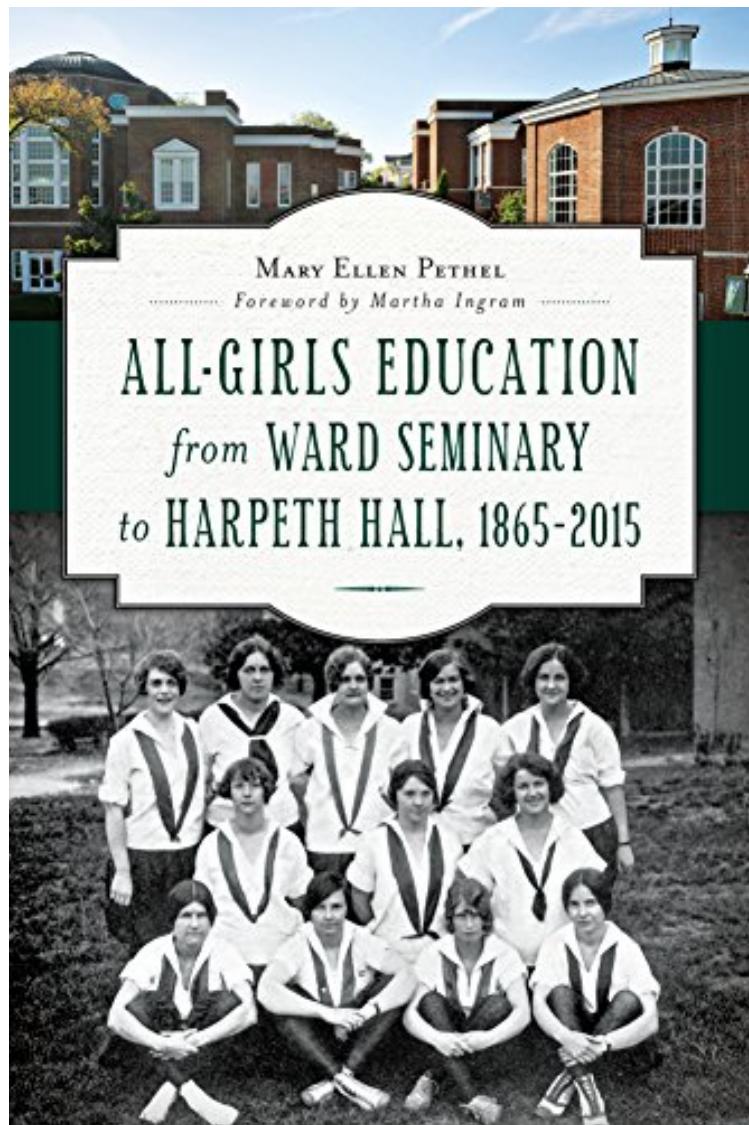


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## All-Girls Education from Ward Seminary to Harpeth Hall: 1865ndash;2015

*Mary Ellen Pethel*  
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During the final days of the Civil War, Dr. William Ward and his wife, Eliza Ward, envisioned a school for young

women in Nashville that would evolve into one of the nations most prestigious institutions. As the New South dawned, Ward Seminary opened its doors in September 1865. Merging with Belmont College for Young Women in 1913, Ward-Belmont operated as a college preparatory school, music conservatory, and junior college. In 1951, the high school division moved farther west, reopening as the Harpeth Hall School after Ward-Belmont's sudden closure. Ward Seminary, Belmont College, Ward-Belmont, and Harpeth Hall are simply separate chapters of one continuous story. As Harpeth Hall celebrates 150 years, its story reflects a unique case study and provides a lens through which to understand the evolution of all-girls education in the United States. The Harpeth Hall School remains one of the oldest all-girls college preparatory schools in the South.

**About the Author**  
Mary Ellen Pethel is an educator, author and historian. She currently teaches in the social science department at the Harpeth Hall School and serves as the school archivist. In addition, she teaches as an adjunct in the honors program at Belmont University. Dr. Pethel is also a historical consultant for the West End Home Foundation. She received her BA from the University of Tennessee, MEd from Berry College and PhD from Georgia State University.