

*The Anne Page Memorial School shortly after it was built in 1913*

### **Acknowledgements**

Cover photo and Nehoiden Club photo courtesy of the Wellesley Historical Society

Photos below and inside of Anne Page and the Page house courtesy of the Danvers Historical Society

Photo above and inside of Katherine Lee Bates courtesy of the Wellesley College Archives

### **Resources**

Various documents in the archives of the Danvers Historical Society, as well as articles in the *Lowell Sun*, the *New York Times*, the *Wellesley Townsman*, and *The Kindergarten Magazine*

“The History of the Child Study Center,” Shara Collins



*Children digging on the grounds of the Page School in the early years in an area that would one day become the school's parking lot*



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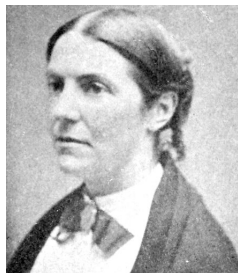
## ANNE LEMIST PAGE AND THE FOUNDING OF THE PAGE SCHOOL

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Presented by Martin Padley  
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at the Wellesley College Child Study Center  
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Anne Lemist Page was born in Danvers on October 5, 1828, in the house that her grandfather had built in the 1740s. She opened a school for young children there in 1849 and began what became a life-long dedication to early childhood education.

Anne was an adherent of Friedrich Fröebel, the German thinker whose unhappy childhood propelled him to pioneer what was to become a well-regarded method for teaching young children. Among other things, Fröebel advocated the exposure of children to nature and this appealed to Anne's love of flowers and the natural world. Anne later became a founding member of the American Fröebel Union and was its secretary.



*Anne was in her thirties when this photo was taken*

After teaching for a number of years, Anne realized that there was a need for more kindergarten teachers, and she opened a school in her home for kindergartners, as they were then called. According to several sources she later ran a school for kindergartners in Boston. Contemporary accounts describe Anne as an enthusiastic, warm, and loving person.

In 1912, Wellesley College professor of economics Katharine Coman became seriously concerned about the plight of poorer children in Wellesley and felt that a kindergarten for them was sorely needed. Coman lived with Katharine Lee Bates a few blocks from the corner of the College where the school opened just a



*In her sixties, Anne ran a school for kindergartners*



*The Page home in Danvers was built in the 1750s by Anne's grandfather, who rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the American Revolution. Anne set up a kindergarten here and later a school for kindergarten teachers or kindergartners. It became the headquarters of the Danvers Historical Society in 1914*

year later. Coman managed to interest Bates, members of the faculty at the College and Dana Hall, and the Wellesley Village Improvement Association in the kindergarten project.

A flurry of articles appeared in the *Wellesley Townsman* that made it clear that the Improvement Association was very supportive of the concept for the school and would be involved in its administration. Katharine Lee Bates was named secretary of the ad hoc committee to create the school and enough money was raised to begin classes in a community building on Central Street.

Anna White Devereaux, a graduate of Anne Page's school for kindergartners, was named the director, and classes began in the fall of 1912. The response was so positive that the school was flooded with applications, and the organizers set about the task of raising funds for a new building. The fundraising effort did not meet with much success at first, but one day Professor Coman bumped into a friend on the train that ran between Wellesley and Boston. The friend was Helen M. Craig, a wealthy woman with homes in Boston and Wellesley. (It was often the case in those years that wealthy Bostonians would have a second home in "the country.") The first homes of the founders of Wellesley College and the Hunnewells

were summer homes on Lake Waban.) Mrs. Craig was so taken by the idea for the school that she agreed to pay for the project as well as for five years of maintenance. Helen Craig also attended Anne Page's school for kindergartners and was a classmate of Anna Devereaux, the school's director. Craig stipulated that her gift be anonymous, and it was duly run through the Wellesley Village Improvement Association, which nominally gave the school to the College. The association had a voice in certain



*The school opened in 1912 in the Neboiden Club on Central Street, a building that had been given to the town by College founder Pauline Durant and that was originally intended as a boy's club*

administrative decisions for some time, but by 1923 it had become known that Helen Craig was the anonymous donor.

Anne Page reportedly knew that the school was being built and was very pleased, but she did not know that it would be named for her. She died in May of 1913, and the Anne L. Page Memorial School opened its doors on November 4 of that year. According to the *Wellesley Townsman* the opening day ceremony was well-attended. College President Ellen Pendleton "voiced gratitude at being able to cooperate with the Village Improvement Association," and Fraulein Mueller of the College German department presented some flowers gathered and pressed by Fröebel. A painting of Anne and a bust of Fröebel were put on display in the school.



*Wellesley College professor Katharine Coman (left) came up with idea for the school, and Katharine Lee Bates was the secretary of the ad hoc group that caused the school to come into being*