "Fears in Childhood and Youth" issued in early 1895, the eighth questionnaire of what would eventually prove to be an extensive series of more than 200 questionnaires issued at Clark over roughly two decades (Young, 2014).⁵ Circulating the questionnaire widely, Hall was able to collect information from more than 1,700 people who described nearly 6,500 fears, with thunder and lightning topping the list (Hall, 1897). As Hall directly acknowledged when discussing his findings on fear, this kind of mass data collection endeavor was predicated on the cooperation of many individuals, particularly untrained observers of child life (Young, 2014). He deliberately and necessarily constructed this and other questionnaires so that they "call[ed] for phenomena so marked that the non-expert parent or teacher can make reliable returns" (Hall, 1897, p. 148). For pragmatic reasons if nothing else, these inquiries relied upon the assistance of parents and educators, who by very definition had unique access to the population of interest.

Child study investigations though intended to bear on child rearing and pedagogical practices were also positioned research endeavors that fell within the new scientific psychology. Hall's efforts, however, to uncover children's mentality through these kinds of investigations were not always embraced by other psychologists during this era. At the broadest level other psychologists questioned Hall's unequivocal championing of psychology's direct applied benefit to pedagogical practice (e.g., Cattell, 1898; Dewey, 1900; Münsterberg, 1898b). In more absolute terms, Hall's colleagues in psychology came increasingly to reject the methods he employed in his child study research (e.g., Baldwin, 1898; Jastrow, 1901; Titchener, 1896). Hugo Münsterberg, who contended that observational data on children could only be

of value if collected by trained psychologists, rather than the lay individuals Hall relied upon so heavily, expressed this position most forcefully, arguing “the work must be done by trained specialists or not at all” (Münsterberg, 1898a, p. 115). So far as he was concerned, when it came to the work done by the public in Hall’s enterprises “all this seductive but rude and untrained and untechnical gathering of cheap and vulgar material means a caricature and not an improvement of psychology” (Münsterberg, 1898a, p. 115). Even if one were to venture outside the laboratory with the new psychology, something that Münsterberg did not recommend—at least at this time (Benjamin, 2006; Münsterberg, 1909)—the research was still to be done by those specifically trained in psychology. By engaging members of the lay public in his research enterprises Hall threatened the newly established scientific authority of the field as a whole, the same authority he traded upon to claim expert status within the realm of pedagogy.

Objections from those within psychology aside, the public was regularly presented with the opportunity to participate in Hall’s child study projects through their promotion in the popular press. In the mid-1890s the popular American religious periodical *Outlook* described ongoing child study projects and implored the public, particularly mothers, to involve themselves in these undertakings. Noting that Hall had just begun to issue a series of topical syllabi for child study, it asserted

the American people owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University, for the impetus he has given to the intelligent mothers of America to study their children from the scientific point of observation. He has given mothers the most delightful subject ever given a woman to study - one that engages heart and brain. (The home club, 1896a, p. 298)

Positioned as a part of a romanticized vision of motherhood, child study was conceived as a noble pursuit for women, one capable of engaging their intellect along socially acceptable channels. Several months later the publication issued further praise for Hall and his child study undertakings, singling out his recent questionnaire on kindergarten as an especially important contribution. This particular syllabus was said to be “as valuable for mothers as for kindergartners, and it also valuable for teachers through the entire primary grade” (The home club, 1896b, p. 824). In this instantiation of child study all those with contact with young children – mothers, kindergarten workers, and educators – were encouraged to make meaningful contributions to projects of this kind.

Widespread enthusiasm for educational matters, together with entreaties of this kind, facilitated the establishment of child study clubs in locales across the country (The home club, 1896a; see von Oertzen, 2013). In Minnesota the *St. Paul Daily Globe*, after reporting that the state teachers association had recently created a child study association, noted

child study is doing much for the advancement of education. The impetus given to the work by the recent lecture in St. Paul upon that subject by Dr. G. Stanley Hall, as embodied in this association, will no doubt receive the hearty support of every truth-seeking teacher in the state. (Child study association, 1896, p. 10)

Mothers’ clubs, in particular, were urged to devote their time to this kind of work. Outside of spurring the creation of child study groups, Hall’s work was also the topic of discussion within these circles. For instance, the San Francisco Child Study Club on occasion made Hall’s findings and writings the subject of discussion at the group’s weekly meetings (Child study club, 1899). Child study had established a foothold in the state by the 1890s, in part through the effort of Milicent Shinn, who organized her own network of child observers as part of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae’s California Child Study Section (von Oertzen, 2013). Her own work on child study, eventually published as *The Biography of a Baby* (Shinn, 1900), served the basis for Shinn’s doctoral dissertation, for which she was the first woman to earn a doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley (see Rodkey, this issue).

Shinn’s extensive observations of her niece Ruth formed the basis of her biography of a baby. This kind of record keeping regarding child development was not without precedent (Shuttleworth, 2010), though Shinn’s accounting of mental development was held in particularly high esteem. Although never the main focus of his child study endeavors, Hall too emphasized the value of extensive record keeping when it came to a child’s development. Writing in *The Youth’s Companion* Hall implored “every mother, aunt, teacher, or father” to keep a “book about the baby” (Hall, 1895b, p. 106); this book

might be opened the day the child was born. In it should be noted anything whatever about the child's development: the first time it uses each new word, its progress in sitting erect, holding up the head, standing and walking; its favorite toys and plays, all salient little speeches, mistakes, questions; all the observer's efforts, fears, successes, etc..How invaluable such a "life book" would be if well kept into the "teens" or later, and what would I not give for such a record of myself! (Hall, 1895b, p. 106)

In addition to recording the baby's behavior, those keeping such records were also encouraged to take photographs at regular intervals. Having done so one could then "arranges these faces in order in a gyroscope" and "see the baby grow and its face expand – first the human and then the parental and ancestral traits coming out with each revolution of the wheel" (Hall, 1895b, p. 106). In this way parents and educators might bear witness to recapitulation in action without ever leaving the sanctified space of the family home.

The directive that parents and other family members devote themselves to documenting childhood as it took place before their eyes was all well and good, but Hall's addendum that this kind of information might benefit science was problematic for some. The *Sacramento Daily Record-Union* was particularly indignant when it came to this request:

all these are to be kept indeed, carefully, Dr. Hall says, not for doting thumbing, however, but in the interests of the baby's future career in particular and of the species generally. It really does seem too hard that science and research and investigation and deduction over which the world has gone mad these days, says the indignant mother, can't leave me even my own precious baby! (Watch how the baby grows, 1894, p. 8)

With science invading some of the most intimate moments of home life—and requesting documentation on each and every one of them at that—it seemed to this writer that nothing was sacred any longer.

From Hall's very first foray into child study, the press was captivated by these kinds of projects (Educational notes, 1883a, Notes on education, 1883). In his earliest child study investigation Hall sought to ascertain exactly what children do and do not know upon their initial entry to school. To do so, he enlisted Boston educators to quiz children, three at a time, about their knowledge of the world (Hall, 1883). What he found was a pronounced ignorance of the natural world with, for example, large numbers of students unfamiliar with common animals and unable to locate various body parts. This situation, Hall argued, was the direct result of city life which he contended was "unnatural" (Hall, 1883, p. 255). According to Hall "those who grow up without knowing the country are defrauded of that without which childhood can never be complete or normal" (Hall, 1883, p. 255). So profoundly important was exposure to the natural world that "a few days in the country at this age has raised the level of many a city child's intelligence more than a term or two of school training could do without it" (Hall, 1883, p. 255). These findings were soon picked up by the press which reported "a gross ignorance of practical things may exist side by side with a with a very thorough book knowledge, and that some modification of the kindergarten method is necessary in the instruction of the young" (Educational notes, 1883b, p. 3). Here were the direct pedagogical implications of Hall's child study.

Familiarity with this investigation of the contents of children's minds spurred for further inquiries on the subject. Inspired by Hall's undertaking a reporter for the *Omaha Daily Bee* took it upon himself to conduct his own survey of local children. Relaying his findings the reporter was careful to note that the exercise was conducted "not with the idea of depreciating the instruction afforded by their teachers in any way, but simply as an amusing study" (Childrens' minds, 1883, p. 4). Particularly humorous were "the peculiar workings of the infant mind" (Childrens' minds, 1883, p. 4) as revealed in the idiosyncratic responses of children to questioning; for instance, one little girl contended the moon was in fact God's face. Asked to define the word "holiday" another child offered as an explanation the reasoning "because the teacher wanted to go somewhere," a response the reporter characterized as "capital" (Childrens' minds, 1883, p. 4).

Most notable in this inquiry, however, was the difference in knowledge between Omaha and Boston schoolchildren. Children in Omaha schools lacked the "lamentable ignorance" of their Boston counterparts and instead demonstrated an extensive familiarity with the natural world, a result predicated on a presumed stronger connection to country life in this region of the nation. All, for instance, knew

what cows were and where their ribs were located. These findings reaffirmed Hall's insistence on the superiority, if not necessity, of country life in fostering children's knowledge of the world.

The results of the Omaha inquiry were soon picked up by other outlets, including the *New-York Daily Tribune* and the *Chicago Times*, and reprinted in papers across the country (Notes on education, 1883; see also Local brevities, 1883). In a number of these accounts of the work undertaken in Omaha it was erroneously reported that Hall had personally visited the city to question its children. This, as the *Omaha Daily Bee* took pains to correct, was not the case, as "Dr. G. Stanley Hall was not here nor had he anything whatever to do with the matter" (Local brevities, 1883, p. 8).

The Omaha undertaking was not the only endeavor to extend Hall's work on the contents of children's minds. As reported in the press, at the NEA meeting in Madison, Wisconsin, in the summer of 1884, Superintendent Greenwood of Kansas City presented the results of his own endeavor along these lines. In doing so he gave "a trenchant review of the observations made by Prof. Stanley Hall concerning the general knowledge of children in the primary schools" (Gov. Rusk's reception, 1884, p. 4). Greenwood's own investigation found that Kansas City children were notably less ignorant than those in Boston (see Hall, 1893b, pp. 18–20).⁶ Unlike the *Omaha Daily Bee*, however, Greenwood did not interpret this as a reflection of Kansas City children's greater connection to country life. Instead "he contended that to form a true estimate of the ability of children in primary schools, the occupation of their parents, together with their opportunity for gaining information were materially essential" (Gov. Rusk's reception, 1884, p. 4). In this, as in many other instances, Hall's conclusions about child life were provocative, but by no means definitive. Expert or not, the wide relevance of this kind of work, together with the public's extensive personal experience with childhood, meant that no claim about child life could be taken as the final word on the subject.

Conclusion

Having crafted a public persona as pedagogical expert in the early 1880s, Hall's pedagogical authority stretched from coast to coast by the turn of the 20th century. His lectures and engagement with the public more generally, together with press accounts of his work, served not only to disseminate his ideas on the nature of childhood and education, but also to mobilize work on child study among the public. The latter effort was controversial among both psychologists and members of the public, though for different reasons. On the one hand, some psychologists considered Hall's involvement of untrained members of the lay public in his research undertakings a threat to the scientific status of the new discipline. On the other, some members of the public rejected the encroachment of science into the sanctified spaces of the home. In similar terms, accounts of Hall's ideas and research projects on childhood and education were widely circulated both in person and in the popular press, but were received by the public in a variety of ways; on some occasions Hall's ideas were warmly embraced, on others they were rejected outright.

Focusing on the period from 1880 to 1900 I have documented Hall's far-reaching influence on the American public, most particularly parents and educators, when it came to understandings of the nature of child life. Although this period was arguably the height of Hall's popularity as pedagogical expert, his work in the field continued into the 20th century. His ongoing work, and declining status within educational circles (Ross, 1972), from the turn of the 20th century through the end of his life (i.e., 1924) remains to be explored. Irrespective of these later developments, Hall's carefully crafted persona as an educational expert helped legitimize pedagogy as a field, while ensuring psychology's special standing in this realm. In doing so, he set the stage for psychology's continuing presence in educational discussions today.

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Notes

1. Hall's post-World War I persona as a man of science as previously been explored by Francesca Bordogna (2005).
2. By some estimates Hall delivered 34 lectures in 1893–1894 alone and as many as 2,500 talks over the entirety of his career (see Ross, 1972).
3. The relation between psychology and the educational congress at the World's Columbian Exposition has been explored by Shore (2001).
4. Hall continued to write pieces for *The Youth's Companion* into the 20th century (Hall, 1903, 1910, 1913, 1915).
5. "Fears in Childhood and Youth," Feb. 1895, B1-7-1, G. Stanley Hall Papers, Clark University Archives, Worcester, MA.
6. When he reprinted his study of the contents of children's minds in the 1890s, Hall included a section comparing Greenwood's Kansas City data with his Boston findings (Hall, 1893b).

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