

**THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE CHAUTAUQUA MOVEMENT AND ITS LESSONS  
FOR 21ST CENTURY CIVIC ADULT EDUCATION**

by

**Ferki Ferati**

Bachelor of Arts, Mercyhurst University, 2007

Master of Public Administration, Gannon University, 2012

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
the School of Education in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education

University of Pittsburgh

2017

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This dissertation was presented

by

Ferki Ferati

It was defended on

May 2017

and approved by

William P. Garvey, Ph.D., President, The Jefferson Educational Society of Erie

John C. Weidman, Ph.D., Professor, Higher and International Development Education,

University of Pittsburgh

Thesis Director/Dissertation Advisor: Maureen W. McClure, Ph.D., Associate Professor,

Administrative and Policy Studies, University of Pittsburgh

Copyright © by Ferki Ferati

2017

# **THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE CHAUTAUQUA MOVEMENT AND ITS LESSONS FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CIVIC ADULT EDUCATION**

Ferki Ferati, Ed.D.

University of Pittsburgh, 2017

This study focuses on mass civic adult education reform. It inquires how lessons learned from the Chautauqua Movement, a movement that was funded through philanthropy and exploded throughout the United States and Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, can be applied to popular civic adult education reform today. At its peak, the Chautauqua Movement engaged more than 50 million people annually (or almost 50% of the total population at the time<sup>1</sup>), playing a major role in building shared values among Protestant dominations, and kept adults without access to formal education informed. With the Chautauqua Movement's contraction, a void in mass civic adult education was never filled.

The aim of this inquiry is threefold. First, it aims to understand the tenets of the Chautauqua movement and how this movement became so popular among adults. Second, it seeks to understand why the Chautauqua Movement declined. Third, this inquiry discusses lessons of the Chautauqua Movement for twenty-first century civic adult education. The approach of this inquiry is a historical case study and uses archives, mapping, and interviews for a mixed methods view of this very complex phenomenon in American history.

---

<sup>1</sup> US population in 1921 was 108.5 Million (Demographia, 2017)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE.....</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 APPROACH, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.1.1 Design of the Methodology.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.1.1.1 Archival Work.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.1.1.2 Mapping / Cartography .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.1.1.3 Semi-Structured Interviews .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.1.2 Analysis.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.2 LIMITATIONS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.0 THE RISE .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.1 THE VISION OF J.H. VINCENT AND ATTORNEY LEWIS MILLER... </b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.2 THE CHAUTAUQUA LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC CIRCLE (CLSC) </b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.3 FILLING THE EDUCATIONAL GAP.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.4 THE MOVEMENT OF PATRONS.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>2.5 THE MOVEMENT OF IDEAS.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>2.6 OTHER CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE GROWTH OF THE</b>	
<b>CHAUTAUQUA MOVEMENT.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>2.6.1 The Railroads.....</b>	<b>33</b>

2.6.2	Chautauqua Circuits .....	34
2.6.3	Family Leisure .....	35
3.0	THE DECLINE .....	37
3.1	FINANCIAL PROBLEMS .....	38
3.2	DIVERSITY PROBLEM.....	42
3.3	“TOO MUCH ENTERTAINMENT NOT ENOUGH EDUCATION” - CHAUTAUQUA CIRCUITS PROBLEM .....	45
3.4	THE CAR, MOTION PICTURES, AND RADIO .....	47
4.0	LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 21 <sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CIVIC ADULT EDUCATION .....	49
4.1	NEW IDEAS SHOULD BE EXPLORED .....	50
4.2	CIVIC ADULT EDUCATION MUST BE OPEN TO EVERYONE.....	51
4.3	PROGRAMMING MUST BE AFFORDABLE .....	52
4.3.1	Governmental Sponsorship .....	52
4.3.2	Membership Driven Civic Adult Education .....	53
4.4	QUALITY CONTROL SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED.....	54
4.4.1	Certification Program .....	54
4.4.2	Centralized Headquarters .....	55
4.4.3	The McDonaldization of Civic Adult Education .....	55
5.0	CONCLUSION.....	56
	BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	57

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1. Comprehensive View of Adult Education (Summary from: Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2005; Watkins and Marsick, 1993; Carteret, 2008 and others).....	3
Table 2. Eight Propositions and Three Major Beliefs of the Chautauqua Movement.....	15
Table 3. Chautauquas and The Patrons In Charge .....	25
Table 4. Number of Daughter Chautauquas by State and Years of Existence .....	40

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Chautauqua Institution Official Archives.....	6
Figure 2. Google Maps Example .....	7
Figure 3. CLSC Curriculum Taken from Chautauqua Institution (2014).....	17
Figure 4. Google Maps showing Chautauquas (Blue are past, red indicate existing in 2017, and red building indicates original Chautauqua) .....	22
Figure 5. Chautauqua Distributions across Regions of United States .....	23
Figure 6. 1898 Texas Colorado Chautauqua First Season Brochure .....	29
Figure 7. Chautauqua Gathering as shown in The New York Times (1914) showing a large number of women in attendance .....	31
Figure 8. Catholics as Percentage of Total Population and Church and Adherents, 1850-1926 (Finke and Stark, 2005 p. 122).....	43

## **PREFACE**

My interest in the field of civic adult education came about while working at the Jefferson Educational Society in Erie, Pennsylvania. The Jefferson Educational Society (JES) today closely emulates Chautauqua. The JES is a nonprofit adult education institution. Founded in 2008, the JES has been modeled after the Chautauqua Institution (which is still active) and two other successful adult education programs: the nationally renowned think tank Brookings Institution because of its research activities, and the 92nd Street Y because of its educational programming. The Jefferson Society offers more than 100 programs per year, publishes books and essays, and serves as a civic engagement platform for its community (Ferati, 2017). (Upon the completion of this study, in June of 2017, I will assume the role of President of the JES.)

In 2014, the Jefferson Educational Society completed its first strategic plan with major success. The next strategic plan was designed to further the JES mission in a more informed, scholarly manner. At that point, I was also ready to take my educational attainment to the next level. The Social and Comparative Analysis in Education (SCAE) doctoral program at the University of Pittsburgh met both my and the JES' goals. I owe a great debt of gratitude to the Jefferson Educational Society and its Board of Trustees, chaired by the Hon. Joyce S. Savocchio, for not only sponsoring my tenure but also for their generosity in scheduling flexibility for the demanding nature of this program.

“We are like dwarves perched on the shoulders of giants, and thus we are able to see more and farther than the latter,” said Bernard of Chartres. This is, indeed, the case with this inquiry. From the works of the Chautauqua founder John Vincent, to the works of Jesse Hurlbut in the 1920s, to the works of John Scott and Andrew Rieser, to the databases compiled by Maxwell (2002) and Mathews (2003), to the insightful works of Mary Lee Talbot and Jon Schmitz, I walk to shine a different light on that same path traveled by many.

Further, I extend my deepest appreciation to those who took time out of their busy schedules for the interview part of the research:

- Dr. Mary Lee Talbot, author of multiple works on Chautauqua, journalist, lifelong attendee and historian of the original Chautauqua Institution in Chautauqua, New York.
- Mr. Jon Schmitz, Chief Archivist of the original Chautauqua Institution in Chautauqua, New York. Mr. Schmitz provided private lessons, showed me around the archives, invited me to record his lecture on the history of the Chautauqua Movement, and made himself available via email for clarifications.
- Mr. Frank Gwalthney, President of Chautauqua Trails, lifelong member and historian of Ocean Park, Maine Chautauqua.
- Dr. John Weeks, Professor Emeritus of History at Adrian College, lifelong member and historian and Bay View, Michigan Chautauqua.
- Ms. Carol Taylor, Program Manager – Education & History of the Colorado Chautauqua Assembly.

I would not have been able to complete this study without the guidance, encouragement, and interest of my three committee members. My advisor at the University of Pittsburgh,

Maureen McClure, went beyond the call of duty and took interest in challenging me to better myself not only as her student but as a person. Her advice was truly life changing and will stay with me forever. One of the best teachers I have ever had was Dr. John Weidman, whose understanding of the world and the role of education in the world is unmatched. My mentor, Dr. William Garvey, has been indefatigable to my educational, professional, and personal growth.

The belief that education is the roadmap to a better life was instilled in me by many amazing people throughout my life. From my grandfather Qazim Hajrizi, to my uncle Muharrem Ferati, to my elementary school teacher Rifat Vidishiqi, to my high school principal Peggy Aste, along with my wonderful mother Zehra, and my hero older brother Visar, they all gave me the inspiration and confidence to take this educational journey.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my wife Katya. For thirteen years (I met her in our sophomore year in college) she has been the cornerstone of my life. Her encouragement and love have inspired me to want and do more for us and this one world in which we live.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This inquiry is a historical case study conducted using archives, mapping, and semi-structured interviews. The general organization of this document is laid out in four main chapters. This introductory chapter describes the background of the Chautauqua Movement including its field of practice, theoretical background, methodology, and analytical design. Chapters two and three describe the Chautauqua Movement itself with chapter two describing the rise and chapter three listing reasons for its decline. Chapter four provides an analytical review of lessons learned from the Chautauqua Movement and how those lessons could influence contemporary adult educational practices in the twenty-first century United States.

Multiple studies, histories, and books have covered the Chautauqua Movement through different perspectives. John Vincent, the founder of the first Chautauqua (who is also considered as the father of the Chautauqua Movement), wrote multiple books, including a firsthand recollection titled *The Chautauqua Movement* (1896). Dr. Mary Lee Talbot published multiple works about the movement but mostly focused on how the Chautauqua Movement and the feminist movement in the United States were connected. Dozens of descriptive histories look at different aspects of the Chautauqua Movement: some look at the daughter Chautauquas, others look at the circuit Chautauquas, and many provide histories of individual Chautauquas. This study adds a different lens, as it looks at the Chautauqua Movement through the eyes of a

practitioner in order to extract the reasons it grew and declined, and the lessons it left for civic adult education in the twenty-first century.

This study inquires how lessons learned from the Chautauqua Movement, a movement funded through philanthropy, that exploded throughout the United States and Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Schmitz, , 2015), can be applied to popular civic adult education. At its peak, the Chautauqua Movement civically engaged more than 50 million<sup>2</sup> people annually, played a major role in building shared values among Protestant dominations, and kept those without access to formal education informed. With the Chautauqua Movement's contraction, a void was left in mass adult education that has not been filled to this day.

Webster's dictionary defines Chautauqua as "any of various traveling shows and local assemblies that flourished in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, that provided popular education combined with entertainment in the form of lectures, concerts, and plays, and that were modeled after activities at the Chautauqua Institution of western New York" (Chautauqua, n.d.). Upon first reading this definition, I thought I had discovered a new field called "Chautauqua Education," but after further study, it has become clear that it was a part of the broader field of adult education.

While efforts like Technology, Education and Design (TED) talks have great appeal to those who are already well educated, they do not completely align with the Chautauqua Movement's vision of providing continuing education for the general public. The Chautauqua Movement, however, experienced the height of its success in the first and second decade of the twentieth century; by the early 1930s, as the America population became more diverse, the movement failed to continue expanding and grew stagnant. For example, the Roman Catholic

---

<sup>2</sup> The U.S. population in 1921 was 108.5 (Demographia, 2017).

population in America swelled as waves of Irish, Italian, German, and Polish immigrants washed over the country. Chautauquas did not greet these new Americans with open arms. Rather, by the early 1930s, going to a Chautauqua had morphed into a place of entertainment and exclusion for American Protestants.

From the nearly 500 independent Chautauquas, only a few survived into the twenty-first century. The original Chautauqua still stands at its site in Chautauqua County, New York. It has become a playground for the very rich, where homes are listed for as much as \$1.8 million (Maple Group Real Estate, 2017). It was not until 1988, 27 years after John F. Kennedy was elected President, when the first Chautauqua Catholic Center appeared. It took another 21 years for the first Jewish center to appear in 2009 at the Chautauqua Institution (Chautauqua Catholic Community, 2017). Despite its contraction, the Chautauqua Movement had tremendous success; therefore, it is important to better understand both its vision and its reach.

Where does the Chautauqua Movement fit in the broader field of adult education? Table 1 shows that adult education is generally divided into two orientations: human capital building (andragogy) and social capital building.

<b>Table 1.</b> Comprehensive View of Adult Education (Summary from: Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2005; Watkins and Marsick, 1993; Carteret, 2008 and others)					
Human Capital Building (Andragogy)			Civic Adult Education / Social Capital Building		
Formal	Non-Formal	Informal	Formal	Non-Formal	Informal
Degrees (usually job driven)	Job related lectures	Work formal events	Degrees (usually liberal arts)	Lectures and seminars	Plays
Certificates	Conferences	Work after hours	Certificates	Conferences (e.g. world issues)	Museums
Continuing Education	Continuing Education	Work clubs		<b>Chautauqua Movement</b>	Parades
				Museums	Picnics

Malcolm S. Knowles created the theoretical framework behind andragogy<sup>3</sup> (the method and practice of adult education). In the late 1960s he insisted that adults were primarily concerned with improving their human capital. This means they invested in learning to improve their work-related knowledge and skills, earned formally through degrees, non-formally through certificates, and informally through lectures and other activities (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2005). Watkins and Marsick (1993), on the other hand, argued that adult education also was concerned with social and cultural capital<sup>4</sup> building through non-formal and informal education.<sup>5</sup> The Chautauqua Movement, for example, was created to enhance mass social and cultural capital formation mainly through non-formal education.

## **1.1 APPROACH, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this inquiry is to better understand if and how the historical Chautauqua Movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can inform civic adult mass education reform policies today. This inquiry was explored through a case study.

Essentially, this inquiry incorporates a historical aspect. As I reviewed the historical data, I used three methods to frame a highly complex historical context within a contemporary

---

<sup>3</sup> Knowles' theory of andragogy is an attempt to develop a theory specifically for adult learning. Knowles emphasizes that adults are self-directed and expect to take responsibility for decisions. Adult learning programs must accommodate this fundamental aspect. Andragogy makes the following assumptions about the design of learning: (1) Adults need to know why they need to learn something (2) Adults need to learn experientially, (3) Adults approach learning as problem-solving, and (4) Adults learn best when the topic is of immediate value (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Social capital refers to the "networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively" (Social Capital, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> "Non-formal education has typically looked at workplaces, libraries and neighborhood learning centers, and research focused on less formal learning through voluntary participation in groups has been primarily interested in sporting and incorporated associations" (Carteret, 2008, p. 503)

comparison. First, I used document analysis of existing historical archives. In order to better understand the Chautauqua Movement and its narratives, I explored the official Chautauqua Institution archives as defined by Yin (2014) who used the term “artifact” when describing this type research and said it can be very useful if used carefully (p. 117). Second I conducted five semi-structured interviews with scholars, historians, and representatives of surviving Chautauquas. Third I used descriptive “mapping” of the “daughter Chautauquas” by using social cartography as presented by Yamamoto and McClure (2011). The purpose of the mapping was to visibly represent the complex relationships that arise from multiple perspectives. A subsection of this chapter describes the design of the methodology in more detail.

My perspective is influenced by a focus on the construction of meaning, using symbolic interactionism, as described by Stryker (1980) and Blumer (1986). Blumer argued that symbolic interactionism has three premises: a) humans act towards things based on what those things mean to them; b) those meanings are influenced by the environment of those individuals; and c) “these meanings are handled in, and modified through an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters” (p. 2). For example, ten people looking out a window see ten different things because their current position and past experience will shape their outlook.

My experience fits with the theory of symbolic interactionism. I was born in Kosovo; was part of the revolution in the former Yugoslavia; have lived in Sweden, Norway, and Russia; and have visited another 20-plus countries. I am a lover of history and have an educational background in Intelligence Studies and Public Policy. Most recently, I helped found the Jefferson Educational Society, which has interests in adult and citizenship education similar to the Chautauqua Movement. My experience has let me to believe that adults shape contemporary policy that shapes the future of the young. In the former Yugoslavia, for example, the quality of

the universities in Belgrade, Sarajevo, or Pristina did not matter. Those students did not start the conflict; it was the older generation who, frankly, unwisely and started the conflict that led to hundreds of thousands of deaths. This experience, along with those that followed, gave me a unique perspective on the need for adult education provided by the Chautauqua Movement.

### 1.1.1 Design of the Methodology

#### 1.1.1.1 Archival Work

I conducted archival work through three avenues:

1. I made multiple visits to the Chautauqua Institution official archives in Chautauqua, New

York.

- a. Worked with the archivist Jonathan Schmitz through my inquiry questions to see where I would find the information to explore those questions.



---

Volume Number	<input type="text"/>	
Issue Date	<input type="text"/>	(YYYY/MM/DD)
Issue Number	<input type="text"/>	
Issue Type	<input type="text"/>	
Page Text	<input type="text"/>	
Page Notes	<input type="text"/>	
Before Year	<input type="text"/>	
= Year	<input type="text"/>	
After Year	<input type="text"/>	
	<input type="button" value="And ▼"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>

**Figure 1.** Chautauqua Institution Official Archives

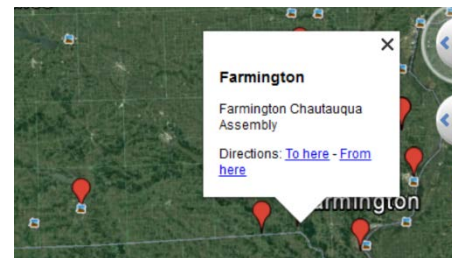
- b. Took notes using my iPhone:
  - i. Notes Application.
  - ii. Dictation for reminders on leads.
  - iii. Camera for pictures of material in order to avoid typos.

2. Explored the online archives of the Chautauqua Institution, which include complete copies of every *Chautauqua Daily* (official newspaper) going back to its founding, documents, pictures, programs, and other papers.
  - a. Searched by keyword (i.e. Midwest, religion, daughter Chautauquas, race, etc.)
  - b. Searched by year to pinpoint the climax and the start of decline.
3. Used *The New York Times* TimeMachine tool to look into the archives and found extensive coverage of the Chautauqua Movement.
4. Found at least three databases that contain “daughter Chautauquas” compiled by include Maxwell (2002), Mathews (2003), and an 1892 untitled list.

#### 1.1.1.2 Mapping / Cartography

After gathering a total list of “daughter Chautauquas,” I placed them in an interactive map in the following manner:

1. The only publicly available interactive map software available for scholarly use is Google



**Figure 2.** Google Maps Example

Maps. Under its “fair use” policy, Google cautions the use of its platform only when profit is at play.

2. I input each “daughter Chautauqua” into Google Maps so that the user will be able to point at each location for the years of its operation.

#### 1.1.1.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with scholars, historians, and leaders of the original Chautauqua and the remaining (total 17) “daughter Chautauquas,” in the following manner:

1. I reached out by email describing to each individual what I was trying to do.
  - a. I scheduled interviews with six individuals: two in person; one via video chat using Skype; and three via phone.
    - i. One of the in-person interviews was not recorded, at the request of the interviewee; he was giving a lecture and preferred that I record and transcribe the lecture instead.
2. I recorded the interviews in the two following ways to ensure that data was safe with a backup:
  - a. Option 1: Voice Recorder available on iPhone.
  - b. Option 2: Voice Recorder available on Laptop.
3. The interviews were transcribed using Windows Media Player to slow down the pace and Microsoft Word for typing.

### **1.1.2 Analysis**

Folkestad (2008) argues that analysis does not happen in a vacuum, that it is a continuous process, that the scholar starts analysis before, during, and after the collection of data. With almost every piece of data, the scholar learns something new and learns better ways of collecting the information with analysis in mind.

With every article I extracted from the archives, I learned something new that helped lead to the final analysis found below. It was in the archives, for example, where I found the first short list of “daughter Chautauquas,” which led me to the search for more comprehensive lists. I then created a complete database, which eventually gave me the idea of putting all the Chautauquas on a map. The map showed a cluster of Chautauquas, which led me to realize that

Chautauquas were most present in rural areas of the United States, where educational institutions were also least present. To add another dimension to these findings for a more complete inquiry, I added interviews to this study.

Because I conducted only six interviews, I did not use coding and relied on self-analysis. I used the following tools as described by Folkestad:

- Transcribing interviews: one of the early tools a scholar can use is transcribing the interviews.
- Quote research: I used quote research to illustrate and confirm themes that emerged during the interviews.

After transcribing, I used coding by grouping answers to each question from each interview and found commonalties, reduced data, and came up with conclusions.

## **1.2 LIMITATIONS**

It is important to note that there are limitations to this inquiry that could be addressed by future studies. Some of those limitations include:

- The New York Times (1914) said that at the forty-year anniversary there were over 600 independent Chautauquas. Only 493 were identified for this study.
- Gwalthney (2017) said that dozens of organizations in the United States and Canada were former Chautauquas that changed their name over the years. Therefore, current organizational leaders may not know that they were Chautauquas at the beginning of their history. This theory has merit, according to Taylor C. (2017), who said that Mrs.

Rosalynn Carter (wife of President Carter) was working to restore a Chautauqua in Plains, Georgia.

- This inquiry does not study the Chautauqua Circuits in-depth. Instead, it focuses on the “daughter Chautauquas” or, as they sometimes were called, “independent Chautauquas.” Future studies could look at the programming offered at these Circuits<sup>6</sup>. How did they differ from the programming offered at independent Chautauquas? Since they had a profit motive, looking at their financial statements might provide insight on how to make civic adult educational programming more sustainable.
- The program time allotted for the completion of this study limited the time available for interviews, hence the small numbers. The amount of new information I learned from each interview, however, was substantial. Having conducted interviews with representatives of four Chautauquas, I see the need to complete interviews with representatives from the remaining 13 Chautauquas because they all have unique stories to tell.
- Because of the social nature of the Chautauqua Movement, this inquiry does not take into consideration online learning platforms (i.e. FutureLearn, Fora.tv, Youtube, etc) which can be done by an individual alone. While online learning was an important development which emerged in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, to seriously emulate the Chautauqua Movement, the social interaction between participants must be improved.

---

<sup>6</sup> Chautauqua Circuits were often referred to by “the talent” of speakers and entertainment groups as “one-night stands” because they would perform in many small cities during the twelve- to sixteen-week season. These seasons were organized by for-profit organizations that would set up many tented locations and contract with the performers to appear in all of them over that period of time (The New York Times, 1914).

## 2.0 THE RISE

In late autumn 2016 my mentor, Dr. William P. Garvey, gave me a recent copy of *The American Scholar*. He pointed to an article by one of my favorite American historians, Allen Taylor (2016).<sup>7</sup> The article, “The Virtue of an Educated Voter,” was a breath of fresh air, considering the election between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Every day for over five months I saw ads, news coverage, speeches, and social media posts from both sides attacking each other in a way I had never witnessed before. In my opinion, this uncivilized campaign season spilled over to the public arena, and people from both sides attacked each other as if the opposition party were alien, and not fellow Americans. There was practically no gray area and people, especially on social media, displayed the type of hate that I witnessed between different ethnicities while growing up in the former Communist country of Yugoslavia.

Until the 2016 election, I believed, perhaps naively, that America’s tribe, as described by Francis Fukuyama (2011), was, deep down, America itself. Taylor (2016) disagreed! He argued that the idea of the American republic is very fragile, and education is the only way to ensure its long-lasting existence. Taylor credited the Founding Fathers, especially Thomas Jefferson, with recognizing that an educated citizenry would prosper and that only “empires and monarchies could thrive without an educated populace” (p. 20).

---

<sup>7</sup> I met Dr. Taylor in 2012 when he presented at the Jefferson Educational Society as part of the War of 1812 lecture series.

The question, of course, was the type of education the Founding Fathers were talking about. More and more, Taylor argued, our education is increasingly focused on what he calls “economic good” rather than “political virtue.” Most people were going to school because they expected to make more money, not because they wanted to learn “for its sake” (p. 25). “We need to revive the founders’ definition of education as a public good and an essential pillar of free government,” Taylor continued, and “we should also recover their concept of virtue, classically defined, as a core public value worth teaching” (p. 27).

The article by Taylor made me think of the Chautauqua Movement and its founding. Supporting Taylor’s article, the Chautauqua Movement was grounded in the principles of the Founding Fathers. The founders of Chautauqua were concerned that the wide divisions between regions of the United States would damage the union, a similar concern of the Founding Fathers who “feared a violent split between the old states east of the Appalachians and the new settlements emerging in the vast watershed of the Mississippi river” (Taylor, 2016, p.19). One of Chautauqua’s early goals was to create bridges between different parts of the country in a post-Civil War America.

Chautauqua, however, focused on the American adult, an American generally ignored by the Founding Fathers when it comes to education. The Chautauqua founders believed that the adults teach the young and, therefore, they must be educated themselves. Unlike the youth, they believed, adults primarily learn for the sake of learning; the founders created a platform that would take America by storm. Between 1874 and its peak in the 1920s, Chautauqua went from one location in Western New York to having nearly 500 locations, over ten thousand reading circles, and tens of millions of American adults partaking in its programming.

In fact, the Chautauqua Movement was such a remarkably successful campaign to educate the American public that the term “Chautauqua” “came to be applied to almost any gathering devoted to the interests of the Sunday School or of general literature with a bit of entertainment on the side” (Volkel, 1939). President Theodore Roosevelt once referred to Chautauqua as the “most American thing in America” (Schmitz, History of Chautauqua Institution, 2015).

This chapter describes the rise of the Chautauqua Movement and its influence on what it meant to have an educated citizenry. It is divided into sections detailing some of the prominent reasons the movement was so well regarded. The first section discusses the vision of the founding fathers of Chautauqua, section two describes the impact *The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle* (CLSC) had in the growth of the Chautauqua Movement, section three discusses bringing education to places where education it was lacking, section four discusses the people and organizations who made it happen, section five discusses how Chautauqua served as a platform of ideas, and section six discusses some of the less prominent but important reasons behind the movement’s success.

## **2.1 THE VISION OF J.H. VINCENT AND ATTORNEY LEWIS MILLER**

The movement began in a small town in western New York State, known then as Fair Point but now known as Chautauqua. It started as a dream of two extraordinary individuals who wanted the traditional campground Sunday School assemblies to be more than a group of people gathering to discuss an issue of the day. Bishop J.H. Vincent and Attorney Lewis Miller are considered the two founding fathers of the Chautauqua Movement (Schmitz, History of

Chautauqua Institution, 2015). Both men were strong Christians in the Methodist Episcopal Church. J.H. Vincent was a pastor who later became Bishop in both North America and Europe. Lewis Miller was a wealthy entrepreneur who helped fund the original Chautauqua.

Miller served first as the Chair of the Board of this institution, and Vincent found himself in the role of superintendent. Working together, the two men saw their vision become an instant success. It debuted in 1874 as a two-week conference that invited Christians (primarily Protestant) from all over the country to Fair Point to hear some of the best new ideas and discussions from well-known speakers, resulting in attendance of more than 20,000 people. From there, they created the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC), a reading circle designed to be the first comprehensive distant learning model to bring education to Americans who could not – for whatever reason – access formal education. These circles endeavored to bring programming that followed readings, ultimately leading to nearly 500 “daughter Chautauquas” or “independent Chautauquas,” and eventually led to the creation of profit-driven Chautauquas circuits.

Guided by the Methodist view that all things are made by God are worth studying by every Christian, these two men created the largest adult educational movement in American history. It was spurred by their recognition of an educational attainment gap that they desired to bridge; and for a while, they were successful with the original model and its ripple effects throughout the country. The Chautauqua Movement also played a vital role in the Women Rights Movement because it brought book clubs to Americans all over the country. It started speaker series that reached more than 50 million people, and generated an industry of paid speakers who eventually included authors, scientists, politicians, inspirational leaders, and even former U.S. Presidents.

Vincent and Miller were visionaries. They wanted to create a place for what Miller described as “Magnifying God’s word and work; and, when gathered, each [domination of Protestantism] to bring its strongest light” for discussion in moving to the future (Vincent, 1886, p. v). Vincent would describe the movement in the following manner:

People coming to Chautauqua are not expected to abandon their church relations. They come, without compromising conviction, to join in a broad movement for the increase of power in every branch of [protestant] Church, and throughout our American society. (Vincent, 1886, p. 25)

Vincent saw that there was a major gap in educational access in America and that gap had been widening. High schools and universities were a worthy cause, but the fact of that matter, he believed, was that a majority of Americans did not have access to quality high school or college-based education. Even those who did find access often did not continue their learning. To combat this situation, Vincent articulated eight propositions and three major format beliefs that defined Chautauqua (pp. 12-15):

<b>Table 2.</b> Eight Propositions and Three Major Beliefs of the Chautauqua Movement	
Eight Propositions	
1. The whole life is a school.	5. Lack of culture by “full-grown people, begets a certain exaltation of its value and desirability, and a craving of its possession.”
2. The true basis of education is religious.	6. Adults need wise direction, assistance and encouragement to learn.
3. All knowledge is sacred to those who surrender themselves to God.	7. Testing and awarding of diplomas and degrees are important to keep adults motivated to learn.
4. Life beyond traditional schooling should be about reading, reflection and production.	8. Learning should take place in groups with local resident scholars.
Three Major Format Beliefs	
1. Many lectures should take place for a few weeks every summer.	

**Table 2** continued

2. Continued voluntary readings should follow throughout the year.
3. Assigned readings by Chautauqua will be given during the entire year.

Vincent employed the above-mentioned propositions and formative beliefs as parameters to launch the Chautauqua Movement in order to address his concerns about the educational system. The two founding fathers drew on their connections around the nation to spread the word. “In all, 20,000 people or more attended that first two-week assembly here at Chautauqua” said chief archivist and historian at the Chautauqua Institution Jon Schmitz in a lecture on the Chautauqua History. “And you know, they came from all over the country; this was not a local event that grew into a national event,” he continued. “This circuit was a national event from the beginning” (Schmitz, History of Chautauqua Institution, 2015).

Mr. Schmitz tells a very interesting story, which illustrates how Vincent and Miller wanted this conference to be a big draw from the beginning. When they published their first marketing materials, they listed all speakers invited, not only those who confirmed their attendance. “Vincent published those who were simply invited to come to suggest the possibility that you still might be able to meet them at Chautauqua” (Schmitz, History of Chautauqua Institution, 2015).

Dr. Mary Lee Talbot, author, journalist at *Chautauqua Daily*, and the official historian of the Chautauqua Institution, had a different understanding of the number of people who attended the first gathering (which she estimated it to be around three to five thousand), but she agreed that without the vision of Vincent and Miller, the Chautauqua Movement would not exist. “They weren’t looking to do a little something; they were looking to do something large and they were looking to do it immediately” (Talbot, 2017).

The influence of Bishop Vincent and Attorney. Miller will continue to be part of the discussion for the remainder of this work for they created the vision and also took opportunities to grow and expand their mission in many entrepreneurial ways.

## 2.2 THE CHAUTAUQUA LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC CIRCLE (CLSC)

### 1878 – 1879

Green, J. R. ....	<i>A Short History of the English People</i> <i>This book was the first CLSC book selection</i>
Brooke, Stopford ....	<i>English Literature</i>
Hurst, John F. ....	<i>Outline of Bible History</i>
Larned, Augusta ....	<i>Old Tales Retold from Grecian Mythology</i>
Mahaffy, J. P. ....	<i>Old Greek Life</i>
Peirce, Bradford K. ....	<i>The Word of God Opened</i>
Steele, J. Dorman ....	<i>Fourteen Weeks in Human Physiology</i>
Vail, A. D. ....	<i>Greek Literature</i>
Vincent, John H. ....	<i>English History</i>
Vincent, John H. ....	<i>Greek History</i>
Warren, Henry W. ....	<i>Studies of the Stars</i>
Warren, Henry White ....	<i>Recreations in Astronomy</i>

### 1879 – 1880

Blaikie, William ....	<i>How to Get Strong and How to Stay So</i>
Hughes, James L. ....	<i>Canadian History</i>
Hurlbut, J. L. ....	<i>American History</i>
Lawrence, Eugene ....	<i>A Primer of Latin Literature</i>
Merivale, Charles ....	<i>A General History of Rome from the Foundation of the City to the Fall of Augustulus</i>
Richardson, Charles F. ....	<i>A Primer of American Literature</i>
Ridpath, John Clark ....	<i>History of the United States</i>
Vincent, John H. ....	<i>Christian Evidences; Chautauqua Library of English History and Literature</i>
Vincent, John H. ....	<i>Roman History</i>
Walker, James B. ....	<i>Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation</i>
Wythe, J. H. ....	<i>Biblical Biology</i>
Wythe, J. H. ....	<i>The Science of Life</i>

The Chautauqua Institution had been held for four years before it introduced the third major format (assigned readings by Chautauqua for the entire year), which would take the Chautauqua Movement to the nation. *The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle* (CLSC) was born at the end of the summer session in 1878 (Talbot,

**Figure 3.** CLSC Curriculum Taken from Chautauqua Institution (2014)

2017). The CLSC mirrored the

Chautauqua programing scheduled during the summer session, which included representative programing of the Protestant sects. The figure above shows the reading list for two years, which included books on a variety of topics from studying the stars to examining Canadian history (Chautauqua Institution, 2014). By the end of the nineteenth century, 16 years later, more than

10,000 reading circles had been formed throughout the United States and Canada (Talbot, 2017, p.4).

The CLSC represented the final step in completing Vincent's vision. In his book, *The Chautauqua Movement* (1886), he stated that the ideal person to benefit from the concept of Chautauqua was a farmer's wife in rural America. She was never able to go to school beyond learning to read and write but played a vital role in educating children. How could that be done if she did not have current information and a deeper wealth of knowledge? The CLSC, over a four-year period, was designed to provide an individual with a comparable amount of information to that of a person with a four-year college degree. To measure and assess a CLSC learner's growth and knowledge, tests were administered to ensure that such learners who were given a CLSC diploma comprehended the information from the reading list.

According to Mary Lee Talbot, Vincent spent a few years after the first Chautauqua season thinking about how he could take the model of Chautauqua to places where educational opportunities were missing. This drive to provide educational opportunities, Dr. Talbot explained, was because Bishop Vincent did not go to college himself: "Yet, it's something he longed for... maybe it was a good thing because it helped him be creative in thinking about what are we going to offer people" (Talbot, 2017).

He sought advice from many people, including William Jennings Bryan. During our interview, Dr. Talbot stated that "[Vincent] sent a letter to William Jennings Bryant ... trying to get an idea on what could be done to provide the college outlook for people" (Talbot, 2017). Eventually distance learning emerged as an idea. Talbot said that there were many correspondence learning programs (e.g., for learning Greek, Hebrew, The Bible, etc.) but none that had a comprehensive mission for education. Jon Schmitz backed this claim, stating "the

CLSC was not the first correspondence course, but it was the first to include a wide range of subjects” (Schmitz, History of Chautauqua Institution, 2015).

Vincent appointed Miss Kate F. Kimball, of Plainfield, New Jersey, office Secretary of the CLSC. She created a taskforce to take the CLSC to the nation (Chautauqua Assembly Herald, 1889). In an annual report summary for the *Chautauqua Assembly Herald* in 1899, Miss Kimball noted the major success that the CLSC was already having just 12 years after its inception. In that summary she said that “even those who have not identified themselves with this movement, or who are not in sympathy with the methods in peculiar to this institution, can but note with appreciation and approval the aim and purpose of the CLSC and commend the work which it has done in this and other countries (CLSC was found in Canada and England, but only a few)” (Kimball, 1889).

The success of Miss Kimball and her taskforce was apparent in most of the interviews conducted for this inquiry, but none was more vivid than the description by Dr. John Weeks, Professor Emeritus of History at Adrian College, a lifelong member and historian in the Bay View, Michigan Chautauqua. He stated the CLSC was the reason for their Chautauqua. The Bayview, Michigan, Chautauqua admired what the CLSC was doing, and their own reading circled. Dr. Weeks stated “[the] reading circles at one point had probably 450-500 reading circles around the nation” (Weeks, 2017). The Bayview Chautauqua reading circles focused on social studies and culture, reading lists were distributed, one country would be selected each year, and tests were given. “I’ve seen the final exams given for some of them, I have them in the archives up there and it’s a pretty tough exam” (Weeks, 2017).

“It was really through the CLSC that the Chautauqua Movement was born and quickly spread across the continent, including all regions of the United States” (Schmitz, History of

Chautauqua Institution, 2015). There were even diplomas and graduation ceremonies. In 1896, for example, Harvard University President Charles Eliot gave the graduation speech at a CLSC graduation (The New York Times, 1896) and Mrs. Mina Edison, the wife of Tom Edison, got her diploma a year before she passed away in 1930 (Section Social News, 1930).

The 10,000 reading circles directly linked with CLSC, in addition to thousands of others like the ones run by the Bayview Chautauqua, were directly linked to starting the Chautauqua Movement. As these readings circles grew, the people in them started talking about bringing experts to speak on what they were reading. And a movement to educate America began!

### **2.3 FILLING THE EDUCATIONAL GAP**

One of the most interesting things I have observed in three years of studying the Chautauqua Movement was the fact that it deliberately targeted areas where education in general was scarce. Unlike the educational institutions that followed in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries, the Chautauqua Movement, for the most part, did not compete in densely populated areas. For three years, I was asked the question of “wasn’t the Chautauqua Movement replaced by institutions like the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y, TED and TEDx, and Aspen Institute?” At first, I agreed with that premise, but later I realized that these organizations have thrived by targeting large cities like New York, Washington, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Even TEDx, which targets some small to mid-sized communities, does so for ideas to emerge *within* those communities and rarely does it bring ideas from the outside.

I discussed this theory with Dr. Talbot at her interview, and her response was, “I think that’s a good analysis. I think that’s a very good analysis” (Talbot, 2017). This section uses

mapping to illustrate this point. While other studies (Mathews, 2003; Rieser, 2003) have mapped Chautauquas, there has not been a comprehensive map showing all Chautauquas. Rieser published his book before there was access to the most comprehensive list ever compiled, which was completed by Mathews. Mathews mapped his list but without analysis, and the list was not fully complete without the addition of some Chautauquas compiled by Maxwell (2002). There is still work to do to complete a final list which, according to The New York Times (1914), was at 600 as of 1914.

---

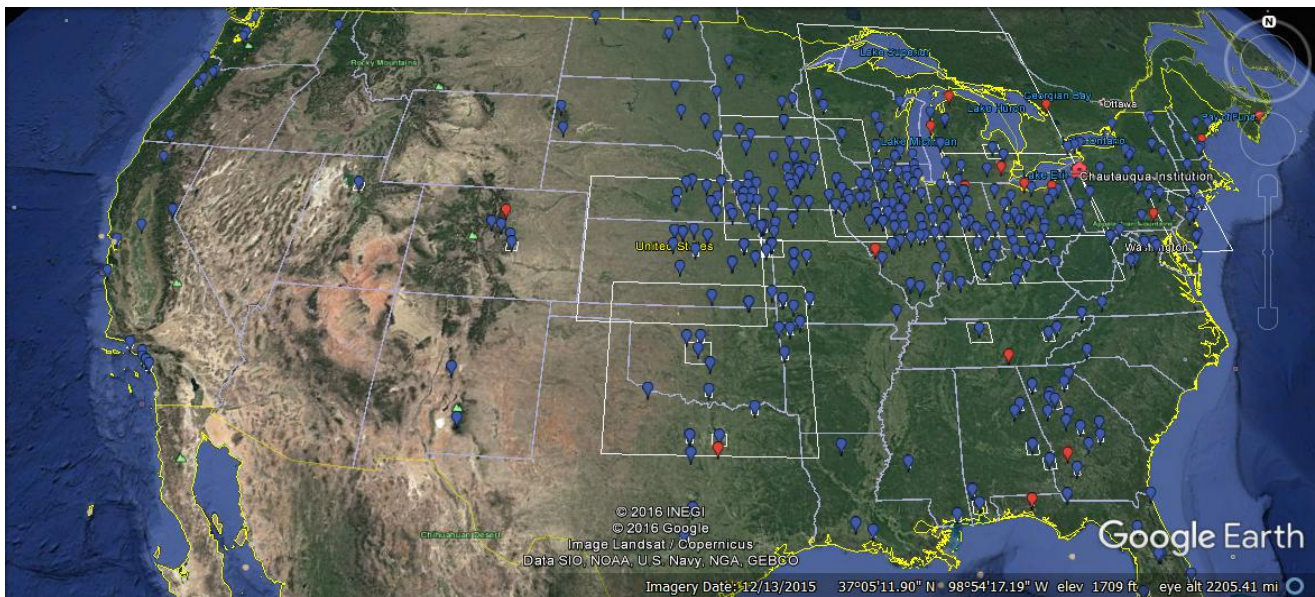
“The towns which have local Chautauquas range in size, as a rule, from 5,000 to 30,000 populations.”

(The New York Times, 1914)

---

It is important to note that Mr. Frank Gwalthney, President of Chautauqua Trails, lifelong member and historian of the Ocean Park, Maine Chautauqua, said that even the list compiled and mapped for this study is not complete. There are many other active organization in the U.S., Canada, and even Europe, which have changed their names and do not know that they were “daughter Chautauquas” in the past. He also stated, “I think one is a Jewish Chautauqua that has existed for over 100 years. There is a new Chautauqua in Canada that just started at the end of last year” (Gwalthney, 2017). I later found that Chautauqua was in Atlantic City and had opened in 1897. “The first service connected with the first session of the Jewish Chautauqua Summer Assembly was held in Temple Beth Israel, Atlantic City, last evening, when the address was made by the Rev. Joseph Krauskopf” (The New York Times, 1897).

As stated in the previous section, many CLSC members could not afford to take two weeks off to attend programming at the original Chautauqua and, therefore, started developing their own. In fact, at least 493 “daughter Chautauquas” or “independent Chautauquas” were created around the United States and Canada<sup>8</sup>.



**Figure 4.** Google Maps showing Chautauquas (Blue are past, red indicate existing in 2017, and red building indicates original Chautauqua)

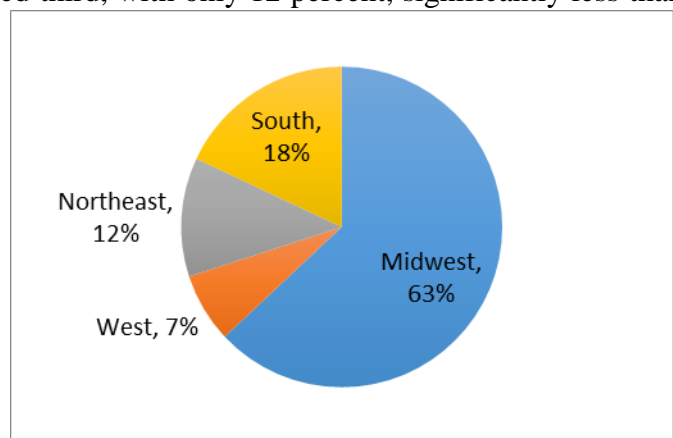
---

<sup>8</sup> The picture above was created by combining multiple databases including Mathews (2003) and Maxwell, (2002), digitizing them, and inserting them into Google Earth. It is important to note that the Mathews (2003) list is the official list of the Chautauqua Institution Archives and needed to be digitized, whereas the Maxwell (2002) was a much smaller list put together by interested scholars. Further, the blue marks indicate the Chautauquas of the past, the red marks indicate the 17 Chautauquas that are still active, and the red dome symbol indicates the original Chautauqua Institution.

The first observation from Figure 4 above is the fact that the vast majority of “daughter Chautauquas” were located in the Midwest region of the United States. That is, the vast majority of them are placed away from the original thirteen colonies where most of the colleges and universities were at the time. The lack of good educational opportunities in the Midwest continued to be a priority for Chautauqua’s leadership. Records indicate that as late as 1931 when Chautauqua Community Church Pastor Dr. John E. Roberts spoke at Chautauqua to argue for a “strengthened emphasis upon education [in the Midwest] ... education to make us, as a nation, understand, appreciate, and serve is the true ally. The rule of life which says, "Live," [is] incomplete; "live and let live" might be deemed higher; but let America fully incorporate the principle, "Live and help to live," and she has earned a place among the stars” (Roberts, 1931).

The pie chart on the right illustrates this belief, as 63 percent of all Chautauquas were created in the Midwest. The Northeast ranked third, with only 12 percent, significantly less than

the Chautauquas in the South, which reported 6 percentage points more. This reveals that the Chautauqua Movement was meant to bridge the noticeable and pronounced gap in educational



**Figure 5.** Chautauqua Distributions across Regions of United States

Chautauqua Movement did not challenge conventional or traditional modes of education but rather introduced a new modicum for learning that spread significantly based on desire coupled with application of model.

Snyder (1993) showed that there were eight states without a permanent college or university during the growth but the data collected for this study showed that there were 52 Chautauquas spread among those states. That includes 15 Chautauquas in Nebraska, 19 in Montana, and 12 in the Dakotas. The top three states with permanent colleges and universities are Pennsylvania with 44, New York with 39, and Ohio with 30, which only had 10, 18, and 12 Chautauquas respectively.

The vision of Bishop Vincent to educate America's farmer was growing because he had team members like Kate Kimball spreading the word and recruiting for the CLSC. It, however, would not have been so successful without patrons and sponsoring organizations.

## 2.4 THE MOVEMENT OF PATRONS

---

“When it is decided that a town can support an independent Chautauqua, some of the businessmen get together and form a joint stock company to finance the enterprise.”

(The New York Times, 1914)

---

“It was simply, it took the name, called it a Chautauqua assembly, but it was run by people from the association and the man who was most responsible was a man named John M. Hall” (Weeks, 2017). This was an answer Dr. Weeks gave when asked about how the Bayview

Chautauqua started. Like Vincent and Miller with the original Chautauqua, one of the common stories I heard during the interview process was the fact that patrons made the daughter Chautauquas possible.

Were there other people like Bishop Vincent, Attorney Miller, and Mr. Hall? The answer to that question is a resounding yes. The table below shows that almost every Chautauqua had a patron. The list below was found in historical archives of the Ocean Park Chautauqua and shows all the daughter Chautauquas in 1892 with the patron responsible for each one. Some of those individuals were in charge of two and even three Chautauquas.

<b>Table 3. Chautauquas and The Patrons In Charge</b>	
Assembly	President
Florida Chautauqua, De Funck Springs, Florida	A. H. Gillet
Suwanee River Chautauqua, White Springs, Florida	Alenxo W. Mell
Southern Illinois Assembly	D. M. Hazlett
Seaside, Key East, New Jersey	Dr. C. R. Blackall
Ocean City, New Jersey	Dr. D. W. Bartine
Round Lake, New York	Dr. H. C. Farrar
Nebraska, Crete, Nebraska	Dr. Jesse L. Hurlbut
New England	Dr. Jesse L. Hurlbut
Albany, Georgia	Dr. W. A. Duncan
Ocean Park, Maine	Oren B. Cheney
Long Beach, California	G. R. Crow
Long Pine, Nebraska	Geo. Hindley
Rocky Mountain, Glen Park, Colorado	Hon. R. H. Golmore
Monona Lake, Wisconsin	J. E. Moseley
Black Hills, South Dakota	J.W. Hancher
Bay View, Michigan	John M. Hall
Puget Sound, Washington	John W. Fairbanks
Pacific Coast	Mrs. M. H. Field
Oregon Chautauqua Assembly	Mrs. N. W. Kinney
Bluff Park, Iowa	Nm. E. Patterson
Monteagle, Tennessee	Prof. A. I. D. Hinds
Glen Echo, near Washington D.C.	Rev. A. H. Gillet
Mountain Dors, Florida	Rev. A. H. Gillet
Omaha, Nebraska and Council Bluffs, Iowa	Rev. A. H. Gillet
Lakeside, Ohio	Rev. B. T. Vincent
Winfield, Kansas	Rev. B. T. Vincent
Lake Madison, South Dakota	Rev. C. E. Hafer

**Table 3** continued

Ottawa, Kansas	Rev. D. C. Milner
Fountain Park Assembly, Eagle Lake, Indiana	Rev. D. C. Woolpert
Salt Lake City, Utah	Rev. F. G. Webster
Plasa Bluffs, Illinois	Rev. Frank Lenig
Northern New England	Rev. G. D. Lindsay
Connecticut Valley	Rev. G. H. Clark
Central Chautauqua Assembly, Fremont, Nebraska	Rev. G. M. Brown
Waseca, Minnesota	Rev. H. C. Jennings
Cumberland Valley, Pennsylvania	Rev. H. C. Pardoe
Pennsylvania Chautauqua, Mt. Gretna, Pennsylvania	Rev. H. C. Pardoe
Iowa Chautauqua	Rev. J. J. Mitchel
Missouri Chautauqua	Rev. J. Spencer
Action Park	Rev. J.W. Dishiel
Mountain Grove, Pennsylvania	Rev. John Horning
Island Park, New Jersey	Rev. N. B. C. Love
San Marcos, Texas	Rev. O. R. Caldwell
Hedding Chautauqua, East Epping, New Hampshire	Rev. O. S. Baketel
Eggleston Heights, Florida	Rev. R. S. Pardington
Kentucky Chautauqua	Rev. W. L. Davidson
Mountain Lake Park, Nevada	Rev. W. L. Davidson
Silver Lake, New York	Rev. Walt Platt
Beatrice, Nebraska	S.S. Green
Lake Tahoe, Nevada	T. E. Slason
Topeka Chautauqua, Kansas	W. A. Quayle
Clarion District	W. H. Bunce
Texas Chautauqua	W. W. Pinson
Ridgeview, Pennsylvania	W. W. Ulerich

Patrons like Dr. A. H. Gillet were originally from Chautauqua, New York, but traveled the country to find suitable sites for new Chautauquas. In 1884, for example, Gillet made his way down to a young Walton County, Florida to establish the Florida Chautauqua Association (Walton County, 2017). Noted author Dr. Jesse L. Hurlbut, who was a nationally recognized pastor in the Methodist Church, not only was an ambassador of the Chautauqua Movement but also wrote a book about it (Hurlbut, 1921). In his book, he wrote that “Chautauqua is doing

more to nourish the intellects of the masses than any other system of education extant; except the public schools of the common country” (p. ix). With this level of commitment, patrons took it upon themselves to fulfill that mission by providing financial capital and social capital.

Mary Lee Talbot explained to me that Chautauqua “has never been self-sustaining. Ever. It has relied on philanthropy.” She continued, “Miller wasn’t [just] an attorney; he was an inventor, and Chautauqua relied heavily on his money until his death in 1899.” After Miller died, others had to step in and continue that kind of support. People like John D. Rockefeller, Talbot explained, stepped in with a matching challenge of \$100,000 (\$2.5 million in 2017 dollars) to keep Chautauqua going. At most, Talbot stated, the original Chautauqua Institution brought in 40 percent of its budget through tickets and property income, and 60 percent of operational costs came in through philanthropy (Talbot, 2017).

Mr. Frank Gwalthney of the Ocean Park Chautauqua agreed with Talbot. He stated that Henry Ford, founder of Goodyear Frank Seiberling, and even John D. Rockefeller had connections with the Ocean Park Chautauqua. Those connections were made by Freewill Baptist Oren B. Cheney. Cheney, like many of the other patrons, was an extraordinary person. Before starting the Ocean Park Association in 1881, Cheney founded and was the president of Bates College, located in Maine one of the first, if not the first college to admit black students before the Emancipation Proclamation. When asked whether Cheney was connected to Bishop Vincent, Gwalthney replied, “Oren Cheney was the mover and shaker and moved all kinds of important people, so I got to believe that there were correspondents.” He continued, “Whether or not Oren Cheney visited Chautauqua, New York, that I don’t know and none of us know” (Gwalthney, 2017).

Patronage did not always come from individuals, explained Ms. Carol Taylor, the Program Manager of Education and History at the Colorado Chautauqua Assembly. Sometimes, it takes a village ... or a city and two states. Before it became Colorado Chautauqua Assembly, it was known as The Texas-Colorado Chautauqua “and it was founded by the Texas Board of Regents [who] were looking for an educational retreat for their teachers.” It was, indeed, a competitive process. “The City of Boulder really lobbied hard to get it here because they thought it would be a real wonderful amenity to the city,” she continued. “Boulder was just about 4,000 people at the time, and the Texans chose Boulder over a couple of other Colorado cities.” The City of Boulder bought the land, local banks split bonds, the people voted to back the bonds, and together they built the first Dining Hall and Auditorium. The Colorado & Southern railroad then stepped in as another patron and until 1901 paid the bills for this Chautauqua (Taylor , 2017).

One of my favorite archive articles was from *The New York Times*. It was a July 12, 1914 commemorative article celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the Chautauqua Movement. At that point, Chautauqua was present in 3,000 cities across the nation, and \$7,500,000 (\$182,702,250 in 2017 dollars) was being spent to educate 8,000,000 people (The New York Times, 1914). Taking into account the 40 percent of revenues generated by ticket sales and the 60 percent of revenue generated by philanthropy (as described by Talbot, 2017), \$3,000,000 (\$73,080,900 in 2017 dollars) may have come from the gate and \$4,500,000 (\$109,621,350 in 2017 dollars) may have been raised through philanthropy.

The patrons of the Chautauqua Movement came from many walks of life. Business and religious leaders, conservative and liberal individuals, and public and private organizations all played a part in starting a movement to educate America. The section below discusses the impact of the Chautauqua Movement in shaping America.

## 2.5 THE MOVEMENT OF IDEAS

According to Hurlbut (1921), William Jennings Bryan once wrote that Chautauqua was “molding the mind of a nation.” Viscount James Bryce, Great Britain’s ambassador to the US, and author of *The American Commonwealth*, wrote, “I do not think any country in the world but America could produce such gatherings as Chautauquas.” Journalist Dr. Lyman Abbott once wrote that “Chautauqua has inspired the habit of reading with a purpose.” The *Review of Reviews* in 1914 wrote that “the Chautauqua platform often results in bringing these matters [issues and ideas] to local attention for the first time.” *The World To-day* said that “People turn to Chautauquas to be taught politics along with domestic science, hygiene, and child welfare.” Dr. Edward Everett Hale, Chaplain of the United States Senate, argued that “if you have not spent a week at Chautauqua, you do not know your country” (pp. x-xvi).

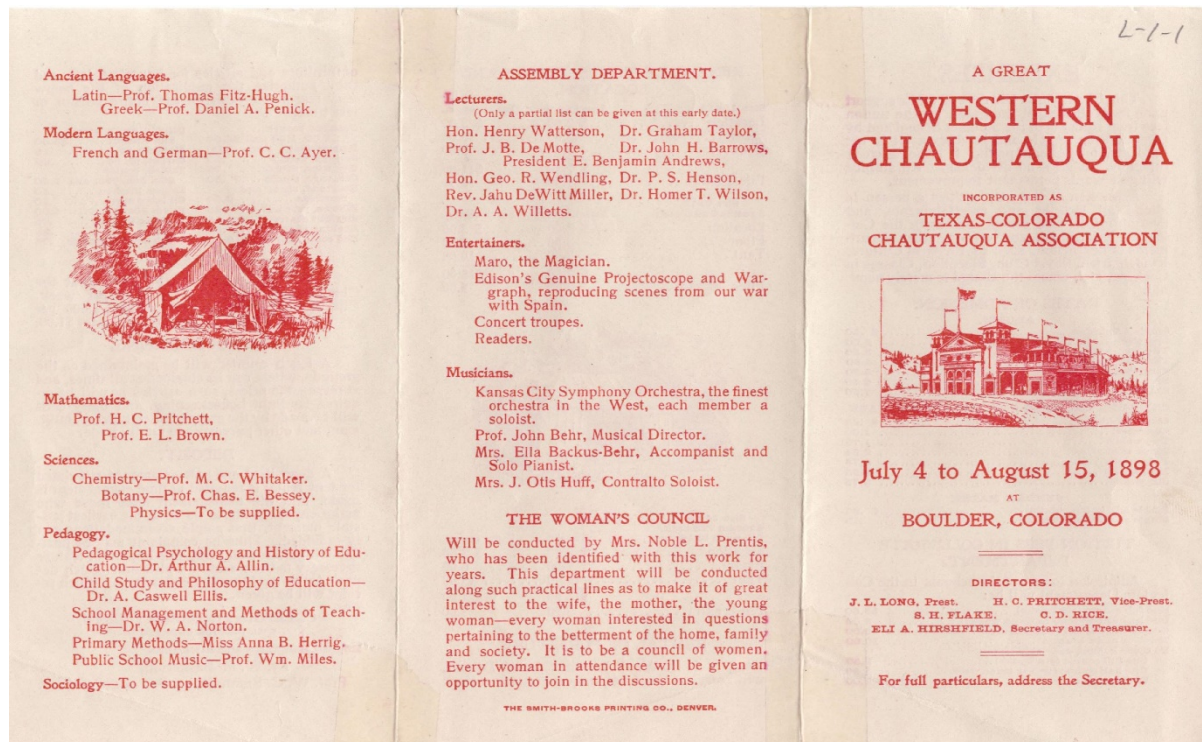
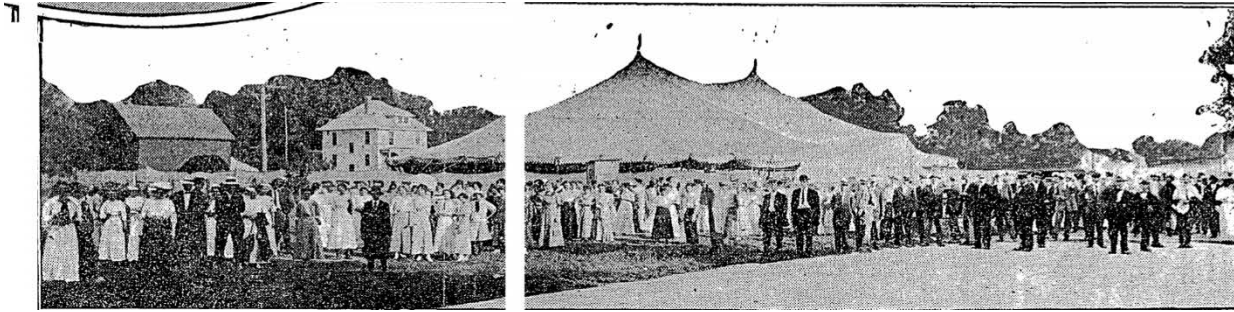


Figure 6. 1898 Texas Colorado Chautauqua First Season Brochure

The picture in Figure 6 above was found in 2016 in the Colorado Chautauqua archives. It shows the offerings of the first season at that Chautauqua, which kicked off on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1898. This brochure won the 2016 award for most significant artifact by the Colorado Connecting to Collections (Auraria Library, 2017). It is easy to see the interdisciplinary variety of the programming that led the many people above to make complimentary comments about the Chautauqua Movement. The type of learning included history, languages, science, mathematics, sociology, and music. The biggest space filler on the brochure is the part about The Woman's Council. It states that the department "will be conducted along such practical lines as to make it of great interest to the wife, the mother, the young woman – every woman interested in questions pertaining to the betterment of home, family, and society."

Dr. Mary Lee Talbot, both in her book (1997) and in her interview for this study (2017), makes a very strong argument that the Chautauqua Movement was one of the key reasons for the rise of the Women's Rights Movement and the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. It is easy to see that the Texas Colorado Chautauqua, as shown in the brochure above, took it seriously. Only five years after its first season in 1893, Colorado became the first state to allow women to vote. The next state to do so was not until three years later in 1896. Only much later, the Nineteenth Amendment passed in 1920 (Rosen, 2013).



**Figure 7.** Chautauqua Gathering as shown in *The New York Times* (1914) showing a large number of women in attendance

Talbot (1997) stated that even though Vincent and Miller did not necessarily want women “to challenge the prevailing social or political hierarchy” (p. 1), that was precisely what happened. The idea that women were equal became a tradition at Chautauqua assemblies, to the point that President Taft referred to his wife, at a Chautauqua gathering in front of other world leaders, as “the real President of the United States” (*The New York Times*, 1910).

Child labor, another key component of the progressive movement, often took center stage at Chautauqua gatherings. The state of child labor was reported at Chautauqua as early as 1889 by Dr. Richard T. Fly (1889). By 1897, there were programs at Chautauqua addressing the old arguments of child labor: Children worked at home, it had been argued, so why could they not work in a factory? In a lecture, Rev. Charles R. Henderson argued that “the boy in a mill or factory serves a machine, which runs full speed by steam power from 7 to 12 o’clock, and from 1 to 6 o’clock. Again, the country boy works in the open air and breathes oxygen. The factory child works in a house, breathes dust, vapor and poison” ((Henderson, 1897). The topic of child labor was cited an *additional 281 times* according to the online archives of the *Chautauqua Assembly Harold* and *Chautauqua Daily*.

The Chautauqua Movement was a platform that brought many ideas to its audience. Throughout my research, I found both progressive new ideas, and the reexamination of old ones,

were the fuel that drove the Chautauqua machine. One notable example was the fact that a topic like the positive factors of Socialism was discussed by Prof. Bernhard Moses (The New York Times, 1914). Other famous people to use Chautauqua to spread their message included:

- Presidents Grant, Hayes, Garfield, McKinley, and Teddy Roosevelt,
- British liberal politician James Bryce,
- Progressive politician William Jennings Bryant,
- Republican political leader Robert M. La Follette,
- Lawyer and political leader Charles E. Hughes,
- Businessman and New York Governor B. B. Odell,
- Businessman Marcus A. Hanna,
- Scottish evangelist and biologist Henry Drummond,
- British women's rights leader Lady Henry Somerset,
- Salvation Army leader Maud Bollington Booth,
- Social reformer Susan B. Anthony,
- Temperance orator John B. Gough,
- Women's suffragist Frances E. Willard,
- Philosopher and psychologist William James,
- Union general Lew Wallace,
- Historian and Unitarian minister Edward Everett Hale,
- Author Thomas Nelson Page,
- Novelist George W. Cable,
- Danish-American journalist Jacob Riis,
- Poet and author Julia Ward Howe,

- Social worker Jane Addams, and
- Harvard President Charles W. Eliot (The New York Times, 1914).

Chautauquas served as the platform for the discussion of ideas. They were, for the most part, nonpartisan but with a progressive spin. Without this free and safe platform, I do not believe that the idea of Chautauqua would have spread at the rate it did. After a Civil War, people wanted a better world and reconcile the nation, and to accomplish that goal the country needed to move together and back ideas that would improve the life of everyone.

## **2.6 OTHER CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE GROWTH OF THE CHAUTAUQUA MOVEMENT**

Many factors distinguish a fad from a movement. It is often difficult to pinpoint all the factors responsible for the growth of a movement. There is, however, no such difficulty when it comes to the Chautauqua Movement. It happened mostly because of the social and political moment in time discussed in the above sections, but there were additional reasons that played a major role in the growth of the movement, reasons that are worth discussing for the completions of the inquiry.

### **2.6.1 The Railroads**

Railroads were mentioned in all of my interviews. Taylor C. (2017) told me the success of the Chautauqua Movement was tied to the success of the railroads. People traveled to go to Chautauquas, and they used rail to get there. For the Texas-Colorado Chautauqua (now Colorado

Chautauqua), Taylor said, “The railroad officials were represented on the board of directors initially, because the railroads were providing transportation” and, until 1901, the railroads paid the bills of that particular Chautauqua (Taylor C. , 2017).

Gwalthney (2017) agreed regarding the vital role of railroads to kick off the Chautauqua Movement. He stated that “Chautauquas in the nineteenth century bought the land from the railroads because the railroads owned extensive pieces of land all over the country.” In return, the railroads built stations close to those Chautauquas to encourage further use of their business. Chautauqua Archivist Jon Schmitz agreed, stating that the Chautauqua Movement was “made possible by the extension of rail lines in the county” (Schmitz, History of Chautauqua Institution, 2015).

### **2.6.2 Chautauqua Circuits**

According to Schmitz, Chautauqua Circuits were started 30 years into the Chautauqua Movement by businessman and entrepreneur Keith Vawter. I speculate because the Chautauqua Movement was so successful that people wanted to see how they could monetize it. These fundamentally differed from the movement in the following ways because they did not have stationary locations and their first motive was profit. Shortly after the first one was established, at least 50 companies took these circuits to the nation (Schmitz, History of Chautauqua Institution, 2015). Chautauqua Circuits were often referred to by “the talent” of speakers and entertainment groups as “one-night stands” because they would perform in many small cities during the twelve- to sixteen-week season. These seasons were organized by for-profit organizations that would set up many tented locations and contract with the performers to appear in all of them over that period of time (The New York Times, 1914).

[Circuits] would be a group that would set up a tent and get things organized and then day 1's entertainment would come in and perform and they would then move into town 2 while someone was coming behind them for day 2 in town 1 and towns 2's and so on and so forth and that's why they were called circuits, a string of entertainers. And maybe these entertainers went for 90 days without a break (Schmitz, History of Chautauqua Institution, 2015).

The circuits were not as organized and as detailed as the independent Chautauquas but without question played a major role in taking the concept of Chautauqua to the masses. In fact, even the people at the original Chautauqua recognized this fact years after the fall of the Chautauqua circuits. A short history of the Chautauqua Movement explained that "at no time were they in any way connected organically with Chautauqua Assembly or Chautauqua Institution, and they are therefore strictly outside the scope of the present study. But their existence must be mentioned" as a significant player in their history (Bestor, 1934).

### **2.6.3 Family Leisure**

Gwalthney (2017), Talbot (2017), and Weeks (2017) all told of fond memories of growing up at a Chautauqua. They described these magical places where their parents and, for Talbot, grandparents, took them as children. They were hooked from then on. Talbot's family involvement with Chautauqua goes back to her great grandparents! In fact, her great-grandfather, Samuel Hasley, was the founder of the Chautauqua Foundation, which played a major role to ensure the survival of the original Chautauqua.

Most of the independent Chautauquas were near a body of water or in a recreational area. At the original Chautauqua, for example, starting in the first season in 1874, people from all over the country were coming to Western New York with their entire families. Although the founders started the movement to provide education, “we must not conclude that Vincent or the other founders were in any way opposed to leisure time itself or its pleasures” (Schmitz, History of Chautauqua Institution, 2015).

Other reasons, like the need to better educate teachers, college students who wanted to see the people they were reading about in person, and real-estate investments, all played vital roles in the growth of the Chautauqua Movement. More research, however, is needed to adequately explain their impact. The Chautauqua Movement, however, started declining in the early 1930s and was no longer the “most American thing in America” (Schmitz, History of Chautauqua Institution, 2015). In retrospect, the Chautauqua Movement appears to have fallen victim to its own success.

### **3.0 THE DECLINE**

The Chautauqua Movement was multidimensional, and to conclude that the movement no longer exists or bears weight on civic adult-based education underestimates its effect on American civic adult education. Heller (2011) stated that an estimated 5 million Americans belonged to Book Clubs, and Wilson (2014) supports its continued significance, stating that speaker fees were at an all-time high. Organizations like TED.org, Aspen Institute, Brookings Institution, and 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y all created speaking series to fill the gap left by the Chautauqua Movement. Finally, there are 17 Chautauquas still left and many more were being discovered while this research took place. The original Chautauqua still draws over 100,000 individuals per year (The Chautauqua Institution, 2016), and hundreds of thousands attend the other sixteen.

Nonetheless, the Chautauqua movement that President Theodore Roosevelt heralded as “the most American thing in America” (Schmitz, History of Chautauqua Institution, 2015) was severely weakened by the early 1930s, and by the twenty-first century, it had become nothing more than a distant memory for many Americans. The decline of the Chautauqua Movement may be attributed to the following factors:

1. It was not able to achieve financial sustainability.
2. Its audience did not expand in diversity.
3. It became more focused on entertainment than on continued learning.

4. The auto industry, along with the expansion of motion pictures and radio and other media forms, created added competition.

### **3.1 FINANCIAL PROBLEMS**

“[Chautauqua] has never been self-sustaining. Ever. It has relied on philanthropy,” Talbot emphasized in reflecting on the importance of patronage to the growth of the Chautauqua Movement. How does this explain Chautauqua’s decline? “The nonprofit sector has traditionally been driven by a ‘dependency’ model, relying primarily on philanthropy, voluntarism, and government subsidy, with earned income a distant fourth” (McClurg & Boschee, 2003). This is precisely what happened with most of the Chautauquas: They depended too much on philanthropy and, when patrons lost interest and/or the ability to donate because of economic circumstances (for example, during the Depression), or when the patrons passed away, they folded.

“Even before the onset of the Depression, the gate dropped. It was more and more difficult to make up lost revenue with bonds or gifts. In 1933, the Institution was unable to announce the opening of the next season. It looked as if Chautauqua was over,” explained Schmitz (2015). The problem started even earlier for some of the daughter Chautauquas (Taylor, 2017). The Texas Colorado Chautauqua had been struggling as early as 1900 when the Colorado & Southern Railroad stopped paying the bills of the institution, and they faced a debt nearly \$19,000 (\$513,626 in 2017 dollars) shortly after, and had to be bailed out several times by both the City of Boulder and philanthropists over the years.

Quantitative data analysis from the combined database list of daughter Chautauquas for this study affirm this claim. Table 4 below illustrates that 39.15 percent of all Chautauquas closed after the first year of operation, and nearly 55 percent failed to exist for more than five years. At most, the Chautauqua model existed in 41 states, Canada, and even in England; currently, only 11 states and one in Canada still feature the model.

**Table 4.** Number of Daughter Chautauquas by State and Years of Existence

State	< 1 yrs.	2-5 yrs.	6-10 yrs.	11-25 yrs.	26-50 yrs.	51-100 yrs.	> 100 yrs.
AL	4	1	1	1	0	0	0
AR	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
CA	3	2	1	3	3	0	0
CO	2	1	1	1	0	0	0
CT	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
FL	4	1	0	3	1	1	1
GA	8	4	0	2	0	1	0
IA	20	8	11	6	4	2	0
ID	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
IL	25	8	5	8	3	0	2
IN	11	6	7	11	4	3	2
KS	10	5	5	3	3	0	1
KY	4	1	1	1	0	0	0
LA	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
MA	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
MD	4	1	0	2	1	0	0
ME	2	2	0	1	0	0	1
MI	6	2	0	2	3	0	2
MN	5	3	2	0	0	0	0
MO	10	3	0	5	1	0	0
MS	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
ND	4	0	0	0	1	0	0
NE	8	0	2	4	1	0	0
NH	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
NJ	5	1	2	1	1	0	1
NM	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
NV	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
NY	7	3	0	4	1	2	1
OH	12	5	8	4	1	0	2
OK	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
OR	0	2	0	1	1	0	0
PA	1	2	2	4	0	0	1
SD	3	1	1	0	2	0	0
TN	3	1	0	0	0	0	1
TX	5	1	2	0	1	0	0
UT	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
VA	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
VT	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
WA	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
WI	4	0	1	4	1	0	0
WV	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Canada	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Grand Total	193	72	55	78	35	8	17
Percentage	39.15%	14.60%	11.16%	15.82%	7.10%	1.62%	3.45%

*Some Chautauquas in the database compiled do not have dates of operations.*

Maxwell (2002) found that the institutions that made it into the 1930s tended to be absorbed or managed by local colleges and universities, resulting in their fading into the background as sideshows or their inevitable disappearance. Even the ones that made it through struggled through multiple crises, like the original Chautauqua, and needed to be bailed out on multiple occasions. Frank Gwalthney (2017) from the Ocean Park Chautauqua said “we didn’t realize that we had no money... but we just spent it like we did have it” and found themselves in financial trouble and needed to be bailed out by new wealthy patrons.

So, what happened to the rest of the Chautauquas? Why did they not make it past the 1930? The depression is certainly one of those reasons. I also kept seeing the same of patrons in both my archival research and interviews. Those names included people like JP Morgan, Thomas Edison, Rockefeller.

**Table 5.** Chautauqua Movement Key Financial

Chautauqua Movement Key Financial Patrons		
Name	Mentioned as Key Investor In:	Year of Death
Cornelius Vanderbilt	Archives	1877
Lewis Miller	Interviews / Archives	1899
John Pierpont "J. P." Morgan	Archives	1913
Andrew Carnegie	Archives	1919
Thomas Edison	Interviews / Archives	1931
John D. Rockefeller	Interviews / Archives	1937
Henry Ford	Interviews / Archives	1947
Frank Seiberling	Interviews	1955

These are the same individuals credited by the History Channel as the men who built America during the Gilded Age of Industrialism (Reams & Megan, 2012). They invested in the growth of the Chautauqua Movement. With the exception of Henry Ford and Frank Seiberling, all of these great funders of the Chautauqua Movement were gone by the end of the third decade

of the twentieth century and all but three had passed away before the height of the great depression.

### **3.2 DIVERSITY PROBLEM**

Chautauqua Institution archivist and historian Jon Schmitz suggested that the main reason for the decline of the Chautauqua movement is the fact that it failed to welcome the new non-Anglo-Saxon, non-protestant Americans. People at Chautauqua saw immigration and racial diversity as a problem rather than a solution to growth; further, it was not a secret. J. H. Vincent himself introduced Col. George W. Bain<sup>9</sup> to present as the keynote speaker at the Grand Army Day Address in 1908. After Bain's rant about the need for social separation between whites and blacks, Bain turned his attention to the question of immigration. The below is a summary of his views on the subject:

Col. Bain then swung the searchlight on the immigration question. He cited statistics to show the magnitude of this influx of foreigners. At the same time he showed the dangers that are arising from many of these foreigners, with a training so subversive to American traditions of order and Sabbath observance. The especial danger he foresaw was that of anarchy (Editorial, 1908).

---

<sup>9</sup> Col. George W. Bain was a frequent speaker in the grounds of Chautauqua first appearing in 1884. His to go lecture was titled "the Negro problem and the question of immigration."

The original Chautauqua was more progressive than the other Chautauquas, and even there, their discussions about immigration would not be seen as appropriate today. In a “news perspective” article which appeared in *The Chautauqua* in 1914, the original Chautauqua kept talking about the “immigration problem.” The writer stated that the United States had always welcomed immigrants but the new immigrants coming in at the end of the nineteenth and early parts of the twentieth century were too different because they had new cultural, national, and lingual backgrounds. The author stated that “a certain degree of like-mindedness among its people is essential to a well-ordered, stable and prosperous commonwealth” and that there was much to do to fix the “immigrant problem” America was facing (News Perspectives, 1914).

	1850	1860	1870	1890	1906	1916	1926
Catholic adherents	1,088	2,439	3,555	7,343	14,211	15,722	18,605
% of total population	5	8	9	12	17	16	16
% of total adherents	14	21	26	26	32	30	28

SOURCE: The years 1850, 1860, 1870 are based on membership estimates (Finke and Stark, 1986). Other years from Bureau of the Census.

**Figure 8.** Catholics as Percentage of Total Population and Church and Adherents, 1850-1926 (Finke and Stark, 2005 p. 122)

These new Americans were mostly Roman Catholics coming into the United States from Italy, Ireland, and Eastern Europe (Fink & Stark, 2005). Two years before Bain made his speech the Roman Catholic population rapidly increased to 17 percent of the population and 32 percent of the total Christian population in the country.

“By 1900, there was almost twice as many American Catholics, yet out of the typical attendance of Chautauqua, about 8 -10,000, you would have trouble finding about 50 Catholics on the grounds,” said Schmitz, who added, “Ironically, this American thing in America was feeling marginalized” (Schmitz, History of Chautauqua Institution, 2015). The divide between

Chautauqua and a more diverse America continued well into the late twentieth century. It was not until 1988, 27 years after John F. Kennedy was elected President, that the first Chautauqua Catholic Center appeared at the original Chautauqua Institution in Western New York (Chautauqua Catholic Community, 2017). It took another 21 years for the first Jewish center to appear in 2009 (Everett Jewish Life Center in Chautauqua, 2017) at the Chautauqua Institution and as of 2015 there is not African American, Hispanic, Asian, or Islamic representative organization at Chautauqua.

There were nearly 8,500 towns that had a Chautauqua presence in US, Canada, and even a few scattered around the world (Wilson P. 1923). That means that there were many different verities considering there was not a centralized model or organization to dictate format. There was at least one Jewish Chautauqua (The New York Times, 1897) and the Chautauquas in the Northeast, like the Ocean Park Chautauqua, were more liberal (Gwalthney, 2017).

As we learned earlier in these study, 81 percent of the independent Chautauquas were in the Midwest and the South, and they were much more conservative. The Bayview, Michigan, Chautauqua, one of the Chautauquas that made it into the twenty-first century, resembled more of the Chautauquas. “Up until the 1980s it was a limited number, there was a Catholic quota and then after the 80’s that disappeared” said Dr. Weeks (2017). Earlier in the interview, however, he informed me that even today, a letter from “your minister” stating that a potential buyer of property is a good Christian is still needed to be sent to the Bayview Chautauqua board for approval. Dr. Weeks saw the need for the elimination of such a policy and with a laughing tone stated “I know one man that was temporarily denied because the minister of his church changed from the time the letter was sent until the church and, although, he was up there because his

grandfather and father owned the cottage, the letter came back saying “I don’t know this man”” (Weeks, 2017).

When the Chautauqua Movement began, the mission of its founding fathers was to change the world and make it a better place. As it progressed into the second and third decades of the twentieth century many of them started thinking back to the “good old days” when America was a lot whiter and significantly more Protestant. The new Americans never really saw the Chautauquas that had been designed to build bridges and bring America together in a well-educated, well-informed citizenry.

### **3.3 “TOO MUCH ENTERTAINMENT NOT ENOUGH EDUCATION” - CHAUTAUQUA CIRCUITS PROBLEM**

One of the main conclusions by Scott (2005) was that Chautauqua fell victim to its own success. It became so big that there were not enough speakers to go around. What most scholars fail to realize was that in 1904 an entrepreneur and Chautauqua enthusiast by the name of Keith Vawter found a way to make money with the Chautauqua model by creating the circuit Chautauquas. To wit, Vawter would contract a number of speakers during the summer months and send them from city to city and region to region to present in a similar format as that used in classic circuits (Canning, 2005).

The circuit Chautauquas played a key role in the growth of the Chautauqua Movement but damaged it for the long term. Nearly 50 companies started holding circuits in small-town America, and all of these companies had one thing in common – their pursuit to make money by using the name of “Chautauqua.” While the daughter Chautauquas could not make money from

educational programming attendance, circuit Chautauquas did not have that problem. At first, circuit Chautauquas tried to imitate the original Chautauqua by providing quality educational programming in smaller towns that could not support daughter Chautauquas. As competition increased, however, they moved away from the vision set by the Chautauqua founders and moved to appeal to the masses by bringing popular non-academic entertainment. Schmitz said that circuit Chautauqua “audiences tended to be populous” and that they were not community assets. One year, a circuit Chautauqua might come, and another year they would not. Their motive was money, not inclusion.

Circuit Chautauquas, therefore, started offering concerts, musicians, readers, plays, and popular speakers who were beloved by the masses. As a result, it can be argued that circuit Chautauquas started alienating women who had been a critical part of the initial growth of the movement. The New York Times (1914) reported that “90 percent” of the audience were men. Women were alienated because of the entertainment-driven programming on top of the fact that quality was watered down, when “the popularity of the circuits suddenly erupts [in 1924]” (Schmitz, History of Chautauqua Institution, 2015).

With a couple of the interviews, I could see that participants held back their true feelings about the circuit Chautauquas. I can understand their feelings because there is no doubt that the circuit Chautauquas were associated, in the public’s eye, with independent Chautauquas. In 1974, for example, the United States government wanted to celebrate the centennial of the opening of the original Chautauqua. In an attempt to do so, they printed the Chautauqua Centennial Stamp with a Chautauqua circuit tent on the front, even though the circuits did not exist until 1904. Maxwell (2002) called it “a great honor, as well as a mistake.” Jon Schmitz in an email clarified this situation and said that the Post Office wanted to celebrate “rural America”

and the movement as a whole and that he could see why they would want a circuit on the stamp (Schmitz, Chautauqua Stamp, 2017).

### **3.4 THE CAR, MOTION PICTURES, AND RADIO**

Three topics usually are mentioned when discussing the decline of the Chautauqua Movement are the automobile, motion pictures, and radio. Bestor (1934), for example, accredited the entire fall of the circuit Chautauquas to these three new developments. Although the archives do not show an admission by the original Chautauqua that these three developments played a major role in the decline of daughter Chautauquas, some of the interviews did.

“Chautauquas started hurting because of more cars, and with more cars you had freedom to go wherever you wanted,” said Gwalthney (2017). Gwalthney explained that a person did not have to go to a daughter Chautauqua to learn; they could travel to the big cities faster and cheaper to get the education they wanted. Talbot (2017) agreed when she added, “After World War I, radio became popular. What are you going to do with this invention that you invented for war? You create consumers. The need for entertainment was not as great, transportation was improving, a farmer could go into the local town and go to a movie.”

On a side note, the automobile was not seen fondly by the original Chautauqua Institution. The archives show that it was a constant topic in *The Chautauqua Daily*. Today, it is almost humorous to read how they reported on issue of speed limits, accidents, and how the institution was struggling to adapt to the automobile. In the early 1930s, *The Chautauqua Daily* editorial wrote, “One ride thru Chautauqua will show the motorist that it was never made for

automobiles” because they were made for walking with very little access for cars (Editorial Staff, 1934).

The decline of the Chautauqua Movement continued through most of the twentieth century as more and more of the daughter Chautauquas kept closing doors. In the first two decades of the twenty-first century, however, there was a new appreciation for them, and many of the remaining 17 daughter Chautauquas suddenly began to prosper. According to Taylor C. (2017) and Gwalthney (2017), there have been multiple efforts to rediscover and revive some of the lost Chautauquas. Although bringing back the Chautauqua Movement will be extremely challenging, there are lessons that the movement left behind in case others want to pursue mass civic adult educational outreach in the twenty-first century America.

#### **4.0 LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CIVIC ADULT EDUCATION**

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "We are not makers of history. We are made by history" (Commonwealth of Virginia, 2017). While Dr. King was referring to some of the darkest history in our nation's past which we must relearn the quote applies to all of history. We must look back to who we were in order to understand who we are and where we should go. Late twentieth and early twenty-first century Americans were infatuated with discovering the new and forgot that some great things were lost in recent history – things like the Chautauqua Movement, which was designed, as co-founder Miller said, to "enlarge recognition of the World" and was meant to bring "scientist and statesman, the artisan and tradesman, [who] should bring their latest and best to this altar" (Vincent, 1886, pp. v-vi).

In other words, the founders wanted to create a platform for the discussion of ideas. This vision worked and took over America. The idea of Chautauqua became an idea that was admired by the world. Viscount James Bryce, Great Britain's ambassador and author of *The American Commonwealth*, wrote, "I do not think any country in the world but America could produce such gatherings as Chautauquas" (Hurlbut, 1921, p. ix). The Chautauqua founders were convinced that education should not stop at the formal level but rather should continue throughout an individual's lifetime. It was, after all, their belief that adults are most responsible to educate the future generations and, therefore, their knowledge must be updated and enhanced,

So, what lessons did this movement leave for the future of civic adult education? The following are some of the key lessons that emerged through this inquiry:

1. New ideas should be explored
2. Civic adult education must be open to everyone
3. Programming must be affordable
  - a. Governmental subsidies
  - b. Membership programs
4. Quality control should be implemented
  - a. Certification program
  - b. Centralized headquarters
  - c. McDonalidization of Civic Adult Education

#### **4.1 NEW IDEAS SHOULD BE EXPLORED**

The eight major propositions of the Chautauqua founders, described in Table 2 above, should be amended to fit a twenty-first century civic adult educational institution. Proposition one stating that “the whole life is a school” must be taken seriously because knowledge must be reinforced throughout one’s life. In proposition two, the founders emphasized that all knowledge is important, even when it makes us uncomfortable.

Chautauquas served as a platform for the discussion of ideas related to civic education. Figure 6 above shows the wide variety of topics addressed in the curriculum of the Texas-Colorado Chautauqua (now Colorado Chautauqua). It included science, technology, mathematics, music, and women’s issues. As described in Chapter Two of this inquiry, the

Chautauqua Movement flourished in part because it was a safe platform for the discussion of ideas. That led, some argue, to the Chautauqua Movement influencing the women's movement and furthering the progressive era of American history.

## **4.2 CIVIC ADULT EDUCATION MUST BE OPEN TO EVERYONE**

Civic adult education works when it is open to everyone. This is a primary lesson that emerged through the research phase of this study. The Chautauqua Movement started as an idea to build bridges across the post-Civil War divided America. Education was the tool that they used to unite the nation. The founder believed that educational inequality between rural America and bigger cities was increasing and that educational inequality came the economic inequality that could lead to another conflict within the nation.

At the beginning, the movement grew because of this openness. By 1923, 8,500 towns across America had some sort of Chautauqua presence (daughter Chautauquas, CLSCs, or Chautauqua Circuits) (Wilson P. W., 1923) and reached over 50 million people per year (Schmitz, History of Chautauqua Institution, 2015). This massive outreach of the Chautauqua Movement played a vital role in the Progressive Area and the Feminist Movement, both of which changed America forever.

As the Chautauqua Movement declined, it became more and more exclusive. First, it did not welcome the growing diversity of the changing America. America started becoming more Catholic, Latina, Black, Jewish, and Asian and less white Protestant. Later, as the patrons who subsidized the movement died or lost interest, Chautauquas either folded or started catering to

wealthier Americans. This change affected the movement's popularity as many people could simply not afford to attend its programming.

The Chautauqua Movement taught that an organization that provides civic adult education should strive to reach all people, to be nonpartisan, and to be affordable so that everyone can attend. The mission to reach all people and to be nonpartisan can be directed through the bylaws of an organization. Making it affordable is much more difficult!

### **4.3 PROGRAMMING MUST BE AFFORDABLE**

“The nonprofit sector has traditionally been driven by a “dependency” model, relying primarily on philanthropy, voluntarism and government subsidy, with earned income a distant fourth” (McClurg & Boschee, 2003). This was the case with the Chautauqua Movement. In order for civic adult education to be affordable, the institution must diversify its funding model. The following tools should be explored.

#### **4.3.1 Governmental Sponsorship**

A civic adult education institution should approach governmental agencies for subsidies to provide quality civic adult educational programming. The European Union, for example, declared 1996 the Year of Lifelong Learning, understanding that Europeans need to be informed of their differences in nationality, religion, and race in order for the EU to succeed. The Lisbon European Council declared that Europeans need to continuously update jobs and social skills (Kearns & Kearns, 2012). In support of this argument, Nicoleta (2011) demonstrated that regions in

Romania (part of the European Union) with more available lifelong learning options tended to be more progressive than those regions in which government made little investment.

Outside the EU, China has also invested deeply in social capital building through non-formal lifelong learning programs. In 2002, the Chinese Communist Party decided that lifelong learning was a priority, in an effort to take its citizenry towards the ideas of Confucius. The government found that the people of China, for the most part were simple, aggressive, and unable to comprehend big ideas. Since 2002, however, 61 cities and regions declared themselves learning communities (Boshier & Huang, 2006).

Another model can be found in Italy. In Italy, the Universities for Older People initiative provides “approximately 1,000 centers... which provide learning programmers without any form of certification” (Shmidt-Hertha, Krasovec, & Formosa, 2014, p. 16). These “universities” provide non-formal educational opportunities, which have a wide variety of purposes. An older adult can attend one of these “universities” to learn a new skill, history, technology, global issues, or simply to socialize with other elderly people.

#### **4.3.2 Membership Driven Civic Adult Education**

In the United Kingdom, a member-driven platform for civic adult education, the Universities of the Third Age, has appeared in just about every community across that country. The “U3A” movement started with one chapter in 1982 and now stands with 959 chapters and nearly 350 thousand members. The mission remains the same across all chapters: “learning [is] for pleasure [and] there is no accreditation or validation and there are no assessments or qualifications to be gained” (The Third Age Trust, 2017).

#### **4.4 QUALITY CONTROL SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED**

It is rather simple to ensure that a SINGLE civic adult education institution has good quality. As with the quality of programing at the original Chautauqua, one person, or a board, can enforce quality control rules upon the organization. It can be done with even a few chapters. So, what does one do when there are hundreds? Vincent, Miller and the other stakeholders of the Chautauqua Movement in Western New York decided that they were just not going to deal with the question of quality. In hindsight, that is one of the main lessons the Chautauqua Movement taught us. There were nearly 500 daughter Chautauquas and thousands of Chautauqua circuits, all operating independently. So, what can be done?

##### **4.4.1 Certification Program**

To offer quality civic adult education programs, one could follow the European Union model in which the government does the quality control. In the U.S., the government has more layers and more frequent turnover. For long -term quality control of civic educational programing, I recommend instituting a program similar to the higher education accreditation model in the United States in which civic adult educational institution come together for peer review of each other's programing. If daughter Chautauquas had instituted such a program, they would have policed each other and learned from each other in the process.

#### **4.4.2 Centralized Headquarters**

When the Chautauqua Movement was at its peak, the primary way to exchange information was through mail. Imagine if a programmatic brochure, like the one in Figure 6 showing the first season of Texas-Colorado Chautauqua, had to be approved by the original Chautauqua. It would take days if not weeks before that process could be completed. The internet changed all that. Such a brochure in the twenty-first century would only take seconds to arrive from anywhere in the world. Thus, centralized headquarters would ensure that every location is kept to the same standard.

#### **4.4.3 The McDonaldization of Civic Adult Education**

Ritzer's (2008) social theory that more and more of society is starting to resemble the fast food industry could be applied to civic adult education. Like McDonalds, a civic adult educational institution could take its product and reproduce it all over the world. Using processes, franchising, quality control, and management training, that institution could dictate the direction of its affiliates for one common purpose: to educate the American adult.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

The Chautauqua Movement was, without a doubt, the biggest adult educational initiative in American history. It played a key role in healing when our nation was most fragile and helped shape conversations in some of the most progressive decades in our nation's history. It grew because its mission had good intentions and because of the educational inequalities it found in different areas of the country.

The inability to evolve – remaining almost exclusive to Protestants with a fear of welcoming new Americans of the time – coupled with mission creep from providing educational programming to entertainment along with its inability to financially sustain itself crippled the Chautauqua Movement. Although several models of the institution and its mission still exist, one must wonder what could have been had the framers and those who followed been open to a new demographic of interested and eager patrons in need of access to the quality education once provided by Chautauqua and its movement.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Auraria Library. (2017, April 1). *Brochure from Texas-Colorado Chautauqua Opening Season, 1898*. Retrieved from Colorado Connecting to Collections: <https://collectioncare.auraria.edu/content/brochure-texas-colorado-chautauqua-opening-season-1898>
- Bestor, A. E. (1934, July 25). Historical Sketch of Chautauqua. *The Chautauqua Daily*, p. 02. Retrieved from <http://66.211.223.127/virtualimage/cust/cust.aspx?loginid=1735bad6-c852-484e-ac73-3fbfdab1c64b&PageNo=99&ImageID=17326>
- Blumer, H. (1986). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. . Oakland, CA: University of California Press.
- Boshier, R., & Huang, Y. (2006). Will the Chinese learning initiative evoke the long-awaited fifth modernization. *Planning and Changing*, 37(1&2), 56-70.
- Canning, C. (2005). *The most American thing in America: Circuit Chautauqua as performance*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press.
- Carteret, P. (2008). Diverse pleasures: informal learning in community. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 48(3), 502-521.
- Chautauqua Assembly Herald. (1889, August 5). Personal. Chautauqua, NY, USA. Retrieved from <http://archives.ciweb.org/virtualimage/Cust/cust.aspx?loginid=09a5e696-d798-4b74-a20e-52fa8962667d&PageNo=99&ImageID=2634>
- Chautauqua Institution. (2014). *Chautauqua Literary & Scientific Circle: Founded in Chautauqua, New York, 1878*. Chautauqua: Chautauqua Institution. Retrieved from <http://ciweb.org/phocadownload/LiteraryArts/CLSCBookList.pdf>
- Commonwealth of Virginia. (2017, April 20). *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* Retrieved from Virginia General Assembly Dr. Martin Luther King Memorial Commission: <http://mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov/mlk.html>
- Editorial. (1908, July 27). Col George Bain Speaks of the Problems Confronting the United States. *The Chautauqua Daily*, p. 01. Retrieved from <http://66.211.223.127/virtualimage/cust/cust.aspx?loginid=1735bad6-c852-484e-ac73->

3fbfdab1c64b&PageNo=99&ImageID=8998

Editorial Staff. (1934, July 3). Just Crawling. *The Chautauqua Daily*, p. 02. Retrieved from <http://66.211.223.127/virtualimage/cust/cust.aspx?loginid=1735bad6-c852-484e-ac73-3fbfdab1c64b&PageNo=99&ImageID=17146>

Ferati, F. (2017). *Annual Report*. Erie: The Jefferson Educational Society.

Fink, R., & Stark, R. (2005). *The churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and losers in our religious economy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Fly, R. T. (1889, August 9). Child Labor. *Chautauqua Assembly Herald*, p. 06. Retrieved from <http://66.211.223.127/virtualimage/cust/cust.aspx?loginid=1735bad6-c852-484e-ac73-3fbfdab1c64b>

Folkestad, (. 1. (2008). *Analyzing Interview Data* (Vol. 13). Online Working Papers: EUROSHERE. Retrieved from [http://eurospheres.org/files/2010/08/Eurosphere\\_Working\\_Paper\\_13\\_Folkestad.pdf](http://eurospheres.org/files/2010/08/Eurosphere_Working_Paper_13_Folkestad.pdf)

Fukuyama, F. (2011). *The origins of political order: From prehuman times to the French Revolution*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Gwalthney, F. (2017, February 13). Chautauqua Movement. (F. Ferati, Interviewer)

Heller, N. (2011, July 29). *Book Clubs*. Retrieved from [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/assessment/2011/07/book\\_clubs.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/assessment/2011/07/book_clubs.html)

Henderson, C. R. (1897, August 12). Families and Factories. *Chautauqua Assembly Herald*, p. 06. Retrieved from <http://66.211.223.127/virtualimage/cust/cust.aspx?loginid=1735bad6-c852-484e-ac73-3fbfdab1c64b&PageNo=99&ImageID=5266>

Hurlbut, J. L. (1921). *The story of Chautauqua*. New York, NY: GP Putnam's Sons.

Kearns, D. P., & Kearns, P. (2012). Lifelong learning in German learning cities/regions. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 52(2), 336-367.

Kimball, K. (1889, August 22). The Annual. *Chautauqua Assembly Herald*, p. 1. Retrieved from <http://archives.ciweb.org/virtualimage/Cust/cust.aspx?loginid=09a5e696-d798-4b74-a20e-52fa8962667d&PageNo=99&ImageID=2792>

Knowles, M. S., Holton III, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2005). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human development*. London, UK: Routledge.

Maple Group Real Estate. (2017, April 11). *All Property Types in Chautauqua Institution*. Retrieved from <http://www.maplegrouprealestate.com/Chautauqua-Institution.htm>

- Maxwell, J. S. (2002, June 3). *The Complete Chautauqua*. Retrieved from Crackerjackcollectors: [http://www.crackerjackcollectors.com/Jeffrey\\_Maxwell/alphachautauquan/independ.html](http://www.crackerjackcollectors.com/Jeffrey_Maxwell/alphachautauquan/independ.html)
- McClurg, J., & Boschee, J. (2003). *Toward a better understanding of social entrepreneurship: Some important distinctions*. Nashville: Jerr Boschee and Jim McClurg. Retrieved from <http://www.law.berkeley.edu/php-programs/courses/fileDL.php?fID=7289>
- News Perspectives. (1914, May 19). A Typical Immigration Report. *The Chautauqua*, p. 701. Retrieved from <http://66.211.223.127/virtualimage/cust/cust.aspx?loginid=1735bad6-c852-484e-ac73-3fbfdab1c64b&PageNo=99&ImageID=106745>
- Nicoleta, C. (2011). Regional analysis of adult education in Romania. *Annals of the University of Bucharest, Economic and Administrative Series*, 5(1), 51-62.
- Reams, P., & Megan, R. (Directors). (2012). *The men who built America* [Motion Picture].
- Rieser, A. C. (2003). *The Chautauqua Movement: Protestants, progressives, and the culture of modern liberalism*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Ritzer, G. (2008). *The McDonaldization of society* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Pine Forge Press.
- Roberts, J. E. (1931, July 6). Chaplain Lists Education and Church as Nation's Allies. *The Chautauqua Daily*, pp. I-08. Retrieved from <http://archives.ciweb.org/virtualimage/Cust/cust.aspx?loginid=054f0cd1-84cd-4b04-8ffe-cb0e4ab3f00b&PageNo=99&ImageID=15743>
- Rosen, R. (2013). *The world split open: How the modern women's movement changed America*. New York, NY: Tantor eBooks.
- Schmitz, J. (Performer). (2015, June 30). *History of Chautauqua Institution*. Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua, NY, USA.
- Schmitz, J. (2017, April 20). Chautauqua Stamp. (F. Ferati, Interviewer).
- Scott, J. C. (2005). The Chautauqua vision of liberal education. *History of Education*, 34(1), 41-55.
- Section Social News. (1930, August 14). Mrs. Edison receives Chautauqua Scroll. *The New York Times*, p. 27. Retrieved from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9E02E2DD1730E03ABC4C52DFBE66838B629EDE&legacy=true>
- Shmidt-Hertha, B. S., Krasovec, S. J., & Formosa, M. (Eds.) (2014). *Learning across generations in Europe: Contemporary issues in older adult education*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Springer.

- Social Capital. (2017). *Oxford Living Dictionaries Online*. Retrieved from [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/social\\_capital](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/social_capital)
- Snyder, T. D. (1993). *120 years of American education: A statistical portrait*. Washington, DC: DIANE Publishing.
- Stryker, S. (1980). *Symbolic interactionism: A social structural version*. . San Francisco, CA: Benjamin-Cummings Publishing Company.
- Talbot, M. L. (2017, February 1). Chautauqua Movement. (F. Ferati, Interviewer).
- Taylor, A. (2016). The Virtue of an Educated Voter. *The American Scholar*, 18-27.
- Taylor, C. (2017, February 26). Chautauqua Movement. (F. Ferati, Interviewer).
- The Chautauqua Institution. (2016). *2016 Annual Report*. Chautauqua: The Chautauqua Institution. Retrieved from <http://www.ciweb.org/phocadownload/ChqFoundation/2016annual.pdf>
- The New York Times. (1896, August 19). President Charles Eliot gives Recognition Day Address. *The New York Times*, p. 5. Retrieved from <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9F05EFDB1E3AE533A25753C2A96E9C94679ED7CF>
- The New York Times. (1897, July 24). Jewish Summer Assembly. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9C00E7D7143DE633A25757C2A9619C94669ED7CF>
- The New York Times. (1910, May 19). The Real President, My Wife, Says Taft. *The New York Times*, p. ? Retrieved from <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9B05E0D61539E433A25753C2A9639C946196D6CF>
- The New York Times. (1914, July 12). The Chautauqua Liked by Millions, is 49 Years Old. *The New York Times*, p. 1. Retrieved from <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9D03E5D81F39E633A25751C1A9619C946596D6CF>
- The New York Times. (1914, July 6). The Tendency Towards Socialism. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9D01E3DE1730E033A25754C0A9619C94659ED7CF>
- The Third Age Trust. (2017, April 22). *The U3A Movement*. Retrieved from U3A.org: <http://www.u3a.org.uk/u3a-movement.html>
- Vincent, J. H. (1886). *The Chautauqua Movement*. Chautauqua, NY: Chautauqua Press.

- Volkel, G. W. (1939, July 5). Program Notes. *The Chautauqua Daily*, pp. 1-08. Retrieved from <http://archives.ciweb.org/virtualimage/Cust/cust.aspx?loginid=0acae06c-4efe-4f12-bf4f-d1dc19b325bd>
- Walton County. (2017, April 1). *Walton County's Early History*. Retrieved April 1, 2017, from Walton County Official Website: <http://www.co.walton.fl.us/314/History>
- Watkins, K. E., & Marsick, V. J. (1993). *Sculpting the learning organization: Lessons in the Art and science of systemic change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Weeks, J. (2017, January 22). Chautauqua Movement. (F. Ferati, Interviewer)
- Wilson, P. (1923, June 10). Chautauqua as World Idea Extends into New Fields. *The New York Times*, p. x10.
- Wilson, P. W. (1923, June 10). Chautauqua as World Idea Extends into New Fields. *The New York Times*, p. 10.
- Wilson, S. (2014, July 14). *In Demand: Washington's Highest (and Lowest) Speaking Fees*. Retrieved from abcnews.com: <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/washingtons-highest-lowest-speaking-fees/story?id=24551590>
- Yamamoto, Y., & McClure, M. W. (2011). How can social cartography help policy researchers? *In Beyond the comparative*, 153-170.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.