

cruited, she was promised a good job, early promotion, a furlough . . . that her lack of education did not matter and that she would not have to do physical training, drill, class-work. . . . When this utopia has finally exploded, she comes to us again seeking an escape from an environment which is too rigid for her quotient of adaptability.⁸⁹

As compared to a well-adjusted group of women whom he approved for leadership school, Major Preston noted that the disturbed group had twice as many cases of broken homes as did the normal group, four times as many divorces, five times as many abdominal operations, seven times as many "nervous breakdowns." It also had at least twice as many married women.

If any material was collected by the Consultation Service concerning the technical manifestations of neurotic and psychotic traits in women, or the treatment of the same, this did not remain in War Department files.⁹⁰ The only exception was the subject of homosexuality, which was investigated briefly because of the apparent public impression that a women's corps was the ideal breeding ground for it. One accuser stated that Fort Oglethorpe was "full of homosexuals and sex maniacs."⁹¹ Director Hobby upon receipt of this allegation at once requested the Army's Inspector General to determine the true situation. The Inspector General complied, but was able to find very little evidence of homosexual practices; the incidence seemed no greater and probably less than in the civilian population.⁹²

The only explanation that could be found for such accusations appeared to be the vague and erroneous nature of popular ideas on the subject: any woman who was masculine in appearance or dress, or who did not enjoy men's company, was apt to

be singled out for suspicion. Medical authorities pointed out that the true female homosexual was only occasionally of this type, and more often just the opposite. WAC company commanders were especially cautioned to avoid witch-hunting based on such amateur impressions.

The problem was complicated by the fact that emotional demonstrativeness was an accepted trait among women, who thought nothing of kissing or embracing female friends or walking arm-in-arm with them, while medical officers sometimes viewed these traits with the alarm that would have been attached to identical behavior among men. It was also true that the nation, where masculine comradeship was commonplace, had few traditions of friendship between women; a woman who was capable of liking other women was popularly regarded as slightly peculiar. In actual fact, many members of the women's services noted that there was possible a comradeship among women quite similar to that which men had traditionally enjoyed, and which for honesty, loyalty, and freedom from tension and selfish motives often surpassed the average man-woman relationship. Army psychologists encouraged this loyalty of woman to woman, as an aid to growth in maturity and leadership.⁹³

Because the problem of homosexuality

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ It is understood, from an interview with Major Preston, that he retained these records upon return to civilian employment in the Menninger clinic, and intended to write a book concerning psychiatric problems of women.

⁹¹ Ltr to Dir WAC in WDWAC 330.14 (1944).

⁹² Memo, Dir WAC for CG ASF, Att MTD, 26 Aug 44, sub: Course of Instruction on Homosexuality, with 2d Ind, SGO to Dir WAC; IG investigation is described. SGO CI SPMC 330.14 Ft Oglethorpe.

⁹³ Pamphlet cited n. 41.