

EMMA LOU WILDER: SHE CAME TO TEACH

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ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with the life and contributions of Emma Lou Wilder to the field of physical education at Wisconsin State University-La Crosse, to the La Crosse Community, and to the State of Wisconsin. Background experience as a grade school teacher and as a playground worker, and her education at the Posse School of Gymnastics at Boston and the University of Pittsburgh prepared Miss Wilder for her position as a teacher of physical education at La Crosse. La Crosse was the only teacher's college in the State of Wisconsin designated for the specific purpose of training physical education teachers between the years 1912-1958. Emma Lou Wilder was instrumental in the development of the physical education curriculum and worked for the inclusion of the recreation major, the health minor and the master's degree program. She served the women physical education students as placement director and advisor from the time of her arrival until her retirement. Emma Lou Wilder's dedication to her profession was expressed in her exemplary life, her interest in her students, her contributions and leadership in professional organizations, and her participation in campus and community affairs. The influence she had on her students and on the physical education profession is felt throughout the state and the nation. Emma Lou Wilder retired in 1956, to Ouray, Colorado, after spending thirty-five years of her life as a physical educator.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. EARLY DEVELOPMENT	4
CHILDHOOD AND EARLY TRAINING	4
DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AT LA CROSSE STATE NORMAL SCHOOL	7
III. ARRIVAL IN THE TWENTIES	11
IV. THE DEPRESSION YEARS	23
V. THE WAR AND POST WAR YEARS	34
VI. EMMA LOU WILDER, TEACHER	52
BIBLIOGRAPHY	68
APPENDIX	78

Figure 1. Emma Lou Wilder: Physical Educator



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to provide an accurate account of Emma Lou Wilder's contributions to Wisconsin State University-La Crosse, to the La Crosse Community, and to the state of Wisconsin as an educator and as a citizen. Thirteen years have passed since she retired, and it is important that this investigation be made to take advantage of the available primary source materials before they are lost or unavailable. Although somewhat limited by the fact that Miss Wilder has retired and moved to Ouray, Colorado, the writer, by way of mailed questionnaires and personal letters, obtained semi-personal interviews.

Various biographical studies have been done on such people as "Walter J. Wittich: Physical Educator, 1885-1953," by Culver (141); "The Contributions of Hans Christopher Reuter to Physical Education at La Crosse and in the State of Wisconsin," by Williams (149); and "Biographies of Selected Women Leaders in Physical Education in the United States," by Phillips (145), but little has been written about Emma Lou Wilder. A pamphlet entitled "Emma Lou Wilder..Helper to Heights," was published by Elizabeth Wiley in 1960. Written for the Committee on Pioneer Women and Research of the Theta Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma at La Crosse, Wisconsin, it briefly describes her coming to La Crosse, her numerous involvements within the university and the community, and her philosophies of education and of life.

Historical studies which have been completed in the field of

physical education and provide a background in the development of Wisconsin State University-La Crosse include those by: Bahr, "A Brief History of the Division of Physical Education at Wisconsin State College, La Crosse, 1913-1953," (140); Miller, "A History of La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1900-1950," (144); and Foss, "A History of Professional Preparation in Physical Education for Women in the Teachers Colleges of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa," (142). Two studies concerning the men's department are Kime's, "The Development of Baseball as a Major Sport at the Wisconsin State College at La Crosse," (1957), and Wildt's, "A Brief History of the Men's Intramural Athletic Association at Wisconsin State College, La Crosse," (146). Gilkey, in his chapter "A Half-Century of Higher Education in Wisconsin's Coulee Region," in History of the Wisconsin State Universities (1), commented on the philosophy of the College's several Presidents, but did not discuss the development of the physical education curriculum.

During Emma Lou Wilder's thirty-five years of service from 1921 through 1956, several articles were written about her and her accomplishments. Such newspapers as The La Crosse Tribune and The Racquet provided useful information. A series of newspaper stories on the history of Wisconsin State University-La Crosse, which was written by Virginia Thayer, were printed during the spring of 1940 in The La Crosse Tribune as a public relations project. This series gives an account of important events in the history of the school.

Additional sources of valuable information were obtained from questionnaires, tape recorded interviews, letters, catalogs, minutes of faculty meetings at La Crosse, Wisconsin, curriculum committee minutes, reports, pamphlets, yearbooks, and materials gathered at the Wisconsin

State University-La Crosse Archives.

It is hoped that this study will be of interest to Emma Lou Wilder's professional colleagues, friends, students and individuals interested in the development of physical education at Wisconsin State University-La Crosse.

CHAPTER II

EARLY DEVELOPMENT

A. CHILDHOOD AND EARLY TRAINING

On February 6, 1891, Emma Lou Wilder was born on a farm in South Woodstock, Vermont. She described her early childhood as:

Happy days on a farm home with trees to climb, animals to feed, horses to drive -- learned to braid on a horse's tail -- hay lofts to jump in. Once I jumped so much that I was lame but when faced with this lameness I said, 'I'm lame but not lame abed!' Brooks and water had a special appeal. Special farm events helped to create a love for the out-of-doors. Sugaring, haying, etc. (27:1)

As a young girl "Emmy Lou" often walked or bicycled to the mile and a half distant rural elementary school which she attended. (27:1)

Elizabeth Wiley, in her pamphlet "Emma Lou Wilder..Helper to Heights," described the following incident.

One of the stories told about her when she was very young concerns what she did when she got too warm. Being an ingenious youngster, with much imagination, she tied sleigh bells on her arms and ran up and down the road. The hotter it was, the faster she ran, stirring up the wind and making ringing sounds with the bells. (86:6)

At the age of eleven, her mother died of tuberculosis. As a result Miss Wilder then lived with a cousin in Woodstock, Vermont. (27:1)

About the time Miss Wilder started her secondary education at Woodstock High School, her brother, Myles, who was four years older, was about to enter Norwich University in Vermont. Plans for continued education were frequently in the conversation of the Wilder household, influencing her attitudes about education and her future. (27:2)

Emma Lou Wilder earned her way through Randolph Vermont State Normal School, a two year teaching preparation, by doing chamber work during summers for a family who took in boarders, and also by assisting Mrs. Holden in serving -- "rapidly" -- the dinner plates from the kitchen. "I can still hear her say 'A place for everything and everything in its place' -- and that is what she expected." (27:1) Upon completion of course work at the Randolph Normal School, she took a job in a rural school near Springfield, Vermont. While teaching in rural Vermont, Miss Wilder continued to learn. The farmer at whose home Miss Wilder lived while teaching challenged her to the task of butchering a hog. Her prompt question, "You think I can't?" was followed by her successful execution of the task and the undying respect of the challenger. (119:1)

After two terms at the rural school Miss Wilder moved into the Springfield Public Schools, where she taught third and fourth grades for three years. While she was teaching in Springfield, one of her best friends and a person whom she admired suggested that she major in physical education. One year at the Posse School of Gymnastics in Boston prepared her for a position on the Pittsburgh playgrounds. (130:1) (27:1) With the aid of the Pittsburgh playground director who was from Springfield, Miss Wilder moved to Pittsburgh, where she was employed by the Recreation Department from 1913 until 1921, and where she also attended the University during the mornings. Besides these commitments she clerked in a department store on a call basis. "Was told when I left, 'Your education hasn't hurt you!'" Miss Wilder recalled later. (27:1)

At the University of Pittsburgh Miss Wilder served as a student teacher and later, upon earning her Bachelor of Science degree, was

invited to join the faculty there. In 1921 the University put into action plans to discontinue physical education as a major division. A Pittsburgh faculty member who formerly had taught at La Crosse suggested that she apply for a position in the physical education department at La Crosse. (130:1) Miss Wilder recalled: "The reputation of La Crosse with its department of physical education and its major attracted me, so I applied. I was certain at the time that I did wish to teach physical education major students." (27:2)

La Crosse never made any immediate positive reply to Miss Wilder's application so she accepted an offer at Middlebury College in Vermont. After spending approximately a month at Middlebury College, she was released from her contract and left for La Crosse in November, 1921. (27:1) In La Crosse, it was soon apparent to her that there was something irregular in her job. By accident she discovered that the President of the Normal School had hired her under the provisions of the Emergency Board and that her future was uncertain. (86:7)

B. DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION
AT LA CROSSE STATE NORMAL SCHOOL

Prior to Emma Lou Wilder's arrival in 1921, a sound foundation had been built for the physical education department at La Crosse Normal School. In the autumn of 1909, the eighth Wisconsin State normal school opened its doors. (1:273) "Old Main," which was built on a sandy tract of land located in the southeastern part of the city, housed all indoor education activities for the first eleven years of the school's history. (1:275)

Fassett A. Cotton, the first President of the Normal School, had a philosophy of education which no doubt encouraged the development of the physical education department. He firmly believed that education must be for all of the people in a democracy and it should educate the whole person. The teacher must view schooling as a total experience, and every person should be developed both physically and mentally. (1:278)

In the first year of the institution's existence, physical education classes were held under the direction of Ada F. Thayer, an advocate of activities common to the Swedish gymnastic schools. Her stated objective of the course was, "...to make the human body a strong, efficient, working instrument capable of expressing the mind or thought." To achieve this objective, "...the human body must possess strength, vitality, control of muscles by nerve and will, and the power to conserve energy in order to express ideals." (7:41-42)

During 1912 a movement was started to provide male physical education instructors for the state normal schools. (140:28) Previous to this time, most of the physical education departments of state

normal schools had only women as faculty members. Mrs. Theodora Youmans, a member of the Board of Regents from the Milwaukee area, was critical of the policy which allowed both men and women at the institutions to be taught by women only. Through her efforts, Mrs. Youman was successful in persuading the Regents to pass a resolution which would establish a policy that men's and women's physical education classes were to be taught by faculty members of the same sex. In addition, she introduced a resolution directing the state normal schools to establish and provide physical education courses in all summer sessions, "...in an effort to comply with the Laws of 1911 which prescribed that courses in physical training be taught in the public schools in Wisconsin."(142:63) This resolution eventually led to the establishment at La Crosse of the specialized course in physical education which commenced with the summer session of 1912. (142:30)

The proceedings of the Board of Regents during 1911 and 1912 showed an increasing concern for the need of training physical education teachers for the secondary and normal schools of the state. Teachers of this type were not readily available because very few colleges offered professional courses in physical education. (139:15) Due to this growing need for physical education teachers, the Regents passed a resolution directing the Resident Regent and President Cotton to introduce one, two and three-year courses in physical education and to employ two teachers to carry on the work. (139:15) As a result of this resolution La Crosse became the first normal school in the state to offer a major in physical education and one of the first normal schools and public tax-supported schools in the United States to offer such a course. (8:12)

Carl B. Sputh, M.D., came to La Crosse from Indianapolis, Indiana, in the fall of 1913, to direct the new course in physical education. He was assisted by Laura M. Eustis and Fred Carter. (140:35) The program attracted twenty-two young men and women students in its first year, with the majority of the class enrolled in the three year course. (8:12)

By 1916-17, the enrollment increased to 104 students. The result was overcrowding of the already inadequate gymnasium in Main Hall. However, relief was in sight with the legislature's monetary appropriation for a new physical education building. Construction was begun in the spring of 1917, but the war interrupted, and building problems and legislative quarreling kept it unfinished. (8:12) Finally completed in 1920, the new gymnasium was said to be one of the best equipped in the world. (132:137) In addition to the gymnasium with its apparatus, it contained a swimming pool, locker rooms, a track on the balcony, offices, and storage room.

At the end of the first semester of the 1916-17 school year, Dr. Sputh resigned to return to Indianapolis to re-enter the medical profession. Gustav Heinemann, a graduate of N.A.G.U. (North American Gymnastic Union) Normal School, and an assistant to Sputh, was appointed director of the department. After only one year, military obligations forced him to resign at the end of the 1916-17 school year. (8:7)

The physical education department began the 1917 school year without a full-time director. Dr. Sputh agreed to commute between Indianapolis and La Crosse until a new director was employed. In January, 1918, Dr. Frederick Maroney of Boston, a former schoolmate of

Dr. Spath, accepted the directorship of the physical education department. In June of that same year, however, he resigned to return to Boston. (90:2)

Walter J. Wittich, who joined the faculty in the spring of 1917, served as an assistant physical education director for one and one-half years. With the resignation of Dr. Moroney in 1918, Mr. Wittich was chosen as the new head of the department. (133:16) When Miss Wilder joined the teaching staff at La Crosse in 1921, Mr. Wittich had served three of his thirty-seven years on the La Crosse campus. Other faculty members of the physical education department during this year were Robert Nohr, Raymond Keeler, Hans Reuter, and Leonora Thompson. Mrs. Leon Berry joined the staff at the same time as Miss Wilder. (133:16-20)

The personnel changes during Wittich's regime were quite frequent, especially during the early part of his administration. The physical education division's teaching roster from 1918-1956 indicated that men remained longer than women. Several of the men had tenures surpassing thirty years of service. Hans Reuter joined the staff in 1920 and remained on the faculty until his retirement in 1956. Leon Miller, a graduate of the school, began his career at La Crosse in 1926, and served until 1965, when he retired. Ferdinand Lipovetz, founder of the Men's Intramural Athletic Association, came to La Crosse in 1928 and stayed until his retirement in 1963. The staff of the women's section was changed frequently, especially during the early years. The exception was Miss Wilder, who was destined to remain for thirty-five years.

CHAPTER III

ARRIVAL IN THE TWENTIES

In 1919 and 1920 physical education came into the national limelight. The state governments were concerned about the large number of men rejected for military duty because of their unfit physical condition. Legislation was passed in forty states relating to compulsory health and physical education in the schools. This new emphasis on physical education had a great impact upon college programs. To meet the increased demands for instruction in these specialized fields, La Crosse Normal School increased its teaching staff and stood ready with its new physical education building.

When Emma L. Wilder arrived in 1921,

...the work at La Crosse was centered in a two year course. I was impressed with the professional concern of the students -- women in particular since I had little to do with the men's program. I enjoyed the faculty from my first contacts. (27:2)

A move by the Board of Regents in 1921 to increase the years of preparation of secondary teachers brought about the revival of the three-year course in physical education, which had been abandoned during World War I. The two-year physical education course was offered for the last time in 1914. (139:10)

In March of 1921, the Board of Regents passed a resolution requesting legislative authority to confer the Bachelor of Education degree upon the graduates of a four-year teacher training course.

(139:8) The state legislature passed this bill in 1922, and La Crosse Normal School began setting up a four-year program. (139:23)



Figure 2. Emma Lou Wilder as she appeared during her first years at La Crosse.

Emma Lou Wilder is not a very tall woman, only about five feet four inches. She has a certain solidness to her nature, not overweight, though not slight. Her fairly strong facial features are tanned from the sun and weather. Due to her warm, vibrant smile she is a person one always enjoys looking at. (18) She had very pretty hair which was quite wavy and would curl around her forehead when she got warm.

Her energy was something that was to be admired. She moved very quickly from one thing to another. Her steps were short and quick and she walked with her head held high - quite an erect carriage. I think that is the reason people noticed her. (15)

She had a healthy stride and smile. (20)

A thing worth doing, is worth doing well, certainly applied to Miss Wilder's leadership. She was the living image of a democratic leader in that she insisted that we, the department, set goals, and we all had a part to play. It was never a domineering type of leadership, but rather a true democratic approach. (24)

We fancy most of our leaders as viable, aggressive, communicative people, and quite articulate. I don't mean to imply she was not dynamic and less than articulate. She was very well read and expressed herself beautifully, but she would prefer to listen to what the others had to say and either be called on or if it were a matter of principle, she could argue you right into the floor. She was not the kind of person that bubbled and gushed and pushed her way into conversations. She preferred to make her points and then retire and hear the other side of the question. (23)

"She certainly was excited about her work and liked to deal with the students." (26) "I think she was one of the most honest people I have ever known, and she lived her philosophy, which held that one was to be an example of what one preached." (24)

"The thing that strikes me most about her is her constant exuberance for life. She enjoyed people and she enjoyed doing things.

She was always on the go." (18) "I always think of her in motion, and I have to think a while before I can really visualize her in street clothes and behind a desk." (19) "We always thought that she was a tremendous credit to the profession of physical education as a woman and as a teacher. Her devotion to the profession was one of her most outstanding characteristics." (24)

"Miss Wilder always looked like she was in the top of condition and happy about everything. I'm sure she always wasn't, nobody is, but that's the way she presented herself." (18)

Most people who admired Miss Wilder wanted to be like her. This was because she was such a tremendous individual and she had such a strong personality, you couldn't help but be attracted to her qualities as well as what she had to offer. I suppose she was interesting partly because of her little Vermont twang. She was a legend in a sense because the students loved to try to imitate her twang. Her habit of always writing in green ink was a trademark of Emmy Lou Wilder. If you saw something written in green you immediately knew who wrote it. (24)

Emma Wilder took great care in her appearance. "She was fastidious about her dress and loved good jewelry - always in good taste though - never overdressed or sloppy." She was such a refined lady in speech, manner, and dress that the resulting impact upon students was, "if that's what physical education is like, I want to be part of it." (24)

Born with an enlarged heart and given no encouragement by the doctors for a long life, Miss Wilder worked out a personal program consisting of exercise, fresh air, sleeping on the porch all year long, and a cold bath every morning. (86:8) Mrs. DeVoll, who lived in the downstairs section of the same house as Miss Wilder and Leonora Wilson, stated about Miss Wilder:

In the house which we shared, they had the upper part

and a large screened in porch--glassed in during winter. She slept on that porch all year around with no heat. When she first lived there she used to warm a brick and put it in the bottom of the bed. As she said later, "In my old age I've condescended to get an electric blanket." She was always a person that sought out things that were considered to make one physically fit and healthy. (18)

One of Miss Wilder's former students who lived around the corner from her during her undergraduate days described an occurrence which many had commented on.

On cold wintry days we would see her walking past the house with skates slung over her shoulder. She would walk down to the lagoon, skate a couple of hours and walk home. She lived a life of physical fitness. (48)

Dr. Emerson G. Wulling commented about a faculty get-together:

One of the Decathlon meetings was out at our house, which is near the college. Miss Wilder had been skating in the afternoon at the Lagoon on the River - a good three or four miles from our house. She had a car but she preferred to walk, so after skating all afternoon she walked to our house for the meeting. That impressed everybody because of the energy that it took. (26)

Miss Wilder's concern for good health was also reflected in her students' attitudes. Edith Cartwright, former Dean of Women at La Crosse, recalled her student days under Miss Wilder.

In those days, and I'm sure I can remember Miss Wilder well in this fact, we weren't supposed to have colds and be sick. We were supposed to take care of ourselves and eat correctly. We in physical education were supposed to know these factors which would lead to good health. (17)

A student of Miss Wilder's during the mid-thirties, Virginia Neitzel Pelton, agreed by commenting about Miss Wilder;

She always made us feel that ill health was something to be ashamed of. By that I mean that we never tried to use the excuse of a cold or headache when we were around her. She told us that if we ate, slept, and took care of ourselves in general, as we knew that we should, we would not be subject to these afflictions. To this day I hang my head in shame when I do catch a cold. In those days it took quite a bit of fast moving to keep out of her way

when we hadn't had the prescribed amount of sleep the night before. (30)

"Miss Wilder was loved and respected by the majority of the faculty and staff. Most people recognize worth when they see it." (21)
 "She often had members of the faculty over for dinner and conversation."
 (20) "I had the opportunity to be a housemate of hers for four or five years so knew of her indomitable interest in cooking and experimenting with rare dishes. She was the best cook on the faculty." (24) "We often exchanged meals. I can see her yet in the kitchen making angel food cake with a hand beater." (18)

Recalling Miss Wilder's arrival in 1921, Hans Reuter commented, "She came from the East. I still remember, she wore a rather different uniform--we thought it was a funny looking uniform. She soon got right into the swing of things." (22)

During her first year, Miss Wilder joined Mr. Wittich in advising the Physical Education Club. By 1924 there was a great enrollment and the group enjoyed being the largest organization in the school. (133:75) The annual demonstration conducted by the Physical Education Club provided opportunities for the city, alumni, and friends to observe students working in mass exercises and brought attention to activities other than athletics. (141:71-72)

When Miss Wilder joined the La Crosse staff, she, as all members of the moderate sized faculty, participated in curriculum development. After four years of planning, the first four-year course of study in physical education was inaugurated at the La Crosse Normal School in 1926. (9:64) Because of the four-year course in physical education, the credit load of the students was reduced from thirty to an average of eighteen credits, a figure in line with the requirements

of the accrediting agencies. In July of 1926, the Board of Regents established La Crosse Normal School as a degree granting institution, and changed the name of the institution to La Crosse State Teachers College. (139:15-16)

The growing enrollment within the physical education department at La Crosse State Teachers College dictated the need for additional faculty. Leon Miller joined the staff in 1926, and Ross Lyon joined the staff in 1927. In 1927 George Snodgrass succeeded to the college presidency after President Smith's short tenure was terminated by his death. In the same year Robert Nohr left La Crosse to head the faculty at the University of Wisconsin. Ferdinand Lipovetz joined the staff in 1928, Esther Hume in 1929, Howard Johnson in 1930, Elizabeth Sehon and Elizabeth White Hoff in 1931, and Elizabeth Rodgers in 1934. With Lyon, Chappell, and Hume each remaining for only a short time, and Keeler resigning in 1929, Wittich, Reuter, Wilder, Miller, Hoff, Rodgers, Lipovetz, and Johnson were left to carry the program during the depression years.

For many years the women's section of the physical education division was deprived of ample practice areas for its curricular and extra-curricular activities. To correct this situation the college purchased the western half of the block to the west of Main Hall in 1925. The state already owned the other half of the block, which was used for many years as a garden to provide food for the school cafeteria. In 1926 the entire block was graded and seeded, and an official women's hockey field was laid out. The field was not enclosed with a fence, and many people used the field as a short cut to the physical education building. Soon a path was trodden through the center of the field,

which resulted in administrative action and a fence along the sides of the field. (140:65)

The Womens Athletic Association was organized in 1923, under Miss Emma Lou Wilder.

Although Mr. Wittich was Director of the Physical Education Department, he had relatively little involvement with the organization. A similar detachment from the immediate management of affairs of women's training in physical education seemed to prevail... Wittich let the women instructors develop their courses of instruction under Miss Wilder as they felt best able to teach them. (141:78-79)

Miss Wilder was listed as head of the women's work in the physical education department as early as 1923. (133:79)

After its second year of existence, the Women's Athletic Association was one of the most flourishing school organizations. The object of the society was to promote and supervise the athletic activities of the girls of the school and to create an interest among women in all phases of athletics. Membership in the organization was open to all girls in the school. (133:79)

The Women's Athletic Association did a great deal in developing sportsmanship and good fellowship among the girls of the various departments of the school, which was an aim of its enthusiastic founder and sponsor, Miss Wilder. (133:63) "The identification of purpose inherent in the Women's Athletic Association did much to promote a professional attitude acceptable to Wittich." (141:79)

In February of 1924, the Women's Athletic Association sponsored the school's first Ice Carnival, which proved to be a big success and was continued for many years. (94:1) Presently, the occasion is known as the Winter Carnival, and its sponsorship is rotated among various social organizations each year.

During a brief talk before the student body, Miss Wilder explained that the Women's Athletic Association was entirely an intramural program. The coaching and officiating was done by the senior women. This provided an opportunity for the girls to carry on their own program and also to experience officiating and coaching. The business and responsibilities of the Women's Athletic Association were handled by a board of sixteen members. The officers were elected by the organization, and a head for each sport was appointed by the retiring board. (98:4)

A typical project sponsored by the Women's Athletic Association during the early 1920's was the building or purchasing of cottages or cabins for outing activities. The Women's Athletic Association of La Crosse Teachers College purchased a small cabin in Smith's Coulee for recreational purposes. With the increasing membership of the organization, and with additional emphasis placed on recreation, the cabin served many purposes. One such activity was the annual Women's Athletic Association breakfast held at the cabin on Sunday morning of Homecoming weekend for members, alumni, and parents. Often, Miss Wilder, known for her culinary skill, would assist in preparing the breakfast.

As evidence of Miss Wilder's accomplishments and popularity during her initial decade at La Crosse, the Racquet Yearbook was dedicated to her just five years after coming to La Crosse. The dedication reads as follows:

The Racquet Annual Staff of 1926 dedicated this book to Miss Emma L. Wilder who has taught fair play and good sportsmanship to the girls of the school through the organization which she has founded - Women's Athletic Association; whose own example of industry has been a creative spur to her students - whose leadership and high ideals of firmness and

warded the following year when the Athletic Association ruled out interscholastic competition for girls. This step put Wisconsin ahead of many other states. (100:1)

Following the prohibition of girls interscholastic competition, the National Physical Education Association turned its attention to the formulation of an intramural program and the development of basketball for the game itself and not for a "winning team." (97:4) The intramural program, which was substituted for the interscholastic program, was given prominence in the high schools. The Wisconsin Society of Physical Education made available to the high schools of the state a report offering definite suggestions for supporting and carrying forward intramurals. (100:1)

Miss Wilder's activities beyond the campus did not take any time away from her classes. Her dedication to class work is evident in the following situation. In April 1926, she was presented with a medal of the American Red Cross for her instruction in the rescue and lifesaving section of the Association. Mr. Walter J. Wittich, who made the presentation, spoke briefly about the time, perserverance, and patience required to pass the rigid examination of two Red Cross examiners. He also mentioned the willingness of the American Red Cross to recognize service. In presenting the medal he said, "As chairman of the lifesaving department of the local chapter of the American Red Cross I have been delegated to present this emblem of the highest honor representing a recognition of service to Miss Emma Wilder." (124:5)

In November of the same year, 1926, Miss Wilder was elected chairman and president of the newly formed Wisconsin Physical Education Association. With approximately 200 representatives from all areas of

the state, the Association was formed and a constitution was drawn up and adopted. The vice-president and secretary-treasurer elected for the 1926-27 term were both former students at La Crosse State Teachers College. In those earlier days most of the teachers that belonged to the Association were La Crosse graduates because there were not any other schools in the area with a physical education major. (22) Miss Wilder was re-elected president of the Wisconsin Physical Education Association for the 1928-29 school term.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEPRESSION YEARS

In October of 1929, the stock-market crashed and unemployment began to rise. Public education was directly affected due to the sharp curtailments in budgets. Lack of funds forced many private schools to close and many public schools to decrease staff size and salaries. The trend of thinking was that special subjects, including physical education, were frills in the course of study. As a result, numerous trained physical educators were unemployed. Many more young people went to college and stayed there since they were unable to find jobs. After graduation, however, employment was difficult to find. (142:120)

In 1933 at La Crosse, sixteen of twenty-eight graduating women were placed. Only six out of twenty-two in the class of 1934 received positions at graduation. By 1937, all the graduates who sought positions were placed.

At La Crosse, many of the three-year graduates who had begun teaching with special certification returned during the period of national unemployment and completed work for the Bachelor of Education degree. (142:125-126)

In the fall of 1929, the enrollment at La Crosse State Teachers College was 650 with 350 of these majoring in physical education. The figure slightly increased until 1933-34 when the total enrollment was at a low of 644 with only 222 physical education students. The lowest enrollment in the physical education division was 216 in 1933. (142:121) During the remainder of depression period the number of students in physical education fluctuated up and down in the neighborhood of the 1933 figure. (140:45)

The depression period was a crucial time in the history of the

physical education division. The four year course in physical education continued in force until 1931. (140:80) Due to financial distress, many small high schools throughout the state were unable to hire a teacher specifically trained in physical education. As a result of low placement of physical education graduates an attempt was made to combine the special preparation in physical education with one of several academic areas. The new course, added in 1931, was named the "Physical Education Major and Academic Minor Course." (8:72-86) Graduates from this course were certified by the state to teach physical education and their chosen minor in the academic fields of English, foreign language, history, mathematics, or science. (10:46)

Revision of activity courses in 1931 resulted in consolidation of several dance courses, and reduction in the number of credit hours in swimming, free exercise and tactics, and apparatus. These changes allowed more time for athletic fundamentals and coaching theory. (10:46) The next five years saw little change in the activity course of study. In 1937, however, the division made several changes in the activity program reducing the number of activities to a maximum of four in each quarter. The credit value of each activity was increased to at least a half credit. (9:108-119)

The concept of health as a part of physical education began to grow in the 1930's. The department at La Crosse recognized its importance and changed the name to include Health in the title. (141:91) For the first time in the history of the school all students enrolled in the four-year program for preparation as high school teachers were required to take two hours of physical training per week for three semesters. As a substitution for physical training, students were allowed to

participate in intramural activities or in any major or minor sport, or, if excused by a physician, were allowed to take first aid or the teaching of health. A minor in physical education for students in secondary education was established in the fall of 1939. The aim of the women's minor was to provide training which would aid women teachers in sponsoring girls' recreational activities in smaller schools where their major load would be in an academic area. (114:2)

Toward the end of the depression era, in 1938, the college president, George Snodgrass, suggested the school work toward the establishment of a graduate program in physical education. (140:83) Although graduates indicated a need and a desire for a graduate program in physical education, it was not immediately possible because staff members lacked the necessary doctoral status. (21)

During the early years of the depression there was a halt in construction of physical education facilities. Emphasis was placed upon the improvement and enlargement of existing facilities, and the acquiring of special facilities for individual sports and recreational activities. In March 1931, the addition to the Physical Education Building at La Crosse State Teachers College was completed. It provided separate gymnasiums and swimming pools for men and women, as well as an orthopedic room, an equipment room, and additional offices. "The annex, along with the original structure of the physical education building, was to eventually be called Wittich Hall and provided the college with facilities comparable with the best in the country." (141:78)

At the dedication of the completed Physical Education Building John Callahan, State Superintendent of Schools, remarked that he, "... was pleased with the prospect that graduates from La Crosse State College

would be better able to teach children the health problems of today."

(141:77) In reply, President Snodgrass stated:

Education philosophers are in substantial agreement that physical well-being is the foundation of a child's education. Under whatever caption it is named, whether it be physical adjustment, abounding health or vitality, its importance as an educational objective is fully realized. (126:1)

Toward the mid-thirties, building resumed with the aid of the federal government. President Snodgrass, dissatisfied with the combination of college students and the training school pupils in the same building, recommended to the Board of Regents the construction of a new training school. Since federal funds were available for school construction, the Regents applied, in 1936, for Public Works Administration projects to build a new heating plant and a training school at La Crosse State Teachers College. The federal government approved the projects to help alleviate the unemployment situation in La Crosse. Construction of the buildings began in 1938, and was completed about one year later.

(140:58-59)

The new quarters were a welcome sight for the student teachers in physical education because the training school included a recommended size junior high gymnasium, a multi-purpose room, and locker and shower rooms. No longer did the practice teachers have to improvise in inadequate quarters; a better physical education program for the training school youngsters was now possible. (140:59)

The completion of the new physical education facilities provided the much needed space for the women's activities and the growth of the Women's Athletic Association. By 1930, the organization had developed eight athletic activities in its program. In the fall of 1933, the officers saw an increased amount of leisure time and decided a program endorsing the wise use of this leisure time would be beneficial to members enrolled. Previously, the activities were extensive in the

physical realm but were broadened at this time to include mental recreation as well as physical. Some new phases included within the organization were sketching, camping, costuming and lighting for pageantry, folk and social dance, discussion of present day problems, courses in bridge, poetry, reading, and music study. (107:1)

The May 15, 1930, issue of the school newspaper, The Racquet, gave Miss Wilder credit for originating what was to become one of the most popular traditions in the school - the annual Board party held at her home during May. This event climaxed the activities of the Women's Athletic Association Board for the school year. The tradition included a 5:30 p.m. dinner which was followed by a short meeting and an evening of entertainment. (102:1)

Play Days began in the United States in the 1920's, and to some degree proved to be a transition program between athletics and the intramural sports found in schools today. The Play Days spread quickly through the high schools and entered the colleges a few years later.

In February of 1930, the senior women of the physical education department at La Crosse State Teachers College, under the direction of Miss Emma Lou Wilder, planned as a class project the school's first Play Day for a number of high school girls in the vicinity. The stated purpose of the Play Day was to offer the neighboring schools a typical competitive program which was to be used as a substitute for interscholastic competition which was no longer accepted educationally. The girls participated in various athletic activities as members of teams consisting of representatives from different schools and cities. This procedure insured that the girls played for the pleasure of the game and not to show superior athletic ability or to compete for individual

honors. (101:1)

Approximately one year later, La Crosse's Teachers College held its first all-college Play Day, which was also under the direction of Miss Wilder. Every college woman was encouraged to participate. The initial Play Days for both high school and college were listed as successful and continued to be held through the thirties and the forties. (105:3)

The first publication of The Health and Physical Education News, under the direction of Mr. Walter Wittich, was issued at La Crosse State Teachers College in March, 1935. (87) Walter Wittich's editing and publishing of this news bulletin was probably one of his most influential contributions to physical education at La Crosse. (141:89)

Written for parents, taxpayers, principals, and superintendents, the purpose of the publication was to give health and physical education its rightful place in the school program, and "...to ensure to every boy and girl, the Americans of tomorrow, their birth-right -- sound health, bodily vigor, mental acumen." (87:1) In addition, it advertised the availability of the college staff, which was considered expert in the field of physical education, to provide any help needed at Parent-Teacher Associations, civic clubs, assemblies, or for those interested in physical education. (87)

Evidence of the success of the publication was found in a comment made by the editor of the Wisconsin Physical Education Journal as stated in the school newspaper:

The La Crosse State Teachers College is doing exceptional work in promotion in publishing their periodical, "Health and Physical Education Bulletin." Mr. Walter Wittich and his staff deserve special merit for their efforts in keeping before the administrators the modern trends in health and physical education. (113:2)

Such prominent physical educators as F. W. Maroney of Columbia Teachers College and Jay B. Nash of New York University sent their compliments to Wittich on his publication. The latter said, "of all the bulletins that come to my desk, it represents one of the finest pieces of work." (141:90)

Emma Lou Wilder actively participated in the publication of The Health and Physical Education News through her contribution of written articles. Several of the news items that she wrote during the thirties explained and supported the trend toward additional recreational activities within the curriculum and in preparation for leisure time. She believed, "...the trend in activities is to expand so as to include many individual sports, and also to add creative activities that may lead to permanent hobby interests." (87)

Miss Wilder stressed in her writings that one's choice of activity must be governed by physical skills and ability, probably economic status, geographical location, moral and physical courage, and social inclination. All school programs of sports should include a wide variety so that sufficient provision is made for individual selection. Aside from the organized team sports and the individual activities that offer a challenge to youth, such as tennis, speed events, skating, swimming, and skiing, the physical educator should aim to create and develop an interest in recreation that offers less of an emotional stimulation. She gave the example, joy in nature will eventually make tramping, nature-study hikes, vacations in the wilderness, and camping excursions a satisfying recreational leisure pursuit. She firmly held, "money invested in the youth of today will bring a high rate of interest." (87)

The financial stresses of the depression affected the continued education of many students. Realizing the monetary needs of these

students, Miss Myrtle Trowbridge formulated the idea of organizing a group to collect money donations from graduates and faculty for loans and scholarships. Miss Wilder, involved with this movement in the initial stages, helped to organize what was to become the La Crosse Teachers College Foundation. (26)

The officers and a Board of Directors were elected in October 1934, and the organization's first official meeting was held on April 25, 1935. The purpose of the La Crosse Teachers College Foundation was to provide financial aid and assistance to worthy students at La Crosse State Teachers College and to encourage scholarship. Generally, the organization was to participate in and encourage all endeavors to advance the cause of education at La Crosse. To carry out the stated purposes the organization received, acquired, and held property and real estate which they sold, transferred, or otherwise disposed of.

To become a member of the organization it was required that the individual be a member of the college staff for at least five years. Miss Wilder's interest in the welfare of students may have been the quality which motivated her to aid in establishing the organization. She was elected to the Board of Directors in October, 1934, for a three year term. Each succeeding three-year term Miss Wilder was re-elected to the Board. She served in this capacity through the spring of 1956.

In this Foundation there were five people who were the Board of Directors and took care of lending money to students. As a member of the Board she interviewed the students. She was very generous in appraising the students, but she was very astute. If she approved a student for a loan we felt it was safe. (26)

Emma Wilder was also elected secretary in October, 1934, at the first meeting of the Board of Directors. Her duties consisted of countersigning all deeds and leases, affixing the seal of the corpora-

tion, keeping a record of the proceedings of the Board of Directors, and safely and systematically keeping all books, papers, records and documents belonging to the corporation.

The proceedings of the Board of Directors and the minutes of the Corporation's meetings were always well organized and neatly kept by Miss Wilder. (26) Her entries into the minutes were often made in green ink, and her signature was always written in green ink. Over the years, her use of this colored ink for keeping records and grades, and for writing personal notes and letters emerged as a trademark of hers.

As secretary until her retirement in 1956, Miss Wilder wrote various articles for The La Crosse Tribune and The Racquet, informing the students, the faculty, and the community of the purpose of the organization. In addition, when loans were overdue, Miss Wilder wrote the students letters in a friendly, but firm, way. (26) If a student had difficulty meeting the repayment schedule, generous allowances of time were made.

Before the La Crosse Teachers College Foundation became incorporated in 1935, it had awarded twenty-nine scholarships to senior students. Also, student loan funds made help available. Loans were made with a date set for repayal. Money for the first fund was left to the school by the class of 1916, and amounted to about sixty dollars. By the 1940's, as a result of careful administration and additional bequests and gifts, the funds increased to nearly \$13,000. Scholarships were set up in the names of such La Crosse faculty members as Alice O. Gordon, George M. Snodgrass, Bessie Bell Hutichson, and Ann Thomas. Members of the Foundation were assigned to select the most fitting individual for a specific scholarship award. (129:3)

Emma Lou Wilder did not confine herself to campus activities during the thirties. She carried her enthusiasm for girls' sports and activities to all parts of the community and the state. Visiting the Girls' Athletic Association of Aquinas High School, Miss Wilder spoke about the importance of each girl's choosing an activity to participate in and to benefit from. "In athletics only best effort should be given. Necessarily, girls must be backed by a tip-top physical condition resulting from proper living, mental alertness, and concentration."(128:6)

Another method Miss Wilder used to spread her enthusiasm for activity was to recount her personal experiences with activity. This was illustrated in a talk she presented to the Physical Education Club at one of their regular meetings. She related her experiences of "A Hike Through Canada." (111:1) After tramping through the woods with a group called the "Skyline Trailer Hikers," she hired her own guide and went on another exploration of the country. She named this one of her most enjoyable trips. (108:4)

As guest speaker at the Southwestern Wisconsin Teachers Association Convention in 1935, Miss Wilder spoke on "Educating Youth For The Modern World." The four major points of her talk indicated an insight decades ahead of her time. She stressed: (1) Health educators must develop the need for adaptation and adjustment; (2) As a unified world, cooperation and responsibility must be taught; (3) The government must conserve our natural resources, and there must also be conservation of human resources through selection based on scientific information; (4) There will be more leisure in the world of the future and we must train and develop an interest in worthwhile leisure." (109:3)

A community organization in which Miss Wilder became involved

in the early 1930's was the La Crosse Community Concerts. "When I came to La Crosse in 1938, the Concert Association had been going about seven or eight years, and Miss Wilder had been in it from the beginning." (26)

The organization consisted of approximately one-hundred workers who were each supposed to attempt to get ten or fifteen members to join the Community Concerts or to renew their memberships. Miss Wilder, one of these workers, was able to get more than her quota of members to join, so she was made a captain of the workers.

Now that's not something that's easy to do -- to get people to pay money a half year in advance for something that they don't know what it's going to be, except that it is involved with music. She was a good salesman. (26)

Miss Wilder was appointed to the Board of Directors of the La Crosse Community Concert Association shortly before her retirement from teaching. She was very well-rounded in her interests. She enjoyed things such as "painting, as well as music, and she always went to the college plays. Occasionally, when she was away in New York, she'd go to plays there too, and also see the museums." (26)

CHAPTER V

THE WAR AND POST-WAR YEARS

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, involved the United States in another World War. The service obligations of millions of American men and women greatly reduced college enrollment. At La Crosse State Teachers College this was evident.

The enrollment in physical education in 1931 had been 334; by 1938 it stood at 212 in slow recovery from the depression; and by 1943, it had dropped to 109 -- the same number that had been enrolled when Wittich came to La Crosse in 1917. Of these 109 students in physical education, all but two of them were women. (141:93)

During the decade of the forties, the physical education enrollment increased from a low of 109 in 1943, to a high of 439 in 1949. Female students enrollment exceeded male enrollment from 1928-1952, except during the period 1946 to 1950. Enrollment of students slowed down after 1949, and by 1952 there were 298 students enrolled in the program. (140:45, 47)

The great increases in enrollment indicated a need for additional staff. The La Crosse Women's Physical Education section had a staff of four women from 1931 until 1941, when the number became five. In 1944, Ann Thomas, a graduate of La Crosse, returned as a faculty member. Virginia Congreve also joined the staff in 1944; Alice De Bower in 1946; and Beatrice Baird in 1947. She became the first woman on the faculty at La Crosse to earn her doctor's degree. Betty Baird and Florence Prbylowski came in 1948, and by 1950, with the addition of Bernadine Kunkel and Lois Simons, the women's staff stood at eight.



Figure 3. The Women's Physical Education Staff in 1947. From left are: Alice DeBower, Virginia Congreve, Beatrice Baird, Ann Thomas, and Emma Lou Wilder.

The effects of the draft on the college programs resulted in a severe shortage of physical education teachers. Consequently, it was necessary to grant a thousand permits to teachers not legally qualified to teach. The physical education curriculum committee approved the policy that certain seniors be allowed to take jobs mid-year in the public schools because of the crucial teacher shortage. If satisfactory work was done in the field, credit was given for supervised student teaching. (134)

Following the end of World War II in 1945, an influx of war veterans began to overcrowd the physical education facilities. To keep the numbers of students proportionate with the facilities, an enrollment quota was set in 1947. (140:45) With expansion into the basement area of the physical education building and the addition of a recreation area at the nearby fair grounds, the quota was lifted in 1949. That year the enrollment stood at 439 students, a record number for the department. (141:98-99) "Wittich worked with the city officials adapting the fair ground property to campus use and managed the rapid explosion of student numbers successfully." (141:99)

Minimal curriculum changes were made during the war years. With the absence of men faculty members, the teaching loads were adjusted so that women faculty members taught a large proportion of the professional theory courses. "First Aid courses awarding the Standard First Aid Certificate and the Advanced Certificate of the Red Cross were offered in every school." (142:163)

The War Credits Committee, of which Miss Wilder was a member, had a brief tenure in 1946.

One request of a woman veteran was that two credits in lieu of Physical Education 201, First Aid, be allowed for her work

in the Navy hospital corps (26 months). The committee also considered service experience of several men veterans who submitted requests. (142:163)

The next major change in curriculum resulted in the approval by the college, the Board of Normal School Regents, and the State Department of Public Instruction of the recreation major in 1945. The concept of building a recreation major in conjunction with a major in physical education was discussed among such recognized state recreation leaders as Dr. Howard Danford, Miss Dorothy Enderias, and Mr. G. M. Phalin, and representatives of the college department, the physical education staff, and Rexford Mitchell, the college President. (11:1) Mr. Leon Miller, a member of the Recreation Committee, stated the following:

Miss Wilder very definitely had an influence in bringing in the recreation major. We were advised by the State Recreation Association that there was a great need for special training in the field of recreation for teachers and individuals to take care of public recreation. At that time, we had a man from the State Recreation Association here to guide us in our thinking. Of course, it didn't take very much urging as far as we were concerned to realize that it was a natural off-shoot of physical education. At that time the Recreation Department was much more closely co-ordinated with the physical education courses and department than it is at present. (21)

The graduates of the recreation program were qualified to assist and direct recreational programs and to teach physical education. The courses in recreation replaced academic activities in the regular education major course. (11:43-45) Miss Alice De Bower was employed in 1946 to staff the new program.

After a few years, the recreation program underwent some changes. A minor in recreation was developed and made available to those who wished to supplement an academic teaching minor and a physical education major. This was anticipated to enhance personal interests and abilities, as well as to establish a better understanding of community

recreation. (11:1)

In 1952 a health education minor was offered for the first time. Physical education students could qualify for the minor in health by taking specific courses in that subject area. (11:46) With the inclusion of this minor the title of the division was changed to the "Division of Physical Education, Health and Recreation." (11:35)

Although President Snodgrass proposed the initial graduate program in 1938, action was delayed due to his death in February of 1939. The Board of Regents passed a resolution in the spring of 1946, providing for such a program at La Crosse. Permission was given to begin the graduate program during the 1946 summer session. (139:32) The local administration, however, agreed that further study was necessary. In 1951, the La Crosse State Teachers College President, Rexford Mitchell, appointed a committee to study the "Standards for Advanced Professional Programs," and make recommendations. (140:85-86) The graduate program was finally instituted in June 1956, with the granting of the first Master's degree in 1957. (89:3)

During the time the actual granting of graduate degrees in physical education awaited the approval of the accrediting agencies, Walter Wittich passed away due to a heart attack.

He would have undoubtedly been pleased to note that physical education was the field in which graduate degrees were first granted at La Crosse, a fact which illustrated the strength of the program he had directed through the years and which demonstrated the careful planning which had marked the initial preparations he had started ten years previous to the granting of the first Master's degree. (141:99)

During the last years of Mr. Wittich's directorship from 1946 to 1953, no major curriculum changes were made. Various courses were re-named and renumbered, a Scouting course and several dance courses were

eliminated. For the first time freshmen courses in physical education were divided into specific activities, and each activity carried a specific amount of credit. (11:43-45)

In 1955, Miss Emma Wilder pointed out the following in an article written for the Wisconsin State College Bulletin.

Even though the "tools" used in the academic field and in the gymnasium are different, the children are being taught, and the principles of learning are the same...

In the activity field, the "tools" are required courses. These are set up on a laboratory basis -- two hours work for one credit. The total is 26 credits, all of which are required, since our division is the one division which prepares for a range of grade levels, 1-to-12. (89:1)

The practical work in the activities remain as evidence that subsequent staff members and students recognized the importance of "being able to do what you teach" philosophy of the department. Later changes in the activity courses have been mainly a revision of the schedule to allow for sequential development in the course work. (141:107)

When asked how it felt to be part of the staff of a nationally known and one of the leading physical education schools, Miss Wilder replied:

To be honest, I think I felt more pleased with our programmed standards after seeing some of the "nationally known" products. It was satisfying to see the return of some activities by the large college major department to ones that we had never discarded. Names changed but the activities were the same. (27:3)

In recalling the success of La Crosse graduates in all parts of the United States, Miss Wilder gave them much credit by saying, "Students who come to La Crosse have that something that makes you work hard to help them achieve the goals they are striving for." (130:1)

The war affected many aspects of campus life. Edith Cartwright, Dean of Women during these years, recalled that many extra activities

were planned for the women. Often they were bussed to Camp McCoy forty miles from La Crosse for dances and recreational activity. An all girls orchestra was visible evidence of the war and its resulting absence of men students.

Miss Wilder recalled how the war affected physical education at La Crosse.

During the war years campus leadership and activities fell to the women. Our physical education students demonstrated their capabilities in music, dramatics, athletics. Homecoming with no football -- but the women had demonstration field hockey games; fun affairs such as softball versus the few 4F's. (27:3)

"The good times were still there, but the setting had changed. Students came to school with ration books in hand to be turned in with one's tuition and fees." (142:161)

Classroom activities were also influenced by the war. The senior girls enrolled in Athletic Policies organized a physical fitness program to be presented for interested college students and La Crosse women. The purpose of the program was to answer how everyone could work to win the war. Special advice was given on how mothers should provide a wholesome and cheerful environment essential for the family to keep physically fit, mentally sound, and morally strong. Hints were also given on how equipment could be made inexpensively in the home. (115:1) Miss Wilder, the instructor of Athletic Policies, was the director of the "Fitness For Defense" program.

It has been my aim to have the class study and understand athletic policies for girls and women by applying these policies to some real situations. The call for Civil Defense seemed (1) to offer the opportunity to serve the community in a small but practical way, (2) to present a real situation to seniors, since this type of service will be a part of their work in the next few years, (3) to offer an opportunity for original ideas, and (4)

to learn by doing as restating and applying will demand clear understanding. (87:4)

During the war years the annual physical education demonstrations were given special attention. The importance of physical fitness in the defense program created a greater interest in this event. Traditionally, it began with a grand march in which all physical education majors and minors participated. Apparatus work, body building, and tumbling were especially popular. (116:1)

According to Miss Wilder, the end of the war and the return of the men brought changes to campus activity.

After the war, as men returned, activities returned to normal. Some programs were dropped due to lack of interest and cooperation from the men. This meant a change in emphasis and outlook. Our department June demonstration, which had been a drawing card in the community and to our graduates was phased out. (Graduates used to return and ask to participate). (27:3)

The La Crosse Teachers College Foundation, in which Emma Wilder was very active until her retirement, helped meet the educational costs of many students during the war years. With the reduced size of male enrollment, women were awarded the men's scholarships from 1942 to 1945, because there were not any men enrolled or those men available were not eligible.

The Women's Recreation Association, under Miss Wilder, continued to grow in membership from year to year. The war years saw emphasis placed upon activities which had value for national defense. Swimming, lifesaving, and competition in vigorous team sports were featured. In 1946, Beatrice Baird relieved Miss Wilder of her sponsorship of the organization in order to allow her more time for her other numerous campus duties. By the 1950's, the Women's Recreation Association was sponsoring sports days, intramural tournaments and meets, camping trips,

swimming parties, and folk dance festivals. Both team and individual sports were important, but increased emphasis was placed on individual or dual sports.

Miss Wilder's activities during World War II included community involvement. She and Walter Wittich held American Red Cross First Aid evening classes for all interested city people. This involved volunteer time with no pecuniary reward. (24) At the end of Miss Wilder's teaching, she was awarded a Red Cross button for twenty-five years of service. She also served on the State Physical Fitness Council during war time. (27:4)

Before the establishment of a city recreation department, Emma Lou Wilder served on a civilian committee that made suggestions for recreation and attempted to get programs started within the community. (24) Due to her interest in hosteling, she established the Youth Hosteling Movement and helped plan the Sand Lake Coulee, Holmen, Hillsboro, West Salem, La Crosse Loop. (86:10) She would frequently bicycle the hosteling tours she helped establish. (24)

At the end of the 1946-47 school term, Miss Wilder had completed her twenty-fifth year at La Crosse State Teachers College. Within that week hundreds of congratulations containing personal notes of affection from alumni poured into the college as testimony of the esteem and devotion her friends had for her. A Women's Recreation Association breakfast was held in her behalf. The senior physical education students presented her with a portable typewriter and check. (According to Dr. Baird, she learned to type after she received the gift and has used the typewriter ever since). In addition, the seniors offered her their class pictures. A scrap book containing hundreds of

signatures and comments from well-wishers and students was presented by two of her former students, then faculty members at the college. They were Miss Ann Thomas and Dean Edith Cartwright. (130:1)

Within the same week, Miss Wilder was recognized by the school for her contributions. She was officially appointed assistant to Walter J. Wittich. Dr. Rexford S. Mitchell, President of the college, commented, "We all congratulate Miss Wilder on her twenty-five years of service to La Crosse State Teachers College. One does not need to be here long to sense her tremendous contributions to the college." (130:1)

Following the war, enrollment in the Physical Education Club decreased due to lack of interest. In the spring of 1952, through the efforts of Miss Wilder and Mr. Wittich, the club was reorganized into a Student Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. All physical education majors were encouraged to join the Association and participate in its projects. Miss Wilder acted as the faculty co-sponsor for this Student Association. (88:2)

Emma Wilder continued to contribute her professional ideas to the Health and Physical Education News, which was edited by Mr. Wittich. She emphasized in her writings, as she had during the 1930's, the approaching increase in leisure time. She believed that camping had excellent educational possibilities which should not be overlooked by physical educators. (88:3) The death of Walter J. Wittich on August 8, 1953, left the challenge of planning the bulletin to the older members of the physical education staff. (89:1)

Although Miss Wilder was never an advisor to Delta Psi Kappa, the professional fraternity in physical education for women, she tided them over many rough spots in the early years when it was difficult to

get sponsors. (24) Perhaps because of this concern she was elected an associate member of Phi Chapter of Delta Psi Kappa. (86:11) In addition, the professional fraternity established the "Emma Lou Wilder Loan Fund," in her honor in 1950. (86:12)

Emma Wilder served in many capacities both within the physical education department and within the total institution. Upon the request of Walter Wittich, she worked on numerous and varied departmental committees. "She was a very respected member of the faculty. Dr. Mitchell placed great confidence in her, and he gave her many committee assignments to carry out." (15) "She was very often on university steering committees, building committees and housing committees." (24)

Along with her involvement in the American Red Cross, City Recreation, and Community Concert Series, Miss Wilder found time for other community activities. She was active in the Y.W.C.A. and a member of their Board of Directors. (86:10) Commenting on the American Association for University Women, she said: "I was always a member but seldom was able to attend meetings as they were in the day -- afternoons and I had classes. On special events I was called to assist with some of the manual labor." (14)

Girl Scouts was also a community interest of Miss Wilder's. She became a member of the Girl Scout Council in the late 1920's, and served as a member of the Camp Committee. (12) Mrs. Miriam Annis, who was involved in La Crosse Girl Scouting for many years, recalled the following.

Miss Wilder's great value to us was in her ability to see the problems in perspective and in her sound judgment. She was held in very high regard by the community, and her presence on the council was guarantee of good leadership and sound policies. She was also most helpful when it came to fund raising. (12)

As the college grew, the increased enrollment indicated a need

for campus housing. "When it became known that a new girls' dormitory was to be constructed on this campus, Miss Wilder's legion of friends and former students besieged the administration with requests to name the new building for her." (11) On November 28, 1949, the Board of Normal Regents passed a resolution to name the new dormitory for women at La Crosse College the Emma Lou Wilder Hall. (119:1) The resolution that was passed said in part:

Whereas Physical Education is a special field of Teacher Education at La Crosse State Teachers College Whereas Emma Lou Wilder has served with distinction in the Physical Education Division at La Crosse for twenty-eight years, and

Whereas during these years she has won to a remarkable degree the confidence and affection of the students of her division, therefore Be it resolved that in recognition of her outstanding service the new womens resident hall now being erected at La Crosse will be known as the Emma Lou Wilder Hall. (119:1)

Miss Wilder described her feelings when the first women's dormitory was named in her honor. "I was quite overcome. Never realized that I had so many friends in 'high places.'" (27:6)

The two-story building contained many facilities available to the occupants of Wilder Hall. A television lounge was located on the second floor. The basement contained a laundry room, a game room where ping pong could be played, lounges, and a kitchen. The basement lounge was used not only by the girls, but also by many outside organizations for teas and receptions. (122:2)

Following a dedication ceremony, Wilder Hall was ready for occupancy in the winter of 1952. To help complete the decor, Delta Psi Kappa, under the sponsorship of Miss Ann Thomas, purchased and donated a huge wall-sized picture to be hung in the main floor lounge. (132:60) A third floor was added to the structure in 1955, to help accomodate the rising enrollment.

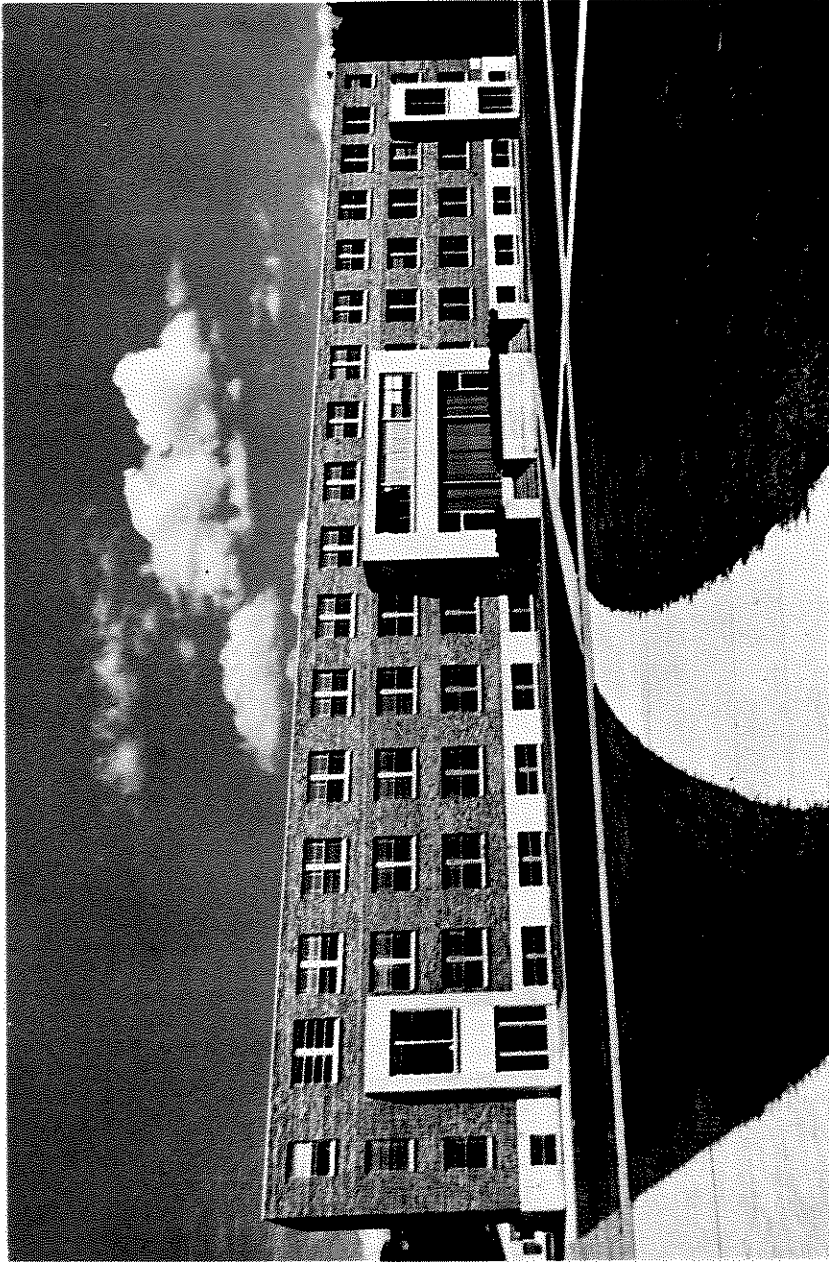


Figure 4. Front view of Emma Lou Wilder Hall.

followed by a panel discussion and work groups. (84)

Ann Thomas, a former student and teaching colleague of Miss Wilder's stated:

Emmy Lou served the State Department of Education on many occasions with help in putting on clinics around the state, and in helping to structure bulletins. It was she, for instance, who got the women's staff together to write a booklet in rhythms. (24)

Miss Wilder was a member of the following professional organizations: the National Education Association and the La Crosse Education Association; the Wisconsin State Teachers Association; the American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, and the Wisconsin Association of the Health, Physical Education and Recreation. (24:4) She was also a member of the Association of College Women Teachers of Physical Education, and the Association of Wisconsin State College Faculties. (86:11)

In the state, Emma Wilder was one of the outstanding members of the Wisconsin Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. In addition to serving as President of the group in 1928, and again in 1946, she worked on numerous committees. She was a member of such groups as the State-wide Curriculum Committee of the State Department of Public Instruction and the Curriculum Committee of the State Association. She acted as consultant on and a contributor to the publications of the State Association. She also worked on the Association's public relations and philosophy, (86:11) and was selected in 1931 as the Association's delegate to the National Convention. Miss Wilder frequently attended the annual Wisconsin Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation Green Lake Conference. In 1954, she served as a panel member in a discussion group on "Curriculum Con-

struction in Health and Physical Education." (85) In the Mid-west Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, she acted as chairman of the teacher-education section. (86:10-11)

In 1953, Emma Wilder was awarded a citation from the Wisconsin Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation "for her outstanding contribution to the status of her profession and for her leadership training in Wisconsin." (86:12) According to the Association:

...the Citation Award is given to an outstanding person who has made contributions to the advancement of the profession through the fields of health, physical education and recreation or through related fields. Such contributions are in the form of administrative service or specific participation in local, state or national program development. (85)

Miss Wilder was again honored by the Association in 1957, when she was presented with the "Life Membership Award." This award is granted in recognition of outstanding service in the profession. To be so honored, one must be forty years of age or older and must have held a continuous membership in the Association for at least ten years. The recipient of the award has all the rights, privileges, and services that belong to a member. (85)

Mr. Leon Miller recalled about Miss Wilder:

Without question, she kept up with her national professional association and had a standing in that particular area but probably not as extensive as it was in the state of Wisconsin.

He continued:

I wouldn't say that she was a convention goer in the ordinary sense of the word. She went, but I would say her thinking was that the classroom is the place where teaching is done and not at the conventions. (21)

Miss Thomas agreed, "She was a great person to go to National Conventions, but she never desired the limelight. She contributed, but

didn't seek to hold office, and when she did she usually had to be persuaded into it." (24)

Emma Lou Wilder's involvement in her surrounding environment did not decrease during her last years in La Crosse. On April 17, 1951, the Board of Regents passed a resolution which authorized dropping the word "Teachers" from the college title. (139) With the death of Walter Wittich in August 1953, Miss Wilder and Mr. Leon Miller were acting co-chairmen of the Division of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at La Crosse State College.

Dr. Glenn Smith was employed in 1954 to replace Mr. Wittich as the director of the Division. He described the assistance Miss Wilder offered to him during his first year at La Crosse.

Miss Wilder had been the acting divisional director since Mr. Wittich's death, and she continued that for the entire academic year of 1953-54. Then I came in the fall of '54 and she oriented me to the total La Crosse picture and philosophy and was just more than my right arm. We worked very closely together and I don't know whether I would have learned as quickly and as much about this job without Miss Wilder; I'm certain that I wouldn't have! (23)

Dr. Frances Carter, who joined the staff in the fall of 1953, stated: "When I came Miss Wilder wasn't doing much teaching. It was primarily administration, and she didn't like that too well. To her the teaching came first." (16) Dr. Glenn Smith commented:

You couldn't keep Emmy Lou involved in administration; she liked to teach too much. She loved her gals particularly too much to isolate herself in that way. She taught more than she should have. She did her share of the administrative work--probably more than her share that first year because she was teaching me. (23)

The following story told by Dr. Smith reflects Miss Wilder's total dedication to her profession.

I used to race her to see who would get to the office

first in the morning. Knowing what her schedule was and how she drove herself, I finally gave up when I started getting to work about 7:15 and she was always there. I don't think I ever beat her to the office. She had and continues to have boundless energy. I don't know where the woman gets it, but she never seems to tire. She would put in days to handle both her administration and her teaching and her counseling. She would be there first thing in the morning and would be there when others left to go home. (23)

In the spring of 1956, after thirty-five years of service to the La Crosse State College, to the La Crosse Community, and to physical educators and students throughout the state and the nation, Emma Lou Wilder retired.

CHAPTER VI

EMMA LOU WILDER, TEACHER

Perhaps the best description of Miss Wilder's personality was written by the students in the 1937 La Crosse Yearbook. For the second time in her second decade of teaching at La Crosse State Teacher's College, the Yearbook was dedicated to her. The dedication read:

To the ideal sportswoman: one who has charm in being the "perfect hostess" as well as the "enthusiastic skater." When we asked for a streamlined description of this nicely balanced personality we heard "fun, likeable, peppy." (Go hiking with her). "Enthused, tireless, thorough." (The seniors appreciate her work on placement). "Cute, admired, reserved." (Ask anyone). "Modest, thoughtful, human." (The misfortunate know). (132:8)

The relationship Miss Wilder shared with her students was professional, yet warm, friendly, and considerate. Her excellent rapport was attributed to her sympathetic, open, and honest way, and to her receptive ear for students problems. Many students stood in awe of her with respect and admiration for her and her way of life. She never demanded things of her students which she could not do herself. (Composite of questionnaires).

Miss Wilder described her rapport with her students as always having a teacher-student relationship.

To this day many of my good friends who come to see me call me "Miss Wilder" and I never noticed this fact until it was mentioned. Never a palsy-walsy relationship, but I am sure that it was a friendly, sincere and cordial one with nearly all. One year I failed a senior in tennis. She knew why and accepted the conditions for working it off during summer school... She was to be on the courts at seven -- spend some four or five hours on them and be done in half the summer session. The next year she stopped and challenged me to a



Figure 5. The ideal sportswoman, Emma Lou Wilder, circa 1937.

game. (27:4)

During Miss Wilder's tenure at La Crosse she organized and taught, at sometime, the following courses:

- (1) Field Hockey
- (2) Tennis
- (3) Badminton
- (4) Swimming
- (5) Diving
- (6) Lifesaving
- (7) Apparatus
- (8) Gymnastics
- (9) Volleyball
- (10) Basketball
- (11) Softball
- (12) Square and Country Dancing
- (13) Ice Skating
- (14) Skiing
- (15) Snowshoeing
- (16) Archery
- (17) Recreational Games
- (18) First Aid
- (19) Camping Education
- (20) Theory of Coaching
- (21) Methods and Observation
- (22) Administration
- (23) Survey of Education
- (24) Correctives
- (25) Child Growth and Development

When asked about the classes she specifically enjoyed, Miss Wilder replied:

The outdoor work was always my "love." I would list field hockey and tennis in first place; swimming and life-saving close second. None of these had ever been in my own professional preparation. Many a night I saw bubbles in my dreams as I was anything but a swimmer. Summer Red Cross courses were a "must" for me. (27:3)

Emma Lou Wilder also attended summer sessions and received her Master's degree from Harvard University. (27:1)

Many students attending school at La Crosse State Teachers College during the days of Miss Wilder recalled that her classes were always enjoyable. "We worked hard because she inspired us with her enthusiasm and skills and vitality." (47) "Her classes were refreshing,

instructive, enjoyable, and, I might say, inspiring." (79) "She allowed critical thinking and individuality of thought and expression." (74)

Miss Wilder's classes always started on time and lasted the full duration. (81) They were well-organized, interesting, motivating, and professional. She encouraged self-evaluation and was very democratic. "There was always present the desire to achieve... Her goals were high but within the student's reach. Her criticisms, if negative, were accompanied by a pat on the back - they were never degrading." (29)

Not rain, nor snow, nor sleet, nor hail, not -10° would stop the class. I remember having to walk, in winter, over the bridge to Pettibone Park to ice skate, ski, and snowshoe. Miss Wilder would be a speck in the distance behind us and before long she was passing us! (70)

Emma Wilder's prescribed method of transportation to any activity was "run a block and walk a block." As a strong advocate of physical health and fitness she set the example.

She would walk from the college to the skating rink on the Mississippi River for an 8 A.M. class while her students took cabs, busses, and hitchhiked. She had more pep, energy and love for her profession than the whole class. (67)

"I recall the wry smile which registered disappointment when the students goofed off or didn't really want to learn." (62)

Emmy Lou would be out sweeping water off the tennis courts before class - then spend all hour shagging balls (it was a beginning tennis class) so we could spend our time hitting -- all the while giving teaching tips and encouragement. (61)

"She was the chief retriever whether the ball landed several courts away or went over the fence. Come to think of it - she was there before the ball!" (59)

Miss Wilder was concerned about each student's individual

progress and accomplishments. A physical education student was having a desperate time in archery.

Try as I did, I couldn't seem to hit the bull's eye. But "Emmy Lou" kept encouraging me -- and guess who hit the balloon on the bull's eye at the physical education demonstration - Yes - I! And guess who let out a loud "Hooray" Yes - Miss Wilder! (49)

Although she was interested in her students individuality, Miss Wilder's ultimate goal was to educate successful and understanding teachers. A psychologist residing in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, Elizabeth McGinnes recalled:

She once gave three of us who generally did exceptionally well, and who were well aware of it, a "C" grade on perfect papers. When we questioned her as to how she could do such a thing to us she replied, in words to this effect, "I feel that you three should know how it feels to be average." At the time I remained angry, and I don't know exactly when it hit me that she was probably trying to make us understand the need to be aware of individual differences - at least this was my ultimate interpretation. I think it reflects a philosophy on her part of the importance of respecting the dignity and worth of all human beings - and I think she lived this philosophy. (60)

Another outstanding trait of Miss Wilder's as a teacher was her attempts to recognize honest effort, even when it resulted in failure.

Cora Forbush, Associate Dean of Students at WSU-Whitewater stated:

A classmate was giving her all to execute a perfect half-gainer in advanced diving class. She succeeded only in flinging all appendages in every direction. The dive bore no resemblance to a half-gainer. Miss Wilder waited for her to come up and stated - to her and to the class - "Well, I can see you're thinking about it! (45)

In addition to course work, Emma Wilder was an advisor and placement director for the girls enrolled in the physical education curriculum. As an advisor, she extended herself far beyond desk work.

Miss Wilder met me at the train station as I arrived; a very frightened and insecure freshman. She saw that I was settled in my rooming house; that I knew my way around the campus and the city. Whenever she saw me she indicated that

she would help if I had any problems. How many teachers care that much? (38)

My first day at college during registration, she counseled me with some very good advice. I didn't know what I wanted to take besides Physical Education so she encouraged me to take another major in case jobs were not available (and sometimes, then, they weren't). I never regretted this additional major and did teach in it, also. (66)

Miss Ruth Zimmerman, at one time Miss Wilder's colleague and roommate, said about her: "Her awareness of problems and needs of her students often resulted in financial aid to those whom she felt deserving and in need of such assistance to continue their education." (32)

A student at La Crosse State Teachers College from 1922-1925, Josephine A. Hemmer, added credibility to Miss Wilder's extremely generous nature.

She would help people without telling anyone. She knew that I didn't have any money. She surprised me one Christmas with a beautiful W.A.A. sweater that I prized dearly. She also saw to it that I had a graduation dress - nobody knew about that. (50)

Miss Helen J. Close, a student at La Crosse from 1950-1954, while working on her Ph. D. degree at New York University recalled:

Miss Wilder was very observant in details as well as being able to accept variances. She was very helpful to me in one situation where I consulted her about my problem of going to both band practice (where I was the vice-president my senior year and working on raising money for our group to go to the Cigar Bowl in Florida), and Catalina Club, which both met from 3:30 - 6:00 on M-W. She suggested to me to do both by getting excused from Catalina Club until after Christmas when the band trip was over; going to Catalina Club until that was over; and then rejoining band. (Worked out fine). I used this case (my being the client) in a class in "How to Interview." The professor at NYU used various class members and had them try to counsel me into knowing I should give up one thing -- not try to do both -- not knowing that long ago this real case occurred and has been solved satisfactorily. (39)

"When I first came here, Miss Wilder was not the division chairman," commented Dr. Beatrice Baird, who joined the teaching staff at La Crosse State Teachers College in 1946.

Mr. Wittich was chairman of the whole division, but we sort of considered her as the boss of the women. I don't know if she was ever told that she was, but the rest of us just took this into consideration. She felt it was her responsibility to see that the girls got jobs, so that's the way she got started with placement. Before there was a placement bureau in the school, she was working with the superintendents helping the girls get jobs. (15)

"She was respected throughout the state and the nation, particularly with regard to placement." (21) "Miss Wilder set up some pretty difficult standards for the whole state system to live up to in many ways. One of the farthest reaching was probably placement service." (31)

I remember talking with an administrator who mentioned that Emma Lou was a highly respected person with whom administrators liked to deal - her girls were well prepared and one was given the "straight scoop" on what he was getting. (34)

"I have known a number of superintendents who preferred Miss Wilder's appraisal of a male teacher over anyone else's appraisal. She seemed to possess a native ability to analyze a person's worth. Her judgment is sound." (29)

Mr. Leon Miller, who helped place the graduating men in physical education, recognized Miss Wilder's success in placing the graduates.

There wasn't a superintendent who didn't rely almost entirely on her judgment as to whether a particular gal would fit into a particular situation. I don't think there was ever anyone in the department, either mens' or womens', who had as broad a base of confidence in assessing the potentialities of prospective teachers. (21)

Placing students into teaching positions was only a part of Emma Lou Wilder's involvement as a placement director.

One of her gestures which I thought was very nice and which I appreciated occurred when I got to my first teaching job. I went to the mailbox at school and didn't really expect anything except the usual notices one gets her first day. There was a little note in an envelope from Miss Wilder, and it was wishing me well in my first teaching job. These went to every graduate and they were there waiting for these people on the first day of their

job. (19)

"I took a job at a lesser salary in a high school over a junior high, that she thought was a good opportunity for me. Later in September, and again in November, she wrote to me inquiring about how I was getting along, offering help and giving suggestions." (76) "She knew her students well and she not only tried to get them a job, she tried to counsel with them and with the employing authorities so they would be successful in that particular community or in a particular school in an urban situation." (23)

She always showed the confidence she had in you and of course, one would try to live up to it. When I was a senior there was an opening in Whitefish Bay and she said she was sending me there for an interview and knew that I would do a good job there. Well, her insight was right on the nose. I landed the job and her words "do a good job" ring in my ears to this day. (44)

Even though she was not married, Miss Wilder's insight into family life proved helpful and beneficial to her students. "Many times she would say, 'Physical Education is a wonderful education for women who will be wives and mothers.'" (38) Marjorie Zimmerman Nixon, a housewife and former physical education teacher stated: "After the death of my first husband, she went out of her way to find a part-time teaching job that would fit into a family schedule." (64)

Elizabeth White Hoff, a member of the La Crosse State Teachers College faculty for fifteen years, shared an office with Miss Wilder for ten of those years.

She was one of the most outstanding persons I have been privileged to know. Her mastery of her field, her great stamina, and her deep interest in young people made her perfect for her position. I often wondered if the students were aware of the many hours she spent preparing them so that they would be successful in the field, and the endless time she devoted to trying to find them just the right position to insure their success. She always

gave of herself beyond what is normally expected in order to help her students. (13)

Miss Leonore F. Wilson, who was Miss Wilder's roommate and friend for many of her teaching years, had great respect for her as a teacher.

She prepared herself thoroughly. She knew what she wanted to teach and used every minute of teaching time. She worked at her teaching and had fun and pride in it. Since she had great concern for the humans as individuals in her class, she planned for individuals as well as for the group. Important to her work was her good physical health and condition. She knew how to play to recreate herself - and she did. (31)

Miss Wilder used teaching methods and techniques which produced results best for her. She was always aware of new methods and adopted those which proved successful. "In fact many of the techniques that she used I find cropping up as "new" in some of the professional literature that I read in my present capacity as a psychologist," said Elizabeth McGinness. (60) She often used the method now known as the problem solving approach, which required the students to think through a problem and arrive at a feasible solution. (Composite of questionnaires).

Demonstration was always an important part of Miss Wilder's classes. Frequently she would participate in showing the skill. "She could demonstrate well in tennis...lots of charm and wit about her. Full of smiles. You never knew if she had any personal problems or didn't feel the best. She radiates energy." (44)

Miss Wilder recalled:

I don't think I ever saw much success with classroom teaching so the results that I saw were largely from activities: These were reached by: Setting goals to be achieved, setting skill tests to reach these, and practice and more practice on skills. (27:3)

At one time her student and later her colleague, Virginia Neitzel Pelton agreed.

In classroom teaching she was not at her best. In practical field classes she was tops. It was when she talked to us about how to conduct ourselves within the teaching profession that she really came across. (30)

When Emma Wilder decided to retire from teaching at La Crosse State College in 1956, she was experiencing her third attempt to resign. Dr. Glenn Smith, Dean of the College of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, recalled:

When I came Miss Wilder was a comparatively young woman, but she had already attempted to resign on two occasions. We worked together several years and then she approached me and said she had sent a letter to President Mitchell and was asking to be allowed to retire. She told me that this was her third effort and she would like to have my support. I talked with the President about this and he said it was true. Each time she tried to retire they would not accept her resignation for retirement purposes, and they agreed the second time to put her on half time. When I came she was supposed to be on half time, and that goes back to my reference of my not being able to out-race her here (office) in the mornings, and she was still here when I left at night. So I think all she did was go on half or three-quarters pay and continued to work about sixteen or eighteen hours a day. (23)

Although the first two resignations were not accepted by President Mitchell, the third request was granted when it was learned that it was Miss Wilder's strong desire to be free to travel and participate in all the activities that her busy schedule would not permit. Dr. Smith continued:

Naturally, I was very disappointed to learn that she was planning an early retirement. She wasn't even approaching the mandatory age, but she said that she had always worked hard and had neglected herself and her own personal interests in the things she wanted to do. I can almost quote her. She said, "I want to be able to climb the mountains and skate and snowshoe and see the beauty of our country and the world while I'm still able to do these things and appreciate it. (23)

The impact Miss Wilder had on the La Crosse faculty and students

was great. "She made the greatest contribution, as much so as some of our men who were instrumental in setting up La Crosse as a renowned school. She made a big, big dent on this campus." (24) "I give her much credit along with Mr. Wittich, Mr. Reuter, and others for what I inherited when I came here in the way of a program with a national reputation," commented Dean Smith. (23)

Dr. Baird believed that Miss Wilder was responsible for the philosophy that the department still professes. "It is a reflection of her work and her character. She believed in hard work and she believed in showing people that she could do it, and if she could do it, they could do it." (15) Dr. Carter agreed. "She was an excellent director and certainly established an excellent program here. I think she is primarily responsible for the program that is and has been here. She put her whole life into it." (16) An incident related by Dr. Carter indicates Miss Wilder's concern and interest in all phases of the physical education program.

She was very knowledgeable about physical education, even modern dance, although she had little skill in it. I remember the first two years of the Orchasis Program. They were alright, but they weren't great, and she said nice things about them. Then the third year I was here, we had a really good program. When I got here (office) on Monday, on my desk was a little note and a rose. She knew the difference. (16)

Along with her professional duties, Emma Lou Wilder always had time to enjoy a social life. She was a gracious hostess and entertained often. (13) Even with the increased enrollment in the 1950's, she had an annual get-together at her apartment for the senior women in physical education. It was possible to invite all the girls because she scheduled them in groups at different times during the day. (15)

After Miss Wilder's retirement the following article appeared

in the Delta Psi Kappa Newsletter.

No one can approach your stature of graciousness, or the wiseness of your guidance, the unselfishness with which you gave of yourself to this college in its growth and progress, your democratic leadership, and your concern for the welfare of 'your girls'. It is with pride that Phi Chapter of Delta Psi Kappa can claim you as an associate member, that you would honor us with your membership, that you acted as temporary adviser and gave counsel when needed since the infancy of this chapter. We are proud of your honor in having the Emma Lou Wilder Dormitory named for you, and that we could establish a Loan Fund in your name. In our humble way, we cannot pay as adequate tribute to you for all you have been and all you have done, but we know you will understand when we say, 'Thank you, Miss Wilder, for all you have done to make La Crosse State College a wonderful place, and thank you for having given much of your life's work to us. We will ever be grateful. And now as you tackle your new horizons, we wish you Godspeed, and a wonderfully rich new experience in your Colorado mountains. You are a Great Lady--Emmy Lou. (86:16-17)

At the time of her retirement, Emma Lou Wilder had no idea of moving away from La Crosse.

However, I never could enjoy summers in La Crosse. I learned of Ouray through Jane Durlin -- a graduate who said when she learned that I was to take a pack trip from Glenwood Springs, "Be sure that you see Ouray if you are in Colorado. It is the best spot in the state." I simply feel in love with the place. I have never been sorry. All four seasons are great. (27:7)

As a result of her pack trip, Miss Wilder bought a home 7000 feet above sea level in Ouray, Colorado. Elizabeth Wiley, a former housemate of Miss Wilder's has often visited "Emmy Lou" and described her home in the following manner.

Her friendly home -- The Purple Patch, nestling in this beautiful little southwestern Colorado town encircled by various colored peaks -- is very much Miss Wilder -- uncluttered, very liveable, simply but attractively furnished.

On one wall is a sea picture with its blues and whites of the ocean off the coast of Maine. There is a picture of a mountain peak painted by Mr. Wittich who was head of the Physical Education Department at La Crosse. In her book case are many books dealing with birds, nature, Vermont (some new ones on Colorado), some poetry books, and of course, the books written by her friend, Maureen Applegate

Clack. Over in the corner is her hi-fi phonograph. The cabinet, made by Miss Wilder, is filled with good music ranging from opera to western music. Beside the phonograph is a sculptured head of a little boy with an expression on his face that touches the heart. This art form was created by the head of the Washington Park Playground in Pittsburgh. Johnny was a real little boy who was a favorite of Emma Lou's when she helped on the Pittsburgh playgrounds many years ago. When she left playground work, this lovely figure was given to her.

On her desk are several pens filled with the green ink which everyone who knows Miss Wilder associates with her. And of course, at one end of the room is a Franklin stove fireplace filled with wood and ready to send out its warmth. The red orientals are on the floor. Much of the furniture she had refinished herself. The chairs and settee made by her grandfather are from the old farm in Vermont.

Each window frames a view of a different mountain peak. Somehow mountains and Emma Lou Wilder go together. (86:1-2)

Many could not understand Miss Wilder's desire to retire so far from her friends and her life work. Virginia Neitzel Pelton, a former student and colleague of Miss Wilder's and a close personal friend, believed this was part of Miss Wilder's personality.

At an age when most people retire to a life of known security she moved to a completely new community. In a very short while she was a very important member of that town. My husband and I saw this when we visited her there. Our tour of the town was stopped many times by various business people asking Emmy's advice about something to do with tourist plans--Chamber of Commerce business--or plans for the Art Fair. Miss Wilder is seldom without guests or callers. There is a never ending stream of visitors passing through her home. Her correspondence would be the envy of a Congressman. (30)

Miss Ruth Zimmerman, a former housemate and colleague of Miss Wilder's, stated:

Probably her activities since retirement to the small town of Ouray, Colorado show as clearly as anything her influence for the betterment of a community of which she is a part.

Miss Wilder has an inspirational, activating and cohesive quality which, I feel, has inspired young people, women's civic, cultural, and religious groups and city officials to cooperate in many and varied areas: civic improvement and community beautification, education encouragement via scholarships, cultural developments in

the field of art, and the growth of tourism which her untiring work (given gratis) as the secretary of Ouray's chamber of commerce has done much to motivate. (32)

Along with all the activities previously mentioned, Miss Wilder listed some of her favorite leisure times activities as bird watching, hiking on snowshoes in winter, cooking, jeeping with cook-outs, bridge, reading, following some six or eight television programs, and entertaining in a small and modest manner. (27:5)

Much to the delight of her former students and teaching colleagues, and her numerous friends, Emma Lou Wilder often returns to La Crosse for the annual Homecoming. A graduate in 1953, Patricia Collins, recalled: "Last fall at the 1969 Homecoming Delta Psi Kappa Banquet some of the young students couldn't locate the legendary Miss Wilder because they were looking for an "old woman." She will never be old!" (40) Another graduate commented: "Just talking with her or seeing her at Homecoming or through newsletters at Christmas time gives one a lift." (36)

Dr. Emerson Wulling, a member on the faculty with Miss Wilder for eighteen years, had the following thoughts about her.

She has some kind of a secret and I don't know what it is. She comes back frequently and doesn't look any different. She keeps her health and she keeps her weight and she keeps her looks. They have been more or less standard as far as I recall, ever since I knew her. She doesn't seem old. By any means she doesn't seem kiddish and never did, just a good human mechanism with humanity. I don't know how she keeps looking the same and stays as vigorous as she was. You think that thirty years would show, but it doesn't seem to. As I say, it's something of a secret. It may be a cheerfulness of spirit and a firmness of moral principle, so that she isn't buffeted around with the winds in taste and silly argument. She's quite calm; not quite serene, but almost. (26)

Dr. Ernest Gershon commented about one of her visits:

I recall that after she left here, she would come back from Colorado to go ice-skating. Once, around Christmas

time when it was below zero, we were sitting around chatting with her. She decided to go skating and said, "Well, I'll wait until the heat of the day." That would be about noon when it might get up to zero. (20)

Although several years have passed since Miss Wilder retired from the physical education teaching profession, her influence remains with students she taught. Following are excerpts from questionnaires sent to students. "I have always felt that being able to know Emma Lou Wilder was one of the real blessings in my life, for she was always an inspiration and a comfort to me." (13)

I had the desire to follow in her footsteps, so to speak; to be like her. She was a great example for all of us students. She had a lovely personality that was full of goodness, humor, and a genuine wit. She was more interested in others than herself; she gave endlessly of her time. She knew us all and had a talent to bring our best out. (44)

Miss Wilder was a whole-heartedly dedicated woman to her profession, self and those she taught. Her beliefs and dedication could not help but have a tremendous influence on us. I and many of my classmates will always adore her as a person and respect her as a great woman in our profession. (74)

I feel that Miss Wilder is one of the most "remarkable" women I have ever known. I was never especially close to her, but I feel that she is a totally honest individual, and one of those fortunate people who have a real goal in life and spends a lifetime accomplishing that goal. (41)

After her retirement Emma Lou Wilder reflected on the philosophies of life which served her best.

I always liked Dr. J. B. Nash's philosophy as I knew it. Dorothy Enderis, who ran the Milwaukee Playgrounds for many years, seemed to me to know where she was going and had good ideas for reaching her goals. Our own Ann Thomas would not consider herself a philosopher, but she has contributed a great deal to physical education and to many young teachers. (27:5)

Miss Wilder's basic philosophy of life is a good reflection of her character and personality.

I believe that constructive living can be achieved by following some of these ideas: Keep busy with worthwhile activity and projects. Be community conscious--Give and forget receiving. If you want friends be a friend. Learn to live simply and you will live well. Actions speak louder than words. Don't expect to talk yourself into acceptance. When in doubt mind your own business. Always spend a little less than what you make. (Lucky for me that this advice from my grandfather was followed). Expect the best but plan for the worse. You never get something for nothing, so pay as you go. Look before you leap. Get the facts before passing judgment. (27:5)

After thirty-five years as a successful teacher, Emma Lou Wilder listed the following traits as essential to becoming a good physical educator.

- 1) Abundance of physical stamina and mental awareness of relationships.
- 2) A love of activity and of people in terms of individual-family-community.
- 3) Willingness to recognize contributions of others.
- 4) Flexibility combined with courage of one's convictions.
- 5) Ability to evaluate objectively.
- 6) Demonstrate living habits that are moderate in all respects. (27:5)

Reflecting on her friendship with Emma Lou Wilder, Leonore Wilson characterized her in the following way.

Miss Wilder is an exciting person. When she steps into the room life comes in. She made life richer than most because she planned carefully and no minutes were ever wasted--nor are they yet. She has an art of being wonderfully warm without being intimate. She has a habit of being interested - and always planned on taking her share to make any event she was involved in interesting. Living with her you might expect the interest to run down, but it never does. The world is too full of activity and beauty....she plans so she can be where it is. (31)

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16. Carter, Frances. April 16, 1970.
17. Cartwright, Edith. May 7, 1970.
18. DeVoll, Diana. April 10, 1970.
19. Foss, Jean. April 8, 1970.
20. Gershon, Ernest. April 24, 1970.
21. Miller, Leon. April 29, 1970.
22. Reuter, Hans, May 4, 1970.
23. Smith, Glenn. April 23, 1970.
24. Thomas, Ann. March 26, 1970.
25. Wiley, Elizabeth. April 20, 1970.
26. Wulling, Emerson. April 21, 1970.

QUESTIONNAIRES

Personal Questionnaire

27. Wilder, Emma Lou. Sent and returned in April, 1970.

Faculty Associates at La Crosse College

28. Daniel, Virginia (Congreve)
29. Mullen, Eileen (Hammerberg)
30. Pelton, Virginia (Neitzel)
31. Wilson, Leonore F.

32. Zimmerman, Ruth

QUESTIONNAIRES FROM GRADUATES OF THE LA CROSSE
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

<u>Name</u>	<u>Present Position</u>	<u>Student In</u>
33. Adrian, Marlene	Teacher, Univ. of Idaho	1951
34. Ault, Audrey (Jasiorkowski)	Housewife	1948
35. Bates, Gloria (Olson)	Teacher, Texas	1950
36. Batikis, Annastasia	Teacher, Racine, Wisconsin	1948
37. Bhend, Helen (Buelke)	Housewife	1937
38. Carey, Ruth (Wabers)	Teacher, Illinois	1942
39. Close, Helen J.	Graduate student, New York University	1950
40. Collins, Patricia	Teacher, WSU-Platteville	1949
41. Cremer, Betty (Miller)	Sec'y-Treasurer, Cremer Engineering Co.	1945
42. Day, Susan J.	Dept. head at Winona State College	1948
43. Dobrunz, Carol	Teacher, Menomonie, Wisconsin	1953
44. Doll, Audrey (Blank)	Teacher, Illinois	1949
45. Forbush, Cora	Associate Dean of Students, WSU-Whitewater	1944
46. Garrity, Frances (Riley)	Teacher, Indiana	1950
47. Groth, Jane (Kleist)	Teacher, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	1928
48. Hackman, Virginia (Gautsch)	Teacher, Kentucky	1929
49. Hagen, Mildred (Mann)	Teacher, Illinois	1935
50. Hemmer, Josephine A.	Physical Therapist, California (retired)	1922
51. Hoff, Muriel (Graslie)	Physical Therapist Minnesota	1942

52. Johnson, June (Ekstrom)	Teacher and Supervisor, California	1931
53. Kent, Ruth (O'Hara)	Retired Health Coordinator, California	1922
54. Keppel, Ruth (Rolsted)	Teacher	1940
55. Kidd, Frances M.	Physical Education Consultant, Minnesota	1925
56. Kohanek, Charlotte (Cotts)	Housewife	1949
57. Lappin, Shirley (Julian)	Housewife and Secretary	1948
58. Lienlokken, Marguerite (Schultz)	News writer	1928
59. Masaros, Leta (Lyon)	Asst. Prof. Appleton, Wisconsin	1953
60. McGinness, Elizabeth	Psychologist	1932
61. Miner, Connie (Brenner)	Teacher, California	1953
62. Nelson, Emogene A.	Prof. WSU-River Falls	1945
63. Nelson, Barbara (Sorensen)	Housewife and Subt. Teacher	1945
64. Nixon, Marjorie, (Zimmerman)	Housewife	1940
65. Nobiensky, Maxine (Gunderson)	Jr. High Teacher, Janesville, Wisconsin	1939
66. Nyberg, Eleanore (Forster)	Retired Teacher	1941
67. Olson, Virginia (Frank)	Housewife	1945
68. Peterson, Ellen (Vanderhoof)	Asst. Prof. of Physiology University of Iowa	1951
69. Piskula, Grace	Physical Education Consultant	1944
70. Rhode, Toni (Lenz)	Teacher, New Holstein, Wisconsin	1947
71. Sacharski, Esther (Towers)	Housewife	1935
72. Shoman, Alice M.	Asso. Prof. Northern Michigan University	1945

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|---|---------------------------------------|------|
| 73. Singrin, Jean
(Nettesheim) | Housewife | 1940 |
| 74. Spring, Marjorie | Asso. Prof. WSU-Stevens Point | 1946 |
| 75. Starks, Janet
(Spaltholz) | Teacher, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin | 1940 |
| 76. Sternberg, Nancy
(Stoeckman) | Teacher, Milwaukee | 1949 |
| 77. Strong, Ann (Morgan) | Housewife | 1951 |
| 78. Swartz, Esther A. | Physical Therapist, Minnesota | 1930 |
| 79. Waterstreet, Sister
Ruthmary | College Math and Physics
Teacher | 1938 |
| 80. Weaver, Charlotte
(Vogelpohl) | Housewife | 1943 |
| 81. Winters, Shirley
(Briesemeister) | Housewife | 1955 |
| 82. Worthman, Marjorie
(Carsen) | Teacher, Minnesota | 1926 |
| 83. Young, Mary (Nenadich) | Jr. and Sr. High Teacher,
Illinois | 1949 |

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92. November 15, 1922.
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94. February 20, 1924.
95. January 15, 1925.
96. November 11, 1926.
97. November 1, 1927.
98. November 17, 1927.
99. December 6, 1928.
100. November 14, 1929.
101. February 13, 1930.
102. May 15, 1930.
103. October 31, 1930.
104. December 19, 1930.
105. February 20, 1931.
106. March 6, 1931.
107. October 13, 1933.
108. October 18, 1935.

109. October 25, 1935.
110. November 1, 1935.
111. January 17, 1936.
112. January 14, 1938.
113. January 13, 1939.
114. November 29, 1939.
115. March 20, 1942.
116. May 15, 1942.
117. October 30, 1942.
118. May 6, 1950.
119. December 14, 1950.
120. April 12, 1951.
121. February 7, 1952.
122. October 31, 1957.

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123. December 13, 1925.
124. April 18, 1926.
125. November 9, 1926.
126. March 25, 1931.
127. October 24, 1933.
128. November 8, 1934.
129. July 2, 1944.
130. June 11, 1947.
131. August 14, 1949.

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APPENDIX

1638 Bainbridge Street
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601

WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY

La Crosse, Wisconsin

I am working on a biographical study of Emma Lou Wilder for my master's thesis at Wisconsin State University - La Crosse. Since you are acquainted with her, I would like to ask some questions which will aid me in the completion of my study. A self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Please return the form by April 15, 1970. Thank you.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Linda Thompson

Name _____ Date _____

Maiden Name _____

Present Address _____

Occupation now or before retirement _____

1. During what years did you attend La Crosse? _____ to _____

2. What was Emma Lou Wilder's relationship to you?

- a. Colleague
- b. Teacher
- c. Club Advisor
- d. Academic Advisor
- e. Civic Group Co-Member
- f. Other _____

3. Check the classes you had that were taught by Miss Wilder.

- a. Field Hockey, Basketball
- b. Badminton, Tennis
- c. Swimming
- d. Recreational Games
- e. First Aid
- f. Camping Education
- g. Methods and Observation
- h. Administration

4. What were her outstanding traits as a teacher?

5. What was her relationship with her students?

6. Was she a different woman when teaching in comparison to when she was not teaching?

7. Comment on her teaching in relationship to:

a. Traits of leadership

b. Quality of leadership

c. Success

d. Lasting impact on you

8. Do you agree with her teaching methods?

9. What do you recall about her classes?

10. Can you relate any incidents in your class or during your acquaintance which would indicate Emma Lou Wilder's personality or philosophy?

11. What do you consider Emma Lou Wilder's contributions have been to physical education and to her environment?
 - a. At La Crosse State University

 - b. In the La Crosse Community

 - c. In the State of Wisconsin

 - d. At the National Level

12. In your opinion, is Miss Wilder a woman who changed with the times?

_____ Why or why not?

13. Do you have any objections to being directly quoted?

14. Please include any additional comments and suggestions that may occur to you.