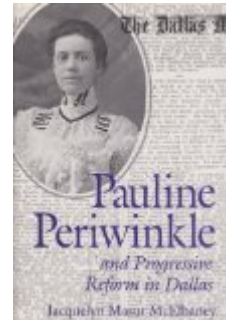


Jacquelyn Masur McElhaney. *Pauline Periwinkle and Progressive Reform in Dallas.* College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998. xix + 201 pp. \$29.92, cloth, ISBN 978-0-89096-800-0.



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Published on H-Urban (February, 1999)

In *Pauline Periwinkle and Progressive Reform in Dallas*, Jacquelyn Masur McElhaney offers a biography of an influential but little known columnist. Through the life and career of Isadore Sutherland Miner Callaway, McElhaney explores the influence of women on progressive reform. In particular, she focuses on the women's efforts in pushing Dallas, Texas towards civic improvement between 1893-1916. Callaway's life, and her career under the nom de plume Pauline Periwinkle, provide a dramatic example of women's leadership in municipal reform. She urged women of Dallas to form political pressure groups and helped push through important changes in city services. Divorced, self-supporting and childless when she fought to establish a career in journalism in the 1890s, her personal life was far different from the middle and upper-class women who read her columns. Somehow, she managed to find acceptance with and gain the respect of society women who joined the many clubs in Dallas.

The book begins by exploring the record of women journalists and clubwomen in the nineteenth century. Interwoven with the background

material, McElhaney presents what little is known of Callaway's early life, education and work history. Born in Battle Creek Michigan in 1863, Callaway's early childhood was difficult and she spent many years with her aunt rather than her mother and stepfather. She was educated at Battle Creek College and began working at the Review and Herald Publishing Company as a contributor to the newspaper and associate editor for a magazine. An unhappy marriage to James Miner followed. She left Battle Creek and her husband for Toledo, Ohio in 1891 to work on the *Toledo Commercial*. She then moved to Dallas to work for the *Dallas Morning News* in 1893.

In Dallas, she worked as the editor for women's and children's departments of the *Morning News*. Away from the newspaper, she quickly joined and served in several important associations. She played a part in the writing of the constitution and bylaws of the Texas Woman's Press Association. She also served as secretary to the first Texas Woman's Congress and addressed the Texas Equal Rights Association. In 1896, she began her influential column on the woman's page un-

der the pen name of Pauline Periwinkle. She remained active in reform efforts particularly through the local, state and national Federations of Women's Clubs. She officially divorced Miner in 1895. In 1900, she married William Allen Callaway, prominent in the insurance business in Dallas, and remained happily married until her death in 1916.

The main body of the book examines Callaway's influence on reform in Dallas through her popular column in the *Dallas Morning News*. Long excerpts interspersed with narrative illustrate her unique style and fierce commitment to women's reforming efforts. The last four chapters are divided thematically. In "Verily, We Are Coming On," McElhaney chronicles Callaway's efforts to encourage meaningful club activities as opposed to haphazard meetings cluttered with long papers on literary subjects. Callaway urged women to view themselves as citizens committed to bringing about change, not merely wives or daughters. She worked to increase their understanding of the potential for power in their clubs. As Pauline Periwinkle, Callaway sought to encourage women to exploit their organizations' moral suasion when working for change.

Other chapters focus on her efforts to prod Dallas businessmen and politicians to work for civic improvements of all kinds. "The City That Has Not Doffed Its Village Swaddling Clothes" describes her role in efforts to improve the health and living standards of Dallasites. From a campaign to build a public library, the need for pure food and drugs, to the necessity for public sanitation and water filtration, Pauline Periwinkle wrote columns urging improvements at city expense. Spurred on by her efforts, Dallas clubwomen responded and pressured both local and state lawmakers to institute regulations leading to cleaner, healthier cities.

Isadore Callaway never had children of her own. Despite this, children remained a main concern for her both in her columns and her other

activities. "Children of the Present--They Are the Future" illustrates her constant concern for children's health and well being. She helped lead the Texas clubwomen's fight for free kindergartens, better education, public parks and juvenile court system. Pauline Periwinkle's columns constantly reminded her readers of the need to improve the lives of children and of the need to protect those who fell into the hands of the court system. Dallas clubwomen attempted to convince the city of the need to hire a matron for young offenders. When that effort failed, they hired and paid for a matron until the city agreed to create a paid position.

In additions to children's problems, the lives of women played a prominent role in Callaway's writing. Her core audience of middle class women in Dallas often read of her belief in the need for greater educational opportunities for young women. "An Enlightened Woman Means More for the Future" chronicles her efforts to help young women think for themselves, seek education and to accept marriages only where love and respect were present. She lectured men on the need to uphold their responsibilities in a marriage and stated that fewer women would have to work if men took responsibility for their families. If a marriage failed to provide safety and love for the women, she did not shy from advocating divorce. She also supported the election of women to school boards long before women could vote, and then served as campaign manager to the two women seeking election to the Dallas school board in 1908.

The book's inclusion of long excerpts provides valuable insight into Callaway's writing style, sharp sense of humor and outspoken advocacy for women and children. The excerpts illustrate Pauline Periwinkle's development of an argument and her use of humor to puncture male pretensions. They also help make up for the real paucity of information on Callaway's life. None of her correspondence or papers have even been found. Therefore, a traditional biography becomes very difficult. The reasons for her divorce, her move to

Dallas and other episodes in her life remain open to speculation because so little is actually known. This book really remains more of a study of Callaway's professional life rather than a full biography. However, despite the lack of information on her private life, it still provides a valuable service by drawing together the writings of Isadore Callaway. When presented in a body, the remarkable range of subjects she addressed becomes evident.

A more serious problem is the failure to address Callaway's racial prejudices. In the introduction, McElhaney simply observes that Callaway's attitudes were "southern and stereotypical" and "not unusual among reform-minded Texas clubwomen" (p. xviii). She speculates that Callaway went along with the racial attitudes of white Texans and perhaps kept her real opinions to herself. The introduction provides the only discussion of Callaway's resistance to including clubs for African American women in the General Federation of Women's Clubs and her columns about the inferiority of African Americans and other minorities. Isadore Callaway was not from the South and to suggest that her racial biases arose simply from common southern prejudices avoids the issue.

Additionally, McElhaney makes no attempt to explain the contradiction between her rather brief dismissal of Callaway's views and her considerable attention to the effect that Callaway's early life in Battle Creek Michigan had on her. She writes that Battle Creek had a "liberal entrepreneurial spirit" (p. 25), a "progressive outlook toward slaves and women" (p. 24), and advanced educational ideas. She speculates that this atmosphere had an important impact on Isadore and helped make her into the open-minded, independent woman she became. She never offers an explanation of why someone as outspoken as Callaway would have backed away from addressing racial issues when she tackled other controversial ones. A full discussion of the racial biases in Texas Progressivism would have expanded the book and

helped provide a more complete context for Isadore Callaway's work. It could help explain why Pauline Periwinkle's columns found acceptance in a conservative city such as Dallas while advocating many unconventional ideas. She prodded, teased and reprimanded the male leadership to improve the city and pushed women to take public roles in their society. But, she never suggested breaking barriers of race or class. Callaway's reforms, like much of progressivism, were for whites only.

More attention to Dallas businessmen and city government could have helped illustrate Isadore Callaway's attempts to change Dallas within the limits that they all accepted. McElhaney pays scant attention to the power of the business community and its effect on the citizens of Dallas. She briefly reports the change to the commission form of city government in 1907, stressing the increased efficiency for this form. She also notes Pauline Periwinkle's approval and campaigning for this new form of city government. However, like Callaway's racial beliefs, the problems connected to this form of city government are never explored. Commission government and the attendant change to at-large voting led to political domination by the middle and upper class in Dallas for many years. In time, this form of municipal government increased neglect of minority and poor neighborhoods which lost all political power when ward-level representation ended. In some cases, citizens waited until the 1950s or 1960s for electricity, sewage or paved roads. Isadore Callaway's endorsement of reforms for whites only fit well with the politics of exclusion practiced by the Dallas city government. Attention to the social and political dynamics in Dallas could have placed the works of Isadore Callaway in a larger framework and illuminated not only her unique contributions to reform but also some of the reasons behind the toleration of her unusually blunt and forceful writings.

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Citation: Patricia Gower. Review of McElhaney, Jacquelyn Masur. *Pauline Periwinkle and Progressive Reform in Dallas*. H-Urban, H-Net Reviews. February, 1999.

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