

Biography of lucy sprague mitchell – a leader in the field of education in the ea...

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Lucy Sprague Mitchell was born in Chicago on July 2 1878 to Otho and Lucia Sprague. She was their fourth child and their third daughter. Her father was a very well-off merchant while her mother was one of the leaders to grow the cultural and social environment in Chicago. Sprague was a very shy kid who was nervous as well as withdrawn. Her father's parenting style was very dominating which is one of the reasons she was so closed off. " Play, self-expression, indeed, any out-ward display of affection were considered symbols of laxity", says Antler.

Sprague was lonely even though she had 5 siblings. Lucy did not attend school until the age of 16 because she had uncontrollable shaking. But luckily Lucy's father had a very large library so she could learn a lot from reading. She lost her two youngest brothers to contagious diseases as well as an older sister to a mental collapse that was devastating. This made her mother go into a profound depression. Sprague became the nurse of the family but not willingly since her sisters were at school and her dad had hemorrhages because of the war where he got tuberculosis. She went on to major in Philosophy at Radcliffe 1896 in the fall. She went on to graduate with honors in philosophy as well as Magna cum laude. She resigned from Berkley after her father died and mother died with her mother dying months before her father. She then went to explore six different job opportunities available to women in New York. She worked with Lillian Wald at the Henry street Settlement on the lower east side. She then worked for Florence Kelly at the consumer's League where she learned about job laws. Mary Richmond at Charity Organization society where she helped babies who were homeless.

Fourth was Pauline Goldmark with the Russell stage foundation which surveyed the social aspects of the district of the West side. Fifth was the Salvation Army. Then lastly she went to work with Julia Richman who was the principle of a high school. Mitchell found the high school the most memorable and helpful in her research.

Lucy Sprague met Wesley Clair Mitchell while he was studying philosophy and economics in Chicago. He went on to join University of California on the department of Economics. He fell in love with her after her watched her do a gypsy dance. Mitchell proposed and that broke their friendship. Many years later there love rekindled. Mitchell proposed once again and Sprague could not decide what to do. She finally decided only her emotions to decide and got married in 1912 at the ages of thirty-three and thirty-seven. Once Sprague got married she figured out that educating young children was her calling. She moved to New York after getting married because Wesley had better opportunities to do research first hand on business cycles.

Mitchell had the great honor of becoming the first dean of female students at the University of California, Berkeley from 1906-1912. Through this job she was able to make sure there was sex education courses, enough housing for women, made sure women had social clubs as well as fighting for students could have self-governance. Mitchell made it so women felt that they could have a family as well as an active career.