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Guiding the Children: Schools, Teachers, Community and State in Sussex County, New Jersey, 1750 - 1894

By

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the City University of New York

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ABSTRACT

GUIDING THE CHILDREN: SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, COMMUNITY, AND STATE IN SUSSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, 1750-1894

BY

HARRY STEIN

ADVISER: PROFESSOR ARI HOOGENBOOM

Sussex County is in the northwest corner of New Jersey. Its easternmost communities are fifty miles from New York City. Twenty miles to the west is the Delaware River separating New York and Pennsylvania from New Jersey. By 1997 1,400,000 people lived in the county.

Until 1780 Sussex County was a militarized frontier. Following the Revolutionary War between 1790 and 1860 the economy changed from a mixed subsistence/monetary economy to a market economy more and more integrated with the New York metropolitan area following 1853 when rail transportation reached Newton the County seat.

During the last three decades of the 19th. century the County's population remained stagnant. Small scale, mixed crop farming declined. Many farmers attempted a transition to dairy products or fruits, vegetable, and egg production shipped to nearby urban markets. Young people migrated to jobs and training "down below." Within the county Newton became a shoe and silk factory town with 600 jobs by 1895. The Ogdensburg/Franklin mining area expanded.

Amidst these economic changes Sussex County public schools continued to provide children a transition from rural and small town family life to the options of remaining within the county or leaving for work elsewhere.

The first schools were created by community leaders and parents. They taught

literacy and arithmetic skills. Through these skills children would take their first steps along a life-long road of personal improvement designed to retain their political rights develop morale character and achieve social respect Schools did not emerge from market economy demands and did not change their curricula or goal as the regional and national market economy negatively affected the county The poor, one room schools met the needs of the urban, industrial economy by preparing fluent, literate, and arithmetically competent workers

Throughout the 19th century Sussex school leaders worked aggressively to get more and more state authority and money for their schools. When state officials first arrived in 1867 local leaders worked cooperatively, adjusted their practices where necessary and never gave up the idea that they were the "state" responsible for educating children. In 1894 legislation consolidated local school districts trustees into township Boards of Education This change did not significantly affect children Most continued to attend ill equipped, one room school houses Consolidation did not cause a shift in school operating authority from local leaders to state officials

Today, as legislatures and courts in northeastern states grapple with educational issues political power rests with suburban and rural residents who have inherited and modernized 19th century educational ideas and practices which had seemingly died with the coming of consolidation and bureaucratic management in the 20th century. The beliefs and practices of early 19th century rural school managers and community supporters will dominate early 21st century educational practice.

Guiding the Children: Schools, Teachers, Community and State
in Sussex County, New Jersey,
1750 - 1894

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....Page 1

CHAPTER 1: PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN SUSSEX COUNTY, 1775-1829: LOCAL INITIATIVES AND STATE RELATIONSHIPS.....Page 5

CHAPTER 2: SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL GOALS IN SUSSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, 1829-1865.....Page 27

CHAPTER 3: STATE GOVERNMENT AND SUSSEX COUNTY SCHOOLS: 1865-1894.....Page 53

CHAPTER 4: TEACHERS IN SUSSEX COUNTY SCHOOLS: GAINING SECURITY AND A PUBLIC VOICE: 1860-1895.....Page 99

CHAPTER 5: SUSSEX COUNTY SCHOOLS: 1865-1895.....Page 133

CHAPTER 6: ROMAN CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN SUSSEX COUNTY BEFORE 1896: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOL STRATEGIES...Page 174

CHAPTER 7: THE 1894 TOWNSHIP CONSOLIDATION ACT: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, SUSSEX COUNTY REACTIONS AND THE SPARTA TOWNSHIP SCHOOL SYSTEM: 1894-1905.....Page 192

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS.....Page 221

APPENDIX A: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY.....Page 234

APPENDIX B: TEACHERS' EXAMINATION.....Page 262

APPENDIX C: THE AMERICAN IDEAL & THE MODEL AMERICAN GIRL.....Page 266

APPENDIX D: EXAMINATION FOR COUNTY GRAMMAR SCHOOL DIPLOMA.....Page 268

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....Page 270

Guiding the Children: Schools, Teachers, Community and State in Sussex County, New Jersey, 1750 - 1894

Introduction

Sussex County lies in the extreme northwestern corner of New Jersey. Its eastern and southern borders are fifty miles northwest of New York City. The county extends west thirty miles to the Delaware River which separates New Jersey from Pennsylvania. To the north Sussex borders Orange County, New York. Except for the isolated westernmost townships which have maintained economic ties with Pennsylvania and Port Jervis or Middletown, New York, the County's economy and political growth has been merged by road and rail systems into the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area. The state capital at Trenton is a seventy-five mile drive to the south. During the nineteenth century the rural Sussex economy became increasingly integrated with these urban areas and Sussex's large and consistent Democratic majorities often played a key role in national or state elections.

From the earliest days of settlement local community leaders provided public schools for children. The schools were established to meet the goals of a secular politics based on individual interest and personal achievement, Christian morality and the growing pressures and opportunities of a rapidly growing market economy. These schools reflected an ideology in which human rights were derived from God but managed by men.

Community schools were a means to define the relationships of a new generation to their society, the economy and the democratic political state. This original local control and role of schools later produced a "contested vision" between Sussex County leaders and state officials as well as state-level reformers who wished to use public schools for their own goals. Local leaders tried to follow often vague state guidelines or operated freely in the absence of precise state rules. They unceasingly tried to get all possible state aid and consistently adjusted state laws and policies to their unique, local needs. They were never docile or submissive to State authority or to the agenda of state-level reformers.

Sussex County's agricultural economy underwent major changes between 1865 and 1894 but neither local officials nor the State legislature attempted to change school goals. During the entire nineteenth century the question of whether the school's curriculum should help sustain the local agrarian economy or provide students with skills they could use anywhere was never raised. Within their geographic, demographic, and fiscal limitation schools successfully produced graduates for the mass production and unskilled labor markets. With pride, the sons and daughters of "old Sussex" left the county for success "down below" in urban New Jersey or elsewhere never forgetting their humble schools and independent rural origins.

Studying the origins and development of Sussex County schools offers an opportunity to examine different hypotheses about how 18th and 19th century rural schools were planned and operated. These schools integrated generations of children into their communities and an expanding market economy which offered many ways to leave the same communities. Some studies argue that the very origin of rural, public schools was indeed caused by market economy demands for literacy and arithmetic skills. Given these economic forces, parents created schools and sent their children so that they might have prosperous economic futures.

Sussex County's experience indicates that schools emerged because community leaders and parents believed children needed education to protect and expand their individual political rights and that schooling was a desirable experience which would mark their characters and personalities permitting their participation in society as genteel, polite social equals. By the last decade of the 19th century the market economy more closely linked Sussex to the metropolitan New York region and had severely damaged small-scale farming. There were more schools but the schools taught children the same skills and information as they had in more prosperous communities earlier in the century. State-sponsored teacher training institutes brought to Sussex also did not change from 1853 through the end of the century.

Parents did recognize the adverse economic changes which swept through the county during he last quarter of the century. However, the type of market economic changes which led to industrialization, urbanization, and market integration provided

employment and training for migrating Sussex youth. The graduates of poor, rural schools only needed basic literacy, arithmetic skills, fluent English, and the right mix of character traits and personal ambition for success "down below" where the new jobs were. Their traditional schools gave them the right skills and attitudes for success in the changing economy.

The study of Sussex schools also shows that the adults who organized and ran the schools knew that while State government approved their authority the State did not create their rights and obligations. They derived these powers from their citizenship transmitted into action through township and county politics. Unlike studies which support the view that 19th century rural communities gradually but inexorably lost their authority to State officials, the Sussex experience argues otherwise. Before 1867 in Sussex local leaders and officials believed that the State could delegate authority and completely fund their schools without taking them over. Local schools managers believed they were the State. After 1867 as a State official lived and worked in the county, local leaders learned how to cooperatively work with the State's County Superintendent and never relinquished many important powers.

Even when the State legislature consolidated neighborhood, rural school governance into township-wide boards of education there was no significant loss of local authority. As early as 1828 and continuing through the 20th. century local leaders and organized parents have used their representatives and, since 1970, the courts to either attack or support legislation which might affect their communities and children. The State has always been a heavy sponge local leaders squeezed dry releasing money for their children thus reducing local, land taxes.

The study of 19th century Sussex teachers shows the expected progression to a heavily female teaching force by the 1880s and 1890s. It also shows that during the 1830s and 1840s teachers were viewed and self-described themselves as both moral and secular missionaries working for the union of God's plan for America and the new Republic. By the 1890s teacher voices had changed. They were using organized forums and the press to attack possible legislation permitting State aid for Catholic schools which would place their secular education programs under State authority. Teachers opposed this action calling it

not only immoral and anti-American but it would also drain money from poor rural, Sussex County and might reduce their salaries. Teacher had become not only a profession but also a professional interest group.

There have been very few studies of rural, 19th century, northeastern schools. Historians interested in conflict among racial, religious, ethnic, or competing elite political groups will not find these themes in Sussex County. Yet, these largely forgotten communities now dominate the politics of New Jersey and other states. Today, they are the State's suburbs and growing ruralburbs and exert extraordinary political power in legislatures. The ideology and operation of contemporary legislative and judicial conflict have their origins in 19th century rural school history.

CHAPTER 1
PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN SUSSEX COUNTY, 1775-1829: LOCAL INITIATIVES AND STATE RELATIONSHIPS

The Colonial Period

There were no transplanted communities from England or other colonies with established leadership and educational visions that migrated into Sussex County. The first schools emerged within small local communities and grew without central direction from either the state or state-sanctioned churches.

Sussex society was created one house and one settlement at a time. The earliest Sussex settlers were from New York and Connecticut. Between 1730 and 1750 they moved west from the Hudson Valley across New York's Orange County and migrated southwest into New Jersey. Settlers from southeastern Pennsylvania also pioneered the upper Delaware river valley entering Sussex from the west. During the colonial period the county lay in the middle of a trading arc linking the Delaware valley and Philadelphia with the mid-Hudson valley towns of Albany, Newburgh and New England

The earliest government effort to regulate schools started in 1662 when Dutch authorities licensed Englebert Steenhuysen as the first teacher in their new colony. Steenhuysen lived in the community of Bergen and believed that as a teacher he did not have to pay taxes. Town officials said that he did. He wanted to immediately resign but was forced to remain teaching until the end of the school year.

Dutch rule ended in 1664 and an English proprietary form of government was established. To encourage settlement, in 1668 the proprietor's charter for Bergen Colony, today Jersey City, required that inhabitants who were legally organized under proprietary protection support schools. A school was soon established but in 1672 settlers just outside the main Bergen settlement refused to pay school taxes. They said that the school was too far from their homes and inconvenient for their children. Moreover, they wanted their own school. The dispute was solved when the local magistrates ruled that the more remote colonists had to pay school taxes. This complaint was the first evidence of local community pressure on government authorities which eventually led to the creation of 1400

local neighborhood districts in New Jersey before 1860.

On October 12, 1693, the first colonial school law enacted by the proprietary general assembly of East Jersey at Perth Amboy permitted the inhabitants of any town to secure a warrant from the Justice of the Peace, assemble, and choose three men to set a tax rate for a schoolmaster's salary and then hire a teacher. The law also called for a binding majority vote to require all land-owning inhabitants to pay a portion of the teacher's salary. Nonpayment of taxes would result in confiscation and public sale of the delinquent taxpayer's goods and land. In 1695 the law was amended giving three trustees the authority to locate the school in the most convenient place for the inhabitants' use. These two late, seventeenth-century laws were the basis for all later state legislation concerning property taxation and the authority of locally elected school board trustees. The laws gave local communities permissive authority to create schools unlike the laws in Connecticut and Massachusetts which mandated that local towns create school boards and schools. These policies were continued by the Royal government which took over the proprietary colony in 1702.[1]

By the late seventeenth century the states' obligation toward needy children was clear. Legislation required that communities assure the health and education of orphan, pauper, and manumitted children. In 1693 congregations in Acquackanonk and Hackensack were presided over by a minister who unified the schoolmaster's job with his office of Zicken-trooster, consoler of the sick. This policy showed that children were categorized with the sick as part of a varied dependency population whose needs were managed by either church or secular authority and were not solely the responsibility of their immediate families.[2] . In the late eighteenth century with the emergence of democratic, republican state governments, this authority was broadened to all children creating the basis for local community and state relationships and fiscal legislation to operate schools.

The first Sussex schools were influenced by various New Jersey religious groups. School practices drawn from the philosophy of the Dutch Reformed Church stressed concentration on reading, writing, and arithmetic and the belief that the schoolmaster should be a significant community person of high worth. New Jersey Puritans who came

from Connecticut and settled the Newark area brought the concept that lay, secular government as well as the established church and families should play a critical role in sponsoring education. Finally, West Jersey Quakers introduced the idea that education should have small classes with permanent well-paid teachers who could favorably influence children.

Records from Jersey City, Woodbridge, and West Jersey Quaker schools show similar state and church goals. The state and both the Anglican and Calvinist churches believed that state and church could form an ideal society based on Christian principles enforced by civil decrees. Children could be educated for both service and loyalty to God and state in New Jersey. There was no dominant church group that wished to create its own state-wide school system. Various churches recognized the importance of the state and, because of their competition for members, they acknowledged their need to coexist.

The first history of Sussex County published in 1881 cited the founding of schools in Walpack and Montague Townships along the Delaware River in the 1730s and 1740s. In the 1750s William Ennes, a one-armed teacher, taught in Sandyston Township. Later schools were reported on farms in Frankford and Hampton Townships in the 1750s through the 1770s[3]. A description of a 1776 Wantage Township school notes that it was constructed with logs in a sixteen by sixteen square with a plank floor, open fireplace, slab benches, and one desk. Before 1790 the physical demands of daily life made survival the first order of business. The first county schools were limited by the poverty and isolation of the early settlers who lived as much as five miles from one another. What aspirations for education that did exist were expressed by educated religious leaders who later lamented the absence of formal education in the eighteenth century.

One religious leader called the era "a day of small things." Writing in 1844, Reverend Peter Kanouse pointed to the lasting effects of this early deprivation. Kanouse pointed out that although the county was inhabited by a gradual and dispersed family-by-family settlement pattern before 1790, during the 1780's there were three schools in the Deckertown settlement taught by two Europeans and an African American who used spelling books, an arithmetic text and the Bible in the one room schools.[4]

Early Sussex village schools followed a pattern found elsewhere in eighteenth century colonial society. Schools were quickly established in newly formed and rapidly growing frontier settlements. The communities formed a significant part of the state's population. In both southeastern and southwestern Pennsylvania towns and villages accounted for 30-40% of the total colonial population.[5]

Within rural, frontier areas, the residents of these settlements had different goals for schools when contrasted with the scattered majority of farmers. Newton was the county's major settlement. The first house was built in 1750, a county court house was completed in 1765, and the first congregation established in 1769.[6] A significant number of pro-education colonists lived in the county seat and Newton's first school was established in 1789. It did not prosper and closed but was followed by another school which opened in 1800.

Before 1789 state authorities had little effect on the educational plans or schools of Sussex residents. The 1776 State Constitution made no mention of education for New Jersey's 150,000 citizens. Neither Massachusetts nor Connecticut municipal mandates nor an institution similar to the 1785 New York State Board of Regents system existed in New Jersey. The growth of local educational institutions and policies during the next century reflected this weak state leadership. In Sussex County before 1789 local residents started and sustained their schools.

Rural Sussex schools were established when four concepts merged. Families believed in an evangelical Protestantism emphasizing radical New Testament ideals that the poor and simple could be as wise or even more virtuous than the rich and well-educated. Second, as the market economy evolved with its emphasis on self-interest and property rights, children had to be educated with new skills. Third, the democratic ideal that while government might still require the talents of elected officials, all citizens required an education to carry out their egalitarian civic responsibilities. Finally, some have argued that the Revolutionary War demolished the myth of historical continuity with British culture. Therefore, public schools were needed to transmit new, unifying articles of faith creating a new national tradition.[7]

The Growth of Schools in Sussex County: 1789-1829: Merging Political Individualism In A Market Economy

Between 1789 and 1820 thirty-three schools were started in the fifteen County townships.[8] These schools were state-sanctioned but received no state financial assistance. They were not created by local township or county governments. They developed from citizen associations, private entrepreneurial decisions and voluntary, student enrollment. There was no state-wide effort by business, political, or religious leaders to spur the growth of common schools for economic, civic, or moral improvement objectives. Only later in 1828 did state-level evangelical religious leaders bring both secular and religious reformers and local educational leaders together in a lobbying effort to get legislative support for State funding. The emergence and growth of public schools occurred earlier, finding its origins in decentralized and largely unrecorded local community decisions.

In 1783 and 1784 the New Jersey legislature passed laws promoting the spread of "literature" and allowing citizens the right to incorporate and create schools for the advancement of learning. These laws were an extension of earlier colonial government regulations authorizing but not mandating local community schools. These private, trustee-managed schools also provided an alternative to the private, proprietary school model whereby an individual could start a school with or without supervising trustees. The 1784 law recognized that citizens could incorporate, raise funds, hire a teacher, and manage a school. In 1794 thirty-four citizens petitioned the legislature for the right to operate a school in Newton, the county seat. The petition noted that the effort had started several years earlier but they were unable to finish building the school. Now they wished to get additional money and complete the task. The group's goal was to "promote learning for the rising generation by building a free school or academy to instruct youth in the languages and other branches of the literature of the country."[9]

This school in Newton revised the economic and social changes that later occurred during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. In 1798 the first post office was established at the County Court House. By 1813 there were two churches in Newton,

Presbyterian and Methodist Episcopalian. There were five lawyers in the county. The 1810 census showed Sussex with 10% of the state's population.[10] During that time Sussex County changed from a frontier of small, pioneering settlements to a mixed subsistence farming and local trading economy which functioned parallel with a growing market economy oriented toward supplying agricultural and animal produce to towns in eastern New Jersey and New York.

The Sussex Register, a weekly newspaper, started publication in 1813. An earlier paper had failed in the mid-1790s. The first issues of the Sussex Register show the emergence of a consumer market/bartering economy and the growth of public schools. The October 29, 1814 edition had commercial advertisements announcing the recent arrival of calico and gingham goods from New York which could be purchased for ready pay in either county produce or bank notes. The paper also announced that school subscribers in Myrtle Grove, three miles from the county seat, wanted a teacher of good moral character qualified to teach reading,writing, arithmetic, and English grammar. The requirement that the Myrtle Grove teacher also teach writing shows that writing instruction and not simply reading was an important educational development during this period since writing was a skill needed in a market economy requiring record keeping and new documents. A New England colonial literacy, instruction, and gender study by E. J. Monahan suggests that in the eighteenth century only males were taught writing skills. However, the Myrtle Grove school enrolled both female and male students who would be taught writing.[11]

During the winter of 1814-1815 the Sussex Register carried an advertisement from the Newton Academy Board of Trustees. The Academy had lost its teacher and hired a new Princeton graduate to teach Latin, Greek, and English. The Newton Academy was a secondary school for students who successfully completed a rudimentary common school education in other schools. The Register also ran advertisements from schools in Morristown, some thirty miles to the southeast. The general growth of literacy was evident because students and county residents could purchase dictionaries, almanacs, Bibles, psalm books, writing paper, and paper for mathematical calculations from vendors in Newton.

In 1815, eight miles from Newton, a two story school existed in the Sparta

Presbyterian Church, a village in Hardiston Township. The journal of Robert Ogden, an early community leader and landowner, noted that the church had spent fifty cents for primers and catechism books. Alphabet books cost six cents. This evidence indicates that these early Sunday schools instructed both children who were already literate and those who had not yet learned their letters.[12]

Newspapers and census data are one means to interpret the expectations of school organizers and parents. Incorporation papers filed with the county clerk are another method. The Union School Society was formed on December 14, 1822 at the home of John Fisher in Sandyston Township.[13] The society was established for the purpose of building a schoolhouse and promoting literature in general. The constitution for this privately financed but public school reflects the language and organization of the Federal Constitution. Beginning with the very term "constitution" it had a preamble showing a "compact" among its signers. Its only purpose was the promotion of literature or knowledge that could be obtained from writing through reading and writing. Moral or economic reasons for education were omitted.

Organized into "articles", the constitution's first section signified that the document was to form a compact, giving system and energy to its operations. Article II stipulated that at an annual meeting on the second Monday in April officers would be chosen through a publicly advertised election of the subscribers, a body of fifteen men who paid from $1 to $15 to join the compact. The subscribers had raised $124.50 to start constructing the schoolhouse. Article III stated that those assembled at the annual April meeting would choose three of their members to act as President, Treasurer, and Clerk for the coming year. They would also choose two school inspectors. Article IV outlined the fiscal operation of the school with the inspectors given the right to collect fees from student families and supervise the teacher whose responsibilities extended to also safeguarding schoolhouse furniture. Parents or guardians of pupils could be fined up to $20 for damages to school property. The two inspectors were to visit the school once a month, examine the scholars' progress, and assist or direct the teacher in the mode or manner of instruction. They were also to evaluate the conduct of the school, its enforcement of

discipline, and then report back to the larger membership in the society. The society's rules also gave inspectors the right to fire teachers for misdemeanors, neglect, or inattention to duty. Throughout the articles, only male pronouns were used and, while not overtly restricting employment to only males, the clear assumption was that only males would teach. Subsequent articles discussed the financial obligations of officers and the means for organizing meetings and changing the constitution.

The Fisher Union constitution clearly shows the expectation that the school would be controlled by its trustees and not by its teacher or the parents of students. School goals were revealed only in the single statement stressing the promotion of literature in general. The written organization of the society shows its use of civic, republican language. The document is remarkable for its omissions. There was no mention of religious or moral instruction. The clerical or arithmetic demands of the market economy are not noted or even inferred. The document's language borrows from Federal civic language and was directed toward a single intellectual goal: literacy.

In James McPherson's study about the motivations for Union and Confederate soldiers and officers during the Civil War, he asks his late twentieth century readers to believe in the literally stated emotional and sentimental language of honor, duty, loyalty, and sacrifice that these men used in their memoirs.[14] Understanding the ideas and actions of rural, early nineteenth century Americans from intellectual vantage points in another century often is difficult. Yet the language should be taken at its face value.

The Fisher Union school was an early school of the republic created by ardent democratic, independent farmers in a remote Sussex township to educate their children and others in the community. The schools originated through the sponsorship of the more wealthy and perhaps more educated members of these face to face, highly homogeneous communities. Parents had to pay fees for their children and unless they joined the subscribers as trustees of schools they had no role in school management. Teachers were supervised by trustees who controlled their terms of employment. There was a very high turnover of low paid teachers. One 1883 local school historian counted sixty five teachers employed in the seventy eight years of community control in the Stockholm District in Hardyston Township.[15]

State Educational Initiatives 1808-1828: Unifying Evangelical, Community, and State Interests

While local communities in rural, Sussex County were creating their own tuition-supported public schools during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, state legislators and social reformers wanted to organize state funding and bring a limited measure of state control to local public schools. The State did not first offer aid to control local education. Rather, local officials, evangelicals and secular humanitarian reformers aggressively and directly sought this aid to carry out their school goals.

Following the 1794 law authorizing educational associations there were no state educational policy initiatives until 1808 when Senator Steven Dodd of Morris County introduced a resolution creating a permanent State system for funding public schools. The next twenty years of state educational policy centered around legislating, organizing, and using this proposed state school fund.[16]

Dodd's 1808 proposal reappeared in the October, 1813 Assembly session when James Parker, a Federalist from Middlesex County, also proposed creating a permanent state funding source. His bill called for appropriating $50,000 of state securities toward a fund which would generate interest for the support of free schools. Parker's bill referred to the funding systems in Massachusetts and Connecticut which dispersed the money with supposedly great thrift for the improvement of public morality. Parker's comment about moral thrift brought a retort from Assemblymen Joseph Sharp of Sussex County who said that whenever Sussex County residents encountered travelers from Connecticut or Massachusetts they immediately put their hands in their pockets for fear of theft and, if men from these states had been formed by the common school system that Parker was advocating, New Jersey should have nothing to do with such system producing such "sharp and cagey" men. Sharp's comment brought laughter in the Assembly and the measure was put over to the winter session and then referred to a committee from which Parker was excluded thus ensuring the resolution's defeat.[17]

Parker reintroduced his state school fund plan in the 1816/1817 session. He advocated the appointment of a committee to inquire into the feasibility of creating a school fund. The resolution was adopted and Parker was given charge of the committee. Following quick action in the Assembly and Council, the measure was made law. The act directed the creation of a State School Fund consisting of investments of $15,000 in United States bonds at 6% interest state shares of Turnpike funds, shares in a Trenton bank, and other assorted state assets. In 1817 the Fund totaled $113, 238.78. An act in 1818 created a trustee board to manage the Fund. Between 1818 and 1829 the Fund accumulated investment interest but no aid was distributed to either township schools or private institutions. During this time, Sussex schools continued educating students supported by private, voluntary tuitions and local management.[18]

Before 1829 the legislature permitted but did not mandate local public schools. This limited state policy was expanded in 1820 when townships were given authority for raising tax money to pay the school fees of resident pauper children. The 1820 law was the first action recognizing a growing concern for needy children in the state's developing towns. This law recognized that family breakdown could harm both the civic and moral education of children. Recognizing that poor children were the responsibility of the state, legislative leaders believed that both local society and the new republican Federal government required both educated and loyal citizens. Most families could provide for their children's education. But when a family lacked tuition fees or if illness, the death of a parent, or some other event interfered, the responsibility to educate children passed to the state. In 1828 a law was passed authorizing townships to raise funds for the construction and repair of either public or private school buildings.

Between 1827 and 1830, three forces converged that changed the educational goals of parents, students, and trustees in Sussex county schools and began the very slow and irregular process of aligning local management with the goals of reformers and state legislators. A general movement throughout the state led by town-based, professionally educated men began to lobby the State legislature to pass a comprehensive law establishing a unified New Jersey system of education. It would cover all aspects of school governance including teacher certification, state oversight, tax policies, and teacher education. This

secular effort was then joined and led by evangelical Christians who saw common schools as another means to inculcate youth with Christian moral principles and virtuous habits. The growing state school fund attracted the attention of all groups because it offered a stable revenue source. As long as the state simply distributed funds to local schools and did not threaten local control, local school leaders welcomed state aid.

The movement for a state sanctioned common school system in New Jersey coincided with the rise of a national evangelical movement. In 1800 one in fifteen Americans belonged to a church. In 1835 this figure had risen to one in eight.[19] Evangelical Protestantism and civic republicanism created both new churches and public schools. Secular schools and religious interests worked together for mutually reinforcing but different interests. Within the evangelical movement a new philosophical creed had emerged. It maintained that children and mankind in general were not born eternally marked by sin and depravity. Rather, an individual's earthly good deeds could affect his salvation.[20] The world was knowable and improvable by the rational principles found in republican ideals. These beliefs also permitted an individual to work toward perfectionism in both private and public life. Given these beliefs, public schools had an important role to play in saving both the individual and the society. The common school system was an example of a voluntary association that Americans created which commingled religious and secular goals.[21]

The educational expectations of Sussex's rural families were merged with the twin reform concepts of millenarian Christianity and millenarian republicanism. God had selected America as a redeemer nation. This redemption had both a supernatural and a secular, temporal quality and mission. Reformers believed that both the nation's salvation and individual salvation might be achieved if Protestant sectarianism was abandoned at the public school doorstep. The common school reform movement which emerged in New Jersey during the late 1820s was influenced by the passion and imagination of a religious cosmos which created religious meaning from secular social behavior. If secular society was changing under the impact of a growing market economy, immigration, changes in group status caused by an expanding economy, and the political leveling effect of male

suffrage democracy, evangelical reformers wished to sanctify this new American order. A rapidly changing America needed religious intervention so that the millennial hope of a new cosmos would not become a cosmos crumbling under rapid economic and social changes within a system that had godlessly and constitutionally disestablished church from state.

Religion would link an emerging American secular identity with God's plan and judgment. Where better to forge these links than in the scattered and uncoordinated common schools emerging and growing across the State? If America could not be a Christian state, it could have a Christian people through Christian lay control of its schools. Evangelicals could affect policy in these schools either through their formally educated Presbyterian or Congregationalist leaders or through an active laity involved in school management.[22]

Between 1815 and 1828, the formally educated evangelical leadership set out to reorder and restore American society by creating a voluntary, benevolent empire of private associations across the eastern United States and westward into the frontier Ohio and Mississippi valleys. During these years the American Educational Society, American Bible Society, American Colonization Society, American Tract Society, American Sunday School Union, American Temperance Union, American Sabbath Union and American Home Missionary Society were formed.[23] These organizations shared two common goals: loyalty and patriotism to the Republic and Christian commitment to personal salvation. In this benevolent empire of associations, churches were moving from their sole emphasis as a devotional community designed for the salvation of individuals to an aggressive, outreach program to guide and save society. Public schools were a target of this benevolent empire. However, public schools existed before the movement and their leadership had different interests. The task of evangelical leaders was to find a common ground. In New Jersey, the possibility of securing State funds marked this common ground.[24]

The political leadership of fifteen Sussex County townships was united with the state-wide secular and evangelical reform movement through the efforts of Robert Baird, a professional, evangelical organizer and an employee of the American Bible Society. That organization was formed in 1816 as a missionary reform agency designed to merge the

ideals of human perfectibility and social reform. The Society had opened a branch in Newton, New Jersey on February 17, 1817, and began distributing Bibles to poor Sussex County residents.[25] A recent history of the Society describes its leaders as socially conservative patrician politicians who, while believing themselves the natural leaders of American society, also believed that they could not control the growth of political parties and their fractious struggles.[26] If republican democracy might lead to possible social disruption, evangelical leaders created new institutions such as the American Bible Society (A.B.S.) in the belief that schools might prevent dangerous moral defects that radical, unprincipled democratic behavior could inflict on Christian society.

Peter Wosh, an early republic religion historian, depicts the A..B.S. organizers as "status-displaced" reformers anxious to keep their role and ideals for American society through new social control institutions. Robert Baird thought of himself in simpler, less sociological terms. He was a rootless, religious professional, recruited, and paid by a Board of Trustees to create pious communities of pious believers in towns and rural areas through the activities of the Society. By distributing Bibles without sectarian comment or note, the society's organizers came face to face with Americans in their towns and on their farms.

Baird was born in 1798 in Fayette County on the frontier of southwestern Pennsylvania. At twenty he went to Washington and Jefferson College in Canonsburg and then for additional study at the Princeton Theological School, graduating in 1822. Baird taught for six years at the Princeton preparatory school and was active in the Nassau Hall Bible Society, a collegiate affiliate of the American Bible Society. At Princeton, Baird met John Maclean, a mathematics professor who, by 1827, had become a significant public figure in the New Jersey educational reform movement. In January, 1828, Maclean delivered an address to the Literary and Philosophical Society of New Jersey. He proposed a common school system for New Jersey which would carry out Thomas Jefferson's educational philosophy. Following his speech Maclean and fellow reformers convened as a New Jersey Missionary Society committee and developed a plan to investigate the condition of common school education in the State. Their plan had two

strategies: create mission-sponsored schools in remote areas of New Jersey and encourage local officials to lobby their legislators for State aid.

The New Jersey Friends of Education, a combination of secular reformers and evangelicals who wanted to increase government control and funding over public education, recognized the need for an aggressive organizer and hired Baird as their county field agent. Baird's goal was to develop and coordinate activities in all counties so that the friends could gather state-wide statistics and political support for their legislative agenda. Maclean's address and Baird's organizational work led immediately to the 1828 law permitting townships to appropriate taxes for school repair and construction.

The 1828 legislation did not fulfill their other goals. The reformers and evangelicals now planned a summer and fall statewide fact gathering and publicity campaign using Robert Baird as state coordinator. Their target was the 1829 legislative session. Baird visited each county, meeting with key leaders from each township. The announcement for the meeting specified that the meeting was for discussing the condition and future of the county's voluntarily organized public schools. On Friday evening, August 20, 1828, Baird and John Hall, the editor of the Sussex Register, met at the Court House with thirty-one Sussex Township leaders.[27] Twenty were elected or appointed politicians. None were religious leaders.

Before the evening meeting, Baird spent the day at New Mission School in Stillwater Township. Following Baird's visit, a missionary teacher, Charles Worrell, arrived from Princeton and began teaching on October 13, 1828. He was paid $1.50 for each student each quarter term. From this money Worrell paid for his own boarding and washing. His costs for one quarter were $30.92 and his income from fees was $27.04. An 1830 trustee report noted that parents could substitute labor for fees but no one was ever compelled in any way to support the school. Worrell was commended for his active spirit and pious teaching. He gave general satisfaction to all and merited rehiring for the 1831 school year. If the State passed a school aid bill, it might even be possible to bring public funding to even Presbyterian mission schools.[28]

Baird was introduced by Hall as the main speaker. Following his remarks four resolutions were moved and adopted. The first called on the legislature, as a guardian of public liberty, to extend its fostering hand, as far as means would justify, to the encouragement of education and the establishment of schools. The resolution stated that America's first virtue was its independence which could be insured only if people had the intelligence to make them free and happy. The second resolution noted the defects in the current system of education and the large number of destitute county children who were not in school. The third resolution called for committees in each township to gather information about school facilities, attendance, the type of instruction given, the qualifications of teachers, their pay, the number of children who did not go to school, and the communities that did not have schools. This information would be summarized by the County committee and forwarded to the central state committee. The final resolution formed a seven man County committee with a corresponding secretary who would gather and coordinate township information. The local township committees were given until October 1, 1828, to submit their information to the County committee. All agreed that the proceedings of the Baird meeting should be published. On August 28, the resolutions appeared in the Sussex Register.

Baird repeated this organizational plan in each county that he visited. With state-wide information from the American Bible Society he hoped friendly legislators could begin a policy discussion, pass laws. and fulfill the evangelical-reformer agenda.

John Maclean's January address in Princeton and Robert Baird's visit to Newton both raised difficult political and organizational questions for the New Jersey legislature.[28] The Sussex County school reform leaders did not address the key question of mandatory school attendance. Baird's speech and the resolutions were silent on this critical fiscal issue. They took no position about Maclean's plan creating a State Board of Education with some type of executive leadership. The thirty one local politicians did not want a State official in Sussex County. They only wanted state money. But Maclean, Baird, and the local leaders recognized that the legislative debate and subsequent funding legislation could not proceed without statistical information about children, illiteracy, and the condition of school buildings. Both religious missionaries and local leaders coordinated their efforts to

raise money sending teachers and organizers into the local townships gathering information and in some cases starting new schools expanding opportunities for rural children. One group sought redemption and salvation, the other only wanted state money for their schools

During the 1800s the State's School Fund continued to grow. $20,000 was added each year in addition to accrued interest. The legislature faced an unprecedented political demand. The common school reformers, evangelicals, and local officials were creating a massive, state-wide issue. They also wanted state-aided public education for every child between the ages of 5 and 18.

During the late summer and fall of 1828 the state-level reformers shifted the focus of their campaign from local county organization and data collection to reaching the state's literate population through a series of twenty-eight essays that first appeared in the Newark Sentinel. and were probably written by Baird. Three appeared in the Sussex Register between late September and election day in November, 1828. The first essay appeared on September 29, 1828, stressing the need for better educated and experienced teachers. The author noted that, while appointments to colleges were made only after great investigation, the common schools were willing to hire alcoholics and people of low moral repute.

The second essay on October 20, 1828, concerned the moral qualifications of teachers. Regarding the issue of religious qualifications for teachers, Baird wrote that if a man could not be a pious fundamentalist, a teacher should not be a man of licentious or publicly opposed to or contemptuous of religion. Baird cautiously stressed that trustees should not insist on a teacher being a member of one particular denomination but then Baird rhetorically asked how any "Christian" community could employ a teacher without publicly voiced Christian sentiments to conduct the education of their children. Clearly, he believed that common schools needed qualified, Christian teachers. A qualified free-thinker or deist would not be suitable. How could such a person communicate to his scholars his "affectionate lessons of duty, his prayers, and his holy life?" Through new funding legislation and proper moral management, the schools could bring Christianity to those young Americans whose families were not in a local church.[30]

The final essay appeared on October 27, 1828. The writer shifted his topic from morality and teacher preparation to presenting the statistical information gathered by the

township leaders who had attended the August 20 meeting. County figures showed 846 illiterate adults and 831 children without schooling. The 1830 census counted 20,323 residents. Baird's data indicated a ninety five percent literacy rate. Clearly, the independently organized schools were already providing a rudimentary education to children. The report concluded that education should be reformed and that citizens were willing to pay reasonable taxes for its support. The essay closed with a call for unified action to get state aid for an efficient and judicious common school system for New Jersey.

In January, 1829 the New Jersey legislature met and partially enacted the agenda of local officials, secular reformers, and evangelicals. Previously, schools had been privately organized and managed. While open to families in a given area, they were not accountable to municipal authorities who were only mandated to give fiscal aid for pauper children and build and repair schoolhouses. The 1829 law mandated that township school boards operate through a three man school trustee committee chosen at the annual town meeting. Trustees could divide the township into convenient school districts, apportion state funds to these districts, license teachers for the township, inspect schools, and report to the County Freeholders. The school districts within the township also had three trustees annually voted into office by the taxable inhabitants of the district.

Neither local records nor state statute indicate how the trustees of the private but publicly accessible schools like Fisher Union came under direct township supervision. But since the law created a mechanism whereby the township trustees might create a school district approximate to the area the school served and through this process create a township recognized district, it is likely that the Township simply recognized and gave funds to the privately organized Fisher Union trustees. The private trustees turned over school management to elected public officials. This neighborhood district board of education then hired teachers and maintained the schoolhouse. While township districts were required to provide a school, there were no mandatory attendance laws increasing enrollment and forcing boards to build more schools.

The act also made the first distributions from the 1817 State school fund, providing state money for local townships but requiring equivalent local matching funds. With this first, direct state involvement came the first State requirements that the funds be properly

spent. Later, as state laws changed and grew more complex, they resulted in continuous, permanent, and often contentious interaction among local leaders, state legislators, and state officials.[31]

While the 1829 law met local political needs by bringing state aid into the county schools, the state-wide reformers did not achieve their goal calling for a central state board to develop policy and support a state teacher preparation school. There was still no state curriculum, length of school year or day, or even minimal standards for schoolhouse construction or maintenance. The law recognized the local nature of school operation and advocated very local, neighborhood control with even a minimum of township supervision.[32]

The committee report to the full Assembly clearly stated its reasons and expectations for supporting state aid for publicly-sponsored schools. The committee reported that knowledge, when diffused among all classes of citizens, had the tendency to promote equality, virtue, and patriotism. These were the key features of republican institutions. If they were absent, the republic would be imperiled. Without organized instruction how could a citizen know his government and his rights? The legislators were especially concerned that from the notions of liberty and equality men may feel that they have equal claims, regardless of qualifications, to offices of trust, power and responsibility. This mistaken notion could bring evils into the country which would destroy all patriotic feeling. These thoughts directly reflected the tension between liberty and equality feared by some leaders in a democracy. If schools could maintain a democracy based on qualifications and earned merit, they were both a necessary and safe investment.[33]

Before 1829, New Jersey townships were not required to maintain schools. Public schools were neither free nor did they require mandatory attendance. There were no state officials present in the county to enforce state laws or policy expectations. Local officials at the township or county level were required to fulfill these state prescribed tasks. The law chose not to directly support a corporate, voluntary organizational model in which private citizens formed corporations run by trustees and offered education to children with state support for facilities and tuition. The first local schools in Sussex had followed this model.

Privately sponsored and operated, they met the needs of those families who decided to send their children. The law did not call for state aid to private schools, but it did not explicitly prevent state aid from going to private institutions. After earlier actions in 1783, 1820, and 1828 the state had tentatively taken its very first step toward answering the question: who was to educate and govern the child?

Before 1829 the state aided only children from pauper families. The law did not mention the need for preparing students to work in the growing market economy or how education might lower public welfare costs. The rhetoric promoting publicly funded common schools stressed republican ideals and presupposed that this society was composed of men freely and equally acting for the common good. With the certainty of state aid more county families could now hope that their children would learn the necessary knowledges and skills to maintain their interests in a society whose political principles extolled common political responsibilities and rights within a growing market economy based on individual self-interest.

Chapter 1 End Notes

[1]Nelson Burr, "The Development of Education in New Jersey to 1871" Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society 51 (1933): 153-60 and Julian Boyd,(ed.) Fundamental Laws and Constitutions of New Jersey, 1664-1964, (New York: Van Nostrand. 1964).

[2]Ellis.Apgar, Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the State Board of Education 1877-78, (Trenton: 1868), 37.

[3]Peter Kanouse, "A Historical Sermon Preached January 7, 1844 to the Inhabitants of Wantage Township," Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 1878.

[4]James Snell, A History of Warren and Sussex County, (Philadelphia: 1881).

[5]R.E.Harper, The Transformation of Western Pennsylvania, 1770-1800, (Pittsburgh: 1991), 322.

[6]James Lemon, "Household consumption in the eighteenth century America and its relationship to production and trade: The situation among farmers in southeastern Pennsylvania." Agricultural History 41 (1967): 68-69.

[7]Ronald.Zabory, Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public (New York: 1993), 187.

[8]Snell, 187.

[9]Walter Fee, The Transition From Aristocracy to Democracy in New Jersey, 1789-1829, (Somerville: 1933), 67.

[10]Peter Wacker, Land and People: A Cultural Geography of Preindustrial New Jersey: Origins and Settlement Patterns. (New Brunswick: 1975), 417. The 1810 census showed 245,562 people in New Jersey. 10,851 were slaves and 478 lived in Sussex County. On February 15, 1804 the legislature passes an act calling for the gradual abolition of slavery. This act and a supplement in 1820 provided that every child born of a slave since July 4, 1804 or which should be thereafter born, should be free, but must remain the servant of the owner of the mother until the age of 25 if a male, and 21 if a female.

[11]E.J. Monaghan, "Literacy, Instruction, and Gender in Colonial New England," American Quarterly 40 (1991): 18.

[12]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 21 November 1814 and 9 January 1815. See also Sparta Centennial, 1786-1886.,Proceedings of the Centennial Anniversary of the Presbyterian Church at Sparta, New Jersey, 23 November 1886 together with a History of the Village. (New York 1887): 46. See also Charles Baker, "The World Was All Before Me." Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society. 58 (January 1954): 9-25, for evidence that in 1806 residents of Wantage Township built a school but did not hire a teacher until 1810 when James Herring, a fifteen year old with an elementary education and one year of secondary education at Erasmus Hall Academy in Flatbush, New York, was hired to teach town youth willing to subscribe for Herring's services.

[13]The Constitution of the Fisher Union School was located in the Virginia family of John Depuy who made it available to Len Peck of the Walpack Historical Society. Depuy's family lived in Sandyston Township, Sussex County in the 1820s.

[14]James.McPherson, Why They Fought. Baton Rouge, (1993).

[15]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 14 February 1883.

[16]F.B. Harrington, A History of Education Legislation in New Jersey:1776-1867. Diss., (University of Chicago, 1921).

[17] Murray, 151.

[18]Apgar, 79 and Murray, 153.

[19]Melvin Yazawa, From Colonies to Commonwealth: Familial Idealism and the Beginning of the American Republic (Baltimore: 1985): 198.

[20]B.A. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalists and their impact on religion in America (Boston: 1958), 8.

[21]D. Tyack, E. Hanson "Conflict and Consensus in American Public Education," Daedalus (Summer 1981): 1-25.

[22]R. Abzug, Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination. (New York: 1994), 16.

[23]Curtis Johnson, Redeeming America: Evangelicals and the Road to the Civil War, (Chicago: 1993). Mark Hanley, Beyond A Christian Commonwealth: The Protestant Quarrel with the American Republic, 1830-1860 (Chapel Hill: 1994). Both Johnson and Hanley offer interpretations of evangelical efforts to influence public policy which indicate coalition building tactics in state legislatures in efforts to pass significant policy legislation.

[24]Johnson, 26.

[25]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 1 January 1877.

[26]Peter.Wosh, Spreading the Word: The Bible Business in Nineteenth Century America. (Ithaca: 1994). 10 .

[27]See the Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 28 May 1829 for lists of elected municipal officials and the Sussex of 25 August 1828 for list of attendees for Baird's Newton speech. See John Trowbridge, Presbyterian Interest in Elementary Education in New Jersey, 1816-1866. Diss. Rutgers University, 1957. for background on Robert Baird and his relationships to Princeton-based reformers led by John MacLean.

[28]Trowbridge: Presbyterian Interest, 178.

[29]Murray, 154. 30. and Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, Newton: N.J. 6 December 1830.

[30]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register 25 September 1828 and 29 October 1828.

[31]Harrington, 103

[32]Apgar, 44.

[33]Michael Katz, Class, Bureaucracy and the Illusions of Educational Change in America, (New York: 1971), 18-19.

CHAPTER 2
SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL GOALS IN SUSSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, 1829-1865

The Economic Context

Between 1829 and 1865 Sussex County's economy became increasingly interdependent with the nearby New York metropolitan economy and other regions in the United States. These new relationships were caused by rising farm productivity and regular freight and passenger rail service which began in 1854. Increasingly, the economic choices facing Sussex County's families were influenced by this integrating market-driven economy. With the certainty of state aid, more families could now hope that their children could learn enough to maintain their interests in a society whose principles extolled common political responsibilities and rights within an economy based on self-interest.

State Educational Policies: Funding Local Schools 1829 - 1896

Following the first state funding law in 1829, lawmakers and governors had no specific goals for Sussex County schools. They did not want a uniform, free state-managed school system or curriculum imposed on local communities. This policy had bipartisan support. State officials had met their obligations by passing state aid and teacher licensing legislation giving permissive and limited powers to local township government. Between 1829 and 1865, free, state-operated public education was not an issue in New Jersey.

Between 1829 and 1832 state policy goals were made clear in four laws that established a limited state responsibility and presence in local education affairs. The 1829 law brought state aid to township districts. It also mandated a student enrollment and aid-distribution reporting system from township clerks to County Freeholders to officials in Trenton. In an 1830 amendment to this law, the aid was given to only those township districts organized before 1829. New schools could not receive state aid since this would

establish unrestricted state aid obligations and encourage new public schools. If aid were increased to more schools, state officials knew they would also have to create and oversight system to account for the aid. The 1830 revision did not make schools free or attendance compulsory.[1] It repealed the 1829 law that townships provide schools.

In 1831 the legislature permitted a township to use all of its State aid for the resident indigent. This permissive provision meant that all state aid could support pauper children giving the public common school a negative tone since other children would pay for their education. The public schools could be viewed by their detractors as charity institutions rather than a place where all children should attend. It is not clear how local Sussex trustees responded to this law. They probably assumed that the State money they received from their township clerk could be applied to a teacher's salary and educational materials for all students. The State school fund trustees could not trace its money to specific students or expenditures.

Section 6 of the 1831 law also permitted township trustees to give state aid to privately operated or church-sponsored schools. The law characterized these schools as "common schools" and called their leaders "patrons, supporters, or proprietors" and hence eligible for aid. The law repealing the 1829 and 1830 laws represented a step away from democratic, egalitarian, and secular policies. An 1832 supplement gave townships the discretionary right to raise local taxes in support of public schools. Local taxes could supplement the state aid and tuition paid by the parents.[2]

The 1830 and 1832 amendments to the 1829 state aid law showed the legislative power of citizens opposed to common schools. Conservative legislators, private school educators, adults without school-age students, and taxpayers who believed government had a very limited role in local school affairs lobbied the legislature. The laws of 1831 and 1832 continued until 1837 when The Friends of Education, a statewide reform movement, began a campaign for greater state aid and laws that would require greater township tax support for township district schools. Reformers created organizations and pursued their goals through public media and the established political parties. Socially, they represented what Morton Keller has termed "the chattering classes," a group of intellectuals, academics,

professionals, and journalists, with a sprinkling of socially conscious businessmen. They believed their advocacy was a form of moral stewardship. As the guardians of conventional religious beliefs, aesthetic standards, and shared moral certitudes and united across the state and working for the common good of both children and society, they could restrain unwise and vicious forces threatening both the spiritual and economic foundations of society .[3]

In New Jersey the strength of the education reform movement was in the larger towns of Essex and Middlesex county, along the New Brunswick, Princeton, and Trenton corridor, and in the Philadelphia area. State interventionists believed that New Jersey's growth and success would be hastened if there were centrally managed institutions which could teach and direct the values of prudence, discipline, punctuality, deferred gratification, and piety through common schools. Reformers deemed these values essential for an emerging, capitalistic, market system that relied on democratic male suffrage for its political decisions. There were similar reformers in every county, but in rural Sussex County they were opposed by equally educated and reform-minded local leaders who, while proponents of public schools using state aid, did not want state-controlled or state-mandated institutions directing local schools and the townships that supported them. As Jacksonians they rejected the state's Whig elite reformer assumption that the republic's safety and local crime rates depended on the growth of central state authority.

During late 1837 reform groups began a series of efforts to influence the 1838 legislature. In December, 1837, Friends of Education groups aligned with lyceum organizers met in Perth Amboy. The prospects for new state reform seemed favorable because in 1836, in the final days of the Jackson administration, a Federal law passed returning $37,468, 860 to the states. New Jersey's share was $1,019,561. The reformers wanted the money to go directly into the common schools with centrally administered system to "engineer" the federal funds and increase state aid.[4]

The possibility of federal funds for New Jersey schools was also known in Sussex County. In January, 1837, the Deckertown Lyceum organized a meeting resulting in a recommendation that the interest from the invested funds go to the common schools.

Sussex County's portion of the revenue was $51,600. County leaders wanted Sussex's share of the federal grant to go directly from Washington through to the County Freeholders who would invest it and use the interest for the schools. Their views were persuasive in the legislature. The 1837 legislation showed that state legislators and the governor respected the power of their local constituencies who wanted direct, county control over the Federal windfall.

With the money in hand, the Sussex Freeholders announced in the press that loans secured by mortgageable property were available in amounts ranging from $200 to $1000 dollars. Applications were received requesting $60,350. $38,689 was loaned to ninety-nine applicants. The County used the remainder of the federal grant for its own expenses. These loans generated $2,084 in interest which was given to townships for schools in May, 1838.[5] This financing was a mid-nineteenth century version of Federal revenue sharing given to a state government that had no concept or capacity for comprehensive, entitlement-driven social service programs.

Thwarted in their effort to centralize the federal funds, the state reform movement did not give up its vision for public schools and in January, 1838, the Friends of Education sponsored a meeting in Trenton just before the annual meeting of the legislature. Rev. George Doane, the state's leading Episcopalian cleric, delivered a speech emphasizing the major reformer goals. Doane believed that education should prepare every child for republican citizen duties whose discharge in the free exercise of unconquerable will would lead to knowledge and power. A state system that was free and equal for all children with the state's professional and central direction would insure this goal. He also disavowed the contention that there was a specific education for the poor and another one for the rich. State aid should be increased and applied to all children not only to paupers. The common school should be the first school because it was the cheapest defense for the nation.[6]

There were probably representatives from the Sussex County Friends of Education at the Trenton meeting because on January 8th a meeting was held in Newton to publicize the event. Unfortunately, a traveling circus featuring Siamese twins was in town that Saturday and reduced attendance at the Friends meeting. The meeting report noted the low

attendance and stressed that, regardless of attendance, Sussex would lead the reform movement since the current school funding system now wasted money.[7]

The 1838 law gave reformers only limited success. State aid was increased from twenty to thirty thousand dollars a year. Townships were given the authority to raise local taxes but they were capped at a level no more than double the amount received in state aid. This aid could now be given to a school for the general use of all students thus repealing the 1831 law linking aid to only pauper students. However reformers lost the policy debate for free compulsory education. An effort to mandate that townships raise local taxes as a precondition for receiving state aid was defeated in the assembly by an 8-39 vote. Aid for existing religious schools remained legal. The managers of these private schools had to give the township committee a certificate of their incorporation and a list of their students. Funds went to counties and townships on the basis of land value rather than on the number of students enrolled in the schools. Sussex County suffered under this policy since it was relatively poor in assessed property value. The law left reformers without a central state manager and schools that were not free and remained unequal throughout the county and the state. The State still had no obligation to fund and manage public education for all eligible children.

The Reluctant Growth of State Administrative Oversight: 1829 - 1846

The 1829 and 1838 laws gave local school districts new money and powers with minimal reporting requirements. Local leaders approved since they cherished their authority and wanted more money without interference. To then, the state represented an untapped potential and was no threat to their autonomy.

State officials were reluctantly and slowly meeting their fiscal accounting and reporting requirements imposed by the 1829 and 1838 laws. The state's highest elected officials were involved. They had no professional educators assisting them. From 1829 to 1845 the administrative fiscal accounting function was the responsibility of the governor along with members of his cabinet. In October, 1830, Governor Vroom made his first report to the State Council noting that even though twenty thousand dollars was sent to the

districts in 1829, the fund's total assets had increased by $1346.99 during the previous year.[8] This was fortunate since in the next two decades whenever the legislature wanted increased state authority to impose mandates on local townships those actions were implemented using money from the growing School Fund, rather than general revenues.

Each year the Governor and his staff compiled reports from the various counties and reported to the Council. In the 1833 report the Governor had very little to say since he had received only one report from the twelve county Boards of Freeholders. Some Council members argued that the State's annual twenty thousand dollar grant was insufficient to alter school conditions and the State should stop aid until it could give enough to make a difference. Governor Vroom disagreed and called for more aid to local schools. In January, 1833, the Governor made his first proposal for a Commissioner of Education and a state teacher training institution.[9] Over the next twelve years similar recommendations went unheeded despite protestations from various governors that they had no effective way to account for the distribution of state aid.

Governors occasionally appealed to State pride by negatively comparing New Jersey's common school system or lack thereof with other state systems.[10] Letters from New England university presidents were included in the October, 1836 report as evidence that other states had surpassed New Jersey.[11] At the 1837 legislative session the Governor pointed out the need for educated workers in new state industries. He read letters from Horace Mann, the leader of the Massachusetts state system of education, in which Mann discussed why leading Boston businessmen supported the common school movement. One manager reported that he employed 1,200 in his factory. Only 45 could not write their names and of this group 29 were in the factory's lowest paying job. The Boston employer noted that his literate employees earned 40% more than those who were illiterate. In the same address to the Council the governor emphasized that education also had the power to overcome evil and resist the temptation of adversity. He then pointed out that education was also essential to counter more dangerous seductions of prosperity.[12]

Occasionally, a Governor struck a positive note by proposing a reform program that went beyond better fiscal administration and data collection. In October, 1842, the

Governor called for the laws to set standards for school construction and teacher certification. State funds for district libraries and a State-sponsored journal of education were also recommended. The Governor also opposed the continued growth of small districts caused by the absence of state enrollment standards and an aid-distribution policy that sent equal state aid to all districts regardless of their size. Like other executive initiatives, these also received no legislative endorsement.[13]

In October, 1843, fourteen years after the first state aid with reporting requirements went to local districts, the State Treasurer reported that he had received reports from 102 of 146 townships and 894 of the local 1500 districts. Local Township schoolhouse inspections were completed in only 20 of the 146 municipalities. This incomplete data meant that if any state executives or legislative officials wished to propose any new policies or laws, they would lack essential information about all aspects of New Jersey schools.

Following the adoption of a new constitution in 1844 which specified for the first time that education was a state responsibility, in January, 1845, the Governor, spoke to the first session of the newly formed New Jersey Senate and declared that the 1838 law was defective. He again recommended that a Superintendent of Schools be appointed since the State School Fund totaled $358,547; and could fund both an aid increase to thirty-thousand dollars a year and a new state official. The legislature supported the governor and in 1845 the position was authorized. Finally, after sixteen years of state school fund administration, the Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Vice President in the Senate, and Speaker of the Assembly could move away from data collection and reporting toward policy formation and oversight. Sussex County residents learned of this new state superintendent who could not even visit their county without the invitation of the Freeholders on March 31, 1845.[14]

Teacher and Reformer Influence On The Schools: 1829 - 1846

In addition to new state legislation, between 1829 and 1845 organized teacher groups attempted to influence the development of Sussex schools. They had limited

success. The first known teacher's meeting was announced by John S. Cook, a teacher at the Juvenile Seminary in Newton who used the Sussex Register issue of August 15, 1831 to assemble Sussex and Warren County teachers in Newton on the first Saturday in September. The meeting was held on September 3, 1831. Following a discussion of their mutual teaching experiences, the teachers listened to a speaker and formed a five person organizing committee to create a constitution. Concluding the meeting, Cook called for a system of education just as other eastern states had successfully established. But between 1831 and 1835 the local press noted no further activity from this or any other teacher organization.[15]

In August, 1835 a group of educators met in Deckertown and announced through the Newton press that an organizational meeting would be held on August 4th to form a lyceum. Its goals would include increasing the knowledge of its members and diffusing knowledge throughout the community. The members hoped the lyceum would also arouse and reform the teaching profession. This effort was supported by the editor of the Sussex Register.[16] On August 8, 1835, the Sussex County Lyceum of Teachers met and wrote a constitution. They agreed that their next meeting should feature a speaker who would discuss the "faults" of popular education in the county. The meeting set for August 22 in Deckertown was unfortunately never held because when the teachers arrived they found that a visiting zoological exhibition was in town charging only 12 cents admission. This was too strong a counter-attraction for the teachers, and the meeting was canceled in favor of attending the circus and zoo which had stopped in Deckertown that Saturday as it made its way from town to town in rural New Jersey.[17]

The meeting was rescheduled for September 5 and the organizers noted that the community could rest assured that no obstacles would stop this professional effort. The teachers met and discussed the new books and periodicals bought for the new lyceum reading room. A speech was given and another meeting set for September 19. Additional meetings were held throughout 1835. Teachers were notified through the press to attend a December meeting with the indirect admonishment that if they did not attend they could be certain that the work would go forward.

William Rankin, a successful teacher-sponsor of a private school in Deckertown designed to prepare graduates of the district schools for college, was a leading figure in merging the lyceum movement with public discussion of educational issues. He used a room in Peter Vibbert's home for both a public library and lyceum meetings. Throughout 1836 meetings were held where teachers could also read periodicals and text books or listen to speeches about school discipline. Ministers were especially invited to attend. The lyceum movement attracted ministers, book sellers, district teachers, and a secondary school teacher and gave them a convenient meeting site for discussing educational ideas and current issues.

Between 1836 and 1840 there were no other direct indications of organized teacher activities until the Sussex Register of January 27, 1840 noted that on January 21 a speaker from New York addressed county teachers at the Court House. He recommended a list of common school books that could be uniformly used in all grades. Often schools did not provide common texts and children came to school with different books. This produced additional instructional problems for a teacher who also had the diversity of a ten year age and grade span in the same classroom. The speaker also pointed out a reading series that introduced students to the practical business of life, a trait not found in other books.

Rural Democratic ideology stressed that citizens had created their state. As citizens they needed three types of state power to improve their schools. More money would help them build new schools. Strict teacher licensing and minimum student attendance requirements would improve teaching and learning. Their strategy called for new state laws and aid would they could control in managing local common schools. In this form of state/local interaction the state would provide and local officials would decide.[18]

During the 1840s only indirect newspaper sources point to the existence of organized teacher groups in Sussex County. Newspapers quite naturally gave generous space to teacher organization news since their future readership and advertising market development lay in the successful literacy instruction of the common schools. A list of texts developed by the Trenton-based Teachers and Friends of Education was published in the local press during the summer of 1844. The announcement also referred readers to an advertisement from the local Newton bookstore which sold the texts.[19]

The State and Township Superintendents' New Influences on Local Schools: 1846-1865

Dr. T. F. King, the first state superintendent, faced an extraordinary administrative task. He was trained as a physician. His educational experience had been in Brooklyn, New York. He had neither an office nor clerk. He could visit any school in Essex or Passaic Counties. But in any other county he could visit only at the written invitation of the County Freeholders He worked from his home in Perth Amboy and at his first two meetings six people appeared in Essex County and none in Passaic County. Opponents of the position believed that he might try to interfere with local affairs by prescribing texts or rules for creating new districts. They feared he might also introduce sectarianism. For many citizens a state official with such perceived authority even appeared aristocratic.[20] Since state involvement in local school affairs was primarily to audit state money, his first task was to create forms and regulations governing the distribution of state aid The office was not designed to otherwise influence local school control or to introduce new state regulations. Given the state's very limited expectations for common schools, the new position was adequate yet it would take on unforeseen but critical functions in the two decades.

Regardless of the position's limitations, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction became the focus for state educational initiatives. Dr. King was not selected as a state official to use education as a control strategy for growing urban crime and family disorder. The need for greater local district fiscal accountability was the sole factor which created the position, but this limited function did not deter the Superintendent from taking a policy leadership role. A respected educator could advise the Governor and coordinate the work of the Attorney General and Treasury Department on matters affecting the common schools.[21] He could help beleaguered legislators whose constituents came to them with educational controversies. Moreover, his office could deflect queries and antagonisms, which heretofore had gone to politicians, and attempt to find solutions involving local politicians and county freeholders. An aggressive educator could quietly propose new bills to friendly legislators and help carry out new laws such as those in 1846 and 1851 which

gave townships the right to raise more funds in support of their expanding school systems. An 1853 law had even given townships the right to establish totally free schools if 2/3's of the voters approved.

Professionally, the superintendent could also help organize and coordinate the work of the teacher training college, established at Trenton in 1853, with the needs of the common schools. An educator who could avoid the appearance of partisan politics could fulfill the inherent powers in the new position and move the public support for his role from fiscal accountant to general, state-wide educational leadership. The new state superintendent had no office in Sussex county. Although township superintendents reported to him since he might be helpful in solving disputes or getting more aid. He was certainly no threat to their autonomy or interests. But his presence did represent a new possibility in local efforts to get more aid.

Each year the Superintendent prepared a report for the Governor and Legislature. Following his expected reporting on state enrollment figures and fiscal accountability, he might exhort the political leadership to move toward new policies, publicly test specific ideas given to him by the governor or important politicians, and make clarifications in state policy which could strengthen certain interpretations of legislation. On carefully selected occasions, he could even use the office as a general bully pulpit for popular educational themes.

In the 1847 report the Superintendent noted that townships were successfully electing township superintendents, a new position he created in 1846. He noted that all counties had Teacher Associations or Friends of Education societies. He then called for these associations to hold teacher institutes, purge their ranks of unqualified teachers, and examine teachers, with the township superintendents merely signing the teacher's new certificate. These certification functions were not legal mandates. Only township superintendents or county freeholder-sanctioned examiners could certify teachers. The superintendent was clearly pushing the outer limits of the law and political caution by suggesting teacher involvement in licensing. His report also exhorted parents to visit their schools and he pointed out ambiguous sections in the 1846 law which continued aid to private schools but did not clearly indicate if township superintendents could visit these

schools and inspect them. Although King was interested in improving teacher education, there was no state support for teacher institutes until 1853. [22]

Between 1846 and 1860 two state superintendents accomplished the specific goals of the position as well as the job's integrative functions linking state administrators and legislators with local government officials. The State Superintendent did not preside over the New Jersey educational system. No such system existed. Children throughout the state did not have equal opportunity under the law. The State Superintendent was primarily useful for bringing critical participants together in resolving uncertainties or moving in new policy directions. He could not affect daily lessons in one room, Sussex rural school houses.

School Expectations of Township Superintendents: 1846 - 1865

Starting in 1846, the new township superintendents gave the State Superintendent a statistical review of school activity for the previous year. Some forwarded narratives commenting on educational progress and concerns in their districts. State documents do not indicate if all superintendents sent narratives to Trenton or if the State Superintendent selectively published some or all of those received. The first state superintendent may have selected those reports which illustrated the need for the policy changes that he and other common school reformers advocated. Dr. King's reports for 1848 and 1849 show comments from six Sussex county township superintendents. These reports described the local superintendent's expectations and frustrations. They described how their schools should promote citizenship and parental responsibility, use State authority aid, and respond to a changing market economy.

John Beach, the Hardyston superintendent, took an egalitarian tone in his report stressing the need for free district schools and equality of opportunity since all children in the township did not have similar school opportunities. Since state aid did not cover the full expenses of a year's operation and townships were not mandated to raise necessary funds, the burden for running a school eventually fell on parents who had to provide tuition when government funds ran out. In some districts this happened sooner than others. In

some townships the local voters might decide to raise enough taxes for the entire year. In other townships without local tax support district schools simply closed if parents did not send their children to school with the necessary tuition. Without new state laws and more money, Beach could not change these conditions.

Other reports to Dr. King show a similar demand for specific administrative power, some implying the need for more state aid and others asking for greater state authority to get children into school with properly certified teachers. The Wantage superintendent unhappily noted that only a minority of parents were interested in their schools. The Sparta superintendent argued that teachers should have a license before they applied to the three-person district school committee for a position. Superintendents were often asked to examine and license teachers after they were illegally hired. The superintendent gave the examination. However, if he sensed the candidate was inadequate he would have difficulty denying the license since the person was already teaching. All township superintendents called for increased state teacher training and clearer state licensing authority. In the fiercely competitive employment market, township superintendents wanted greater and clearer state regulations so that their decisions would not appear arbitrary or render them politically vulnerable by disappointed local applicants.[23]

Francis Moran of Newton asked for better salaries for men. He noted that while the county's wealth had increased, the salaries for men had remained stable for the past thirty or forty years. Moran also recognized that female teachers were available and acceptable at current wage scales. Other superintendents, such as Henry Potter of Hardyston, described the need for better facilities and improved teaching to help students learn. The Stillwater superintendent noted that the six districts within his township used eighteen different teachers during the past year. Some districts were supported by parents who maintained an interest in their schools. Other parents never visited the schools or spoke with the teachers.

Between 1848 and 1855 the State Superintendent published numerous narratives from three Sussex County townships: Frankford, Newton, and Wantage. Frankford had reports from 1851-1855. Newton and Wantage's reports covered six years of the eight year period. Each township had a small agricultural processing and trading center while Newton was also the County seat. These narratives show a pattern and continuity of

educational needs and goals in these rural townships.

Between 1851 and 1855 Alfred Ketchum, Superintendent of Frankford Township, made five consecutive reports to the State Superintendent. Appointed each year by the annual April meeting of the township's voters, he was entrusted with the general supervision of the township's eleven district schools and their thirty three trustees. With the trustees, he examined and certified all teachers.

His 1851 report scolded the trustees for the lack of suitable, and in some cases the absence of, outhouses for the students. He called for trustees and parents to immediately correct the situation. In the 1852 report Ketchum stressed that in April, 1851 the Township had voted no local district school taxes. In April, 1852 they voted $3.00 per student which allowed instruction in the following year for eleven months. Ketchum commented that inconsistent funding over different school years made sequenced curriculum development impossible. From April, 1852 to December, 1852, when his report ended, the local districts had a budget of only eighty cents for each student and schools closed once their state and district aid could no longer pay the teachers. He recommended that the state take over all costs since only in this way could some continuity prevail. [24]

The 1852 report also identified another concern which could not be altered regardless of how the schools were funded. Taxpayers, who wanted to create their own new school district and more safely or more effectively educate local children, could ask the township committee to permit their incorporation. In 1852 Frankford Township expanded from ten to eleven small districts. Once the Township Committee acted there was no legal way Ketchum could not stop the new district from building a schoolhouse and hiring a teacher. Each new district required a teacher, spreading the state aid and township taxes over more schools. These small schools duplicated facilities and equipment costs. Even if aid were steady, the differing size of the schools prevented their students from enjoying an equal education since local district taxes, which could supplement both state aid and township taxes, came from communities whose wealth varied. Ketchum wanted state laws to prevent more small districts since he could not consolidate existing districts.

Ketchum wanted more direct state authority to do his job and help schools improve. The existing system fragmented different types of power between different officials within

the county, township, and school districts inside the townships. His 1853 report asked for total authority when examining and certifying teachers. He also wanted state aid to come directly to him rather than passing through the County Freeholders in Newton who sent it to the various township officials. In 1854 Ketchum again emphasized the need for additional and consistent state aid. During the year some schools had closed because they could not find teachers willing to work at low salaries.

Ketchum's 1855 report again stressed that the quality of education in each district varied because the tax base varied according to the size of the district. Free schools did not exist in ten of the eleven districts. Many were open only four to six months.[25] He was willing to accept full state funding without fear of state control because state government had no means of enforcing its administrative will over local schools.

From 1848-1854 state reports from Wantage Township, a large, wealthy agricultural area to the north of Frankford Township, also describe local schools. The Wantage superintendent wanted greater parent interest and participation in district schools. On his yearly school inspections the superintendent visited the homes of some interested parents but, in general, found the township " destitute of those deeply interested and active to improve schools."[26] Teacher quality was another concern of township superintendent John Case who, along with district trustees, recruited and examined thirty one teachers in 1850. Twenty-five were males between the ages of 18-40, and six were females between the ages of 18 and 30. These statistics indicate that the shift from a male to female teaching force had not yet occurred in this remote section of the state.

Moses Stoll became Wantage superintendent in 1853. His lengthy reports of 1853 and 1854 are the first to show the disparity between a reformer's hopes and real school conditions. Stoll reported that he did not even know how many children really attended school because not one teacher kept a proper register. Teacher quality varied from district to district because wages differed ranging from eleven to thirty dollars a month. Poor districts with a limited number of tax-paying families could not attract qualified teachers. More significantly, like the Frankford superintendent, Stoll maintained that the school funding system seriously disrupted the community creating divisions among neighbors and

between those who had children in school and those who did not. Stoll recommended total state takeover of school funding. His rationale was that all children were a state responsibility. Since the future prosperity of the state depended on their education, he could see no reason why the state should not assume responsibility and provide the means for instruction for all children in some fair and permanent manner.[27] Stoll's 1854 report made a similar recommendation.

These public comments from an elected official in a strongly Democratic township again represented a viewpoint advocating greater State funding. Stoll, like his colleague in neighboring Frankford, realized that the State lacked the bureaucracy to supplant local township leadership. The "State" was one educator working from an office in his home or occasionally, from an office in Trenton. Local officials wanted to represent the "State" using its money and authority.

Stoll's second major criticism of Wantage schools was the number of small districts. The township tax might be decreased if it could be divided among fewer schools. When the state, township, and district aid was spent and parents had to pay fees, a school's ability to finish the year might depend on the resources of ten or twenty farming families whose children attended the district school. Stoll noted that in some small districts the families had to pay fees equal to those at a nearby private school.

When parents complained that their children were not learning in school, Stoll told them that in some districts students went to school for only four or five months. They needed longer and regular attendance for continuous learning. Stoll also believed that parents would reap the advantages of better education if they would send children to a more centrally located school even if it meant walking one to one and a half miles from home.

The 1853 and 1854 reports also reveal changes in the teaching force and curriculum. Stoll and district trustees examined thirty four teachers during 1854. Twenty were male and fourteen were female. This was a significant increase in female participation as contrasted with Case's 1850 report. All district schools had a common set of texts. Stoll wanted to continue his common text standardization by assuring that each district also had the Webster's standard dictionary. The expectation that schools prepared some students for further education is clear since they offered algebra, chemistry, and natural

philosophy in addition to the regular, common subjects.The addition of subjects beyond basic literary and arithmetic indicated that some students would go on to high schools or take clerical jobs in the growing local market economy.

Each of Stoll's reports began with a careful accounting of students enrolled in the district schools. This information was legally required by township and county officials who distributed school aid. Each report ended with pleas to change the funding system through greater state aid. No report directly offered a means to reduce the number of neighborhood district schools. Logic and cajoling were tried but neither Stoll nor any other elected township official was prepared to legislatively or fiscally challenge the right of a local parent group to form its own district by petitioning the township committee. The township committee often gave way to local requests since a school could raise the value of farmland and encouraged parents to send very young children from three to six years old to school if they did not have to walk very far from their homes.[28]

Superintendent reports from the Newton district between 1848 and 1858 show similar comments. These reports are significant because District #7 within the township was the town of Newton, the county seat and home to the county's commercial and professional elite. The 1848 report notes the superintendent's opinion that town leaders were opposed to continuing the State superintendency position. There was also opposition to the concept of County examiners appointed by the Freeholders. Newton leaders preferred that their own officials certify their teachers. The opposition to state administration and even county authority reflected a steadfast belief in local rule principles. The 1849 report also opposed plans for a state teacher training school. The township superintendent argued the money might be better spent on increasing state aid to local townships.[29]

The Newton superintendent reports of 1848-1851 criticized local district trustees for concentrating their state aid in the first two quarters of the school year and then closing schools during the final quarters if the township did not raise local funds or if enough parents did not pay school fees. The quality of teachers was also criticized. The superintendent then noted that the low quality might be due to better general economic

conditions since far better teachers were available in the depression years 1837-1838.

The 1852-1853 reports were significant because, like his other Sussex colleague, the Newton superintendent recommended a total state takeover of school funding.[30] In 1852 Newton township, defied state law that required raising local funds upon acceptance of state aid and decided to raise no local taxes for maintaining its schools. As a result, in 1853 there were no free schools in any district.

The superintendent also recommended changing the law permitting enrollment from five to eighteen years to starting school at seven years. He pointed out that children of five and six were too young to learn and were in school only to relieve their mothers of child care duties. By tightening the age span, class sizes could be reduced and better teachers might be attracted with both more manageable class sizes and age group differences. In addition to aggressively seeking state fiscal support, the 1852 report promoted schools as social reform agencies in which students who smoked or drank would be expelled. Teachers with similar habits would not be hired. Schools could also be part of a public health effort since they denied admission to students who did not have proper smallpox treatment or evidence that they had already suffered some minor form of the dreaded disease. The report closed with the note that certain German states had adopted such a public health policy through schools. These reports pointed out that schools should do more than simply teach basic literacy skills because they were also agencies where standardized child health care policies could be enforced.

Reformers and Public Opinion Influence Local Schools: 1846 - 1860

On November 20, 1847 the local press noted that the Sussex County Friends of Education, made up of township superintendents and teachers, met in Lafayette on November 27. The goal was to advance education in the county.[31] Groups like the state-wide Friends of Education lobbied for increased state aid or mandates such as adopting a common text series or giving township superintendents the exclusive right to examine teacher candidates. The Friends' influence did not escape the attention of local critics who

maintained that the current system of operating the district schools met public needs. Citizens were reminded that, while the cause of education should be advanced, the activities of the Friends should be carefully watched since they intended a costly reorganization of the current system through changing school books, improving school construction, raising the standard of teacher qualifications, and fixing the wages of teachers. A reform movement critic writing in mid-August, 1848 advised his readers to get acquainted with the organization and its aims.[32]

In January, 1849, a controversy developed which revealed some of the basic, underlying differences between state reformers and local leaders. In Hamburg, New Jersey on a snowy, early January Saturday morning, the Education Society of Sussex County, a new organization formed from the Sussex Chapter of the Friends of Education in 1847. Nine persons were present. Although the attendance was limited by the weather, the attendees were important authorities. The State Superintendent came with four teachers from Essex County who had been invited to give lectures on teaching techniques. More significantly, Democratic Governor Daniel Haines, a Hamburg resident of Sussex County, was also present. Following a discussion about the need for common texts and a lecture on chemistry and natural philosophy the group turned to a more contentious topic: the proposal for a state-sponsored teacher training institution.

The New Jersey Herald, the local Democratic party paper, reported on January 20 that the group had passed a resolution instructing the legislature to support a state teacher training institution. Prospective teachers would receive free tuition. Township superintendents and county freeholders would recommend students who would pay their own board and post a bond obligating them to teach in New Jersey for three years following graduation.

The resolution started a news controversy. In a letter published on January 27th, the writer, "L," strongly opposed the resolution. He maintained that while invited and present at the meeting he was not prepared to discuss or vote on such a binding resolution. He was adamantly opposed to the resolution since a personal bond provision would shut out the poorer classes from attending the new proposed Trenton training school. But more critically he believed that if the state had money for education it should go directly to the

townships and district schools and not be put into a teacher training school which would only get bigger and require additional support.[33] "L" may have been Thomas Lawrence, a wealthy landowner, farmer and merchant who later served on the State Board.

On February 3, 1849, "S.N." responded to "L" supporting the normal school idea. He called it a "cheap experiment" that would require five thousand dollars a year and in three years could produce 200 teachers. "L" had misrepresented the discussion since the resolution was only to "request" and not instruct the legislature. "S.N." ended by accusing "L" of political partisanship. The newspaper editor seemed to side with "L" when he noted that the normal school concept was born in Prussia, a state characterized with despotism and thus by implication New Jersey government would also become despotic if it passed a law creating a teacher training college. He advised both parties to maintain a clear discussion since all citizens interested in education acted as a guardian of the state and its offices. If "L" and "S.N." would stop their personal attacks the paper would publish their opinions if brief and relevant.[34]

"L" responded to his adversary in the next issue and denied that he was malicious. He also could have misheard the word "instruct" instead of "request" in the resolution to the legislature. Nonetheless, he still questioned the wisdom of state involvement in training teachers. They could graduate with a license and skills but township superintendents might still believe that they did not then automatically have the essential moral qualities for teaching the youth of Sussex County. Their tact, temper, and judgment might be deficient and "L" feared that a state license might take away local examination powers from the superintendents. This was the real issue: the local power to appoint applicants for jobs. A state fiscal policy bringing more money to local districts instead of giving it to a state normal school would help local authorities since they could hire more teachers or lower local taxes.[35] Local officials expected that their schools would grow and prosper and still remain closely tied to local political leaders. In the next issue "L" also noted that the meeting took no vote on the resolution. He called for more data from neighboring states before discussing the merits of a normal school and he was opposed to New Jersey adopting the New York system of county superintendents.

"S.N." used the next week's paper to respond, accusing his antagonist of being long-winded and off topic. He said the issue was simply whether or not the State should create a teacher training college. Schools needed more qualified teachers even though the general public might not be aware of the need. He promised to continue the dialogue in future issues of the paper.[36] Fortunately, for the readership, the discussion ended but it had revealed issues which showed different expectations for the county's schools among the local and state political leadership which governed them.

Sussex taxpayers were willing to spend for their schools but opposed new state spending initiatives except those directly increasing aid to local communities. They also believed that their township superintendents could do a good job examining new teachers and were even willing to follow the State Superintendent's guidelines in the matter as long as they conducted the examinations keeping religion out of teacher selection.

From 1849 through 1853 the local Education Association held quarterly meetings controlled by township superintendents and more experienced private school teachers. Younger public school teachers rarely found a voice in these proceedings or their reports. The Association's resolutions proposed greater state aid so that local districts could avoid closing when their state aid was spent or parents could or would not pay tuition. Delegates chosen for state and national conventions returned with reports that pleaded for increased public support and an end to the neglect and backwardness of Sussex County's schools. But often local meetings were poorly attended. Committees were created and charged with certain research reports. When they failed to meet yet another resolution disbanded them.

Between 1854 and 1860 reform ideas found a larger audience in the county. This greater awareness was caused by a new state law in 1853 authorizing $100 for holding a multi-day state-sponsored Institute for county teachers. From 1854 through 1859 an Institute was held every year in Sussex County. These events gave reform forces an annual event to publicize and communicate their ideas to fellow educators and important opinion makers or politicians. The teacher institute became a quasi-religious gathering for reconsecrating the secular common schools with a combination of Christian morality and republicanism. The institutes, bringing several score of teachers into a town for three or

four days, seem to have attracted about 25% of the county's teaching force.[37]

Institutes were organized by a state agent appointed by the State Superintendent. The agent used the $100 allocated by the legislature for each county and selected a program of speakers who would deliver their pedagogy to an audience assembled by the local teacher association. In 1857 the local association leadership reversed this process and provided its own speakers and used the state funds to defray boarding costs for the teachers. Institutes were important rallying points for reformers. They offered a chance to refine and publicize their goals. They gave teachers a means to influence local trustees in the districts who did the hiring, firing, and recontracting by suggesting to them that they let their teachers attend the institutes without loss of pay. They should hire only teachers who had attended an institute. The institutes gave a badge of professionalism to teachers which they could use in a job search. Those who did not attend the Institutes could be noted or shamed. Some teachers at the Institutes were advised to continue their training by leaving their jobs and going to the Trenton Normal School, finally established in 1855.[38] After graduation they could look for work in other counties which paid as much as $600 a year for normal school graduates. Institutes occupied the reading public's attention for five or six weeks in a year. There were news articles about the planning and exhortations to teachers and trustees encouraging their attendance. Then, following the institute elaborate summaries appeared in the press outlining the events of each day concluding with grateful appreciation to the town's organizing committee for securing boarding accommodations. Institutes were yet another example of local officials or reformers using state funds for local goals.

Schools: Reflecting the Local Agricultural Economy and Democratic Political Culture

Between 1789 and the Civil War schools existed between the private lives of farm families and large institutions at the county, state, and national level. Schools were places where a small community established an identity for children. Schools were a free space for active, voluntary organization. Leadership roles were open to male property owners

and offered an annual cycle of procedures and events such as elections and budget votes where competing visions of the common good could reach the public. A district school trustee position might also be a necessary first step in a local political career. Their leaders expressed mid-nineteenth-century-small-producer ideas glorifying self-sufficiency, self improvement, and independence through a secular and sacred evangelical language. They used Protestant church-based forms of voluntary organization and procedure for identifying and electing trustees and other managers.[39] In addition to linking their children to society and reflecting democratic rural culture, schools were also a response to the market revolution as an equalizing common experience and institution among free men who participated in the market as distinct unequals.

Democratic republics required citizen equality. Values other than material success existed as a measure of social wealth, and schools were a means for all children in a community to come together, nurture democracy, and prevent community corruption from monied interests. Schools reminded children and families of their common status and obligations as citizens. In schools children would learn the meaning of self-government and the need for good laws. Schools were part of the political, constitutional culture of the northeast. They did not challenge the rules or winners of market relationships, but could set all citizens along the path to social and personal improvement without chastising the rich since they merited their gains.

New state laws in 1845, 1851, 1853 and 1855 created a state superintendent, legislation permitting optional free schools, a teacher training school and annual state funding for teacher improvement. These new state resources did not challenge, but rather supplemented, local Sussex leaders in their efforts to both control and advance their schools. Education was a democratic coin of the realm. In a market economy the merchant opened his doors each morning and operated on a first come, first serve basis. In the democratic, political economy common school supporters argued that every child required an education and the state should also open its doors and spend whatever was necessary on a first come, first serve entitlement basis. These sentiments are clearly expressed by Moses Stoll, Albert Ketchum, John Beach, and other Sussex County township superintendents, by local notables, state officials and through inference by Sussex parents and children.

Chapter 2 End Notes

[1]Newton (N. J.) Sussex Register, 8 March 1830. Both Newton papers published Governor's messages, summaries of legislative debate and action, and full texts of certain laws.

[2]Newton (N. J.) Sussex Register, 7 March 1831 and 30 April 1832.

[3]Daniel Howe, The Political Culture of American Whigs (Chicago: 1979), Morton Keller, Regulating A New Society: Public Policy and Social Change. 1900-1933, (Cambridge, Mass.:1994), Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion (Palo Alto: 1957), and David Shi, Facing Facts: Realism in American Thought and Culture, 1880-1920 (New York: 1995,) 15-17. provided useful background for this section of the chapter.

[4]Harriet Sepinwall. "The History of the 1875 Thorough and Efficient Amendment to the New Jersey Constitution in the Context of Nineteenth Century Social Thought on Education." Rutgers University, 1986, 57

[5]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 9 January 1837, 23 January 1837, and 1 June 1838.

[6]Harriet Sepinwall, 62

[7]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 8 January 1838.

[8]Journal of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the State of New Jersey, 55th session. Trenton, New Jersey (1831). .

[9]Journal Proceedings, 57th session (1833)..

[10]Journal Proceedings,.58th session (1834).

[11]Journal Proceedings, 61st session (1836).

[12]Journal Proceedings, 63rd session (1837).

[13]Journal Proceedings, 67th. session (1842).

[14]Journal of the Proceedings of the First Senate of the State of New Jersey, Morristown, N.J. (1846): 16. The Legislative Council was replaced by the Senate following adoption of the new state constitution in 1845.

[15]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 15 August 1831 and 12 September 1831.

[16]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 17 August 1835.

[17]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 31 August 1835.

[18]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 27 January 1840.

[19]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 7 July 1844.

[20]Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the State Board of Education. Trenton, N.J. (June 1877): 55.

[21]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 21 May 1851, The paper published a lengthy opinion by Q.C.Elmer, the State Attorney General concerning many, long-standing ambiguous questions about state authority in township education administration.

[22] Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Schools of the State of New Jersey for the year 1847. (Trenton, New Jersey): 4-7.

[23]Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Schools of New Jersey for the Year 1848 and 1849. (Trenton: 1849): 71-81

[24]Annual Report of the State Superintendent of the Public Schools of New Jersey for the Years 1851, 1852, and 1853. (Trenton: 1853) contain Ketchum's comments.

[25]Annual Report of the State Superintendent of the Public Schools of New Jersey for 1854 and 1855. (Trenton: 1855), 606.

[26]Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Schools of New Jersey for the year 1848-49. (Trenton: 71).

[27]Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Schools of New Jersey for the year 1853. (Trenton: 153).

[28]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 21 August 1849.

[29]Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Schools of New Jersey for the year 1849. (Trenton: 71).

[30]Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Schools of New Jersey for the year 1853. (Trenton: 148).

[31]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 20 November 18847

[32]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 12 August 1848.

[33]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 20 January 1849.

[34]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 3 February 1840.

[35]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 10 February 1849.

[36]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 24 February 1849.

[37]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 5 September 1857.

[38]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 25 July 1859. In the first three hundred students enrolled at Trenton Normal School eight were from Sussex County. This is a very low enrollment figure given the County's population.

[39]Harry Boyte and Sara Evans, Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America. New York: 1986. See Chapter I for thesis concerning private associations and their relationships to private and official public life.

CHAPTER 3

STATE GOVERNMENT AND SUSSEX COUNTY SCHOOLS: 1865-1894

OVERVIEW

After the Civil War new state laws influenced the schools. In 1967 the first county superintendent in the state attempted to make local trustees more accountable for state aid and teacher certification laws. Although an advocate for general educational improvement, the county superintendent did not bring an alternative vision of school curriculum. Until 1894 he had no authority to consolidate small districts. The new state influences represented no threat to the democratic rural political culture which created schools between 1800 and 1865.

Between 1865 and 1894 state laws and administrative policies were implemented in two distinct phases. In the first phase from 1865-1874, the state created a constitutional, legislative and administrative system that brought different forms of state influence into school districts. In a second phase lasting from 1875-1894, state law and policy tried to standardize education and promote more general social and public health policies administered through the County Superintendents. State goals were derived from the 1875 Constitution which listed but did not clearly define the State's fundamental obligation to its free public schools.

The 1875 constitutional change consolidated a series of earlier laws. In 1866, the legislature created a State Board of Education which in 1867 appointed a State Superintendent of Schools and twenty one County Superintendents. These officials systematically carried out state laws with 1400 school districts in the State's 254 townships and cities. By 1879 the administrative relationships were so comprehensive and standardized that the Annual Report of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction was considered the most statistically complete in the nation.[1]

However, these legal and administrative relationships in the "perfected system" had very little impact on Sussex children or their schools. The curriculum and daily school life remained governed by local politics, demographic factors, and the economy. State

legislation and administrative action never created a common educational system with similar curricula and equal opportunities for New Jersey's students.

State Government Legislative and Constitutional Change: 1865-1875

State administrative reform began as the Civil War came to an end and governance of local school districts needed a "better order of things." In 1865 State Superintendent Edward Harrison recommended that the legislature revise the many laws which had been passed since the State Superintendency was created in 1846. The laws should be simplified, made uniformly applicable to all districts, and enforced by a professional corps of educators responsible to the State Superintendent and a State Board of Education. He also recommended that Section 12 of the 1846 education law be repealed forever ending the controversy over whether or not tax funds could be given to "free" but privately operated schools.[2]

These proposals were brought to the legislature by Governor Marcus Ward in January, 1866. Ward carefully avoided giving the legislators a detailed plan and chose to only indicate the general need for statewide leadership. Ward's strategy was traditional since Governors lacked a capable civil service which could do policy research and craft legislation. Nineteenth century American federal and state executives, unlike their European counterparts, did not inherit a skilled civil service from an absolutist, well-ordered state. Nineteenth century American government gained its coherence and direction from legislation and judicial interpretation Public interest groups such the Friends of Education directed their lobbying toward legislators rather than executives.[3]

The Ninetieth Legislature of 1866 supported Governor Ward by creating the New Jersey State Board of Education and making the State Superintendent of Public Instruction subordinate to it. The legislation provided that local districts should receive annual state aid from general revenues as well as a grant from the school fund. More significantly, the legislation stopped giving state funds to private schools even those that admitted students without tuition charge. The legislation also called for a State Board of Certification

examiners and forbode corporal punishment in New Jersey public schools. On the 21st of March, 1867 the Ninety First legislature passed a comprehensive education law merging the 1866 law and many previous acts into one consolidated statute. The new state system was the culmination of a twenty-year state institutional capacity-building process which started in 1846 when the State Superintendency was created followed by the first state normal school in 1855, an agricultural college in 1862, and a youth reformatory at Jamesburg in 1865.

Ellis Apgar was the first State Superintendent of Public Instruction to administer the new state system linking a State Board of Education with over 1400 local boards. His administrative philosophy was a mixture of laissez-faire economic philosophy with a strong democratic and Christian idealism. Apgar was a professional educator, a "friend of education" who was now in charge of a state-wide personnel and fiscal administrative system. Through this system Apgar would first organize his office and train his staff, establish a state-wide standardized policies, and use the State Superintendency as both a bully pulpit and formulator of policy initiatives for the legislature and governor.

At the first State Board meeting in March, 1866 he presented a new and very aggressive view of the state's role in education. Apgar believed the state needed 40,000 schools and 40,000 teachers. They would be led by God-fearing, intelligent, and active teachers who would enjoy liberal salaries and fixed employment. Under his plan total state expenditures would rise to two million dollars. In 1866 the total expenditure for education from all taxes was $746,794.24. Only $136,335 came directly from state aid. The new centralized administrative system with its plan for nearly a 300% increase in revenue for education was attacked in the rural democratic press. [4]

At the first meeting of his twenty one county superintendents held on December 4, 1867 in Trenton Apgar reminded them of their duty to ensure that all proper age children were educated. Then a County Superintendent should ensure that every district had a good properly furnished school house. A good building added to a community's land values and would help children learn. Later, once a County Superintendent became familiar with every district he could settle boundary disputes and consolidate districts wherever possible. Apgar opposed what he termed professional education since it was specialized and

appropriate for only a small number of students. Common education was for all students and the proper object for public funds. Inherent in this comment was a bias against high schools but these thoughts were never made explicit and Apgar did not oppose the use of public funds for high schools in those communities which chose to sponsor them. Finally, he strongly advocated free public education for all students regardless of race, color, sex, or condition and deplored any use of tuition rate bills for to supplement local taxes permitting a full school year. [5]

Apgar had to administrate Chapter 179 of the 1867 New Jersey Legislative Session entitled "An Act to Establish a System of Public Education." An assumption within its nine major articles and 83 subsections was the belief that the state had the inherent legislative authority to increase its power and decrease the rights of local districts and townships mentioned in the law. Local school districts and their trustees were created and guided by state law executed through an appointed State Board of Education and its officials. The law gave local Boards of Education a wide range of powers over students and teachers and boards were accountable to State authorities. Teachers were certified through a Board of Examiners led by the State Superintendent, the Principal of the State Normal School at Trenton, and supported by County Superintendent-appointed boards of examiners in cities and each county. The relationship of the State Normal school to the State Board and Superintendent was clearly drawn and the college was given the role of providing trained teachers for the State's local school districts.

Finally, the schools were funded by state, township, and local district taxes. Apgar was disappointed since education was still not free and to cover those costs not met by State aid and local taxes, boards of education could still issue rate bills. Free schools could be created if the Legislature passed a special bill for a township or if a township by a two-thirds majority at its Spring trustee election and budget vote decided to operate free schools. The issue of compulsory education was not mentioned.[6]

The first line of state administration was the county superintendents. The 1867 education law replaced the township superintendent system with professional state supervision in each county. Appointed by the State Board of Education and confirmed by

County Freeholders, the superintendents were State-funded employees. To assist them in their work, Apgar designed dozens of forms for carrying out his two fundamental administrative principles: accountability for funding and administrative standardization. The new superintendents would conduct quarterly examinations for new teachers. They were also expected to visit every school district at least once during the school year. The superintendent would observe a class and using standardized form answer twenty five questions concerning school maintenance, discipline, instruction, and learning. He would look for students whispering to one another and look for evidence that they were properly seated, interested and correct or careless in their recitations. The superintendents were also directed to complete a carefully drawn map of the district to determine the student census and taxable property list. The map was duplicated and one was kept by the District Clerk, a trustee charged with completing the census and raising district taxes if state and township funds could not meet the operating costs of the district. The New Jersey county superintendency model was later used by Virginia in reestablishing its public school system and the first State Superintendent William Ruffner was criticized for introducing "Yankee" ideas into the state.[7]

Apgar's first major policy recommendation was his school consolidation policy paper published in the 1868/69 State Board Report. He listed eleven reasons for consolidation. There were nearly 1400 local school districts. A township system would consolidate these districts into 254 township districts and the number of school officers would be reduced from 4200 to 1600. Apgar figured that the state had 3000 local district elections during a year. These small scale exercises in democracy were really not very democratic since often the meetings were attended by very few people whose votes could make decisions which might not represent the true majority will of the citizens. An active minority opposed to raising district taxes could easily organize a campaign to replace an experienced and successful teacher with a younger and less expensive one. Apgar argued that if elections were at the township level people opposed to school taxes would have a more difficult time organizing candidates and promoting their views across an entire township.[8] Apgar believed that by moving the residential location of its school trustees

from neighborhoods to the entire township, more educated trustees might be elected. With a "better sort" of leader, the quality of education might be improved.

Apgar pointed out how the quality of education would improve if schools were in a unified township system. Small districts with meager resources could draw equitably from a single township tax base. With a larger enrollment, a graded school might be started with primary, intermediate, and advanced grades. Instruction would improve when teachers could focus their attention on a narrow range of student ages and curricula. Children could also attend the school closest to their home. In the district system, a child resident on the edge of the district might be closer to a school in a nearby district but could not attend unless the other district accepted him on a tuition basis. The student's home district might not allow the student to leave since this would reduce their state aid. With district boundaries constantly changing and some districts fractionated across different townships, raising and accounting for local taxes was especially tedious. Finally, the oversight work of the county superintendent would be much easier if he had fewer districts to supervise. He would then be able to spend more time visiting schools, observing instruction, and working with teachers to improve learning.[9]

Between 1868 and 1871 the legislature continued to reduce local township authority and increased state funding to local district budgets. An 1868 law set the district minimum spending level at $2.00 per pupil. Unless a township decided by a two-thirds vote to adopt free schools, expenditures were capped at $4.00 per. pupil. In 1869 the legislature took funds from the sale of state riparian lands and integrated them into the state aid package which had consisted of annual general revenues and interest from the school fund. Finally, in 1870, Apgar notified districts that the legislature had removed all caps on expenditures giving local school districts the power to raise any necessary funds. The two-thirds vote requirement for free schools was also eliminated. Apgar hoped that by giving a majority of voters in local communities the right to finance public schools without state controls additional funds would be raised to meet rising enrollment needs in growing counties.[10]

Finally, in 1871 free public education was achieved when the legislature abolished all township tuition bills in the state's 1450 school districts. Now, trustees would operate

schools using a combination of local and state money. All riparian funds were now dedicated to public education and a new state two mill property tax was adopted. Taxes from each county were sent to Trenton and then returned to the counties on the basis of student enrollment with a state minimum expenditure formula for each enrolled student. With the new funding sources, the earlier elimination of township spending ceilings and the two-thirds majority law, state leaders believed that not only would common school education be free but that it would also be more equitable than before.

The state also provided incentive money to improve education. $20.00 was given for a district library if the aid was matched. The library program was the state's first effort to use the local public schools as a social reform institution for the general adult community in rural areas. This act foreshadowed the more comprehensive rural revitalization efforts of progressive legislators in the first two decades of he twentieth century.

The 1871 funding law did not prohibit the use of the new state two mill property tax for supporting high schools. State law and Ellis Apgar's administration did not mandate secondary education but also did not prevent its emergence in different cities and towns. Townships were required only to sponsor elementary schools through the eighth grade. Between 1867 and 1871 the State had achieved a thorough and bipartisan reorganization of public education institutions. Elected officials were now removed from state administrative responsibilities and assumed ex-officio positions on the new State Board of Education. Professionals managed state school laws answerable to an appointed state board.

In 1872 Governor Theodore Randolph appointed a commission to advise him on education policies. The reform-minded commission members produced recommendations that indicated the institutional reorganization from 1867-1871 was only a prelude for an even more extensive state involvement in local school affairs. For an effective state system which would affect daily school operation, more far-reaching changes were needed. State activists wanted consistent state monitoring in school districts, a nine month, free elementary school mandate, a carefully defined curriculum, compulsory education for children under twelve years old and for those who were truants or "problem children", and admission to the state normal school by examination.[11] The compulsory education policy was previewed in a late 1871 speech by John Foster at the State Teachers Convention in

Newark which repeated reformer beliefs that public funding for compulsory education was necessary since an educated citizenry produced good laws and government ensuring the success of a divinely inspired society.[12]

The legislature did not support the Commission's recommendations. Some lawmakers said the proposals exceeded state authority and were dangerous to local district control. Governor Randolph even opposed the compulsory education policy arguing that compulsion was antagonistic to the spirit of democratic government. He recognized the needs of society and the state but was unprepared to place them before individual family decisions to send or not send a child to school. Randolph was undoubtedly also aware that many growing urban districts did not have the schools to educate all eligible children and the state had never funded a local building program.[13] In rural Sussex County the state expected local districts to offer a free public education, restrict funds from private or religious schools, account for the funds distributed to the districts, work cooperatively with the County Superintendent to settle boundary and personnel disputes, and little else.

The legislative reforms and institution building during the 1866-71 period were consolidated in the new 1875 state constitution which identified public education goals. The Constitutional reform movement began in 1873 to update the 1844 Constitution and to incorporate the post-war Federal constitutional amendments. On April 4, 1873 the legislature passed a joint resolution authorizing the Governor to form a constitutional reform commission. The Governor was authorized to appoint fourteen commissioners from the seven Congressional Districts. They would then submit a report to the legislature which would determine if the proposals should be placed on the ballot.

On April 24, 1873 Governor Joel Parker appointed a Commission with two secretaries. The Commission organized itself into four committees and met eighteen times between May 8, 1873 and December 23, 1873. Jacob Swayze, a Newton lawyer from the 4th Congressional District represented Sussex County. The Commission met for seven months without publicity or news comment. The only researcher who has examined the committee's notes found brief comments about education in an October 8 Bill of Rights Committee meeting. This Committee may have been a subgroup of one of the four major

committees. The notes indicated that the commissioners considered the compulsory education issue but never took a vote to bring it to the full Commission membership for vote. They also discussed the 1871 law creating a state-wide two mill property tax and considered various means whereby State funding authority could be placed within a constitution. On October 29th. notes indicate that Swayze proposed a clause that education should be funded through a broad-based tax derived from earnings, stock dividends, personal property, bonds, and land. For land rich but asset poor Sussex Countians this funding strategy would have placed the Constitutional support of education on a more favorable basis. The proposal never reached the full commission since the subcommittee took no vote on his financing proposal.[14]

But other critical votes were taken on November 17th. concerning the age span of eligible students, the use and meaning of the terms "free," "common," and "public,"and the type of education the schools would offer. The eleven member commission had many narrow six to five votes before finally agreeing that state aid could be used in schools with students from ages five through eighteen, the term "free public" should constitutionally describe the schools, and they should offer an education with "rudiments for all." The adoption of these phrases ended the commission's work in 1873.[15]

When the legislature reconvened in 1874 they began work on a compulsory education bill as well as reviewing the constitutional revision commission report. The compulsory education bill had strong bipartisan support. Members were influenced by the State Superintendent's latest enrollment figures which showed that 174,443 or 47.3% of children between the ages of five to eighteen were in public schools. Discounting children in private schools, the members were concerned about the 60,000 to 70,000 eligible children who were not in school. The bill called for a minimum attendance of twelve weeks a year with six weeks consecutive. School clerks, a trustee to manage school business affairs, were to conduct a district census and inform municipal officials if the law was violated. The law did not require truant officers and provided no funds if districts decided to hire them. If a district decided to hire an officer, there were no provisions for enforcement. Handicapped children were excluded from compulsory attendance, and the

bill only applied if communities had facilities to educate the children. Parental home instruction was also authorized. Clearly, the state had little expectation that all children would attend school.[16]

On February 3rd, 1874 the legislature debated the constitutional reform report. Republicans controlled the legislature and a Democrat Joel Parker was the Governor. The education amendment was in Article IV, Section VII. There are no records revealing the details of Assembly and Senate discussion and votes on the issues. Reform supporters did not ask for expert testimony from either the State Superintendent or the presidents of Rutgers or Princeton Universities. During the discussion legislators objected to the term "rudimentary" describing the state's constitutional obligation to its children ages five through eighteen. Many towns had voluntarily created high schools and the term appeared to prevent using state aid in these schools. On February 4 the Senate voted 12-2 to eliminate the words "rudimentary" and "free" from the proposal. Legislators clearly wanted more precise language since some private schools were also "free" schools and they wanted public funds to go to only publicly accountable schools.

On February 24, 1874 Senator William Taylor, the Senate President, proposed language in which the "State shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of free public education schools for the instruction of all children." The record does not indicate what the senators believed the term "thorough and efficient " meant but press reports indicate that the term was related to eliminating the earlier use of "rudimentary." Through this language local districts could establish high schools but they were not mandated. State aid could be used in these schools. High schools could prepare future elementary school teachers, colleges required them, and they were perceived as a necessary training for some students who would work in the industrializing economic system. Taylor's amendment passed 15-0.[17]

On March 12th, 1874 the Senate amendments went to the Assembly. They met with other education legislation concerning Catholic and private school demands for state aid and compulsory education. The Catholic claim was based on three points. They were "public" schools open to all. They helped immigrants adjust to the country and contribute

to its prosperity, and Catholic schools kept the costs of public education below what they would be if their students attended public schools.[18] But on March 25th. the Assembly approved the Senate amendments and voted to prohibit the use of public funds in private or parochial schools. A district's right to give land or money to private schools was clearly eliminated.[19]

During the spring of 1874 the legislature also eliminated state laws capping the amount of township or district taxes a district might voluntarily choose to raise for their public schools. As the debate on the Constitution proceeded the legislature codified a number of funding and administrative laws from earlier post-war sessions. When the Assembly voted on March 25th, 1874 for the constitutional amendments the fiscal and compulsory attendance legislation were compatible with the new proposed constitution guiding the state's laws.[20]

Two consecutive legislatures had to adopt the constitutional amendments. On January 26, 1875 a Republican majority voted 44-0 in the Assembly and 16-3 in the Senate for approval. On March 18th. the Senate voted 18-0 setting September 7, 1875 for a public vote on each separate amendment. During the spring and summer, 1875 the coming vote created little public interest. An August 18th New Jersey Herald editorial stated that no one understood the proposals and while the intent of the changes was certainly critical to the fundamental law of the state the absence of partisan politics surrounding the vote produced a general public apathy. There was no time to develop a sustained public dialogue about what the editor called an unintelligible and confusing public policy.[21] In the next week's issue the editor published a letter stressing that the newspaper still had a duty to inform the public about the significance of the amendments.[22]

If partisan politics did not enter into the brief public constitutional debate Catholic-Protestant religious differences did. Their origin was in an 1874 and 1875 controversy which flared over religious worship policies in the state youth reformatory. The Jamesburg Reformatory for males was opened in 1867. In 1871 a Catholic priest asked to visit the reformatory and provide religious services for Catholic youth. The request was refused. Only Protestant clergy were permitted in the reformatory. During February, 1874 Hudson

County Catholic legislators introduced a bill in the Assembly proposing that no child should be compelled to attend religious exercises other than those of the child's religious denomination. The bill failed and Catholics turned to another strategy: they proposed a second reformatory for Catholics. The bill did not pass in 1874 and when the 1874 elections produced a Democratic Assembly and a Republican Senate, the scene was set for continued deadlock in 1875. In the Spring, 1875 a bill authorizing a Catholic protectory for delinquent youth passed the Assembly. Sussex Democrats opposed their Catholic Democratic colleagues by voting against the bill. The Republican Sussex Register encouraged further resistance to the Catholic bill which could lead to sectarian confusion and strife as well as further divide the state Democratic party. The bill lost in the Senate by a vote of 8 to 12. While this issue was splitting the legislature it also approved the constitutional amendment prohibiting the use of state funds for any private school.[23]

Until late August, constitution amendments evoked little public interest. Then apathy suddenly gave way to religious conflict. An evangelical conference denounced the spread of Catholicism into state affairs and called for laws and a positive constitution vote which would protect the common schools from Catholic influence. With the vote approaching on September 7th, some Democratic papers in urban, Catholic northeast New Jersey opposed the constitutional amendments. Other papers supported the amendments now urging their passage not only for better government but also to stop a Catholic attack on public institutions. Many newspapers inflamed public emotions and on the Sunday before the referendum, sermons in Protestant churches brought out strong anti-Catholic vote passing all amendments in every county. In Sussex County all constitutional amendments passed by a 70% margin.[24] By October, 1875, the basis for new relationships between state government and local schools was now embedded in the Constitution, legislation, and State Board of Education administrative policy.

Between 1866-75 Ellis Apgar and other state officials had met their goals. Schools were free and a limited compulsory education law was enacted. They had standardized personnel and procedures both within his department and between his officials and 1400 local school districts across the state. Throughout the period, Apgar supported the concept

of teacher institutes and stressed the importance of primary grade teachers who he said were the key staff in any long-term hope for instructional improvement. He advocated graded schools which did not exist in many rural townships, and believed this goal could be met through merging local districts into a larger, consolidated township system which would create larger schools with teachers specializing in infant/primary, middle grade, and upper school curricula..

The Sussex County Superintendency

As officials in Trenton legislated free common schools, compulsory education, and the 1875 Constitutional Amendments local Sussex school officials now found a permanent state official functioning between them and the state aid and authority they demanded to operate their schools.

Nathaniel Pettit was the first Sussex County Superintendent. On May 2, 1867 the New Jersey Herald simultaneously announced his appointment and resignation as the rector of Newton's Christ Episcopal Church. When the County Freeholders approved his selection by a vote of 21 to 9, the Herald commented that "he is a gentlemen in every way qualified to fill the position." The Sussex Register commented that Pettit's appointment was due to the influence of Thomas Lawrence, a county Democrat on the State Board of Education. In the following week's edition the Register apologized for having made such a suggestion.[25]

Pettit's first actions implemented Apgar's standardization and fiscal accountability policies. With the 1866-7 school year about to end, he asked teachers in every district to draw a map of their district showing the home of each student, the location of the school house, and the boundaries of the district. Pettit then published a notice to school trustees scheduling a series of meetings at a central schoolhouse in each township. The meetings were to begin precisely at 2 P.M. with each district trustee group ordered to give him the boundaries for each district along with a list of all children between the ages of five and eighteen. If this information was not available Pettit would not release district state aid for the following year. He promised to give each district a copy of the new law and to answer

questions as best he could.[26]

During the summer, 1867 Pettit faced two challenges to state law and policies. One issue concerned whether trustees could hire an uncertified teacher and pay the person with money raised from district taxes. Or did the County Superintendent's examination and certification powers extend to all teachers regardless of tax source? The local Democratic press announced that a ruling of the Attorney General gave trustees the right to hire anyone as long as the salary came from local taxes. The State Board of Education and its employees could maintain certification standards for only those teachers supported with State funding. The decision clearly avoided the issue since in a single teacher district local and state funds were always merged in one salary. In a second development which showed how difficult a task Pettit and the other county superintendents faced in raising educational standards, voters in the Middleville district in Stillwater Township voted 70-18 in opposition to a graded school proposal which would have used two teachers to meet the widely varying needs of their students between the ages of the five and eighteen. One teacher would teach the entire school.[27]

In late August Pettit established an office in the Newton office of S. D. Woodruff, a local lawyer. The building was next to the local newspapers which could publish his policy announcements to local districts. One 1867 news release concerned a warning that trustees should not buy globes and maps from salesmen who claimed that the State would pay for them. In January, 1868, Pettit addressed a notice to parents listing State-approved texts. New Jersey had no central, text adoption system. Pettit had read many different texts and published his own recommended list. Often, parents complained about buying different texts and the problems that developed if they moved, a new teacher arrived or new group of trustees was elected. The books were replaced. Parents could not give used texts to younger siblings. Pettit also recommended that parents work with teachers and trustees to review texts and select a single district text parents would purchase. As the 1867-1868 school year was about to begin he organized a calendar of school visits and began to acquaint himself with the new forms from his boss Ellis Apgar. He gave these forms to local officials standardizing attendance and fiscal accounting.

Often, the most difficult task for a county superintendent was altering a district's boundary since this involved shifting taxable assessed land value and state aid from one district to another. On February 20, 1868 a writer calling himself "District #5" wrote the Sussex Register accusing Pettit of shifting boundaries on the day before District #5 residents were to meet and vote for new school construction taxes. This boundary change was prohibited in the new law and had required a two-thirds majority even under old law. The writer suggested that either the county superintendent's power be curtailed or the position should be abolished. No one person should have such authority. Pettit denied that he had shifted the property lines just before an election. He said the new law needed corrections and if some other governmental agency could revise the boundary, he would accept its decision in the matter.[28]

The State Superintendent required that each County Superintendent submit an annual report. Pettit's first report covering the school year 1866/1867 noted his impressions following only five months service. Pettit believed that the new 1867 law would save the state and townships money since an accurate student count could now be immediately verified by a state official. In past years he was sure that State aid was based on inflated enrollment numbers. Township taxpayers were required to raise a minimum amount for each student but now the local school, district tax was an optional means to give a school the necessary funds to complete a school year. Explaining the new district tax was especially difficult since this funding authority did not exist under the old law. The State's voluntary consolidation policy also required great efforts and negotiating skills but progress was made when Pettit consolidated thirteen small districts into eight larger ones. He also reported that the quality of potential teachers was higher than ten years before. Finally, if corporal punishment was illegal Pettit had found a strong replacement. Reporting disobedient children to the district trustees produced the same results.[29]

Pettit's second report covering the 1867/68 school year indicated that the new school law was respected in more educated parts of the county and opposed where residents were less educated. The old idea that anyone could teach was less accepted but the current examination needed to shift from testing for knowledge to testing for teaching

competency. Pettit proudly reported that investment for new school houses had increased from $4,040 to $36,852.53 in one year. He also made progress in establishing uniform text series in some districts. He and a group of local teachers had published a text list recommending that trustees and teachers should follow the list and instruct parents to buy these books for their children.[30]

In the fall of 1868 Pettit decided to return to full-time ministry work and took up an appointment in Bordentown, New Jersey. The Register announced his resignation on December 10, 1868 along with the appointment of a well-known, private school educator, Edward A. Stiles of Wantage Township. Unlike Pettit, Stiles came to office as both an official and as a zealous reformer. He was loyal to Ellis Apgar and a dogged enforcer of new state laws. But, unlike the more mild and conciliatory Pettit, Stiles believed that the advancement of education depended upon fervent community support. Stiles believed that his job was to exhort men and women to see education as their personal responsibility. To promote this role he wrote opinion articles for the local press. As an official he submitted very subjective and critical reports to the State Superintendent which appeared in the county press. His attacks on general public apathy, the poor performance of school trustees, the tax opposition of wealthy childless landowners and poor teachers earned him both support and opponents in the local press and throughout the county.[31]

The County Freeholders did not confirm Stiles until May, 1869 and his first full year in office began in the summer, 1869. During the 1869/70 school year Stiles aggressively took up his position and call. He went to the Freeholders for money to supplement the State's offer of $20.00 per. district for a library. The request was refused. He visited schools and, in a comment directed toward lazy trustees, his report noted that in some districts he had been the only adult to visit the school in the past year. He admonished local officials when he encountered difficulties in getting proper and complete data from district clerks as everyone coped with the many new forms arriving weekly from Apgar's office. Districts were publicly criticized for illegally hiring and paying uncertified teachers, neglecting to give pauper children textbooks, and failing to tell teachers how to maintain a student register. Stiles was an official and an aggressive "friend of education."

In the fall of 1870 Stiles sent his 1869/70 report to Trenton. Apgar edited it and included both Stiles' data and acerbic comments in his annual report to the State Board. This report became a public document and in the early and mid-winter of 1871 Stiles was criticized for what an opponent called "his gloomy outlook." His critics pointed to building projects in various towns and thought that generally teachers were diligent and education was improving. They advised Stiles to look on the brighter side and take courage that improvement was coming.[32] Stiles responded to the Herald welcoming the dialogue and urging his readers to examine Apgar's report, particularly that part advocating free schools in a county where many districts still used the rate system. He called on the power of community pride when he noted that the county's reputation was thrown into disrespect by his report which showed that Sussex had the lowest teacher salaries in the state.[33]

Between 1870 and 1874 Stiles continued to vigorously speak out in the local press. He exhorted parents and trustees for more school support and used the press to carefully explain how new laws worked. Consistent with Apgar's position that local districts must take the responsibility for building and maintaining buildings, he countered the apathy of many voters who did not have school age children by asking them to act as Christians with love toward all children in the community who needed their support. "Thou shalt love they neighbor as thyself." The poor children of the county were their neighbors. The Lord would repay them many times for their generosity toward children.

Stiles piety did not always earn him friends. A letter from the notable "Justice" in Libertyville, a community near Stile's farm in Wantage Township accused him of double dealing. He was slandered for being an public official "feeding at the public troth and getting free lodging as he traveled around the county." He was further accused of working against a campaign to build a new school in his home district which might lure children from his private school. This attack led the Herald editor to open his columns for Stiles' response but he would not be drawn into a personal feud and neither supporting letters from his friends nor his own response followed the attack on his position and character.[34]

Stiles believed that parents were critical helpers in a child's first years in school. His newsletters to parents warned that their teachers were doomed to failure if children

were not in school or arrived tardy. Parents should also buy the books that Stiles and a committee of county educators had recommended since teachers could then more easily teach a class when all children had the same text. Visits to school were also important showing both the children and teacher the attention and respect that parents had for the school. Most importantly, parents should vote in the spring elections and make sure that their schools were totally free through raising district tax money to supplement state and township taxes.[35]

Stiles was an ardent school consolidationist and over the six years of his superintendency he consolidated twelve local districts. Yet, over 100 districts remained serving 7500 students. Stiles pointed out that one third of the State's districts with an enrollment under 45 students were in Sussex County. A school enrollment of 45 was important since the law gave $350 to these districts. Districts with less than 45 students only received a per. capita allocation which varied from year to year. In one year, a district with 44 students received $177 and Stiles could only point to the law when trustees from such districts complained. He used these occasions to plead for consolidation to reduce local taxes and save money needed for new schools or repairs. His efforts often went unheeded since a school was a community asset. Parents and landowners felt a sense of control over its operation and future. Children walked to the district school and parents believed their children might have to go farther if their local school closed. Occasionally, a new district was created when church leaders wanted a school in remote poverty stricken areas with low literacy rates and poor moral standards.[36]

Stiles' 1873-1874 report was more subdued but produced substantial evidence that education was improving. The number of enrolled students increased from 4,914 of 7,835 eligible in 1868 to 6,511 of 7,640 eligible in 1874. These figures also revealed the start of a steady population decline in the 5-18 year category which would characterize county enrollment between 1874 and 1894. Teacher salaries for males rose from $32.00 a month in 1869 to $46.00 in 1874. Female salaries were $24.68 in 1868 and $33.00 a month in 1874. The value of school property increased from $52,675 in 1868 to $144,465 in 1874. The report used Apgar's new standardized procedure classifying schools into good, fair,

and poor with the good schools producing a "controlling example upon adjacent districts."

In 1875 Stiles had to enforce the State's first compulsory education law. The law required that every parent or guardian with a child between the ages of eight and thirteen assure that the child attended school for a period of twelve weeks of which six had to be consecutive. Failure to meet the law called for a $20.00 fine. Stiles and the other twenty county superintendents across the state had no local police authorities in the rural townships who could enforce the law. His only allies were district trustees who had conducted a census of potential students in their communities and could use their list of enrolled students to identify neglectful parents. Stiles' 1874 census showed 7640 eligible children. Enrollment data indicated that 6511 were in school leaving roughly 15% out of school although he recognized that some of these students might have already attended many years of common school. More importantly, he noted that statewide figures indicated a gap of 25% between census and enrollment data while in Sussex the difference was only 15%. This indicates that a higher percent of potential students were enrolled in Sussex rural schools as contrasted with other more industrialized and urban counties where work opportunities may have attracted students. Part of the difference may also be accounted for by the presence of a larger private and parochial school enrollment in the more populated counties. Stiles accused parents of greed and neglect when they failed to enroll their students in district schools.

Edward Stiles died in August, 1875 while writing the 1874/1875 report, a month before the Constitutional referendum which would redefine the state responsibility for free, public education. His local obituary was later inserted into the state report. The children of the county had lost a zealous public advocate of education whose profession was to mobilize public sentiment for education and the next county superintendent who effectively, but quietly, administered State policy in the county.[37]

Administering the Perfected System: 1875-94

Luther Hill's County Superintendency: 1876/1894

Between 1866-75 the state had created the legal and institutional framework for its policies. For the next twenty years legislators and officials expected to improve school accountability, teaching, and learning through standardized practices. Standardization came in two forms: new laws and expanded administrative requirements. In both ways state leaders hoped to use the school as a model instructor to carry out both a reform of schooling for children and a series of policies designed to improve general child welfare in 1400 communities across the state.

The Superintendency of Luther Hill, 1876-94

Luther Hill was 42 years old when he was appointed by the State Board of Education as the County's third superintendent in 1876. Before joining state service, unlike his two predecessors, Nathaniel Pettit and Edward Stiles, Hill had taught in an Andover Township public school, five miles south of Newton. The school was visited by two clergymen from Asbury, New Jersey in March, 1875 while they were traveling through the county visiting Presbyterian churches. They sent a highly complimentary letter to the New Jersey Herald describing it as orderly, yet with a considerable amount of freedom which indicated that the children looked upon the teachers as friends. This characterization of his teaching would characterize Hill through the next twenty seven years of his county superintendency.

Unlike Edward Stiles, Luther Hill did not conduct himself as an aggressive friend of education whose major task was to mobilize public support for his private policy convictions. He did not make complex, general comments about the county's teachers, parents, and trustees or raise emotional issues in the press or his official reports about their competency and attention to duty. His disposition and working style tended to be conciliatory and consistent, always ready to negotiate, and yet gently reminding trustees of their duties. He had the necessary and valuable skill of discretion and an innate

understanding of how a state official could successfully operate what appeared to be a highly centralized state authority in a setting that was in reality a very decentralized democratic educational system of interacting children, teachers, parents, and trustees dominated by rural poverty and geographic isolation. He did not have a public moral mission but was rather a somewhat genial man who understood rural schools and assumed that others in the local school enterprise also had something valuable to contribute for children. Luther Hill was a cautious, rural bureaucrat who did not try to create or rally sentiment for a "perfected system of administration but rather tried to make it quietly work among his friends and colleagues."[38]

Following Stile's death in August, 1875, Luther Hill was not the first State Board nomination to the vacant superintendent's position. Earlier, W. J. Baxter of Franklin and A.J. Cope of Stanhope were nominated but both were rejected by the County Board of Freeholders. One writer from Wantage township believed they were rejected because they were Republicans in a Democratic county.[39] The Herald's editor chastised the State Board for questioning the right of the County Freeholders to pass judgment on their appointments. Not only were they exercising their legal confirming right, they were men of intelligence who certainly knew the county's needs. The editor also believed the County Superintendency should be an elective position.[40] Hill was the third nomination and may have represented a noncontroversial compromise candidate. Unlike Cope and Baxter, who had been active leaders in county teacher associations and recent state-sponsored teacher institute management duties, Hill had no county-wide reputation. His name had appeared once as the fifth of a five name list of organizers for one state institute in May, 1874.[41] After Stiles' strong but controversial public performance and the two failed nominations he appeared the perfectly competent, local, and inconspicuous candidate. He was reappointed six times and would leave the position in 1902.

Luther Hill's first task was tracking the money the state sent to local districts. He slowly won the confidence of the local school board clerks and reminded them of their duties. In his state reports Hill obliquely pointed to the fiscal consequences if they failed to supply reliable data at the right times. Early in his tenure Hill had to go into a Vernon

Township district where no trustees had run for election in April thus leaving the district without any leadership. In August, three citizens had simply proclaimed themselves trustees and were trying to hire a teacher. Hill intervened and dismissed the rump trustees temporarily taking over the district until an election could be conducted.

Hill quickly gained a reputation among teachers, trustees, and the general public as a quiet and practical man. While he did carry out state standardized procedures for observing teachers and rating schools he always seem to bring a practical touch to his position and authority. The Fredon Township correspondent to the Herald remarked about his recent visit to the school noting that Hill was "very practical as he inspected the school, lectured on arithmetic, and did board exercises for the students." Another correspondent noted that he had recently met Hill on the road returning from Sparta. Hill stopped his carriage, began to converse and alighted with a microscope. The writer and Hill began to examine a bee sting and grains of sand. They were soon joined by local boys whom Hill instructed in the use of the instrument. Hill was characterized as a man "ready to get right down to business along the roadside on the damp earth and he was preferred a thousand times over the kid glove chaps who are too refined to bother with such things."[42]

As Superintendent, Hill was faced with two interlocking conditions he could not control: falling enrollment and the continued existence of many small districts. The enrollment decline vexed Hill because he knew that one of its effects was to sustain more small districts. He first noted the enrollment decline in his 1875/76 report to Ellis Apgar. He thought the low figures came from poor reporting and believed that if he carefully instructed the district census takers the right figures would be reported. But his 1877/78 report noted that even with more careful supervised reporting the decline continued. His 1878/79 report showed a decrease of 736 students in nine years. Clearly, there was a declining birthrate due either personal sexual practice or the migration of young, marriageable adults from the county. By 1885 the enrollment was 6233. The decline was 1557 in fifteen years from 7790 enrolled in 1870. As a result there were 34 districts of 110 with less than 45 students. By the end of the 1888/89 school year enrollment decreased to 5839. Hill estimated that less than 150 students were in private schools. By 1891/92 there were 52 districts with less than 45 students. In 1892 when the state passed its first truly

compulsory education act declaring that districts had to take all resident children Sussex County schools had no problem finding seats for its children.

Hill worked hard at achieving voluntary consolidation. Ten districts were consolidated between 1876 and 1882/83 but declining school population forced Hill into acknowledging that the situation was beyond his control. His 1891/92 report accurately captured his dilemma, "here is a problem: given, a large territory with a limited number of children, how can they be brought together, and taught, according to the demands of the State, with the same regularity of attendance and at a cost no greater per student than in the more populous locations? Who can solve it?" Hill's analysis did not go beyond the need to spread resources thinly over many small districts. His natural restraint prevented his discussion of how teaching and learning might be improved if children were in larger, consolidated graded schools. Hill would be in office when the legislature consolidated schools in April, 1894 and he and others quickly learned that while consolidation might result in different spending and accounting practices, it did not automatically change the daily learning experiences of children who continued to attend small, isolated one room schools in a unified township school district.[43]

Before the state created its "perfected system" of new constitutional, legislative, and administrative procedures between 1866 - 1875, school reformers wanted education to evangelize and republicanize a child's soul. Now, Ellis Apgar and his county superintendents used the school to assist state leaders in coping with new industrial age demographic, economic, and social problems.

The State And Community Schools: An Overview

State officials had one directive in their fiscal relationships with a local district: to tell local officials that where the law was clear, obey it or face the certain loss of equally certain state aid. Schools also had to remain open for nine months. Districts could not take state money and then close schools when funds ran out before June. Local trustees were elected at a specified time. Board meetings were publicly advertised and held in the school houses and not "on the fences." While trustee responsibilities varied slightly over the

1875-94 period, the fundamental assumption was that their powers and responsibility as prescribed in law were a shared responsibility of both state officials and local trustees. To insure fiscal accountability the clerk of the Board, a trustee elected by the full board, took an oath that all bills were itemized and properly paid. Without these basic fiscal and managerial assumptions and penalties state policies could not operate. The task of the county superintendents was to help districts do what they had to do and negotiate with them toward procedures and standards that were not clearly mandated.[44]

State policy often mixed authority and threats. Trustees were expected to build new schools with local funds. In 1884 the legislature gave voters the authority to issue bonds for new construction. In 1886 districts could also borrow construction money from the State School Fund.[45] If trustees were unable or unwilling to carry out health and safety mandates they might lose state aid. Uncertified teachers could not be paid and any effort to circumvent this rule could result in loss of state aid. Neither state funds nor locally raised taxes could be given to any private or parochial school. Finally, districts were also forced to raise local taxes providing at least $4.00 minimum aid per. student in 1881 and $5.00 in 1888. These relationships between state officials and local trustees were the "perfected system" in operation.

The severe depression of 1873-78 placed new strains on state and local officials. Regardless of economic prosperity or hard times, the public education system needed a strong and predictable income source. The 1871 two mill state property tax funded the 1874 free education law. But if depressed economic conditions reduced the locally assessed land values state and local districts would face a crisis. Sussex's state aid from the 2 mill act was $33,423 in 1872 and only $26,436 in 1878. Local township and district taxes needed to make up the difference between state aid and the cost of running the schools for nine months decreased from $9,940 in 1873 to $7,700 in 1879. In Newton, the county's wealthiest town, the 2 mill tax extracted $4,054 in 1873. Only $2,469 in aid was returned. In 1878 the town paid $3,213 and received only $1,501. The aid system was in jeopardy since it required yearly funding by which the state's more wealthy communities paid for the children in poorer communities. As a result of the decrease in

state aid and the reluctance to raise local taxes, teaching salaries were cut as the assessed value of Sussex property declined by 30% between 1873 and 1879.[46]

In April, 1880 Ellis Apgar traveled to Dover in western Morris County where he addressed the school fiscal crisis. Apgar identified the cause noting that as land values decreased the 2 mill tax brought in less revenue. He estimated that the 1880 state shortfall would be $60,000 but perhaps only $30,000 in 1881 since the economy seemed to be slowly recovering and land values were starting to rise. Statewide land values had declined $110,000,000 since 1874 and would increase by only $9,000,000 in 1880. The cost of educating a child in 1875/76 was $4.49. In 1880 only $3.41 was available. Apgar's solution to the crisis was a different state per capita tax linked to land values He recommended a state tax of $4.00 per. child which supplemented by an appropriation from general state revenues would yield $4.30 per. child. The tax would be raised in each municipality and sent to the State Treasury. The State Board would redistribute 90% of the tax to the districts providing $4.00 per student. The board also retained 10% of the tax revenue and could send money to needy counties and districts.[47]

In 1881 the legislature enacted Apgar's recommendations and stabilized the state's funding system. The new per. capita tax would stop the decline in teacher salaries by assuring more predictable revenues. Regardless of the economic conditions, Apgar's policies did not alter his policy that the state would provide aid for operational expenses. Construction costs remained a local responsibility.

Administering The Perfected System: 1875-94

Curriculum/Instruction Reform

After the state successfully accomplished its fiscal and trustee management standardized policies, state officials turned to much more elusive and undefined policy goals concerning ways to improve teaching and learning. The policies they developed were not derived from laws and were often carried out in a piecemeal fashion when the State Superintendent and a county superintendent decided that the time was right for an initiative.

Policies to describe and define proper teaching and high levels of academic achievement for school graduates were mainly confined to small and rural districts where often teachers were poorly educated and the local trustees may themselves not have had a common school education. In these districts state officials visited schools and reported on the quality of teaching. These reports often later appeared in public documents available to the local editors. Rating systems were introduced to monitor and rank schools and districts anticipating that public disclosure would spur trustees, parents, and voters to improve their selection of teachers thereby making the school more effective. Through these standardized procedures, districts received an annual report card from a seemingly objective state official.

Contemporary, effective classroom evaluation research uses the same indicators that Ellis Apgar and his corps of county superintendents created in the mid-1870s. Today, these measures include the arrangement of classroom furniture, the ratio of student talk to teacher talk, whether instruction occurs individually, in small groups, or with the entire class, the presence or absence of learning or interest centers that students use when working alone or in small groups, the degree of physical movement that students are allowed without asking permission from the teacher, and the degree of teacher and student reliance on texts and other instructional material and apparatus.[48]

On October 17, 1877 Luther Hill, the county superintendent in Sussex County, visited the classroom of F. L. Strong, a teacher in a one room school in the Willistine District in Hardyston Township. Hill used standardized rating forms designed by Ellis Apgar to describe and judge Strong's teaching performance. These forms would be used to aggregate county data for a state report and may have also been used in Hill's annual report to the Willistine trustees.

As he entered the school, Hill's records showed that Strong had no teaching certificate. This was a clear violation of law but rather than raise the issue Hill decided to continue his observation and use its conclusions as a recommendation to change teachers. Hill favorably observed that Strong's teaching strategy was not confined to using the text and hearing recitations. He also made a favorable appearance and received a plus for being tidy. Hill saw that Strong did not keep good order in the classroom since he allowed

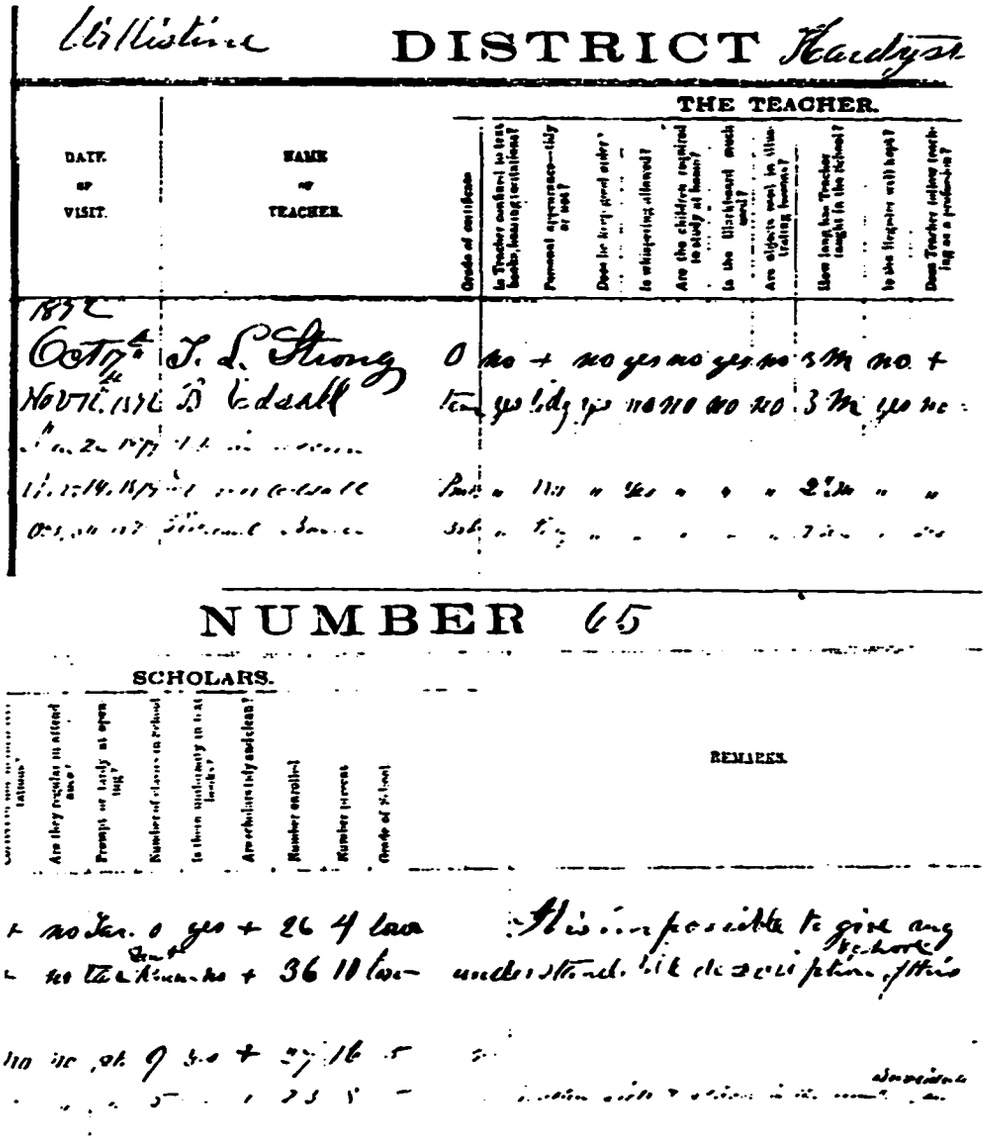
whispering. While he used the blackboard he did not use objects in illustrating abstract ideas. He did not assign homework avoiding the controversy over such assignments since many communities were divided over its value, some considering it a sign that the teacher was not successful in the classroom. Others opposed homework because they believed children needed time at home for chores and play.

Strong had been teaching for three months and had not yet learned how to keep his register book. Hill also noted that Strong had expressed an intention to remain in the profession and marked his rating sheet with a + sign. When students regularly attended school the teacher received another + sign for their recitations. On the day Hill visited Strong's classroom only four students were present from an enrollment of 26. They were tidy and clean and benefited from a uniform text series. Hill rated Strong's school "low" and ended his generally negative rating with the comment "it is impossible to give any understandable description of this school."

In 1877 Hill visited the Frankford Plains school in Frankford Township, Mrs. M. R. Shoemaker, the holder of a third grade certificate given to common school graduates who passed a state certification test had taught at the school for six months and Hill favorably commented on her personal tidiness, building maintenance, register management, object teaching, use of the blackboard, and her prohibition against whispering. Shoemaker received poor marks for maintaining classroom order and the note about the absence of whispering may have referred to the fact that although she did not allow whispering her classroom control was not strong enough to prevent it. Shoemaker's students seemed to understand their recitations and were interested in their classwork. They attended regularly, but were often tardy. The school had 29 students enrolled and 20 were present when Hill visited. He noted that during the day they were organized into 18 different instructional groups. The school had a uniform text series and the students came to school clean and properly dressed.

Hill gave the Frankford Plains school a final grade of "medium" when he finished his observation.[49] He used a separate observational form for each district which enable him to note developments on an annual basis when he visited the school. No copy of the observational form was sent to the trustees. Hill summarized his findings in a letter to

trustees. The visits of County Superintendents resulted in a final annual rating on a one to five scale. The rating was based on five categories of information: the use of the blackboard and objects, the accuracy of student recitations, classroom order, cleanliness, and general school character.



Along with a standardized procedure to observe and evaluate teachers, in July, 1880 state officials also decided to unofficially declare a state-wide course of study and examination system. A study committee advocated a curriculum which included reading, spelling, writing, geography, arithmetic, English grammar, book-keeping, history and

Constitution of the United States, physiology, natural philosophy, algebra, through quadratics, geometry, mensuration, agriculture, and botany. Districts were notified which texts might best be used in this comprehensive curriculum. Once a student finished the curriculum and was selected as a candidate for the county superintendent's examination the student took the test and, if successful, received a special state certificate.

The examinations had questions similar to those found on the lowest examination for teacher certification. Eighteen Newton students took the first examination and scored between 88 and 96 1/2 points. Sixteen Stillwater Township students took the test. These examinations were useful devices for motivating students, they gave a school information to improve instruction, and provided a recognized credential for students who wished to take technical training or seek admission to a college preparatory private school. These examinations did not occur in every county on the same day. Rather, they represented a county by county innovation used to build public support for maintaining high academic expectations for a self-selected group of students.[50]

Administering the Perfected System: 1875-1894

Using School Districts For General Social Reform

The state had other goals for its 1400 school districts beyond the immediate need to improve education and assure managerial and fiscal accountability. Schools were also expected to carry out state policies designed to improve child and adult welfare. School districts gave the state the means to reach into every county, township, and district school community.

Public health policy goals were implemented using school districts. In 1880 Federal census takers noted how many school age children had not been vaccinated. When the census taker found an unvaccinated child local school officials were notified and if parents were too poor to see a doctor the trustees were required to order and pay fifty cents for the vaccination. Two hundred and forty children were found in Newton alone during the summer and fall of 1880. After 1880, the use of local districts for vaccination purposes

was institutionalized when Form #3, the Annual Census Report of the District Clerk, was revised to include a column for reporting this information. The annual school census taker had to swear before the local Justice of the Peace that the information was accurate before he could receive payment for his work from the township clerk.

State community sanitation and environmental protection policies also relied on the public schools as either models for local municipal sanitation laws or they directly used teachers and children as active participants in new state-wide projects. In March, 1883 the Sussex Register reported that only three of the county's twelve townships had submitted their mandated health report for 1881. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction was asked to prepare a state-wide survey instrument which would assess the sanitary and health conditions of the state's school houses. The schools would then be given a rating and a plan for improvement to be met by local taxes or bonding. The school survey became a model for local municipalities and was a further example of the state's standardization strategy to first gather data, arrange the data into a merit system, publish the information, and then systematically report on changes in the status of school buildings each year.[51]

In the Spring of 1886 the Governor declared April 30th. as Arbor Day. Schools were required to arrange special activities for either planning trees or shrubs or in some way focus attention on the relationship of trees to water supplies and agricultural productivity. State Superintendent Edward Chapman sent a circular to every district teacher explaining the importance of the day and the need to instruct children about the need for more trees in New Jersey. Chapman made reference to natural disasters in China, Oklahoma, and parts of Europe where the absence of tree cover had led to severe flooding and reduced crop production. In 1891 the State Superintendent gave teachers a special curriculum activity booklet with successful ideas from across the state. The use of schools for sanitation and environmental protection policies represented very early uses of educational institutions as administrative units to carry out general state-wide health and social welfare policies.

In the mid-1880s two issues converged which influenced schools. The issues were the 1851 child labor law which prohibited factory labor for children under ten years and limited the number of hours worked for minors to no more than sixty a week and extending

the 1874 Compulsory Attendance Law. If children were to be partially excluded from the labor market schools had to be enlarged and extended into the adolescent years so that they could absorb the increased and older enrollment.[52] School officials had to enforce compulsory attendance laws and provide some type of job training skills to students who were kept out of the job market and forced to remain in school. In the Sussex County's rural townships these concerns were not easily resolved.

Ellis Apgar's 1882 report to the State Board showed that 62% of all eligible students between 5 and 18 years old were in public schools. He estimated that another 13% were in private schools and 25% did not attend school at all.[53] His report also showed that while total public-private enrollment was 67% at ages 11/12 it dropped to 47% the following year and fell quickly to only 13% by ages 15/16. Even factoring in the number of students enrolled in private schools, Apgar estimated that 83% of the 15 to 16 year old age group was no longer in school. 90% were not in school by the time they were 16 years old. The state goal that children under the age of eleven attend school was achieved. Only 4% not enrolled in some type of school.[54]

In the spring of 1883 a child labor control law was signed which included extending compulsory education and forming an inspectorate to enforce the child labor law provisions. Section 1 prohibited any girl under the age of 14 or male under the age of 12 from working in any factory, workshop, mine or manufacturing establishment. Section 2, which went into effect in July, 1884, stipulated that any child between the ages of twelve and fifteen in factory or mining work could not be employed unless they had attended some public, public night school, or recognized private school education for at least twelve weeks six of which had to be consecutive weeks of instruction. Before employers could hire a child between the ages of twelve and fifteen they needed to see a document signed by a teacher showing that the child had met the attendance requirements. Section 3 regulated the number of hours for children under fourteen setting a maximum of sixty over a six day period with an average ten hours a day.

Other sections of the law cited the punishments for employers in violation and appointed a single state inspector for a three year period at a salary of $1,200 per. annum

with $500 expenses. School districts were given an incentive to carefully track their enrollment and school leaving data since the fines levied on any employer would go to the district where the violation occurred.[55] The 1883 law was amended in 1884 adding a second appointed inspector and requiring a physical fitness statement from the public school for each child who wished to enter the labor force.[56]

In December, 1883 Apgar spoke at the state teacher association meeting in Newark and the question of school enrollment again emerged in relationship to pending Federal legislation. In remarks entitled "Illiteracy and National Aid to Education" Apgar strongly opposed the proposed Federal legislation of Senator Henry W. Blair (N.H) which would appropriate Federal funds for state schools. He said the present state constitutional system was effective and such aid would cause immeasurable suffering to the cause of education. Apgar said that Blair's data showing 90,000 New Jersey students out of school was inaccurate. The fault lay not in the good Senator's intentions but rather in how the data was gathered and presented. The 90,000 students had been in school for some part of their potential school-age enrollment span between the ages of five and eighteen. There were many causes for students leaving school and the new state child labor laws would keep more of them in school between the ages of twelve and fifteen although they did have access to work outside the prohibited industrial, mining, and manufacturing categories.[57]

The 1883 and 1884 child labor laws were followed by a new compulsory education law in 1885 which required that children between the ages of seven and twelve attend school for twenty weeks a year. Schools were open nine months a year and this law further extended compulsory attendance but applied only in districts that could enroll more students.

The 1885 Compulsory Education Law also called on boards of education, at the request of the Inspector of Factories, to appoint truant officers to assist them in locating both children and records. Since Sussex County had factories and mines in only a few of its 100+ districts it was not clear how the law might apply to most rural areas since the Inspector of Factories would not visit such communities yet section 5 of the law stipulated that children between the ages of seven and fifteen who loitered about the streets or in

public places were juvenile delinquents and subject to the act's penalties. The local press acknowledged the law would be most vigorously carried out in the cities but it clearly applied to all parts of the state and concerned rural county superintendents.

The first visit by the state child labor law inspector occurred in Newton during 1885. The inspector found one underage child working in the Sussex Shoe factory in Newton and none at the H. W. Merriam Shoe factory which had dismissed a few underage employees before the inspector visited. Clearly, these two major employers had no need to hire underage youth given the county's labor market which had many qualified male and female laborers looking for work.[58]

The State Inspector of Factories and Workshops again visited Sussex County in early November, 1887. First, he visited four mines in Ogdensburg and Franklin where none of the 135 male workers was under sixteen years old. His report found the mines provided good ventilation and had had no recent, serious accidents. He then visited the shoe factories in Newton where only one underage child, Florence Butler age thirteen, was found working. A visit in 1887 found 100 workers at the Sussex Shoe Factory, seventy males and thirty females. Five of the 100 were under sixteen. Another visit to the larger Merriam Shoe Factory with a labor force of 345, 222 males and 123 females, found fifteen illegal workers. The underage children were dismissed. They may have been old enough to work but had not attended school the required number of consecutive weeks. The factory inspector also found that the Merriam factory was testing new job candidates for their mathematical skills applied in certain production jobs and their place name geography knowledge essential in the shipping department.[59]

The compulsory education laws of 1874 and 1885 also forced the County Freeholders into expanding the first county-wide school which educated the resident children at the County Poor House. A teacher had been hired in 1869 and by 1876 there were 37 children living at the facility in rural Frankford Township. These children could have been easily absorbed in neighboring school districts, one only 200 yards away, increasing the amount of state aid to these districts. But prejudice and stigmatization influenced the nearby trustees who refused to enroll orphans, abandoned or bastard

children, or the temporarily indigent children of families with parents. A Sunday school was also formed to serve these indigent children.[60]

Another general social welfare policy mandated drug and alcohol education. The local press supported the state mandate noting that some German states even prohibited the sale of tobacco to children under sixteen years. The combined use of alcohol and tobacco was reported in the Register when four boys between ten and fifteen were found drunk, wandering Newton's streets in the summer, 1882. In September, 1883 an article excerpted from the British medical journal Lancet reported that in an anti-smoking experiment investigators had also found a strong relationship of smokers to alcoholism and another local article in April, 1884 noted the increasing numbers of local children who were both drinkers and smokers.[61]

In 1883 the legislature passed a law prohibiting tobacco sales to children under the age of sixteen. A $10.00 fine was stipulated for convicted violators but in two years there had been neither fines nor convictions anywhere in the state. The first legislation to mandate instruction in tobacco and alcohol prevention failed in 1886 even though the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Knights of Labor, and other unions supported the bill which would teach anti-alcohol and tobacco information as well as personal hygiene and home economics.[62] The local press noted the intense lobbying efforts of a New York publisher whose text might be used for the course. School trustees were advised that while instruction was necessary buying a text was not. The proposed legislation lingered until 1892 when the legislature finally passed a bill mandating that schools teach an anti-alcohol program. This curriculum change was absorbed within the physiology course which had been recommended as part of a statewide curriculum as early as 1880. The use of schools to teach temperance represented a policy change acknowledging that alcoholism was a social phenomena modifiable by social institutions rather than an example of immorality which could be attacked through religious exhortation or family discipline.[63]

Families and churches now had a new ally to fight alcohol and drug use and schools had another unfunded mandate and a more crowded curriculum for their young, highly transient teaching staff. The state expected that schools would eagerly join in the

campaign against drugs. The Sussex Independent reported in August, 1893 that the neighboring Port Jervis hospital now had a specialized treatment facility for alcohol, tobacco, morphine, and opium addiction. The problem remained getting people to go to the facility. In an age where people did not have work-sponsored insurance systems or Federal or state medical programs, how the indigent or poor would find money for extended treatment did not occur to the editors.[64]

Administering the Perfected System: 1875-94

Training Teachers

Policies to improve education and use the schools for social welfare reforms depended on improving the education and skills of the state's teaching force. Teachers were certified state agents. Examining their professional development programs provides a direct examination of long-term state policy goals since the State and County Superintendents determined the programs. Before 1875 these programs had two strategies. The first was to make teaching a profession with its own sanctions, rewards, and achievements. If teacher professionalism could link a scientific, empirical training theory to the art of teaching and learning, the profession could move public opinion from regarding teaching as a profession of educated amateurs to a self-evaluated profession with its own standards of knowledge and performance.

County superintendents wanted teachers to do more than act as overseer or drillmaster who assigned pages in a book, conducted recitation correcting students,and concluded with another assignment. They wanted teachers to give students their own information and questions letting students form and answer their own questions. The mark of an effective teacher was to encourage critical thinking which was characterized by interpretation, evaluation, and drawing applications with specific knowledge. Teacher institutes were places where young teachers could get an introduction to these skills, share classroom experiences, and listen to their elders moralize about their political and social duties and privileges.[65] Institute attendance was mandatory after an 1874 State Board of

Education Regulation.

The other strategy was to use the state training institutes to organize permanent County Teacher Associations which would then present their own programs to county teachers. Between 1854 and 1875 the county teacher corps ranged from 110 to 120 faculty and, before 1874, institute attendance was normally under 50 since some trustees refused to pay their teachers if they attended institutes. After 1874 attendance increased to over 100 participants for three or four day institutes.

The seventeen institutes between 1854 and 1875 featured the following inservice education topics:

Reading---nine sessions.
Language Development including handwriting, grammar, spelling, and writing----
12 sessions.
Arithmetic through geometry
and algebra----12 sessions
Speaking---3 sessions
Physical education and Music----4 sessions
Physiology---2 sessions
Geography----10 sessions

These topics can be analyzed to compare and contrast state goals for teacher development from 1875 to 1894. There were only three science topics in seventeen institutes. All were given by State Superintendent Ellis Apgar or his brother Austin Apgar from the Trenton Normal School. Electricity and botany were introduced in 1873, the latter presentation used plants gathered during a walk around Newton between workshop sessions. A presentation on astronomy was made in 1875. New Jersey, American government or history were not featured. Teachers could have used the "query box" opened when the institute ended and asked for these topics.

Teachers received instruction in general classroom methods during eleven of seventeen institutes and professional conduct during ten training sessions. There was only one lecture on the role of religion in the schools, two concerning the maintenance of school facilities, and two on general child development principles. The vast majority of time was spent in basic literacy and arithmetic education. There was no instruction in agriculture, commercial studies, or even the application of basic arithmetic to farming or business. Institutes stressed neither nationalism nor the values of family yeomanry farming. They

did train teachers to impart the workplace skills needed by the growing, nearby urban commercial, industrial economy. The state expected teachers to give students eight years of education in reading, language use, arithmetic, and geography which would form a common education toward a lifelong path of self-improvement and participation in civic American society.[66] Between 1875 and 1902 Sussex County and the state experienced a deep depression, rapid and complex industrialization, the growth of cities which, by 1880, accounted for 50% of the population, and a rural exodus of young adults for work in nearby towns and cities. These changes had no effect on state training institutes for Sussex County teachers

However, the Sussex County teacher institute for early June, 1879 was different. There had been no institutes in 1877 and 1878. In the spring of 1879 the state planners presented a novel topic, one they hoped would affect all instruction and direct the county's schools in a new and modern direction. As usual, the institute began with Kittie Rodgers at the organ leading everyone in singing "Sweet Bye and Bye." The Rev.Thompson then led the teachers in the 25th Psalm.

Luther Hill came to the podium and introduced Professor George Putnam of Boston who proceeded to inform his audience of young, rural teachers that they were the fifteenth group he had met in the preceding seven weeks and the skills they were about to learn would soon be required. He had the answer to school reform and improving quality. It was industrial drawing! The sooner all learned these skills the better they and their students would be. The chastened teachers were given paper, pencils, erasers, and some printed rules of measurement and for the next hour they watched and replicated Putnam's blackboard drawings of cubes, squares, and right angles.

Following lunch the teachers reassembled at 2:00 P.M. and began another three hours observing Putnam draw and making their own drawings with proper spaces, and surface decorations. During these three hours Putnam also discussed the relationship of industrial drawing to other subjects.

The evening session began at 8:00 P.M. and all sang "What A Friend We Have In Jesus" followed by Putnam's third lecture on the greatness of the New Jersey educational system and how industrial drawing could influence their teaching of all subjects. By 10

P.M. the teachers were exhausted and returned to their lodgings for the night.

Kittie Rogers again led the next morning's session with the hymn "The Great Physician Is Near" and after the 33rd Psalm, Professor Putnam continued illustrating his skills for another three hours with drawings of circles, eclipses, and panel decorations. Ellis Apgar spoke at 11:00 A.M. on the metric system used in all major countries except Great Britain and the United States. He also reminded them of the new legal responsibilities the teachers had for reporting student attendance to their trustees. That afternoon Putnam again returned to his now familiar topic and Apgar concluded the two day institute with comments that soon the State Board of Examiners would require industrial drawing on the certification test. The institute ended with Mr. Nicholas, the President of the County Bible Society, giving each teacher a Bible. He thanked them for their cooperation and good work.

For the first time severe negative teacher criticism followed the institute. Writers said that Professor Putnam's theory or "hobby" was unpopular and not essential in rural common schools. Many teachers thought their time was wasted and other topics would have been more useful. On July 2, 1879 a teacher sent a letter to the Herald expressing disdain at the "rather bland press reports" concerning the recent institute. He also objected to his being treated as a student and a child by Professor Putnam. Putnam threatened the teachers' professional integrity telling them that they had to learn industrial drawing or face the loss of their certificate. He had also "ordered" them to act as pupils while he demonstrated his ideas. He told his readers that Putnam's audience did not respond to his commands and even though Superintendent Apgar tried to place the ideas in a more favorable context the writer believed that Apgar was only pantomiming Putnam and his constant humiliating and silencing tone toward the teachers. Putnam was a self-congratulating egotist, "as lively as a colt", and "alone in his glory."

Regarding Putnam's final presentation, the writer concluded that "at last to the pleasant surprise of those who had predicted that he would not stop his drawing and commands until someone in the audience became a casualty. he concluded his labors without accident."[67] This state effort to bring Sussex teachers a topic of nineteenth century technology had failed to show any usefulness to their daily work. The state's attempt to

bring industrial skills training into the curricula of rural, one room school was not repeated again during the remainder of the century.

During a thirteen year period between 1890 and 1902 there were twelve state-sponsored teacher institutes which may be used to compare and contrast state goals with the earlier 1854-75 period. Agendas are available for eleven of the twelve institute years. During this period in which New Jersey experienced increased urbanization and industrialization and the county continued its movement away from a small farmer-based economy to a mixed industrial, mining and market commodity farming system. There was neither a state policy nor Sussex appeals to train teachers in subjects and skills so that students might be either more productive farmers or enter the local or regional work force. The agenda of the late nineteenth century teacher institutes reflected, with one major exception, the agenda of the earlier 1854-75 era.

The agenda for these institutes show language arts in all of its various forms was a subject at every institute. Reading was a topic at eight of the eleven meetings. Geography was twice as popular as arithmetic. It was presented at eight sessions. Arithmetic was a topic at only four meetings. Other presentations were science (3), physical education and physiology (2), speaking (1), music (2), drawing (2), and bookkeeping (1).

American national spirit was not featured until the end of the century. The first law requiring that New Jersey schools fly an American flag was passed in the spring, 1891. A memorandum from the State Superintendent to local trustees clearly indicated that they would be removed if they failed to provide and fly a flag outside the school. This law was the first legally mandated emphasis on nationalism and patriotism. An article from Youth Companion noted that teachers believed flag ceremonies instilled better discipline in children and the flag was a symbol of great attraction and devotion for immigrant children in their classrooms. History was presented at the 1892 institute and reoccurred in three years.[68]

These topics, teaching methods, and procedures to manage and discipline students were presented in every year during the 1890-1902 era. Teachers wanted training that reflected the fundamental, day to day activities in their schools. In 1891 when there was no state-sponsored institute there were two teacher meetings sponsored by the county teachers

association. The agenda for these two sessions shows that teachers were also given training in reading, language arts, arithmetic, discipline, and information about the changes in state certificate examinations which many had to endure for renewing their teaching licenses.[69]

The most significant change in the institutes during this 1875 - 1902 period was the introduction of topics dealing with psychology and in particular primary school child psychology. Teachers learned what researchers believed about the social and political ideas of kindergarten children and how they could better communicate and cooperate with parents. State goals moved toward a more child development oriented curriculum rather than a curriculum which would prepare students for a work force. The economic changes confronting the state and county were not reflected in state policies for its schools. The needs of children and teachers as defined by both local authorities and the state in professional training experiences remained remarkably constant from 1854-1902.

State Policies for Sussex County Schools: 1875-94 - Summary

Sussex County school trustees accepted state law and administrative procedures. They did not use their political or judicial power and challenge the state's authority to regulate them or their children. From this silent acceptance of its legitimate authority the state proceeded with its educational and general welfare standardization policies. Local voters recognized that unless they complied with certain fundamental accounting practices they would not receive state money. They accepted state control over teacher certification because they had no better way of both ensuring local control over hiring and maintaining some standard for picking candidates who would teach their children.

While the state had wanted educational improvement it was unable to offer services or funding which could appreciably alter either the quality of education or the power of local trustees to run their schools. A single state official in a county with 110 school districts posed no threat to their democratic daily control. There was no state legal mandate for student performance, teaching standards, or building quality. Luther Hill's poor rating of a teacher did not prevent a board's rehiring the person and unless a school was blatantly

dangerous the schoolhouse would not be closed. The failure of children on the county superintendent's test only meant that as individuals, they did not receive his certificate of merit. Student failures did not force the local school into a remedial instructional improvement plan which might cost more money.

Sussex County students successfully found their way into the local and regional industrial and commercial economy using the fundamental skills education in their schools gave them. Their educational system was not perceived as part of an integrated plan to either prepare students for a nonagricultural life or to revitalize the dying Sussex county countryside. Sussex County schools were created and managed before mid-nineteenth century reform movements tried to influence local control. From 1828-1894 these local communities had negotiated with state officials over the right and range of authority which both they and outsiders could use in managing their schools. They accepted the state's new laws in 1867 and 1871 forcing them to tax their lands for school costs uncovered by state aid. They wanted to educate their children in pursuit of their vision linking local democratic life with the larger state and national community and economy. They would have rejected an assertion that education was imposed on them or that education was preparing their children to enter the newly emerging industrial society. Public education was a civic political tradition and socialization process they they freely desired and supported recognizing an alliance among joint familial, local, and state responsibilities designed to encourage and direct individual self-interest.[70]

Chapter 3 End Notes

[1]Sussex Independent, 21 February 1879. The Independent was published in Deckertown and regularly ran articles or announcements by Edward Stiles who lived nearby.

[2] Harriet Sepinwall, The History of the 1875 Thorough and Efficient Amendment to the New Jersey Constitution in the context of Nineteenth Century Social Thought on Education: The Civil War to the Centennial, (1986: Rutgers University D: ED.) 115.

[3]Stephan Skowronek, Building an American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacity, 1877-1920, (New York: 1982), 15.

[4]Annual Report of the State Board of Education with the Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the School Year Ending 31 August 1867: 640-645.

[5]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 19 December 1867.

[6]Chapter 179 An Act to establish a system of Public Instruction," Laws of New Jersey. Session of 1867.

[7]William Link, A Hard and Lonely Place: Schooling, Society, and Reform in Rural Virginia: 1870-1920, (Chapel Hill, 1986), 13-18.

[8]Annual Report. 1872/73. 26-27.

[9]Annual Report, 1868/69. 937-945.

[10]Sepinwall, 152.

[11]Sepinwall, 179.

[12]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 4 January 1972.

[13]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 11 January 1972.

[14]Sepinwall. 200.

[15]Sepinwall. 210.

[16]Sepinwall. 228.

[17]New Jersey State Senate Journal, (1874): 454.

[18]Sepinwall. 259.

[19]New Jersey Assembly Minutes, (1874): 1254.

[20]Sepinwall. 264.

[21]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 18 August 1975.

[22]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 25 August 1975.

[23]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 29 April 1975.

[24]Samuel T. McSeveney, "Religious Conflict, Party Politics, and Public Policy in New Jersey, 1874-75), New Jersey History, (Spring/Summer, 1992): 18-44 and Sussex Independent 18 June 1875.

[25]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 2 May 18867 and Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 9 May 1867.

[26]For antisectarian editorial comment see Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 6 June 1967, 6 August 1867 and 4 December 1867.

[27]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 6 August 1867.

[28]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 20 February 1868 and 5 March 1868.

[29]Annual Report. 1864/67 34.-36.

[30]Annual Report. 1869/70. 34. and Annual Report. 1870/71. 45.

[31]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 26 January 1871.

[32]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 5 February 1871.

[33]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 17 March 1870 and 2 March 1872.

[34]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 30 December 1869 and 6 January 1870.

[35]Sussex Independent, 10 January 1873.

[36]Alanson Haines, Hardyston Memorial, A History of the Township and the North Presbyterian Church, Hardyston, Sussex County, New Jersey, (Newton: 1888), 161-67. Haines was the son of former Governor Daniel Haines and the brother of Thomas Haines killed at Harrisonburg by Confederate cavalry in June, 1862.

[37]Sussex Independent, 12 March 1875.

[38]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 24 March 1875.

[39]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 8 December 1875.

[40]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 1 December 1875.

[41]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 4 June 1874.

[42]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 3 November 1886. and 6 April 1892.

[43]The reports of Luther Hill are found in the Annual Report to the New Jersey State Board of Education from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. These reports which covered a year from 1 September to 31 August started for the 1875/76 school year and continued through the 1893/94 school year. Unlike Edward Stiles who filled his reports with commentary and opinion, Hill stuck very precisely to a given number of procedural topics and wrote very sparsely without emotion or intellectual curiosity. Occasionally, he obliquely alluded to a problem and then pointed to a solution be referring to a particular part of a law. The only emotionally distraught words found in his reports concerned his feelings about the difficulties of consolidation which he expressed in the early 1890s. In 1902 Luther Hill was 68 years old. In the summer of that year Charles Baxter the State Superintendent came to Sussex County and went to the newly open Sussex High School to speak at the graduation ceremony. Luther Hill did not accompany Baxter to Ralph Decker's new school. Hill's five year State Board appointment was up in August and he was not a candidate for the position. Ralph Decker, the twenty nine year old principal of the Sussex High School was appointed County Superintendent on October 7, 1902.

[44]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 3 April 1879.

[45]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 12 October 1882.

[46]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 9 April 1879., 30 April 1879, and 3 March 1880.

[47]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 15 April 1880 and 27 January 1881. New Jersey Herald. 10 October 1877.

[48]Larry Cuban, How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms 1890-1990, (New York. 1893),7-9.

[49]The forms used by Luther Hill in his visit to Mr. Strong's classroom are stored at the Sussex County Office of the New Jersey State Department of Education, 18 Church St. Newton, N.J.

[50]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 1 December 1880.

[51]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 28 March 1883., 16 September 1885., and 24 November 1886.

[52]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 21 April 1886 and New Jersey Herald. 16 April 1891. See Nelson Burr Education in New Jersey, 1630-187, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942), 298.

[53]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 18 March 1881.

[54]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 2 February 1881.

[55]Laws of New Jersey Chapter 57, 1883. and Robert Bole, "The Development of Financial Support for Public Schools in New Jersey" (Ph. D, diss., New York University, 1957)

[56]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 16 July 1884.

[57]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 21 January 1884.

[58]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 6 May 1885.

[59]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 2 September 1885,Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 9 September 1885 and 2 November 1887, and Fifth and Seventh Annual Reports of the Inspector of Factories and Workshops of the State of New Jersey. Trenton: 1887 and 1889. See also, Philip Newman, The Labor Legislation of New Jersey (Washington: 1843), 79-83.

[60]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 6 September 1876.

[61]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 21 April 1881.

[62]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 6 July 1882., 5 September 1883, and 16 April 1884.

[63]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 2 September 1885., 14 April 1886., and 3 March 1892.

[64]Sussex Independent, 25 August 1893.

[65]Ellis Apgar developed over seventy different forms for his County Superintendents during the first part of 1867. These forms represented his successful effort to get standardized data from 1400 school districts in the twenty one counties.

[66]Reports of the State Institutes were published in the Sussex Register and New Jersey Herald from 1854 to 1902. The Sussex Independent published them from 1871 onward. They are also briefly mentioned in State Superintendent's reports and the County Superintendent's report. Normally, papers carried information about the Institutes before they met and then a detailed account usually done by a participant in the training. The reports were normally very gracefully and discreetly written but starting in the early 1890s reports appeared which criticized both the programs and the attendance patterns of the various teachers who by this time were required to attend.

The severe criticism of the 1879 workshop on industrial drawing came in a letter to the editor from a teacher who had attended the workshop. The actual article about the workshop only alluded to the discomfort many of the teachers felt with the proceedings. Kittie Rogers, the organist at the June, 1879 meeting, was a teacher and organist at the Presbyterian Church in Newton. She left teaching in 1884 and went to Bellevue Hospital in

Manhattan for nursing training, see Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 14 May 1884.

[67]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 2 July 1879.

[68]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 21 November 1891 and 5 August 1891.

[69]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald,Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 21 May 1891 and 16 December 1891.

[70]Burton Bledstein, The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America, (New York, 1974) and Robert Wiebe, Self-Rule: A Cultural History of American Democracy, (Chicago: 1995) offer similar versions of how rural democrats defined their own version of democracy and negotiated the terms whereby their version and that of the managerial state interacted in the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER 4

TEACHERS IN SUSSEX COUNTY SCHOOLS: GAINING SECURITY AND A PUBLIC VOICE: 1860-1895

Between 1860 and 1895 Sussex County teachers came under increased state control while, at the same time, developing their own professional organizations. They participated in both local and state policy debates affecting their salaries and working conditions. By 1895 they had shifted their professional voice from advocating free schools and a standardized curriculum to more concern with their individual and collective rights. Amidst the 1874-95 depression Sussex teachers did not seek school curricular or administrative reform in response to these economic conditions. They worked alone, amidst rural poverty for as little as $1.50 a day. Teachers in Sussex County were both products and creators of the democratic political culture which gave rise to and sustained their schools.

Getting A Job: The Examination System and Trustee Powers

For teachers who either grew up in the county or migrated to Sussex to teach, schools had three functions. First, they offered employment. Second, if teachers survived their first year many hoped to remain employed even though they had no tenure and were rehired on an annual basis. Finally, working in a school would enhance their career opportunities if they decided to move on to other districts or another calling .

Since 1867, the teacher licensing system had been administered by the County Superintendent. Twice a year, examinations, usually in November and May, were administered in either Newton or Franklin. The County Superintendent prepared tests for three state licenses based on guidelines from the faculty at Trenton State College and the State Superintendent. The First Grade Certificate was the most demanding test. Candidates had to be eighteen years old, have two years teaching experience, and pass an examination that included questions on philosophy, psychology, algebra, English, composition, state law, and the United States Constitution. Successful candidates received a three year license.

The candidates took the test on a Saturday morning. They answered questions about general knowledge, teaching theory, and applied teaching practice. They were graded by the County Superintendent and two paid experienced teachers. Examinees were informed of their results by letter and the results of the successful candidates were published in the local papers. Once the examination was passed the new teacher received a state license which was shown to local trustees who interviewed and hired teachers.

By the late 1880s Sussex County teachers began to raise professional issues in efforts to revise the state licensing system. On December 21st, 1888, County teachers met at Deckertown in a regular meeting of the County Reading Circle, a professional organization encouraged by Luther Hill to develop and share teaching ideas and needs. Following a presentation on school administration and techniques to conduct recitations, the teachers had a lengthy discussion about student achievement. They remarked that the teacher was not always at fault if some children did not learn. The news correspondent who reported on the meeting chose not to report this comment because it might offend some parents. He noted that children were like the followers of Christ who often did not heed His word. The meeting ended by forming a committee which would send letters to the local newspapers expressing their concerns about the teaching examination system and how it negatively affected their teaching and income.[1]

On January 16th, 1889 the Sussex Independent published a letter addressed to other teachers calling for unity and efforts to control certification requirements. They wanted the state to eliminate the provision in the third class certificate which restricted their work to certain counties The letter concluded with excerpts from State reports showing how various County Superintendents across the state supported the need for reform. They also believed that this was an age of progress and the ways of the past could not meet current needs. Teachers were reminded that other professional and worker groups had organized and only they remained disunited. The teachers were urged to attend the next meeting of the Reading Circle scheduled for January 26th in Hamburg.[2]

Teachers opposing the examination system had two objectives. They wanted some public acknowledgement of their success in teaching and some security for their jobs.

They also wanted to restrict the number of new entrants to the third certificate level whose entrance standard was only a common school education. The Sussex Independent of August 23, 1889 published a commonly held view that the examinations did not really indicate who might be a good teacher. But if they were necessary, they should be conducted often and scored immediately so candidates quickly received their results.[3]

By the mid-1890s these calls for professional unity and control had positive results. Greater restrictions were placed on third class certificate applicants limiting the life of their certificate to only two years and confining its uses to only the primary grades of a graded school or any grade in an ungraded school. As the qualifications of prospective teachers increased, the number of third level certificates decreased from 123 in 1882 to 62 in 1893. In 1867 the entry age had been raised to eighteen. In 1894 applicants for the third grade certificate had to take the English composition and physiology tests which had previously been used only in the examination for first grade candidates. The effect of these restrictions on access to the lowest class certificate was to protect holders of the higher certificates from employment competition should trustees look for the cheapest and least educated candidates. Children also benefited since they might expect better instruction from older and more well educated teachers.

By the 1890s the regulations began to reward teachers who remained in the profession or brought higher qualifications to the position. Starting in 1891, first certificate teachers did not have to take examinations renewing their licenses.[4] The entry age for new teachers was also rising. The average age of fifty one candidates at the Newton examination in February, 1892 was twenty years.[5] Along with state officials, teachers also were slowly establishing greater state control over local trustee authority. Yet these revisions in the state licensing system were not a threat to the local hiring power of school trustees. They still hired and fired without cause. Teachers had no tenure. No state law stopped trustees from hiring at the lowest possible monthly salary.

Women in Teaching: Combating Stereotypes and Getting Jobs

Teaching gave educated Sussex County women new opportunities. A teaching job offered a publicly acceptable way to earn money and possibly achieve some degree of financial independence and social autonomy. During the last third of the 19th century young women came to dominate the rural teacher corps. In 1869 Edward Stiles awarded 30 certificates to men and 44 to women. In 1873 he gave 52 to men and 81 to women. By 1890 Luther Hill gave 44 to men and 79 to women.[6]

There were two types of women involved in the common school movement. Urban middle class social reformers provided voluntary services raising money for orphans or indigent children or possibly teaching However, the educated daughters of successful farmers, artisans, or small merchants in rural areas saw schools as a road out of the village or off the farm and into a town. Even if a woman lived at her rural or boarded home she saved money and became more independent. This possibility attracted many young women to the profession.[7]

While women worked for less money than comparably educated and experienced men, Jo Ann Preston argues that they went into teaching for financial independence and not to carry out a male, ideology through which they were guided by men into the schoolhouse nurturing children to citizenship and virtue. Men may have thought that women were suited to teaching as an extension of their domestic roles. As teachers they did not threaten patriarchy, However, women thought of teaching as a profession to meet personal autonomy and financial needs. It was not a missionary calling.[8]

Female teachers were not without public social critics. Richard Goodman came to Newton in 1869 as the Sussex Register's new editor. During late 1869 and into the next decade his columns often provocatively asked why women should be educated. He also criticized what he called a feminine-led, misdirected system of education maintaining that learning a bit of French or playing tunes on the piano did no good for society. Goodman knew that his ideas were divisive and counter to the image of female teachers and child

nurturers but he occasionally took delight in asking his readers why women wanted to teach and not make dresses or labor in good homes where they would get room and board and $1.00 a day. He admitted such work was not altogether genteel but it was honest and flushed of any high-toned pride. He further noted that women who wanted more interesting work might make poor wives since they did not want to help their male providers.

Other critics also suggested that boys suffered in female-led schools. Old enough to be taught trades, they were retained in free high schools learning Latin until they were nineteen or twenty years old. They grew to dislike labor and aspired to clerkships, shop keeping, becoming idle lawyers or office seekers. Such education was an injury to the community. These public schools fostered false pride, ambition, and fit youth for a limited calling. They, like their female teachers, had the idea that physical work was degrading.

Goodman's critique may have had some silent support but since it did not propose an alternative source of teachers few publicly supported him. Goodman's targets were farm and laboring family females whose career plans now did not include female housework or dressmaking and life in a day labor pool for Newton's more affluent families. In 1880 he believed that female teachers perpetuated an educational system which produced his servant help problem.[9]

Teachers eagerly started each new school year only to suffer September's oppressive heat and humidity. As the year progressed they traveled by foot or carriage to unheated wooden buildings through the autumn's chilling rains and the first frosts of impending winter. The Christmas vacation broke the monotony of frigid December days and January's new year hope was soon lost in the long, unbroken stretch of winter school days. In addition to new snow removal and heating chores, they often had to cope with a larger and more boisterous enrollment since older boys who had been working at home were now packed off to school for the winter months.

Then came March, April, May and June: the time of uncertainty and fear. In March there were public votes for new trustees and budgets. Teachers were either rehired or fired. One year Ms. Fuller of the Deckertown faculty was not reappointed because she choose "a new affiliation, marriage."[10] In a June, 1892 incident with religious overtones, the Ogdensburg district within Sparta Township proposed to reduce the salary of Miss Hyde in the intermediate grades and to correspondingly increase the salary of Miss Potter, the primary school teacher. Hyde made $32.50 a month and Potter earned $27.50. When word of this proposal reached Hyde's friends they petitioned the school board to avoid this decision. Religious differences threatened because Hyde was Catholic and Potter a Protestant. The petition to hold the line on Hyde's salary was signed by voters from both religious groups. Fortunately, the Board delayed action and the following week voted to raise Potter to $32.50 a month and keep Hyde at her current salary.[11] Each was rehired for another year.

Teachers also had to face accusations as family disrupters. They were educated and salaried and, some said, had the ability to lure men into marriage or adultery. In the winter of 1874, the Colesville teacher and the widower father of a young adolescent boy took a weekend carriage ride. During the following weeks, the widower's son, in a fit of jealous rage, took the family wagon and went into Colesville driving it up and down the schoolhouse street to the disgust of the teacher. The boys later boycotted the school. In another incident young boys blockaded the road leading to a schoolmarm's house so that suitors could not visit her.[12]

In the fall, 1883 the Rudeville school's new teacher, Miss Ward, decided to board in the home of Barton Rude, a farmer and husband. On November 30 Rude sold his family's property and farm at auction and was thought to be off to Pennsylvania in search of work leaving his wife and family behind with relatives. While Mrs. Rude had noticed her husband's attentions to Miss Ward and had reprimanded him, she suspected nothing until four weeks later when rumors began to reach her that Barton and Miss Ward had run off. Rude was thirty-five and Miss Ward, reputed to be twenty-three and very handsome, were thought to be in the Jersey City area. The local correspondent noted that the return of

either to the area would result in an "unhealthy state of affairs." Mrs. Rude and Barton's father were reportedly searching for the couple.[13]

During the 1889-1890 school year a young female teacher in the Deckertown district faced an employment threat whose origins were a mixture of partisan politics, religious bigotry, gender bias and legal power. On July 24, 1889, the Sussex Register reported that the Deckertown Board of Education decided to hire a fourth teacher for their school. A contract was offered to Mary Dunn who had taught at the nearby Ponds School District.

Mary Dunn was Catholic. She grew up in Newton where her father worked as a stable man at the Cochrane House, Newton's leading hotel. Her brothers, Michael and Charles, had gone to Princeton and were lawyers in Paterson, New Jersey. Mary went to the Newton school and following her sister, went into teaching. Mary's sister taught in the Newton school system, and when the Deckertown job opened, Mary applied so that she would be in a railroad town with easy access to her family in Newton and Paterson. Dunn taught "with acceptance" at the Ponds School and when the Deckertown trustees reviewed her application they noted that Luther Hill had observed and recommended her as a skilled teacher. The three trustees, Charles Stickney, Louis Decker, and Charles Wilson were Protestants. The other two young staff members and the principal in Deckertown were also Protestant.

Dunn started her job in September, 1889 and during October and early November she encountered a problem with the son of Amazie Wolfe, a stone cutter, who told Dunn that "he was not going to school anymore with an Irish teacher." The son's decision, apparently supported by Mr. Wolfe, posed a problem for the trustees since the new compulsory education law mandated that Wolfe attend school. A solution was achieved when the trustees shifted Wolfe from Dunn's class to an older but educationally inappropriate class.

Wolfe's characterization of Dunn may have been related to the anti-Roman Catholic campaign being waged by Alexander McA.Thorborn, the Presbyterian minister in Deckertown. He called the Pope "a man of sin" with designs to destroy public schools. Dunn realized that these remarks were directed toward her. She offered to resign her job

rather than embarrass the trustees. They told her to remain as they were satisfied with her work. Dunn's popularity with her students was illustrated when they presented her with a Longfellow Album and a purse set at the annual Christmas sharing of gifts between students and staff.

Between October, 1889 and March, 1890 there were repeated anti-Popery attacks from the Presbyterian pulpit. A very small Catholic church had been started in Deckertown in 1881 but was destroyed by the blizzard of 1888. It was rebuilt and had been recently reopened by Bishop Wigger of Newark and local clergy from Franklin Furnace and Newton. During the winter, rumors spread that Dunn was soon to become the school's principal and that a priest had been invited to visit the school. Whenever Dunn walked the streets she was pointed out by children as the "Irish teacher."

Unknown to Dunn, the underlying causes for the attack reflected local political hatreds. There were tensions in the town between J. J. Stanton, editor of the Sussex Independent and other town leaders. Stanton was a Catholic and a Republican. His brother-in-law was Charles Wilson, a Protestant school trustee, who had voted to give Dunn the teaching position. By attacking Dunn and by direct implication Wilson, Stenton's enemies now attacked him. According to his enemies, Stanton had successfully managed a campaign to appoint his brother postmaster in Deckertown in May, 1889. Mary Dunn had become entangled in a complex political struggle in which her religion and gender were used to attack a trustee related to a powerful local political figure.

By February Stanton knew that his brother-in-law Wilson could not run again for the school board. He threw his support to William Meeker, a local jeweler. The opposition chose the stationmaster Ora Harden to run against Meeker. The battle heated up in early March when it was rumored that Stanton had approached Harden's boss with a candidate for his job. The New Jersey Herald correspondent in Deckertown reported that "there was a need to fight this." Harden entered the electoral fray with a weak spot. It was rumored that he was illegally charging 10 cents for each telegram he delivered from the station house. Harden's friends believed that Stanton had written his boss making this allegation and suggesting another person for the position. Harden was a Methodist and his supporters believed that with a strong Presbyterian vote they could win an election against

Meeker, take control of the board, and fire Mary Dunn. Louis Decker another board member was aligned with Stanton as a co-owner of the Sussex Independent. The third board member was Charles Stickney who four years later started a newspaper in 1894 in competition with the Independent.

On election day, Tuesday, March 19, 1890, all issues came to a critical point. The Christian Endeavor Society Presbyterian youth group had threatened to boycott anti-Harden merchants. Several zealots were quoted campaigning in the town to the effect that they would "ruin and drive Harden's opponents out of the town." When the Tuesday election day came there was door to door canvassing and Presbyterian women were organized to vote the first time women were eligible to vote in New Jersey school elections.

The election procedures took two hours to register voters and nominate the candidates. Harden won easily with 174 votes to Meeker's 62. Forty-nine women had voted for Harden against Meeker and ostensibly against Mary Dunn. Someone in the audience yelled, "they will be needed next year when another candidate's term was up." Following the election the newly constituted board of education met and listened to audience comment asking that both Decker and Stickney resign. But they refused and told Dunn to continue teaching.

The election seemed to bring the conflict to a close. Dunn would finish the year. Peace seemed to return to Deckertown but then J.J. Stanton played another more decisive card. He contacted his friend C.D. McKelvey, the directing supervisor of the New York and Susquehanna Railroad and told him that Harden's new school duties might harm his work with the railway. McKelvey accepted Stanton's view. He wrote to Harden informing him that the company needed the full attention and energy of its employees and that he had a choice: keep his job and resign as trustee or give up his job and remain as trustee. Harden had no choice and resigned from the board with Luther Hill appointing a neutral person to the board until the next election when two trustees would be elected.

Mary Dunn's story was reported in a series of ambiguous news articles in the three county newspapers during the winter of 1890. Then, someone notified the New York Sun and a reporter was dispatched to Deckertown. A reporter interviewed local residents and described a long series of events from September, 1889 to March, 1890. The report was

published by the Sun in its March 24 issue which sold out immediately upon arrival at the Deckertown rail station. In June, 1890, Mary Dunn was not reappointed in the Deckertown school. She took a job at Hunts Mill School in Green Township near her sister in Newton. Dunn's story shows the confluence of religion, partisan politics, gender manipulation, her personal character, and finally her untenured legal status.[14]

Between 1865 and 1890 the county's teaching force had become 90% female. The Sussex common schools could not function without them Yet female teachers were still not realistically depicted in the local press. The poem "Seeking A School" appeared in the Herald on August 7, 1890. It featured a young woman seeking a job by visiting the homes of the district clerks.

"So you'd like to teach our school then?
Well-we've always had a man;
As fur girls trying to teach it—
Hem? I don't believe they can.
There's my neighbor's boy a sittin'
Over yonder on dem bars
He's a bad one. Stubborn, saucy.
Then, you're rather young like lookin'.
He could thrash you? By the stars?"
'Fraid you couldn't make 'em mind.
Fact is--without furt or speaking.
Tis a man we want to find;
But we trustees have a meetin'
I'll see what the others say.
Need not wait for our decision;
Think its doubtful-well-good day."

The young teacher continues on her search and then finds hope.
But to crown this day' adventure
I meet some one whose face is kind.
As with courtesy he asks me.
"Can you tell me where we'll find
Some good lady who is willing
To control our little school?
One young man has tried to do it
But he knew not how to rule.
Grievous were his manly efforts
And he left us sick and sore.
So we vowed that we would hire
Men to teach our school no more."[15]

Conversely, by 1890 some female teachers had also become public celebrities in Sussex County. The Sussex Independent, using a skillful campaign to raise circulation and break out of its Deckertown market in the northwestern part of the county, ran a contest to determine the most popular teacher in the county. Starting in February, 1890, ballots were printed in the paper and people were asked to vote by mailing their nominations to the editor. The prize was a gold Elgin watch. School children and graduates sent their nominations and a weekly tally was printed. On May 7th the contest was to end with a grand evening award ceremony at Hornbeck's Hall in Deckertown.[16]

On the 7th, so many ballots had arrived at the paper's office that one employee spent the entire day sorting them for the evening's affair. Newton supporters of contest favorites Belle DeWitt and Cora Shimer arrived in Deckertown early in the evening to attend the final counting. The arrival of the Newton contingent caused friends of Eliza Shorter, a Deckertown teacher, to buy more papers, hurriedly complete the ballot, and take it to the newspaper office before the close of day.

In the late afternoon knots of people started to assemble on the town streets as they had for the returns of the Cleveland-Blaine election in 1884. By 7:00 PM they started to enter the hall and by 8:00 PM Hornbeck's was packed. A counting committee led by Luther Hill had already started its work. Ministers had been invited and the Pastors Johnson, Grennelle, and Lathrop were seated on the stage next to the counting committee.

Promptly, at 8:00 PM balloting ended. The ballots were brought to the esteemed committee and following two selections by the Deckertown and Newton bands the counting started. As the vote was tallied, the reverends made short speeches. Luther Hill also made comments. Every thirty minutes, L.J. Loomis in a clear, strong voice announced the current tally. The audience remained in good spirits and order was maintained in the hall. More music and more updates ensued until finally after 10:30P.M. Loomis turned to the audience and announced that the winner was Eliza Shorter of Deckertown with 10,636 votes. The Newton vote was split between Miss DeWitt who received 9,129 and Cora Shimer who had 8,725 votes. Seven other candidates had between 100 and 779 votes. Five had only one vote. Fifty one teachers received votes. Three were men whose identity, unlike the women, was shielded by printing only the initials of their first and

middle names before their last name. Collectively, they garnered nineteen votes.

A thunderous shouting outburst followed Loomis' announcement and a messenger was dispatched to Eliza Shorter's house. She was awakened and hastily summoned to the hall. Her appearance produced more applause and music. When order was restored, Luther Hill made a brief presentation and the parents of Shorter's students, friends, relatives, and other teachers offered her congratulations. Town church bells pealed and gunfire and fireworks could be heard. Later, a note from Eliza Shorter thanked everyone for making Tuesday night at Hornbeck's such a pleasant dream.[17]

Shorter's celebrity status did not free other teachers from arbitrary firings. There remained many obstacles thwarting their hopes that teaching might offer them a job, a career, and a modicum of independence. Trustees could always look for new and cheap third class certificate holders if they wanted to run the school on state aid with a minimum district tax. In some districts classes were so large that teaching would be difficult with a student to teacher ratio of fifty or sixty to one. Some trustees would hire only local district graduates, prohibitionists or members of a certain religious group. Some trustees wanted teachers to board around in the community and take less cash for their work. Others wanted only a male teacher. Yet some would hire only a female since they would work for less than a male and needed a job to pay debts since they often borrowed money for normal school training. In some districts the public now wanted other teaching qualities beyond personal modesty and dignity and demanded energy, scholarship, and enthusiasm necessary to motivate students into the schools.[18]

Keeping A Job: Professional and Personal Attacks On Teachers

In addition to these specifically embedded in religion and gender, once a teacher secured a position and finished the year, they might not be reappointed. Regardless of performance and number of years taught, until 1891 all teachers could be fired when the year ended. After 1891 first level certificate teachers who had two successful years of teaching could not be terminated unless there was good cause and an opportunity for a hearing.[19] As vulnerable public figures, teachers were exposed to a variety of job loss

dangers ranging from mild public criticism to losing a job due to unproven moral or assault charges. Occasionally, an editor would criticize their salaries in view of their two month summer vacation. Richard Goodman, editor of the Sussex Register, asked "who besides 10,000 teachers worked six hours a day for five days a week in New Jersey 5,000 of them using antiquated methods."[20]

The press carried different types of teacher news. Summer vacation time usually produced news that teachers had taken other work or gave the impression that they were enjoying themselves Readers learned from village correspondents that Stillwater teachers were improving their skills at summer schools while others had taken book selling jobs .[21] Most teachers returned to their nearby homes to work on farms or in family businesses. Many single women lived with their parents where their $30-$35 monthly salary might pay for their keep or be more easily saved. A single teacher living in Newton might find lodging for $10-$12 a month.[22] Although references to summer vacations were rare, they could be used by trustees who wished to reduce wages by pointing to summertime extravagance.

At the end of a school year a teacher might be let go because she assigned too much homework. For some critics and parents homework was a teacher's device to get children to do at home what they and the teacher had failed to do in the school. Homework diverted children from their chores and deprived them of contact with their siblings and parents. Teachers who assigned homework or reading for reinforcement or introducing a topic the following day might be accused of inefficiency or shirking on the job.[23]

More dangerous than general public comment about vacations or homework was the prospect of declining enrollment and the threat it represented to job or wages. Many young teachers survived their early years of inexperience because they taught in very small schools with average daily attendance under fifteen. In 1870 Newark teachers might earn more money than their peers in Sussex County, but they also taught 50-60 students. If enrollment declined, district trustees might consider consolidation and hire only one teacher. If small districts were not consolidated they would receive less state aid. Trustees would then look for the cheapest teacher they could find.[24]

Occasionally partisan politics affected a rehiring decision. The Sussex Independent reported a conflict between Montague Township Judge Martin Cole and William Van Syckle, a teacher in a local township district. Judge Cole was a political and personal enemy of Matthais Carmer who owned the Brick House Hotel where Van Syckle boarded. Cole was opposed to rehiring Van Syckle but lacked the votes on the school board to fire him. Carmer supported Van Syckle. When Cole opposed Carmer's annual attempt to get township approval for his liquor license the issues between the three men came to a head. Van Syckle, realizing Carmer's vulnerability, resigned his position in an effort to help Carmer retain his license. The trustees offered Van Syckle the position he had just vacated but he refused and left the district. The editor of the Independent criticized Judge Cole, noting that when he sold the land for the schoolhouse he made a handsome profit buying it for $60.00 an acre and selling it for $250.00 with a clause that if the Board decided to move the school the land reverted back to Cole or his heirs.[25]

Sexual Conduct and Morality

Teachers were also vulnerable to public moral scrutiny. Any allegation or deed might be their undoing, for even the appearance of impropriety could force them from a job by giving trustees an excuse to take what in normal circumstances might have been an unpopular action. Any kind of moral lapse, real or perceived, might also be used by a rival against an incumbent at the annual trustee election. The trustee in power was always responsible and hence vulnerable since he hired the miscreant teacher.

Newspapers often featured stories of either moral accusations or teacher-trustee conflicts. In the spring of 1894 the village of Mt. Hermon in nearby Warren County was in a feverish excitement. A nasty, public struggle was raging between Charles Banks, the school principal-teacher, and Rev. C. E. Scott of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Scott accused Banks of being "too familiar" with one of the pupils. He claimed the relationship was public knowledge. Banks retaliated denying every charge and threatened to bring charges against Scott at a meeting of his fellow ministers. Scott's supporters had organized

and elected their members making Banks a sure target for firing. In this case moral charges against a teacher would not be settled by due process, but by trustee action.[26]

In an unusual intergender conflict in 1872 Newton teachers accused their principal of improper moral behavior. E. M. Allen, the first principal of the Newton school, was castigated in a December, 1872, New Jersey Herald article when the editor, siding with his accusers, said that his behavior "served him right." Allen used to hold teacher meetings on Monday evenings where it was reported he discussed the merits and perils of frail humanity. The spirit and content of these discussions so perturbed the teachers that they organized to demonstrate their concerns. At the close of a Monday school day the teachers gathered with Allen for a brief meeting. Miss Halleck rose from her seat and took Allen's cane, striking him across the hands while verbally reprimanding his conduct. It was clear from the incident that her action was both planned and supported by the other faculty. Allen was married and the editor concluded his story by saying Allen was sure to find some suitable form of Christian revenge. Following E.M. Allen's caning by his female staff for supposed conversational indiscretions, he left Newton and took a position in Hempstead, Nassau County, New York. Allen soon ran into more difficult problems because on August 11, 1881 his license was revoked by the New York Board of Regents for sending false student enrollment data to Albany in hopes of receiving undeserved money for his district.[27]

A more complex case developed in Dover, a town in neighboring Morris County. Joseph Corlew the principal made his annual, spring recommendations to the trustees for contract renewals. Two teachers did not appear on his list. Their supporters quickly appeared before the trustee meetings to inquire why they were not being rehired. The Board refused to discuss its reasons and the teachers' friends began to investigate Corlew's personal history. The local newspaper decided to publish their findings which asserted that he had married into a well-known, Cortland, New York family and then deserted his wife. She had supported him through college and following his expulsion for drunkenness stayed with him although he was intimate with other women. Corlew then supposedly disappeared leaving his wife and according to a 1888 Chicago news report he had married

two other women, one in New Orleans and one in Chicago. He then tried to get a divorce from his original wife. The paper concluded that it saw no reason to doubt the truth of these reports. The duty of the Dover trustees was clear. Corlew deserved the "grand bounce." He lacked the character to lead children and supervise young women.[28]

Maintaining School Order

Student discipline was another reason why teachers might lose their job. Before 1867 physical force, real or merely threatened, was one tool a teacher could use to keep order. But force might be frowned on by trustees and could lead to dismissal, but it was not illegal and could be used by a teacher, as young Salmon P. Chase, the future Supreme Court chief justice from Ohio, learned early in his career while trying to control a classroom and winding up jobless the next week. In 1855 the New York State Superintendent said corporal punishment was legal but any local board authorizing it was legally liable for parental suits.[29]

The 1867 law reorganizing education took away this controversial but effective practice. When the proposal was in committee the State Superintendent was not asked for his opinion as to whether corporal punishment might be made permissive if authorized by individual school boards. The bill called for total, statewide abolition. Corporal punishment was not defined within the law and one scholar believes it was passed to gain some measure of temporary political popularity. The law showed the teachers' weak political influence since they had opposed its passage.30

Teachers were divided on the issue. The State Teachers Association met in Trenton in late 1869 and many teachers pleaded for legislation insisting that they needed the threat of physical punishment to do their jobs. Some read the 1867 law to imply that corporal punishment was legal if the board of education, parents and teacher agreed that it could be used. Others at the meeting vehemently opposed this interpretation calling it a vile relic from a bygone age.[31]

In 1884 the State Superintendent asked neighboring Warren County teachers for

their views on corporal punishment. Fifty-one teachers said they still used it, 53 said they did not. When asked "if the best results were obtained with it", 27 said yes and 77 said no. Finally, they were asked if it should be repealed. Eighty three teachers said no while 11 wanted the law changed. This survey showed a very ambivalent attitude toward corporal punishment. It was a tool teachers could and did use. The majority recognized that it did not often achieve its purpose and they did not want legal authority to impose it at will. The fact that nearly 50% used it in a predominately female teaching force indicates that both sexes used corporal punishment and were faced with a dilemma between what some teachers called the practical needs of their job and their idealism.[32]

The law gave parents legal rights to threaten teachers. One Montague teacher placed difficult, younger children in a baby cradle and, rocking them to the accompaniment of singing, hoped that classroom shame would control the child's behavior. Parents supported this technique.[33] Yet, when John Shepherd, a teacher in neighboring Phillipsburg, shook a misbehaving student, the student reported the incident to his father who took out a warrant for Shepherd's arrest. A sheriff's office found Shepherd, arrested him, and brought him to court. The grand jury happened to be meeting when the warrant was issued and quickly heard the case dismissing it as a trifle without significance. The paper supported the grand juries action but the incident showed what might happen to a teacher who used even mild forms of physical control.[34]

In January 1877, Mr. Baxter, a teacher reputedly less than twenty one years old, was arrested for striking a student in Montague. There was no newspaper follow up to his case because the local correspondent indicated that he was a likable and effective teacher. The paper noted that he was a Republican but this was not held against him in Montague Township.

Several months later a Newton critic remarked in the press that he was opposed to picking up a student and kicking him out of the classroom. He was also opposed to doing nothing when a student disobeyed. Giving such a student a book to read or asking him to be quiet would only encourage negative behavior. These incidents seem to indicate general public support for the ban on corporal punishment but there may have been tacit agreements

between parents, trustees, and teachers that in certain circumstances with male students corporal punishment might be used to discipline male students.[35]

In 1878 a Hunterdon County case was reported in the Sussex press. John Hurley, a teacher, had been indicted for whipping George Smith. The teacher's defense was that he had permission from the boy's father to punish the boy so long as he deserved it. The father denied that he had given such permission. The counsel for the state argued that even if he had the consent of the parent, he did not have the power to set aside the State's law. The parent's permission could not subvert an indictment. The judge brought the question to a jury and after twenty-nine hours of deliberation they returned with no decision and were dismissed as a hung jury.

The Independent's editor began an interesting analysis of the Hunterdon case. He said some children constantly broke a teacher's rules. Speaking to their parents did no good. If a parent gave the teacher permission to physically discipline the child the teacher had to proceed with great caution since his certificate's renewal depended on the teacher's obeying all state laws. The editor regretted that the Hunterdon jury did not reach a verdict but perhaps it would follow the New York example, whose law opposing corporal punishment had been modified to permit it in certain circumstances. The editor estimated that 90% of the teachers in the county physically disciplined their students and the law should be modified since teachers should be law-abiding people.[36]

A teacher's personal disciplinary policy could also lead to a firing since discipline other than corporal punishment were also criticized. The Sussex Register did not support a teacher who kept children after school or took away their recess time. The large and growing Paterson district instructed its principals to strictly obey the law and assure that no teacher struck a child. Incorrigibles could be expelled since a board had the authority to expel for profanity or destroying school property.[37]

Eventually, the corporal punishment section of the 1867 law would be tested in courts. The law was used by parents to bring an indictment against a Catholic priest in Montclair, New Jersey. The editor of the Register supported the law's repeal stating that "children were little animals and pulling their ears or hair would control them. Otherwise

they would be defiant and destructive and beyond discipline." Finally, legislation to repeal the law was brought forward for vote in March, 1894. The Assembly voted 41-11 to retain the anti-corporal punishment section and trustees were given reinforced rights to expel incorrigible children.[38]

In very rare instances a teacher's decision enforcing discipline reached the State Commissioner on appeal. One day in 1890 at Echo Lake, a district within Passaic County's West Milford Township on the border with Sussex County, three young boys, sons of David Wickham and Reuben Brown, Jr. accompanied Bertha Schluter to school. Just before entering the school they kissed Bertha who objected and told the teacher who cut a branch from a nearby tree and thrashed the two Wickham boys. He then called upon young Brown to take a thrashing but he refused and the teacher sent him home.

Reuben Brown, Sr. sent his son back to school where he again declined to accept a flogging and he was again sent home. The trustees sustained the teacher and suspended young Brown. Brown appealed to the County Superintendent who reversed the action of the trustee and reinstated the boy. When young Brown returned to school the teacher demanded that he apologize for his actions, forfeit his recess rights for two weeks and remain after school everyday for two weeks. He refused and was again sent home.

The matter was appealed to the State Superintendent who came to the remote Echo Lake for a hearing. He approved the actions of the County Superintendent and asked the teacher under what authority had he struck the Wickham boys. The teacher responded that permission was obtained from the parents. The teacher was reminded of the state law prohibiting corporal punishment which governed the teacher who was an agent of the state. The theft of Bertha's kiss went unrevenged.[39]

Regardless of their academic record, daily success in school and public accolades as the "Republic's saviors," their performance gave teachers no right to a job. Opponents might favor another candidate and use insinuations of moral misbehavior to pressure trustees. For those teachers who survived the difficult working conditions and low pay, they might remain another year. However, most left for either marriage or other kinds of work.

Teachers Struggle For Recognition And Influence

During the last three decades of the century teachers began to speak out and write against the real and perceived injustices they experienced in their jobs. As early as 1860 county teachers created a list of their concerns and questions which was given to State Institute organizers. Many of the needs concerned rudimentary teaching skills such as teaching the alphabet, primary reading skills, and grammar. They had questions about managing "large" boys and girls, physical exercises to reduce tediousness in the class, and physical punishment. For their older students they asked about managing recitations, teaching composition, and basic algebra. Their only concern about their professional status asked how the normal school in Trenton might assist their career or was it a waste of taxpayer money as some opponents had charged.[40]

In January, 1871 the Sussex Independent created a new education column with E.A. Van Fredenberg, a teacher in Deckertown, as the editor. From 1871 through mid-June, 1876, Van Fredenberg did a weekly opinion column and provided responses to teacher questions. Teachers were now discussing their working conditions, problems, and successes with one another in full public scrutiny. The editor was often critical of teachers, stressing that disciplinary problems emerged because they tried to impose strict conformity or silence in a class. He said no discipline could be achieved by bribing students or promising them rewards. He argued that learning could occur if a class was noisy as long as there was an understood goal for each child. Purposeful classroom talk was better than shouting or trying to instill fear in students.

Van Fredenberg often wrote in a paternal, pontifical manner, hectoring teachers about their lack of such virtues as curiosity, utility, plain talk, timidity, encouragement, and moral convictions. Philosophically, he was anti-Lockean and maintained that the mind of a child was not an unwritten tablet. Nature had left nothing unwritten in the mind and will. His Calvinist sense told teachers that children had "all the proneness to fall that have always characterized man." But Van Fredenberg also believed that teachers and children could conquer these base innate passions through common sense and hard work.[41]

His advice to teachers communicating with parents was to be a listener but remain firm in the belief that children were immature and very capable of swaying a parent's emotions in any dispute. If teachers showed good moral leadership, a firm but quiet hand in dealing with discipline, and knew the difference between indignation and anger toward a student, the teacher would gain the respect of the parent and settle disputes in his favor. If a child was forced to practice honesty, he hated honesty. If forced to learn a lesson, he hated the lesson. A teacher had to inspire and not coerce students.

While Van Fredenberg believed that all children carried an outlook or potential for weakness or even evil into the classroom, he also believed that they should be individually treated in school. He said the sensitive homework question depended on the strength and motivation of the student. A homework policy should not be adopted for the entire class. He stressed that if a teacher saw a child come to school dirty, hungry, or poorly clothed he should exercise extreme care in addressing poverty. There might be reasons beyond both the child's and teacher's control which caused the condition. Each child needed an individual and cautious approach to solving the problem.

His advice was very direct and critical. He especially disliked teachers who took a position because they needed an income en route to another career. Teaching was not a stepping stone although Van Fredenberg went against his own advice when he left teaching and went into newspaper management in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York.

Once teachers asked him if they were underpaid. He said that no other occupation furnished so safe a retreat for broken-down professionals. In no other profession was qualification so completely ignored. Certainly, there were hardworking and intelligent teachers but as a class they were not underpaid. As an example, he noted that too many teachers relied on recitation questions found in books. Rather, they should create their own questions using the background of the students and their community to teach the subject matter.

One teacher asked if the Bible ought to be read in school and what was Van Fredenberg's religion. He favored Bible reading but cautioned teachers to realize that some students and parents might not favor the same passages or interpretation a teacher might give to a reading. As for his own inclination he responded that the educational interests of

the county did not demand its publication and his advice was simple: "do right."

During the late 1880s and 1890s teachers also began using the press to inform the general public about their trustee employer relationships. They especially disliked trustees who hired teachers without licenses and then went to the County Superintendent for a temporary approval until the teacher could take and pass the next available examination. They pointed out how some trustees hired teachers, signed a contract, and when the teacher appeared to take up the position found that it had gone to another person who, in one instance, was the grandson of the district clerk. They disliked the legal but demeaning boarding around requirement offered to some teachers. Finally, they told the public about a few districts who gave them a chit they could sell at a discount to get their salary because the district had no surplus or the trustees would not go into their own pockets to pay a teacher until state aid arrived. Often, they would appeal to the County Superintendent to solve what they believed was an injustice caused by a board's blatantly violating the law.[42]

Criticism against trustees often came from W. H. Hursh, an experienced Sandyson teacher who also ran a general store and sold insurance. He often took on a pro-teacher advocacy as a correspondent. During 1887 he engaged in a long three month public dispute with several board trustees who maintained that they did not have to return surplus state aid they did not spend for salaries and other essentials. Jacob Little of District #75 in Vernon was adamant that he could find nothing in the law requiring that he return the money and until he was ordered by a court he intended to keep the money for his district. Hursh supported the County Superintendent's contention that the law gave him the right to get the money from districts and redistribute it for teacher salaries in other districts that could not pay their teachers.[43]

Hursh's believed that districts accumulated surpluses because they chose to find the cheapest teacher, rather than pay a teacher a salary commensurate with their state aid resources. They then used the money for purposes other than salaries which, he maintained, was the only legal purpose for state aid. William Elston, a former clerk in the Wolf Pit district in Green Township, responded by stating that prudent districts needed a surplus to pay at least a month's teaching salary and for other emergencies. He noted that

his district did not hire cheap teachers so readers should beware of Hursh's generalizations.[44] Otherwise, he wished to take no other position in the argument between Hursh and Little.

Hursh was joined by William Van Sickle, formerly engaged in a political struggle with Martin Cole in Montague but now relocated to Hamburg. who supported his contention. Van Sickle made a distinction between funds received from the state, county, and township whose return to the state were authorized under state law. He argued that the County Superintendent could not collect any surpluses from district funds raised by a district tax. Otherwise, all money belonged to the state and the public should know that "those who wield the birch " are not so dumb that their blindness covers the past, neither are their mouths sealed or their judgment forestalled.[45]

In June, 1891 Hursh summarized the current hiring situation in some Sandyston districts by pointing out that a job search would always succeed if the trustees could find a teacher who would board around and take less money. Hursh considered "boarding around" as another form of slavery but said this was what the trustees wanted and they often refused to appoint a teacher in the hopes they could find a boarder. He also pointed out that some district clerks got their positions because they threatened to tell the County Superintendent that other trustees were illiterate and ineligible for office. But in return for their support for the clerkship he would remain silent.[46] The result of such machinations was that some applicants never knew the status of their job and teachers who wished to remain were left dangling without jobs or forced to seek jobs elsewhere.

Sometimes teachers went to court for protection of their rights or redress against others. In Bloomingdale, Passaic County, a teacher sued the County Superintendent for $30,000 after making remarks about the teacher's competency which he said defamed his character and made it difficult for him to get another job. The case was won by the County Superintendent.[47]

In November, 1888, a long, unsigned essay from a teacher appeared in the Sussex Independent. The essay began with remarks that teachers had been unfairly criticized. Teaching was often conducted in unhealthy school rooms with little air or lighting.

Teachers worked alone in all types of weather They taught all students primary through high school preparatory. At the same time they had to maintain discipline and deal with parents. They took their work home with them and prepared for the next day. Often, the reward was a missing pay packet because the district clerk did not have money and issued him a chit which he could use in the village store but only at a discount of its true value. So, why did the teacher teach and open himself to suggestions from all? America needed him and that was enough moral support to get through the day.[48]

In March, 1893, when the legislature was in session , an anonymous teacher sent a letter to the editor of the Independent. The letter combined religious bias with teacher interest politics in an effort to forestall legislation which might permit State aid for Catholic schools. The teacher noted that the mails were full of proposals which could topple the public schools which protected America's republican government.

The teacher referred to proposed legislation which would create new administrative relationships between private and public schools. The bill called for secular education in private Catholic schools. The secular education in these schools would be placed under public school authority through the public district superintendent, and the county superintendent. The parochial buildings would be rented to the state for a nominal cost. The Catholic teachers would be certified, supervised, and periodically examined by public authorities. The parish trustees would be appointed by the pastor and like public trustees they would appoint teachers. Within this blending of religious and secular authority the state could fund these schools. The Sussex teacher said if this bill were passed, $681,698.89 would go from the State treasury into the private schools.

The teacher was adamantly opposed to this raid on the public purse and asked if New Jersey had surrendered its right to be governed by wise men? The state had recently approved race track gambling and now the Louisiana Lottery would surely be next in someone's hidden strategic plan to undermine the state's moral foundations. Attack the school house and you attacked the very basis of American Protestantism which lay at the core of the republic's history and future. The Bible unified all children and prevented dangerous sectarianism. The essay ended with a comparison of literacy rates in Italy, Spain, and Bolivia which were much lower than Protestant Britain and Germany. Hence,

any reader could see that Catholicism and the progress of individualism did not go hand in hand. All Sussex County voters should unify in opposition to this bill which would take money from public schools and hence from the American future.[49]

The writer, self-identified as a teacher and not as a "friend of education" spoke directly to Protestant fears and teacher insecurities. If limited state funds went to more schools, the amount returning to Sussex County might decline and teachers might find their pay dropping or not increasingly as rapidly as it might otherwise. By the 1890s, enrollment in the county was stagnant or declining slightly each year. Enrollment in urban, Catholic areas was increasing rapidly. Had his letter been written a month later, the teacher could have noted that a recent report from the newly appointed State Superintendent of the School Census reported that Jersey City had claimed 15,000 more students than State auditors could identify. $75,000 illegally went to the city. Newark's enrollment inflation was only 4,000. The letter concluded the dangers this social mixture of enrollment increase with urban politics fueled by Catholic political skills were clear. Civic corruption seemed to accompany urban growth and the ascendancy of Catholics to local political power. The present danger was not only for America but for Sussex County teachers and their economic interests. The proposed legislation did not pass. The administrative realignment between religious and secular authority did not translate into sufficient legislative support to challenge the specific wording of the 1875 Constitution which clearly prevented such aid.

Although county teachers may have favored greater state scrutiny to prevent fraud in state aid, not all teachers approved the state bureaucratic response to the problem which creating an appointed position in Trenton which would manage the census. William Van Sickle of Hamburg criticized the appointment, calling it an insult to the honesty of the local district clerks and an invasion of local rights. He commended Luther Hill for improving his own census oversight although the new official was certainly going to spend most of his time in large urban centers.

Moving On: Teacher Expectations for Career Change in the Nineteenth Century

During the nineteenth century, Sussex County teachers expected that teaching would lead to better opportunities in other districts or to new careers. The number of county teaching positions remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 110-120 during the final four decades of the century. As the educational level of the teaching force increased with fewer third degree certificate holders employed. Many teachers entered their first job in debt for their teacher training. Yet the mobility rate did not decrease. If a job in one district did not work out, many teachers went to other districts where jobs were available because another teacher had also left. An analysis of the county teaching force in 1891-1892 and the preceding year shows that 56.8 % of the teachers who reported for duty in September, 1891 had not been teaching in these schools in September, 1890. Analysis of data a decade earlier indicates that there was a 65% turnover in the teaching force between September, 1880 and September, 1882.

In 1880 there were 129 teachers and 56 were males. In 1890 there were 121 teachers and 49 were male. By 1902 there were 135 positions with 36 filled by men. The data indicates that if teachers decided to move on or were forced from a position, other teaching opportunities were within the county. For females, the prospects for employment improved as fewer males sought employment in teaching. A comparison of the Sussex County teaching force in 1890 and 1902 shows that of the 135 teachers employed in 1902 only 10 taught in 1890. Single female teachers who left to marry did not often return with different names because in 1902 only five of the 99 female teachers were married.[50]

If teachers expected jobs to open within their own profession they also knew that they could move from Sussex to teaching in other, better paying counties or to other types of jobs. Occasionally, a Sussex teacher or administrator, usually a male, moved from one district to another within the county. When the Franklin trustees learned that their esteemed principal Charles Baxter was considering the Newton principalship they raised his salary from $1500 to $1800 which enhanced his status as the highest paid educator in the county. Thamer Snover of Stillwater who was making $40 a month went to Sparta when they

offered him $54 and the principalship of the small, two-teacher Sparta school.[51]

Occasionally male teachers would supplement their incomes by acting as agents for business correspondence schools or starting their own schools for village residents who wanted to learn bookkeeping and penmanship. William Van Sickle opened a class for teachers who wished to prepare for the rigors of renewing their certificates. Professor Seeley, originally from New York and a graduate of Princeton, left the Deckertown principalship and opened his own private, college preparatory school in town.[52]

Sometimes, a teacher would leave a job without any notice to take up a position in another field. Deckertown principal George Bedell suddenly resigned and took a $1200 a year job in the New York City Customs House weighing department. His replacement was a former Stillwater teacher who was finishing medical training. This teacher's roommate at medical school had also taken a job in neighboring Westtown. New York when the previous teacher quickly left for the feed business. The customs house in New York City, a patronage mill for Federal politicians, also attracted F. L. Van Etten of Montague who, upon learning of his new appointment on Monday, left for the city the following day. The local correspondent noted that $45 a month could not hold good teachers and others would go if they got the call.[53]

Editors and correspondents from the villages did not criticize teachers when they left their jobs during or at the end of the year forcing trustees to hire new staff. In the name of enlightened self-interest, they congratulated moves to higher paying jobs or in the case of a Hamburg teacher to the military academy at West Point.

For many, teaching provided no opportunities to advance within the profession. The number of principalships was limited and even though the pool of males was decreasing, the competition for the jobs was fierce, with boards often looking out of county and even out of state for new applicants. One teacher characterized the teaching profession as an "endless task, never done, with no thanks from anyone. A teacher was exhausted with the labor and possibly ill due to nerve disease or consumption contracted in poorly ventilated rooms. When he retired there was no pension and someone else simply took his place their names forgotten." The writer commented that in his current district there had

been 48 teachers in 63 years and between 1867 and 1879 there were 13 different teachers.[54] But for some, the profession offered hope for rapid advancement to both an excellent salary and high community status. The career of Ralph Decker was an example of such good fortune and the possibility that education might lead to a life-long career with an increasing income.

On June 26, 1902, Sussex principal Ralph Decker had reason to feel a measure of accomplishment when Rev. W. A. Knox closed his graduation ceremony with the benediction. The visiting State Superintendent Charles Baxter had just given ten students their diplomas at a well-attended ceremony in the Sussex Presbyterian Church. County Superintendent Luther Hill was to have accompanied Baxter and participate in the ceremony but when Decker went to meet Baxter at the station he was alone.

Decker came from two very old, distinguished, and large families in the northwestern part of the county. His mother was from the Rosenkrans family. His parents were small farm owners in Walpack, an "over the mountain township" bordering the Delaware River. Decker was born in February, 1873, and attended school in Walpack Township until he was fourteen. Then he went to the private Newton Collegiate School where, instead of boarding with possibly more affluent students at the school, Decker moved in with his uncle. He stayed at Newton Collegiate for a year and then went to Blair Presbyterian Academy in neighboring Blairstown, Warren County where he studied for a year.

Decker may have wanted to go to college but the following year he left Blair and at sixteen taught in the Frankford Township schools before taking a job in his old home area at Walpack Center where he taught for two years walking to and from school, a distance of seven miles each way. During these years Decker saved enough money and was sufficiently motivated to apply and gain admission to Trenton State Normal School where he spent two years, graduating in 1896. He was president of his class and editor of the college newspaper.

Decker's next job was just north of Trenton at Stockton, a small Hunterdon County village on the Delaware River. He spent one year at Stockton and returned to Sussex County taking the Principalship at the Sussex Borough school in September, 1897.

Decker quickly established both his career and personal life in Sussex. He married Amelia Stickney, the daughter of Charles Stickney, a former board member in the Deckertown district and now the editor of the new Wantage Recorder newspaper. Decker was an elder in the Presbyterian Church and secretary to the borough's Board of Trade. Decker was principal at Sussex for five years, and in 1902 a new opportunity appeared. Luther Hill's term of appointment as County Superintendent was up in October. Hill was sixty eight years old and had been Superintendent since 1876. It was not clear if Hill wished to continue or retire. State Superintendent Baxter may have asked him to resign. Eventually, Hill decided to not seek the position and Decker with his supporters began an effort to secure the state appointment.

Decker's friends organized a letter-writing campaign and secured eleven signatures of the sixteen member County Freehold Board. An 1891 law had eliminated their power to confirm the appointment. Belatedly, the veteran and highly respected teacher A. B. Cope from Stanhope decided to apply and organized some support for his candidacy. Decker was unanimously appointed by the equally bipartisan twenty member State Board on Tuesday, October 7, 1902. His father-in-law ran a story leader "Mr. Ralph Decker Wins" while the other local paper and the Sussex Register in Newton used less emotional leaders announcing the story. The New Jersey Herald, the largest and Democratic party partisan paper, made no mention of the appointment. Decker was a Republican in what had always been a staunch Democratic county. Decker's ascension to the Superintendency showed that teaching could lead to a more prestigious and compensated position. At age 29 Decker had arrived at the pinnacle of his rural profession.[55]

Ralph Decker was the county's fourth superintendent. To get the appointment he had used both the political party system and county Freeholder Board. His choice was not forced on Sussex County's leadership. Decker emerged from within the democratic political tradition. He came to office with neither a mission nor a mandate to alter the schools in response to changing twentieth century economic conditions. He was an educator of continuous achievement and extraordinary promise who served the county with distinction for the next forty two years. Decker's success showed that not only had teachers developed a public voice to advance their professional interests and claims, in

individual instances it was possible to mobilize political support in bargaining with the state authorities for career professional movement. Teachers were no longer only leading children. They were making efforts to claim leadership in the general society.

Chapter 4 End Notes

[1]Sussex Independent, 21 December 1888.

[2]Sussex Independent, 6 January 1889.

[3]Sussex Independent, 23 August 1889.

[4]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 9 April 1891 & 31 October 1891.

[5]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 11 February 1894 and 3 May 1894. Occasionally, the County Superintendent would publish either a list of preparatory questions or previous examination questions. In 1893 answers to a set of questions were also published.

[6]These records are available at the Sussex County Superintendent of Schools Office in Newton, New Jersey.

[7]Anne Scott, Womens Associations in American History, (Champaign-Urbana: U. of Illinois Press, 1991), 30.

[8]Jo Anne Preston, "Female Aspiration and Male Ideology: School Teaching in 19th. Century New England," Alan Angerman, ed., Current Issues in Women's History (New York: Routledge Co., 1889), 171-182. Margaret Nelson, "Vermont Female School Teachers in the 19th. Century," Vermont History Magazine, (September 1993): 5-29.

[9]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 15 July 1880.

[10]Sussex Independent, 22 August 1894.

[11]Sussex Independent, 3 June 1892 and 10 June 1892.

[12]Sussex Independent, 6 February 1874 and Sussex Register 1 July 1880.

[13]Sussex Independent, 4 January 1884,Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 2 January 1884 and 9 January 1884.

[14]New York Sun, 24 March 1890. Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 24 July 1889, 13 November 1889, 5 March 1890., 2 April 1890 and 16 April 1890. See New Jersey Herald, 17 July 1889 for background on Dunn's family. Mary Dunn was a featured speaker at the June 1879 Newton school graduation.

[15]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 7 August 1890. Often, papers would publish rural, sentimental poems pointing out the virtues of farm life for males or females and then publish companion articles raising questions about rural education and its goals.

[16]Sussex Independent, 28 February 1890.

[17]Sussex Independent, 9 May 1890.

[18]Information about teacher changes in the districts came from the local correspondents of the newspapers. Often, these correspondents were teachers and expressed pro-teacher sentiments when they reported on trustees trying to hire the cheapest and most inexperienced Grade three teachers or negotiating with a teacher about boarding around with the various trustees.

[19]Sussex Independent, 11 March 1892.

[20]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 14 July 1881.

[21] ibid.Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 14 July 1881.

[22]Two Sisters of Charity taught in the Roman Catholic school in Newton from 1886-1896. They boarded in a Newton residence for $135.00 per. annum. See Sussex Independent 9 July 1891 and New Jersey Herald 8 June 1982 for additional comment on this topic.

[23]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 6 December 1882.

[24]John Cunningham, Newark: A History, (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society: 1889), 211.

[25]Sussex Independent, 22 April 1881.

[26]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 26 April 1894.

[27]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 19 December 1872.

[28]Sussex Independent, 16 July 1891.

[29]John Niven, Salmon P. Chase (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 17 and Barbara Finkelstein, Governing the Young: Teacher Behavior in Popular Primary Schools in the 19th. Century United States New York: Falmer Press, 1989), 288.

[30]Donald Raichle, "The Abolition of Corporal Punishment in New Jersey Schools," History of Childhood Quarterly 2, no.1 (October 1967): 1-15.

[31]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 1 January 1870.

[32]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 30 January 1884.

[33]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 10 July 1873.

[34]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 13 May 1875.

[35]Sussex Independent, 5 January 1877 & New Jersey Herald,. 31 March 1877.

[36]Sussex Independent, 15 November 1878.

[37]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 23 January 1883 and New Jersey Herald, 28 October 1885.

[38]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald. 29 March 1894.

[39]Sussex Independent, 10 June 1891.

[40]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 8 September 1860.

[41]Sussex Independent, 17 June 1876.

[42]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 10 March 1886 and 11 September 1879. Sussex Independent, 3 August 1888 and John Crayon, History of the Snufftown Wars. 1879, including a letter from Crayon to Luther Hill stating his case against the Snufftown trustees.

[43]Sussex Independent, 30 September 1887 and 7 October 1889.

[44]Sussex Independent, 21 October 1887.

[45]Sussex Independent, 18 November 1887. Wm. VanSickle taught in the Hamburg school. He was considered an outstanding educator and Hill often included him on his committees to review teacher and student examinations. He was outspoken in the press and was also chosen to often speak before local teachers. In late May, 1891 he was invited to address the Newton faculty in a rare teacher-to teacher discussion. Teachers normally heard from administrators, visiting professors, or local notables.

[46]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 11 June 1891.

[47]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 21 May 1890.

[48]Sussex Independent, 28 November 1888.

[49]Sussex Independent, 23 March 1893 and 21 April 1893. See Sussex Independent, 13 April 1893 for Van Sickle's letter opposing the State Superintendent for Census appointment.

[50]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 18 October 1880, 14 December 1883, 13 December 1884, 22 October 1890, 15 October 1891, 31 November 1891, 14 November 1902, and 2 December 1902.

[51]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 8 August 1883 and 20 June 1889.

[52]30 July 1884, 12 October 1890. Wm. Van Sickle was the teacher at Montague who ran afoul of the Martin Cole's local politics and then moved to Hamburg where he became one of the more influential teachers in the county often writing to the press under his own name and serving on Luther Hill's examination boards.

[53]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 21 November 1895.

[54]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 23 July 1884.

[55]Ralph Decker's career can be followed through the local press in the fall of 1902. See Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 9 October 1902., Wantage Recorder, the paper of Charles Stickney his father-in-law, for 10 October 1902., and Sussex Independent, 27 June 1902 for Superintendent Baxter's visit to his school. Luther Hill did not come to Sussex. He may have already decided not to see another term or Baxter may have told him that he should consider retiring and that Decker already had some support for the position. Earlier, in the previous week, Hill had been at a graduation ceremony with A.B. Cope, his old colleague at Stanhope. Hill may have been ill and decided not to accompany Baxter to Sussex borough on June 27th. See Sussex Independent, 10 October 1902 for news of Decker's appointment. Decker was Superintendent until October, 1942 and with Hill's tenure from 1876-1902 gave stability to the County's educational leadership. Decker died in June 1958.

CHAPTER 5
SUSSEX COUNTY SCHOOLS: 1865-1895

"My children all left home and some gone so far that I do not ever expect to see them again." Roxana to her granddaughter, Augusta. "We are scattered all over the world and writing is the only means by which we can communicate with each other." Dustin to his sister, Sarah[1]

Overview

The local school unified society's democratic goals, the reformer's pleas, state administrative standardization policy and the individual hopes of children and families. Over eight years most children spent 1500 to 1600 days in school. A child's presence would be tallied each day, his progress duly noted and periodically reported. At the end of the year he would perform in a school public entertainment and personally showed the community the results of their yearly school tax. Compared to learning on an active farm or in a village home, school might be a boring abstract experience or a place of unimagined wonders and curiosities.[2]

Cultural historian Warren Susman argued that as the northeast, rural farming and village economy was transformed by market forces in the nineteenth century, schools nurtured two types of human growth. First, they sustained character development and moral goals. Directed by traditional morality and behavior, school started a child on a path toward becoming a self-guided, controlled, polite, and self-correcting Christian gentleman or lady. Susman also suggests that schools developed another more market-oriented personality type. The child learned that he could succeed in school and later in society if he also developed his personality as well as his character and become a magnetic, glowing and attractive individual who could influence people. This personality style helped graduating students learn how to position and market their interests in the complex and growing modern economy.[3]

Although Sussex schools integrated children from all economic levels, parents with differing levels of education and income could supplement a common public education. Daniel Rodgers has studied the socialization practices of nineteenth century middle class children through an analysis of children's literature, texts, and parent guidance manuals. His work supports Susman's argument. He concluded that the local school's conservative stress on order, restraint, habit, and self-discipline was also often modified by middle class parents who stressed that the child innovate, take risks, and, above all, understand that, in the modern world based on disorder and change with its attendant dangers and opportunities, it was essential to sometimes be a master of appearances and impressions.[4]

Yet, in the midst of a rapidly changing economy between 1870 and 1900, Sussex County schools were not designed or sufficiently resilient to modernize themselves, their students or the society. They responded very slowly to those who wished to change them. A study of fifty years state-sponsored teacher improvement institutes shows no changes in the practices teachers were expected to bring into their classrooms. Schools were not transformational institutions. They could help eliminate character defects from poor. They were not designed to take the poor out of poverty.

Part I Schools, the Economy and Society

A - Children in School: Gender and the Child's Future

When children came to school they brought and encountered different hopes and assurances about their potential. These beliefs were partially based in gender stereotype and not in economic status. School was a place where boys would learn independence, pluck, how to gain new knowledge, kindness and compassion, courtesy, and polite discretion.[5] School would mold the girl's character and habits so that they would be faceless and plain, without ostentation, actively matter-of-fact, and fit for a wife.[6]

Parents knew that formal education could have unintended results. Many believed that schools should strengthen and increase a person's ability to improve their economic

status within their local community. However, educating girls could provide new skills and ambitions which would encourage women to leave their rural homes in search of wage labor. Since the 1820s when small woolen mills at Branchville offered hourly wages for local women, newspapers warned farm and village girls that leaving home for distant factory jobs often earned them nothing more than lodging and food. The money they spent on "fashion's treadmill" was soon gone and the clothing out of date.[7]

A more positive feminine role appeared in a July, 1863 newspaper list of virtues for farmer's daughters. They were advised to avoid the city, but still find employment. They should read, study, and cultivate the mind yet be satisfied and dress as farm girls should. They should never invite someone to meet them at nine P.M. and should always select the right friends. All women, regardless of position, should know about keeping house. This was especially true for factory girls who might lose their housekeeping skills if they worked too long in dreary factory towns. When they tried to marry, they might be judged second-class housekeepers by their male suitors.[8]

Advice to young men was also clear. Young men would command more respect and esteem if rather than driving fast horses, smoking cigars, playing cards, and talking nonsense to foolish young women they could do farm work, keep healthy animals, reckon money accurately, and write letters appropriately .[9]

Although society ascribed gender stereotypes to both sexes, they went to coeducational schools. Adults did not believe that single sex education was necessary to achieve different gender-derived roles. Boys and girls were equal claimants to a common school education. State law assumed coeducational practice at schools since separate gender schools would have been more expensive and perhaps increased the walking time from home to school. State standardization procedures assured that boys and girls would have similarly qualified teachers, the same curriculum, disciplinary rules, days and hours of attendance, and public recognitions such as County Superintendent's examinations and, graduation ceremonies.[10] By the early 1870s common schools were being criticized because their success seemed to reduce the number of good female servants for the wealthy farmers and town homes of the county's merchants and professionals. But often girls who

did become servants had to leave for other reasons.

On March 7, 1872, Richard Goodman decided to publish an unusual and passionate letter to Newton's wealthier families. The writer told readers that in recent years over sixty young female servants had been forced to leave town because of "kitchen sparking" pregnancies. Until now, no one had mentioned "this lamentable evil in our midst." The girls were educated but because they were away from their families and lonely, they were vulnerable and treated as transient employees. This letter laundering the town's social evil was not followed by any subsequent discussion in either of the county's two newspapers. "Observer" had clearly touched on too sensitive a social nerve.[11] Inadvertently Goodman had also linked the effect of even rudimentary schooling on life expectations and the reality that many educated girls could find only servant work. Goodwin seemed to imply that the expectation tension caused by their recent education and their current household laboring status may have led to their pregnancy.

Subsequent editorial comment or reprinted articles on the everlasting "servant girl question" linked the labor problem to both schools and widening status differences in the county's towns. Educated girls wanted to work but not in the kitchen. American girls rather than immigrants made the best servants, but they used their rudimentary common school education to look for more respectable work as clerks, milliners, or teachers. Only the poorest students sought domestic service and often they did not give a fair day's work for their pay. Employers were reminded that girls who did housework brought dignity and pride to their work and could win the admiration and respect of their masters who should tell them that it was the spirit of their toil rather than the work itself which made it valuable. A girl who cheerfully and thoroughly swept a room made her broom a royal instrument as if she held a queen's golden scepter . With rising income as they mastered their work and earned more money, educated girls could enjoy cultural events during their leisure time.[12]

Parents in farm families realized there were fewer opportunities to marry and start new farm families. Agricultural modernization, the inability to acquire land, and low prices forced young men to move off the land. In 1873 a farmer's wife wrote that the question "what to do with the girls" had also become a subject of serious anxiety in many

households. Girls were not needed at home yet they could not remain idle and bored. Making farm life more attractive was expensive but remodeling a girl's room could make farm life more appealing and better suited for reading and study. In addition, writers also believed that if boys had a pleasant and private room in the farmhouse they might also have an incentive to remain at home. But reading more might encourage individual interests which might lead him away from the farm or rural village.[13]

The information and opinions Sussex Countians read about young girls and their future roles in life were not consistent with their real school achievements. An article, "How Girls Study" depicted a conversation between two girls. They were trying to study their history, geometry, and French but quickly grew bored and were soon talking about boys, curling their hair, and the price of clothing. The poem, "One Little Maid in School" appearing in the July 14, 1886 issue of the Register suggested that girls could not concentrate or remember school work. The writer suggested that girls did not need to know their arithmetic because their beauty could get them through life. Their writing was poor and knowledge of the world even worse. The author intimated that the only word a female should be taught was "yes."[14]

Rural papers bought this type of imported "boilerplate" literature from news syndicates and reprinted it in their weeklys appealing to their mainly male readership who would enjoy reading about stereotypical feminine foibles. By the 1890's these gender labels were counteracted when newspapers published school news, or graduation information showing female achievements.[15] "Farmer" writing to the Sussex Independent in August, 1891 commented that "the demon of want was driving as many Sussex girls as young men off the land " By the late 1890s, how to educate girls has clearly become a question and an issue.

In the summer, 1892 the Sussex Independent editorialized "what shall we do with our girls?" Compared with opinions in the 1860s and 1870s, readers were advised that the best policy was female self-reliance. Parents were advised to not keep girls at home. Girls also faced the battle of life and while, unlike the boys, they had another option in marriage, they should be educated like boys. The editor told parents that "we have lived our lives and

we should let them live their own lives." School teaching seemed preeminently fitted to them but parents were advised to expose girls to many choices and be sure they mastered one. If necessary, parents should borrow money and not deny them opportunity. Nothing parents could give them would equal a fortune of learned skills and self-reliance. Clearly, public schools were essential. This advice did not prevent the paper from publishing one of its traditional paeans for rural, females extolling farm girls for their "churning, rinsing, feeding, roasting, and sweeping all the while maintaining grace in every motion and music in every tone."[16]

The following week a writer to the New Jersey Herald supported the Independent's advice. A parent's first duty was to give a girl a good education. His letter related a story about traveling from Newton to Deckertown on a Saturday morning and waving to a farmer and his two daughters en route to Newton for the daughters' music lessons. The writer noted that the farmer was really making an investment because music and education would surely improve his family life. Music would liven their days and evenings. Joy and love would abound in this farm family when compared to neighbors whose greed and calculation disdained culture and the joys of life that only education and refinement could bring. Such letters and editorials indicate some also believed education could revive rural family life as well as offer opportunities for work "down the line."[17]

On Columbus Day, 1892, the principal of the Franklin School held a celebration. Luther Hill was a featured speaker and remarked that teachers were noted for their zeal, a quality which had also given Columbus his success. Hill admonished the students to cherish ambition and love of country, the boys to "do or die," and the girls to be like Queen Isabella because they were the inspiration of all good. Franklin children encountered gender restricting images and behaviors in schools they were also aware that most of their teachers were educated women and occasionally, as was the case in Franklin, their principal in a graded school was a woman.[18]

B - School As A Social Control Institution: Public Education in Newton: 1865-1870

If schools could help form or transform gender roles, some believed they could also be used to control negative youth behavior. During the 1860s in Newton, residents used the county press to advocate building a new school to reduce youth rowdyism on the town's streets. For the first time adults proposed using a school for social control rather than character development or life-long learning.

The first public report of youth rowdiness had occurred in June, 1864 following a lecture and Magic Lantern, stereopticon, exhibition of Holy Land scenes and Civil War pictures at the Methodist Church. The event was a fund-raiser for the Sabbath School. Admission was twenty cents for adults and ten cents for children. All were invited and the organizers hoped that the event would yield a large audience for such a worthy school. A week later the paper noted that unfortunately the event was largely attended by the village children and by many of "a larger growth." In the darkened hall the youths' behavior was inconsistent with a sacred building. The pastor and lecturer could not control their outbursts and no parents were present to help them. The editor wished that future performances dealing with non-religious topics might be in places other than houses of worship.[19]

In the spring of 1865 a concert for the elderly was interrupted by "foul-mouthed blackguardism of the more depraved portion of the boys of the town." Town authorities were both remonstrated for taking no action and reminded that County officers had the authority to deal with such disturbances. The paper noted that such rowdyism was not uncommon since scarcely any public meeting, concert, or entertainment was immune from these youth. A town police force was needed and if enabling legislation was required it should be quickly passed.[20]

In December, 1865 the Herald ran an editorial denouncing rowdyism that had occurred at another stereopticon lecture earlier that month. The town now had a reputation as the worst behaved place in this or any other state. Anytime singers or lecturers

appeared, similar behavior drowned the legitimate applause from the more decent portion of the audience. The behavior was present not only at special events but also on the streets every night where loud and often filthy noises disgusted passersby. On commercial Spring Street, ladies alone at night were hindered from reaching their destinations by drunken and insulting brutes. Men owed it to their sons to take action.[21]

During the 1865 Christmas season another incident occurred at a church fund raiser in which even the children of respectable families were involved.[22] In the Herald's next issue, Cersobleptes, a local writer, presented a more analytical argument. He maintained that while rowdyism had been adequately described no one had explained its causes. He proceeded to blame the saloons and the billiards or card playing which attracted young men into drinking places. If homes could be made more attractive with recreational games and social gatherings young people would not go to saloons.[23]

Soon the search for solutions to Newton's rowdyism, whose definition seemed to cover an increasing range of editorially defined moral deviance including the hooting and shouting of children at public events, boys tearing up fencing around Drake's pond using the wood for summer swimming floats, boys dangerously coasting on hand sleds in winter, and adult drunken public behavior, provoked a letter from "P" who advocated that women not offer employment to females who consorted with rowdies. This action might require some women to give up their servants and do their own cooking and chambermaid work but some message must be sent by the town leaders to that class of people who were damaging both the town's name and the daily lives of its respectable citizens.[24]

Continuing town rowdyism so incensed the Register's editor that in August, 1869 he reprinted an article from the Trenton Gazette noting that juvenile offenders who committed disorderly acts did not have to be held for trial thus saving the tax payers boarding costs and preventing the exposure of young men to adult criminals. The Trenton article mentioned that police officers could arrest rowdys by clearing the streets of vagrant or homeless children lodged in outhouses. Newton had no police force but presumable county sheriff deputies could perform the first arresting action and take the youth to a local magistrate. The article pointed to a legal provision whereby these offenders could then be

quickly taken to the State's new youth reformatory at Jamesburg if the magistrate approved. A copy of the commitment paper had to be sent to the nearest sitting State Supreme Court Justice who could act as an appeal mechanism for the youth or family who wished to contest the magistrate's decision. The parents had the right of trial by jury, but if they waived this right, the sitting Supreme court judge could decide the case. The judge could sustain a magistrate and order the youth to Jamesburg. This editorial may have been prompted by earlier incidents at the Newton railway station where drunken Jack Lynch was set upon by boys and severely beaten.[25]

During the summer, fall, and early winter of 1869 other incidents were reported in the press. Following July 4th celebrations, many lawless boys were reported on the streets without parent supervision. The school board was advised to act and some form of apprentice program was recommended. In August, children were reported destroying fences, stealing from gardens, and vandalizing the cemetery. Parents were asked to stop this behavior. In late September, "ruthless boys" were holding a carnival inside an abandoned school house. The paper called on the trustees to either safeguard the site or sell it. In early December the Herald editor recommended that Newton should follow the course of action in the neighboring Warren County town of Belvidere. At 9:00 P.M., whenever a thirteen or fourteen year old youth was not at home, the town crier called out his name and a search was started to find and return the youth to his home.

On December 1, 1869, Richard Goodman came to Newton as the new editor of the Sussex Register. For the next several years Goodman conducted a crusade trying to control and eliminate rowdyism in the town. For weeks the paper reported how children were continually sledding across busy Spring Street interrupting and endangering respectable citizens. Even charity was adversely affected. The Presbyterian Christmas festival raised $400 but would have provided more if children who paid no admission did not cause such a commotion preventing people from browsing more and buying the displayed goods. Goodman reminded readers that rowdyism might become dangerous like the recent incident where two men fought and one choked the other, seriously injuring him.[27]

More rowdyism news appeared in the Register during March, 1870. Mordecai Kent was accused of stealing lead pipe and was set free on $100 bail. Floyd Bissette was arrested for throwing stones through the window of Mrs. Robbins and abusing her daughter by making loud noises. A month later readers learned that Louis Booth and Henry Kent had a stone throwing contest which severely damaged Henry Kent's eye. Beyond reminding boys that they "should be more careful," Goodman's column said no more, an indication of his absence of remorse for the Kent family. A late spring storm in 1870 brought more snowballing incidents to Goodman's weekly column.[28]

In the summer of 1870 Goodman published a story which summarized a note supposedly dropped on a Newton street by a visiting tourist. The tourist was charmed by the town and would have enjoyed the entire summer had it not been for gangs of rowdy boys who congregated in the town square playing ball or walked along the town's main street screaming, shouting, and hooting. Their constant ball playing prevented the young woman from taking her baby for a stroll to the post office.[29]

These continuing incidents, some involving school age children as young as six, both rich and poor, and others involving young adults, was one factor that led to building a new school in Newton. In a town without its own police force and home to many new residents who were not affiliated with church youth groups, the new school promised to offer not only a superior and cost-effective education, but would also in some undefined manner reduce street rowdyism. Using a public school to establish greater control over town youth required a major change in Newton's public education policy.

Until 1870 Newton, District #7 within Newton Township, did not offer public education in board-owned schools. Permissively interpreting the 1846 state aid laws, the board gave both its state funds and local taxes to as many as eight privately operated schools. Private schools receiving public funds took the place of a free public school. The Newton Board of Education was often criticized because many attributed the appearance of youthful street rowdies to the fact that some families could not afford the school fees in these privately-managed schools. As a consequence, children were uneducated and wildly ran the streets. The privately operated schools did not get enough public money to cover all

costs and charged tuition.

In 1867, a new state law clearly prohibited the use of state funds in private schools. In addition, the law provided for a state official to oversee all county schools. During the 1867-1868 school year, Newton's educational leaders recognized the need to provide a board-owned and managed school. Bonds were issued and construction of a new $40,000 school, capable of educating up to 600 students, was started in the 1869-1870 school year and opened in late 1870. With the new school and appeals for greater parental supervision, officials hoped to better control the town's street youth.

The December 22, 1870 dedication of the new eight room, two story, 475 student building was attended by 300 people, roughly 15% of the town population. Many town leaders spoke describing school policies and goals. W. S. Anderson, a trustee, said that the teachers would not administer corporal punishment. Unruly students would be expelled. Other speakers followed, led by the County Superintendent, E. A. Stiles, called for strong school discipline and close parent-teacher relationships. Visiting State Superintendent Ellis Apgar commended the community for their support of a first class building so closely aligned to the town's moral goals. Reverend Myron Barrett congratulated the citizens for their tax support and then reminded them that the school's graduates could go on to the Newton Collegiate Institute or Miss McCarter's school. Reverend Byington told the audience that political parties were corrupt and the school would teach children that they could not be bought and sold like sheep.

Trustee Joseph Coult contrasted the advantages of the new school and its well paid teachers to schools in the past when classes were held in a drafty, frame building and little children were seated on slab benches so high that their feet swung a foot or more above the ground. William Casterline, another trustee, noted that this was the first school the Newton District had ever built. Edward Allen, the principal, concluded the remarks. He observed that a year ago Newton was overrun by male ruffians who had run wild for a year when the town did not operate a public school system. Allen concluded, telling his audience that his vocabulary did not include the word "fail" and that with their support the school would succeed.

In November, 1871 the school had its first graduation and many of the same speakers awarded prizes. Local leaders offered the assembled students and their families a variety of advice. They were told that Miss Leport's seventh grade student Arthur Johnson won a good conduct award. But his brothers had been suspended from school for persistent poor conduct. Now, with Arthur's example, they might return to school and follow the rules. Reverend Byington urged the importance of student achievement, setting a goal of 100, and working to reach it. Reverend Hazelton urged students to strive to overtake those in front of them and to outstrip those behind them. Joseph Swayze, spoke of life's great prizes which were open to all children from the public schools. Joseph Coult congratulated all present for supporting the school and reminded the audience that in 1870 the community could not control its "untamable young outlaws who had roamed our public streets for years. Now, they were reduced to public, constituted authority." Order and discipline once attained could be the foundation for academic success. Mr. Casterline concluded, asking the audience to work harder in the coming year.[30]

C - Rural Schools and Economic Depression: 1870-1894

If schools could help control rowdyism some believed that school administration could be reformed and costs reduced. On April 6, 1870, an editorial conversation appeared in the Register between "Civis" and "Shortsighted" describing different economic rationales for improving the town's schools. "Civis" was portrayed as a wealthy property owner without children in the public schools. Yet he supported free, public education and the recent County Superintendent's plea to the Newton Board of Education for a $4 per student tax that would keep school open for nine months instead of the minimal $2 tax mandated by law.

"Shortsighted" responded that he indeed had read the Superintendent's plea but did not support its moral and religious intentions. Surely, $2.80 per student combined from both local and state sources would be enough to operate the school with parents paying a small tuition fee since parents were responsible for their children leaving others to take care of themselves and destitute charity cases.

"Civis" asked "Shortsighted" to carefully look around the town at the large numbers of poor, permanent adult residents. Without education their children would turn to violence. "Shortsighted" responded favoring a tougher legal stand if crimes were committed. "Civis" pointed to the additional taxes then needed for the legal system, "if we do not tax ourselves to pay for their educational system, we must tax ourselves to punish them. Which is cheapest? Which is best?" "Shortsighted" indicated that he would consider this idea.

"Civis" then turned to a land value argument noting that when people went to sell their homes they would not find willing buyers at acceptable prices if the community's poor youth have been brought up without schools and were now living a life of vice and violence. Opposing free public education was threatening an increase in land values.

The editorial conversation ended when "Civis" noted that increasing the local tax from $2 to $4 per student was less than $2 per $1000 of assessed evaluation. "Civis" ended his argument noting that there was no better social, economic, or moral investment than putting a good school house in every district and operating a free public school for nine months of the year.[31]

By the 1870s economic prosperity and social control became the new goals for public schools. Schools would still be guided by the traditional moral and civic educational institutions: public opinion, families and churches. But, they would now be assisted by mandatory legislation which prescribed fundamental attendance and age standards for children.

Even in the midst of the steep 1874-1880 decline in land values, various writers said it was wrong to cut teacher salaries causing more rapid staff turnover and poorer schools. "Citizen" from Wykertown, a rural district within Frankford Township, pointed out that since the district's wealthy residents had no children in school they only supported minor renovations to the school building. "Citizen" advocated building a new school and thought that the County Superintendent should intervene and stop the trustees from being "all preamble and no resolution."

Critics demanded that schools carefully consider the costs of constantly changing textbooks. Parents paid for books and when Boards acting on the suggestions of

principals and teachers decided to adopt a new series families had to purchase new books. One Sparta writer believed that the people of the township should independently form a committee, visit other schools, and consult with experienced scholars before permitting a change in a reading text series.

During the 1873-1895 depression, writers rarely discussed closing small school districts and consolidating students. Civic leaders and taxpayers supported small, often under-enrolled schools. Consolidation without transportation would increase travel distances for many children. The one room, isolated school houses remained a product of geography, the age of children, local neighborhood politics, and the absence of motorized transportation systems.

During the mid and late 1870s the value of taxable property in the County declined from $11,900,000 in 1860 to $10,447,000 in 1879. As a result there was considerable opposition to expanding common school curriculum. The public argument centered on the high schools though no Sussex district formally operated a high school. As early as May, 1874 the Sussex Register published an article from the New York Tribune quoting New York's Mayor Gustav Havemyer who believed that schools should confine themselves to elementary education. High schools only taught students to pursue a clerk's career and gentlemanly aspirations. Such clerks were of no value to either society or their families. The state had no business supporting a luxurious academic education in the languages and mathematics. If parents wanted such an education they should pay for it.[32]

Some critics also wanted to save money by reducing the range of subjects taught in the common schools. Following the fall, 1873 stock market crash articles supporting this view appeared in the local press between 1874-76. The most significant, "Frivolous Instruction in the Common School.," reprinted from a national educational journal, appeared on February 10, 1876. The article had a three part structure in which the author presented an argument, illustrated it with examples, and concluded with a passionate plea that readers carefully examine his contentions.

The author contended that children were expected to learn too many different subjects and that the "distributive properties" of their education did not prepare them for

either further education or work. The writer identified seven fundamental subjects for the common school curriculum which should continue into high school. They were reading, writing, spelling, grammar, arithmetic, geography, and the history of one's own country and its political institutions.

Now, students were expected to pursue twenty four different subjects including Latin, botany, mineralogy, astronomy, optics, and German. A student's mental energy was spread in a variety of different and unrelated directions. No real progress in secondary education was possible with such a common school background. Costs increased to purchase the texts and equipment for such a curriculum, and, most significantly, the poor children who constituted a majority of the enrollment in a school system did not go to either secondary school or college. When they sought entry-level jobs in the work force this type of diverse and superficial curriculum did not prepare them for employment.

Richard Goodman introduced this essay with an editorial note titled "Our Common Schools." He declared that the author had not drawn a fancy sketch. Proof of his contention could be found in almost every district in the county. All parents and trustees should carefully read the essay and remind themselves that its argument was not aimed at ineffective teachers but was rather directed toward a useless and overly ambitious curriculum which superficially taught children many things and critically honed their skills in none. Goodman called for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the schools. He placed little reliance on the teachers to sponsor the necessary changes since they might be publicly attacked for trying to do less work if they taught fewer subjects. Only parents and trustees could make the required changes if society was to properly educate its children.[28]

The essay's critique of "frivolous education" did not favor a departure from a character- directed, self-improvement education based on a literacy and arithmetic dominated curriculum to a more modern curriculum designed to produce a personality more adaptable for the work force. The writer did not call for technical education. Rather, he argued that a classical, liberal arts curriculum was crowding out the basic courses of study and improperly preparing students for the work force. The working world needed competent, educated workers efficient in communication and arithmetic. Goodman was not a progressive reformer and portrayed himself as a realist whose basic interests lay with the

poor, whose children needed an effective education, and the taxpayers, who supported the common school movement.[33]

Occasionally other writers did propose school reforms which would have given the common schools a distinctly different mission. They favored aligning the school much more closely with the work place. However, no one proposed higher local taxes or a shift in responsibility from local trustees to State Department of Education appointees. Neither did they design plans explaining how rural one room school houses teaching forty or fifty students ranging from five to sixteen years old might accomplish the proposal.

This ambivalent attitude toward reform and economic conditions was reflected in 1879 when a writer, "F.T.," visited the local shoe factory and wrote "that there is more thought displayed in a shoe factory than in Milton's Paradise Lost." He noted that the progressive character of the age demanded practical workers and good thinkers. A universal education was essential but children now also needed a specific kind of work related education to prepare them for their public and private lives. Their education should be in harmony with the necessities of modern life. The culture of the past was shaped by different needs but today the common schools should meet the requirements of the times by attaining two goals: impart knowledge to the mind and use knowledge for thinking that lies at the basis of all social progress. Through this type of education "they would occupy the van in the onward march of our people to the higher altitudes of life-long liberal education."[34] F. T.'s comments and proposal were ambiguous. He recognized the new industrial nature of society and its impact on education. Comments about the new authority of the "appliances of science" and the practical tendencies of the times led to a restatement for traditional curriculum.

In the winter of 1879, a series of articles from Richard Goodman in the Sussex Register put the rising costs of government in general and education in particular into historical perspective. Goodman explained that up to 1860 the "burdens of government were slightly felt." The war and flush times following it caused an increase in prices, labor, and services. Then the legislature created new offices and laws. Education laws and their funding was so complex that people did not understand either the origins of the

current laws or the taxes they paid. Instead of simple, sturdy buildings, gorgeous and expensive ones were built. Then the 1873 depression struck and the only possible solution was to return to 1860 expense levels.

Goodman followed his general overview of economic and tax history with a specific report on Newton education. The Newton school cost $40,000 to build and had cost $60,000 in annual recurrent costs since 1870. If the average attendance was 500 students a year, the average cost per student was $20.00, a figure far in excess of 1860 costs. A subsequent article blamed part of the excess cost on Newton's post elementary upper grades which taught a wide variety of academic subjects. Goodman merged the interests of taxpayers and laborers, maintaining that laborers wanted free schools and expanding business investment so that owners could offer work. Schools were draining capital from the economy and would ultimately make workers unemployable. Schools were part of the general extravagance and had become a "monster," costing the county $62,427.33 amidst a depression in 1878.[35]

Curriculum reform might be guided by practical farming needs or the requirements of the new industrial workplace. The Register arguing that costs had increased while its average daily attendance had decreased from 400 students in the early 1870s to 250 students. The decrease had occurred as the town's population increased and a compulsory education law required attendance. Many eligible children were enrolled but did not regularly attend school.. The results of the absenteeism became a subject for public debate because in 1886 Principal George Atwood received a $1510 salary whereas a predecessor, Edward Allen, got only $1000. Allen had managed 150 more students than Atwood and newspaper claimed that there was a large supply of experienced and capable principals who could be hired at a cost of $800 - $1000 for a year's service.[36]

D - Rural Schools and Curriculum Improvement: Ambiguity and Advice

By 1886 the depression had ended in Newton. The town's shoe factories employed 400 workers. But this prosperity did not prevent criticism of school expenditures. Sussex school trustees and teachers were advised to improve their schools

by observing the work habits of immigrants and contrasting their immediate success in finding work with the uncertainties facing many native born Americans once they left school. One article reprinted by the Register editor on September 27, 1886 issue compared the success of immigrants who had trade skills with the record of many American common school graduates who entered the work world armed only with a smattering of bookkeeping or some genteel knowledge. Often they took Horace Greeley's advice and went west only to find even that job market full of people like themselves. The article pointed to the success of immigrants who immediately commanded high wages and soon amassed enough capital to buy a home or start a small business. Goodman noted that learning a trade was now more complicated since labor unions controlled the number of apprentices. Decreasing job prospects for the unskilled was becoming more serious. Yet, no argument was made that schools should teach technical skills.

Often, newspapers reported how common school graduates were responding to employment conditions. The Sandyston correspondent reported that several more recent common school graduates were talking of attending Coleman's Business College in Newark during the coming winter. The correspondent commented that he knew of no better institution and recommended that other students go for training. Floyd Bevans had already left on Monday to attend the school.[37]

More significantly, the press often reported about former students who were now training or successfully working in the New York metropolitan area. One article proudly called this labor trend "Sussex County Manages the World." The writer noted that his pride always rose whenever he traveled to New York and encountered the many Sussex men who worked in the various transportation systems binding the county to the city. A Sussex visitor leaving the Newton train in East Orange would find that almost every man working on the horse car road to Newark came from Sussex County. When the horse car came to another rail line, the intersection manager was also a Sussex man and at Orange another "son of buckwheat country" controlled the rail yard. When a traveler reached the New York ferry, the man who operated the doors was from Sussex. By implication such articles showed that the impoverished common schools still worked in the new urban world. If a Sussex traveler went to Newark, he found that the city's horse-drawn transit

system attracted farm born Sussex youth who knew how to manage and move horses. Many southern and eastern European immigrant competitors in the job market did not have had these farming experiences. The Sussex applicant also brought a command of the English language to the workplace. Reports like this created confidence in rural, one room school education.

Progressive agricultural leaders often included comments about education in their plans to revive agricultural prosperity. When C.C. Elston concluded his address to the Frankford Township Farmers Club in Branchville during early January, 1887 he noted a tendency among some classes to look upon physical labor as degrading or dishonorable. Farm girls envied their village or city cousins. In rural areas, farmers could remodel their homes, educate their children and give them with books, newspapers, and recreational games and avoid this discontent.[38]

In October, 1890 the Herald published remarks by State Secretary of Agriculture Franklin Dye addressed the Middlesex County Board of Agriculture. Dye listed seven steps that would lead to prosperity for New Jersey farmers. The final step was common school reform linking education to improved farm productivity and a more appealing rural life. Dye knew that some excellent common school students wished to continue their education. They could receive a technical education at the State's land-grant college and return. Yet, in June, 1890, the Herald reported that there were no Sussex County applicants for the Cook College, Rutgers University scholarship. Cook specialized in agricultural education and offered scholarships to qualified residents of each county.[39]

E.N. Millen, the Secretary of the Sussex County Board of Agriculture compiled a report for 1891/92 and noted a local speech by W.P. Hoard, the visiting former governor of Wisconsin, who said that rural schools were now educating children away from agriculture. This was neither intentional nor avoidable since there were no teachers available who could properly teach about agriculture in the common schools. The costs of such a curriculum would be impossible to fund. Nevertheless, Hoard called for continued public support and enforcement of the compulsory education laws. Rural children had to be educated regardless of their curriculum and its consequences.[40]

Other school critics welcomed industrial growth in some parts of the county and stressed that modern schools would attract both businessmen who wanted an educated labor force and working families who wanted a good school for their children. This advice was featured in a series of editorials in the Stanhope Eagle calling for a new consolidated six room, graded school in the villages of Stanhope and South Stanhope.[41]

But even at the start of a depression, some reformers continued to support education. Just after the June 1893 banking crisis Rev. Alexander Craig of the Newton Methodist Episcopal church used his Thanksgiving day pulpit commending the common schools on their belief that all children had the ability to learn when mixed with all social classes in a community. He advocated education that went beyond the mere imparting and learning of knowledge and stressed that critical thinking intelligence must be the goal of the schools. For those who were enemies of the common schools and wanted to cut teacher salaries and building maintenance, Craig reminded them that streetcar drivers were making $50 a month and teachers were still often making $35 to $40 a month.[42]

By 1895 the school critics' ambiguous and confusing goals for schools had not changed. They knew schools had some relationship to the rural depopulation crisis but did not distinguish between cause and effect. They realized that improving the schools might possibly produce more educated children who could fare better in urban job markets. But the system already produced many graduates who were able to migrate and get well-paying jobs. The county lost them as citizens and consumers. Leaders and trustees never decided if the educational system was failing or how to change it.

II - Students in Rural Common Schools: Learning, Competing and Graduating

Amidst a constant pressure of public advice to reduce costs or change the curriculum, Sussex County schools opened every September for another 180-200 days of instruction. Schools had widely varying enrollments and learning conditions. In 1884/85 the Huntsville school in Green Township had 43 students enrolled with an average daily enrollment of 25. The school was open 200 days but only 13 students attended 120 days

or longer.

Five miles away in 1885 the teachers in the graded Newton school had class sizes which ranged from 26 to 42. Twenty miles northwest of Newton over the "blue mountains," a Sandyston Township district had only 22 potential students ages 5-18. Sixteen were enrolled and on an average day seven came to school. Ten of the sixteen students attended for less than four months. During the year no trustee had visited the school and the teacher was paid $30.00 per. month. Often earning the same salary, many teachers taught classes of five to fifteen while their colleagues in neighboring schools might have forty or fifty children.

Most Sussex children came from a seemingly stable family culture. Between 1888 and 1893 there were only seven divorces in the county. There were 1371 in the state. Most county schools were not faced with overcrowded facilities. In 1888 there were 219 births and 261 deaths. This pattern was repeated in 1889 with 211 births and 281 deaths,.and by 1892 the number of county births had decreased to 168 while there were 270 deaths. Newton's population was growing from 2513 in 1880 to 2648 in 1885, and the to 2992 in 1890. 511 structures housed 610 families in the industrializing town.

While the county's population had remained stable at 22,000 to 23,000 from 1860 to 1890, there had been demographic changes within the population. By 1890 Newton had 500-600 factory jobs. Rural townships lost population and farmers owned their land while others leased farms or worked as laborers. Other township families lived in small service villages or in the Franklin-Ogdensburg mining communities in the eastern part of the county.

In 1964 Minnie Smith published a narrative description her childhood and education in a county school during the early 1890s. Her story is an example of how parts of the rural economy were influenced by urban, industrial conditions. Originally the family lived across the Delaware River in Portland, Pa. She moved to Peters Valley, a village in Walpack Township, in the spring of 1890. Minnie lived with her mother, father, and two older brothers, Lorenzo, age 20, and Horace, age 18. The other brothers had migrated to western states. Minnie lived in a self-constructed shanty on a Walpack farm where her father worked on a lumbering gang. They rented farmland for both their home and the

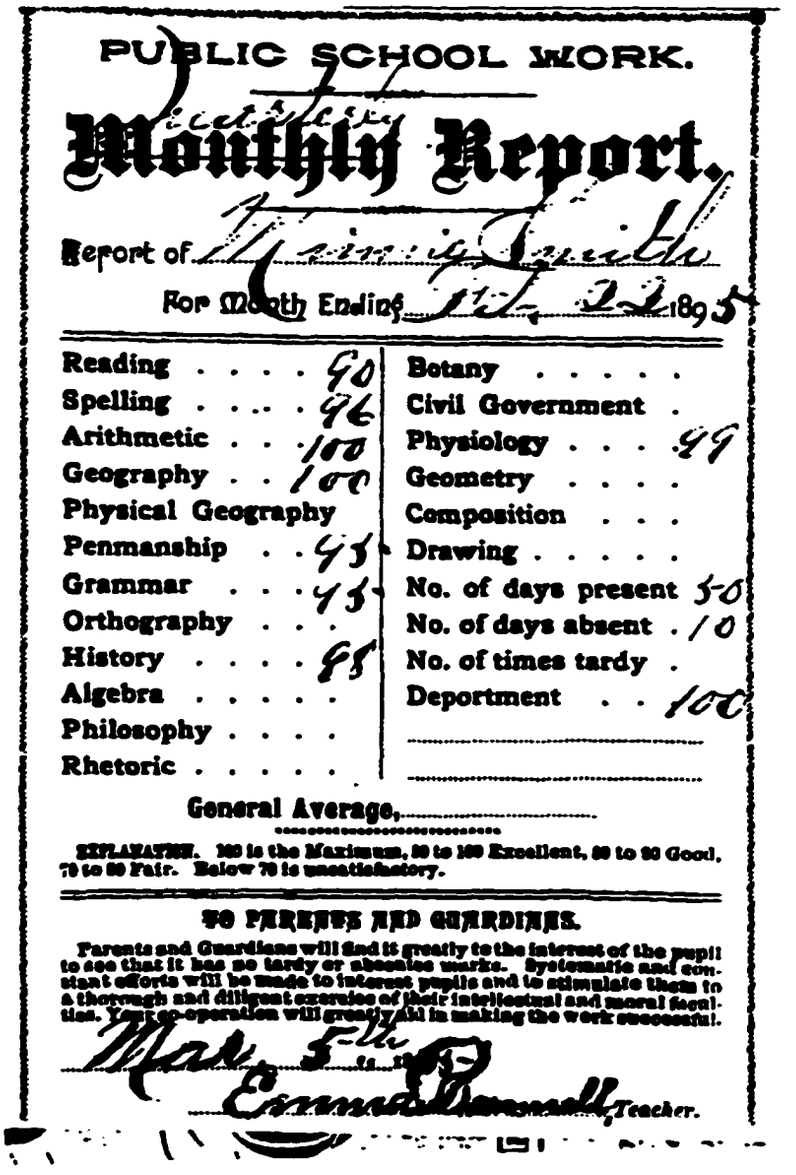
cutting rights. They were never farmers and had made a living in Pennsylvania selling fish and other food to work gangs who cut trees on unused farm land. Now Minnie's family was in the same business.

The family had left the Delaware River fishing business when local Pennsylvania riverfront landowners sold their river frontage fishing rights to a group of local businessmen who formed a fishing club and built a club house to serve visiting sport fishermen from the "city." The landowner's decision eliminated the fishing business forcing Minnie's family into New Jersey.

In Minnie's new Peters Valley home there was a post office, general store, church and a hotel. A shoemaker, wheelwright, and blacksmith served the community. In September, 1890 Minnie enrolled in school accompanied by her older brother. She ate lunch at the school since she lived too far from home. Her first teacher was Theodore Sutton, from Hackettstown, a small town in neighboring Warren County. The school was visited each year by Townley the photographer from Newton who took a class picture and later sold them to parents. The 1890 class photo later showed 17 girls and 8 boys. Those children who could afford to buy a picture created an autograph album with inscriptions from their classmates. Many years later Minnie Smith recalled that the boys would write modest inscriptions like "compliments of a friend," while the girls would elaborate their thoughts writing "may tender memories around thee twine, like the ivy green around the pine."

Minnie personally experienced the rapid and continuous teacher turnover and small district poverty that Luther Hill noted in his annual reports to Trenton. She had three different teachers between 1890 and 1894. All had either lived or boarded nearby. While in school, she shared a seat with another girl and later clearly recalled that in September, 1896 she first received free texts. She was entitled to them in September, 1894 but local boards of education did not budget for them in March, 1894 and resisted the new text law during the 1894/95 school year until the County Superintendent reminded trustees of the law and threatened withholding state aid.

A copy of Minnie's Report Card from her teacher Ralph Decker, who later became County Superintendent, describes her daily lessons.



PUBLIC SCHOOL WORK.

Monthly Report.

Report of Minnie Smith

For Month Ending Nov 22 1895

Reading	90	Botany	
Spelling	96	Civil Government	
Arithmetic	100	Physiology	99
Geography	100	Geometry	
Physical Geography		Composition	
Penmanship	95	Drawing	
Grammar	95	No. of days present	50
Orthography		No. of days absent	10
History	95	No. of times tardy	
Algebra		Deportment	100
Philosophy			
Rhetoric			

General Average,

EXPLANATION. 100 is the Maximum, 90 to 100 Excellent, 80 to 90 Good, 70 to 80 Fair. Below 70 is unsatisfactory.

TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.

Parents and Guardians will find it greatly to the interest of the pupil to see that it has no tardy or absence marks. Systematic and constant efforts will be made to interest pupils and to stimulate them to a thorough and diligent exercise of their intellectual and moral faculties. Your co-operation will greatly aid in making the work successful.

Mar 5-th 18 95

Emma Bonnell, Teacher.

In school Minnie often practiced penmanship repeatedly writing the phrase "honesty in the best policy." She used the Appleton Reader series doing many of the "define and use" exercises, and she read her mother's novels at home. Every spring she participated in arbor day planting ceremonies and as the weather warmed and the days grew longer she noticed how the older boys came to school less often. Later, she ascribed their absence to

both boredom and the duties of farm work. She also noted that many of these same boys in later years recalled these early years as "lost opportunities".

Like most students in county schools, Minnie Smith's education consisted of the three Rs, a bit of history, geography and health, then called "physiology." Her education was limited. A contemporary survey taken by county teachers at a State teacher institute showed that only fifty of the 100 or so schools in the county had any science equipment. There were only 12 musical instruments in the entire county. No school taught typing and only several taught bookkeeping. Unlike the 400 student school in Newton, where in 1892 Charles Marjory, the new principal, sent monthly attendance notices to every parent, Minnie's teacher was under no such trustee pressure to account for the students if they did not regularly attend school.

Minnie lived in a poor but highly literate rural community. Her family had a newspaper subscription and used it to get recipes for preserved food such as pickled walnuts and salted sweet corn. At the country stores her mother bartered home-made goods for eggs. Once Minnie realized she could earn money if only she could go with her friend who left Peters Valley to do babysitting for a prosperous town family. The girl bought beautiful clothing with her money.

In the spring of 1892, the family left Peters Valley and moved a few miles down the road to Walpack Center and another lumbering job on an inactive farm. Minnie's father was part of a crew that had been assembled by a businessman who bought farms, logged them, and cut the lumber into railway ties which were hauled twelve miles over the Kittatinny Ridge to the railhead at Branchville. The work brought a modest prosperity since Minnie also vividly remembered the summer of 1893 when her father went to the Chicago World's Fair to visit her brother John who worked at the Fair.

Two years later the family moved farther north along the western slopes of the Kittatinny blue mountains into Montague Township. Her father decided to leave the lumbering business and for nearly three years the family rented a 400 acre farm. On April 1, 1898, the traditional day when leases ended, the family again moved. They had moved six times in eight years. Minnie's father died in 1898 and she continued her education in the Montague schools going to nearby Port Jervis, New York for her high school

education.[43] Minnie must have been a talented student because only 10% of the graduates went to high school.

Although Minnie and other Sussex students might attend very different common schools in widely varying communities, by the late 1880s all talented students could enter literary contests sponsored by either the County Superintendent or the Deckertown Sussex Independent. Luther Hill's office sponsored an Arbor Day writing contest and the newspapers gratuitously had contests for students who wrote about the usefulness of newspapers. Winners were published in the local press and received modest prizes.

Sometimes, a local teacher would ask one of the county papers to publish graduation speeches. Occasionally, an extraordinary student poem would be published. In October, 1881 Fannie Strawder wrote a poem asking her classmates to search their hearts and minds for the true meaning of education and life:

> For the truths of life sublime,
> Tis no idle dream of learning--
> Let no false ambitions lure us
> Toward the heights of worldly fame
> He must be a man of honor
> Who would win himself a name.--
> Those who tower on the summits
> Which are covered with snow,
> Must be made of firmer metal,
> Than the masses down below.--
> But with mind and soul and body
> Under duty's firm command
> Press onward ever upward
> With an earnest heart and hand.[44]

Neither Fanny, her teacher, nor the editor altered her use of the masculine pronoun.

Often, graduation ceremonies revealed values in a school system. While all schools had year-ending ceremonies in which the entire community would be invited to a series of student performances, only the larger systems in Newton and Deckertown had graduation exercises. During the 1880s and 1890s Newton had two year-ending ceremonies: one for graduates and one for all students. These were festive occasions with as many as 800 people crowding the humid Newton assembly hall on the last Friday in June to watch three or four hour programs.

Between 1884 and 1894 the Newton school district conducted nine graduation

exercises over the eleven year period. None were held in 1889 and 1890 due to a change in administrators. These ceremonies were previewed and carefully summarized in the local press. Students delivered graduation speeches with such titles as Great Women, Heroes, Leonidas, Elizabethan literature, the Future, Women's rights and accomplishments and the Progress of the United States. These teacher and principal-approved topics indicate a willingness to examine somewhat controversial issues. In a less serious 1885 effort, Otto Clawson made a well-received, somewhat humorous speech about the experiences of a husband in the kitchen. Often musical selections were played by male and female duets or talented brothers and sisters. Following the performances, students received prizes from wealthy citizens or free membership cards to the town library. These year-ending ceremonies were not nationalistic Occasionally a student might speak or read an essay about Washington's life or the progress of the states. There was no salute to the flag. A prayer started and ended the ceremony.

By late June school ended and children returned to their farm, village, or town homes. The curriculum had centered on personal character formation and fundamental literacy skills. These experiences were expected to prepare them for the workplace. Their learning accented their "being" rather than their "doing." The school was not designed for a transition to work or as an element in a comprehensive, government-led effort to change or heal economic and social ills. Children were certainly aware that some parts of the county economy offered little hope for jobs or even successful farming. As they prepared to graduate, some realized they might have to migrate for work, training, or further education. This movement would not be difficult since the rail system could get them around the county and from the county into the nearby metropolitan areas where they might have families or friends.

Most children had a two month vacation. Those who lived on farms had their chores. By 1880 some parents recognized there was little need for them on the farm since they required care and oversight having left the daily teacher's monitoring. Some parents even considered replicating a Port Jervis, New York summer school where parents paid a teacher to organize a play school. For the vast majority of children they spent their summer as their parents had and in September returned for another year in their one room school.

State Standardization Policies And Public Accountability

State officials affected schools and Sussex county children in two direct ways: by examining and evaluating their teachers and by offering a county superintendent's test and diploma to graduating eighth grade students. Minnie Smith and other students were taught by a young and increasingly female teacher corps who often moved from school to school. County superintendents visited their schools and observed teaching used a standardized set of evaluation procedures. The teacher observation form had twelve questions about teaching and eleven about student learning. The county superintendent marked a box following each question with a check, a minus , or, if he was uncertain, he drew a cross through a box at the end of the question. From this data he graded the school on a one to five scale. This grade was reported in an annual letter to Trustees and the State Superintendent. However, an unfavorable grade did not reduce state aid to the district.

The county superintendent regarded poor teachers as "overseerers" who merely assigned work, heard recitations, and then reassigned work. He called others "drillmasters" or teachers who asked students to repeat information and consistently used spelling bee competitions. The best type of teacher, the "interpreter" gave students information from personal experiences or resources, carefully questioned students, asked students to think about their answers, and assigned independent learning.

Finding ways to identify how teachers should be educated was often discussed in the local press. Good teaching required more talent and skill than the academic knowledge and grades which could be determined from a teaching license test. On November 30, 1888 the Sussex Independent printed a series of teacher examination questions on pedagogy. The questions were designed to acquaint examinees with the test they would soon take to either obtain or renew their certificate. More importantly, the next week the paper printed the examiners' answers to the questions. These answers reveal what skills the county superintendent and his examining team thought good teachers should practice in the classroom.

Question #1 asked the applicants to name four obstacles "in the way of the improvement and good government of a school." The answer was the home training of parents, wide learning differences in a class, lack of proper interest in studies, and the absence of cooperation between parents and teachers. In response to a question about getting the confidence and respect of pupils, teachers were expected to answer that from the first day of school pupils should understand their work responsibilities. Teachers were advised to make neither threats nor promises which would not be carried out or fulfilled. Discipline based on firmness with tenderness was the teacher's best path always securing respect, and confidence. If they governed with love not rules, they would have a good school.

Four questions were about specific teaching subjects. One asked how teachers should give moral lessons. The answer was that a student's moral training would be fashioned through a teacher's personal example. Teachers should commend good conduct and the right thoughts. Asked the proper way to inculcate the importance of study, teachers were expected to explain its purpose, the results, and the disadvantages of illiteracy. Another question asked about increasing the interest of pupils and parents in the school. The desired answer was that this could be accomplished by making the school work interesting, pleasing, and instructive. A teacher had to understand children and the needs of the local people.[45]

County superintendents also influenced the schools during the Spring when the best academic eighth grade students began preparing for his final examination. For the first time these students would be subject to an external examination and imposed standards. Their teacher would only prepare them but not evaluate their work. They would be graded by the County Superintendent and a team of selected, experienced teachers.

These examinations reflected the changing opportunities Sussex children would face after school. In 1880 New Jersey had 1400 school districts. Each school sent 90% of its graduates immediately to work. Of the remaining 10%, some continued in the same district going to an upper school or official high school. Other graduates went to private, college preparatory academies, tried to get third class teaching certificates, or went into specialized training programs in commerce, nursing, or teaching. Many rural students

lacked a recognized and reputable diploma since, unlike New York State which instituted its Regents High School Graduation System in 1878, New Jersey common schools had no standard curriculum or diploma. In a significant 1880 administrative policy decision the State Superintendent gave County Superintendents the authority to conduct examinations and award a County Grammar School Diploma. The first examination was conducted by Luther Hill in June, 1881. Fifteen girls and three boys from Newton took the examination and passed.[46]

The examination was available to all Sussex districts and eighth grade curriculum and instruction was closely aligned to its requirements. Every county did not give an examination. The examinations were not used in towns and cities that had large graded school systems such as Newark or the suburban Orange and Montclair systems. The examinations were used in rural schools in an effort to raise academic standards and expectations. A school board whose candidates did not fare well might take student performance as a measure of the school's quality and attempt to find new teachers, get better teaching materials, or revise their course of study. The examination given at the end of eighth grade was unlike the New York State Regents Examination given at the end of high school. The examination did not determine graduation from the local school district but was designed to give successful students an additional credential they could use in moving to another school or into the job market. It was a state acknowledgment that as the county economy integrated with the regional economy Sussex students needed recognizable credentials. A copy of the County Grammar School Diploma Examination of 1903, originally developed in the 1880s, is shown in Appendix D.

Choices After Common School: Going to High School

When male and female students graduated from the common school they had different life choices. They could seek work, further education in the county or leave the county for work, career training, or further education. Their schools and larger society believed that good men, and by implication properly oriented good young women, could not undeservedly fail. Life's victories were attainable and the path to success was clearly

marked by the experiences of their elders and the advice of their teachers. Whatever success or failure they might encounter would be both their own victory or fault. They were on the road to becoming self-improving men and women.

Most students returned to their homes. Boys worked on farms or went logging with men like Minnie Smith's father and brothers. They might learn trades in the small farm service villages or look for unskilled labor work around Newton, Deckertown, or Branchville. Some went into the county mines working in the Newton slate quarry, the iron and zinc mines of Franklin and Ogdensburg, or the new iron ore mining project that Thomas Edison established in 1889 on Sparta mountain just to the east of Ogdensburg. Girls might return to their families and help on the farm. Some might look for jobs in the new shoe factories in Newton. If their family had relatives in the nearby industrializing towns and cities they might migrate but they normally waited until they were sixteen or seventeen years old before venturing from home. For girls, the range and number of work opportunities were significantly less than their brothers or male classmates.

Some academically talented students who did not need to work could try to stay in school if it offered an "upper" or high school. These common school extensions or designated high schools had first emerged in the industrialized cities or their residential suburbs. Newark's first high school opened in 1855. Paterson had a school by 1862, followed by Elizabeth in 1871. Wealthy, new suburbs like Montclair and Bloomfield also had secondary schools before 1870. A few town districts in generally rural counties created one to three grade upper common school extensions. These early high schools received no separate state aid and did not have significant status since it was unclear to many how they might lead a student to gainful employment.

A talented student faced a dilemma if his rural school district did not have upper school grades. A student might petition his own school board to help him pay tuition in a neighboring district's upper school. But they often paid their own way since many boards of education did not acknowledge a student's right to post eighth grade education. In September, 1882, Belle DeWitt of the Clove school, just west of Deckertown, went fifteen miles west over the Kittatinny ridge into the Delaware River town of Port Jervis, New York where she enrolled as a tuition student and presumably boarded with relatives or

trusted family friends.

In Sussex, only Newton had an upper school and naturally the principal favored local students for the limited number of available places. In March, 1894 Thomas Kays, the Newton District Clerk, reported to the Board of Education and general public that the "upper room" now had fifty students and eleven would graduate in June leaving thirty nine enrolled in September, 1894. However, the eighth grade numbered thirty nine and if more than eleven wanted to remain in school there would not be sufficient room or teachers.[47] A talented student from a rural district with no chance to apply as a Newton tuition student and board in the town might apply for the more expensive private education offered at the Newton Collegiate Institute as Ralph Decker did when he finished the Walpack common school.

Before 1870 common school graduates from wealthy Newton families were subsidized with public funds in private schools. Slowly the common school added upper grades and by 1875 Newton's upper school offered two more years of education. There is some evidence that rural and small town high schools primarily served children of professional or educated families with girls outnumbering boys in the classes.[48] Upper school students could study mathematics, Latin, English, geography, history, geology, and natural history. During one term, courses were offered in bookkeeping, astronomy, botany, and drawing. Pupils who wished to become teachers could also take a course in the theories and practices of teaching. The students had a debate and literary club. By 1884 there were ten students in the Newton upper school, nine female and one male.[49] The predominance of females is related to the belief that fourteen or fifteen year old girls from professional, merchant, or banking families could not find suitable work in Newton. They were probably considered too young to be sent off for training in nursing, teaching, or commercial studies. If a publicly funded upper school could educate them there was no reason to send them to preparatory school in another town or even to the private Newton Collegiate Institute.

Occasionally, the upper school caused a controversy. When the Board of Education presented its 1888/89 budget in March, 1888 board members were split over

voting for increased taxes. Trustee James Decker then proposed a resolution: "as this school is a common school and nothing more, that Latin, geometry, and the higher branches of study are not required to obtain a first grade teaching certificate to teach in a common English day school be it resolved that these subjects should be taken forthwith out of the school and that the taxpayers be relieved of the burden of teaching branches not contemplated by the law." Decker would not get support for the motion. But his motion was published and represented a direct attack on the children of some of the town's most wealthy public school patrons who had sons and daughters in the upper school.[50] Between 1884 and 1887, 44 students graduated from the Newton district upper school. Thirty-one students were female supporting the thesis that the growth of upper schools or high schools in the later quarter of the nineteenth century represented an extraordinary time of opportunity access to higher education for females.

Luther Hill favored creating a free county high school open to all qualified common school graduates. Parents would pay boarding costs but tuition and books would be free. The Herald editor asked for a plan but none was forthcoming since Hill was conceptually proposing a regional, multiple district high school using a county-wide tax base. The system would replace individual districts supporting tuition students in districts with high schools who accepted tuition students. The issue of advanced education for talented students from rural districts also concerned other County Superintendents who favored either establishing two or three schools in the county or one high school in large, multi-district townships. This type of county or regional school district combining children from different townships did not emerge anywhere in New Jersey until the mid-1930s. Sussex County's first County regional school district opened in 1966 when the County Vocational-Technical School District admitted its first students.

Choices After Common School: Technical Education and Training

If a student did not go to either a public or private high school and did not want to enter the local labor force the county's common schools curricula gave many students the knowledge, and ambition to successfully leave the county for training opportunities. As

students considered their technical education options they were warned that there were already too many clerks and bookkeepers as well as doctors and lawyers. Newspapers reminded students that what the country's employers really needed were mechanics and those who could "cultivate a taste for the noble calling of agriculture." The editorialist called for educating more farmers simply assuming that an education or even desire to farm could create the capital necessary for land and equipment.[51]

Some common school graduates wanted a local teaching job and waited until they were nearly seventeen and then took Luther Hill's quarterly, third grade teaching certificate examination. The test was usually preceded by private study. If a student successfully finished a two year state normal school course the examination was waived and a certificate was issued. The Stillwater district trustees were extremely proud that their school under the teaching leadership of Thamer Snover produced 48 teachers between 1882 and 1894. The Stillwater correspondent noted that Frank Hankison was leaving home to take up a teaching position and other graduates were off to colleges and seminaries.

Female graduates usually waited several years following eighth grade graduation and then went for technical training. In 1878, Elizabeth and Sarah Adams, daughters of Parkinson Adams of Deckertown, were among the nineteen nursing graduates of the Charity Hospital in New York City. Miss Kittie Rogers, who had played the organ during the opening prayer of Professor Putnam's 1879 teacher institute industrial drawing program, also graduated nursing school that summer.[51] On April 27, 1885 Minnie Howell, and Addie Slater graduated from the New York Hospital Training School for Nurses.[52] In January, 1889 the Register reported that there half a dozen Sussex girls in New York City learning stenography and typewriting. Miss Maud Westbrook of Sandyston had also gone to Passaic, New Jersey to learn telegraphy.[53]

Some students studied for university examinations. The Register reported on November 22, 1882 that Adolph Ewald, formerly a diligent student at the Newton school and a laborer at the shoe factory, had left that job to prepare for Harvard examinations under the tutelage of Professor Joel Wilson, the principal of the Newton Collegiate School. Adolph may have been encouraged by the success of Charles Thurber of Deckertown who

had recently entered Cornell after an "admirable career" in the Deckertown school.[54]

On May 26, 1882 John Gilson, a teacher in the McAfee district of Vernon Township, traveled to Belvidere, in Warren County, to take a series of examinations which might qualify him for a Congressional appointment to West Point. A judge, minister, and professor administered a seven hour series of tests in arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, and spelling. Six other candidates took the examinations.

Gilson was the highest scoring candidate. Matthew Bailey, the son of a wealthy Vernon Township landowner and Civil War hero, was second. The three judges recommended Gilson to Congressman Harris who would nominate Gilson if he passed a physical examination given later at West Point. The four year West Point education was free and paid Gilson $540 a year significantly more than he was earning or could expect to earn teaching at McAfee.[55]

Proximity to New York City training opportunities gave extraordinary Sussex women faced with misfortune unusual opportunities. Following the Civil War Emma McMickle lived on a farm in Frankford Township. She married Jesse Herbert Phillips and the couple had four children between November, 1876 and 1881. Then, on March 21st., 1881 Jesse Phillips died and Emma McMickle Phillips was left in an extremely difficult situation. She decided she did not want to remarry and could not raise her four children alone. She had two choices: to either send the four children off to relatives or put them up for adoption. Emma McMickle Phillips decided to serve both her personal and maternal interests. The eldest child, Edward Phillips, was sent to an uncle George Phillips and his wife Dorleska or as Edward later called her "aunt Lech." George and Aunt Lech were childless and raised Edward on their nearby Frankford farm. The other children were sent to relatives in Pennsylvania. Emma Phillips then enrolled in the Mt. Sinai nursing training program in New York City and eventually graduated.[56]

Male common school graduates could also apply to Rutgers University, the state's land-grant college. Each New Jersey county was given a number of scholarships based on its number of representatives in the State Assembly. The grants designed for agricultural and mechanical arts were not very popular since in the 1879/1880 school year only 21 of

40 tuition-free places were taken by qualified students. A decade later Paul Tooker of Beemerville was the only Sussex applicant for a scholarship. He passed the test and was immediately admitted. Clearly, a degree program in civil engineering, mechanics, or agricultural chemistry was not attracting many talented students. Two year courses were also available in chemistry and agriculture. The absence of interest may be related to two factors. A student might not own a large farm. The potential number of jobs in corporations engaged in some form of agriculture may have been insufficient to entice candidates into a rigorous four year training course.

Choices After Common School: Leaving Sussex To Look For Work

If the young men and women of Sussex County decided to migrate to other areas in search of work the local press assured them that they were well educated, sure to bring credit to their families and county, and capable of great success. As an example, they were told that in Newark the street railway managers were "prejudiced in favor of men with rural training for the majority of conductors and drivers were countrymen. They are quick witted, polite and generally more willing than city men." They were also proficient in English as contrasted with some city men. The type of industrialization that Newark and other cities were experiencing called for unskilled labor, skilled labor requiring literacy, or specialized skills that Sussex county common school graduates brought to the job market.[57]

Every week the local Herald, Register, and Independent correspondents reported on the coming and going of local residents to the cities and large towns of different states. The message was optimistic and spoke of achievement, either anticipated or earned. They were simply better than city bred youth. Summer family gatherings were occasions to report the successes of "old Sussex's" children.

One hundred and forty invited family guests attended the Christmas, 1884 and New Years family Isaac Snook family reunion at the family farm in Fredon. Just outside of Newton, six children had returned and were together for the first time in ten years. William was teaching school in Belleville, Illinois, David was running a stock farm in Reading,

Kansas, Jacob was teaching in Lafayette, Georgia, George was running an asylum in Kalamazoo, Michigan and only Alfred and Roy of the six boys were at home. Alfred was the oldest and Roy the youngest of the six sons. Two of the girls had married and the correspondent did not note where they lived or what they did. Two other girls remained at home. On Monday following the holiday weekend the entire family visited the photographer in Newton for a family portrait.[58]

In July, 1888 the Herald's Sparta correspondent noted that while Sparta was considered a poor village, "she seems to have some promising young men who have gone out into business." Mahlon Reid was now the well respected Principal of School #9 in Paterson. The brothers Newton and Henry Laurence were a stenographer and businessman in Newark respectively. William Strait was a successful salesman. Richard Morris was with one of the largest insurance companies in New York City.[59]

Occasionally, successful working women were also noted in the press. The Sandyston correspondent reported on a winter, 1889 trip to lower Manhattan to see Miss Susie Clark. Miss Clark did stenographic and typewriter work for the Herring Safe Company on Broadway and earned $12 a week with hours from 9 A.M. to 4 P. M. which "beats working in a dairy all hollow."[60]

Earlier, the Register's 1888 spring issues brought good news about young Sussex County doctors making their marks in the world. Joseph Warbasse ranked third in a class of 200 at the New York College of Physicians and Surgeons and was recently sent to the Chambers Street Hospital for advanced training, a high honor since only five were admitted. John Gilson of the McAfee school who took the West Point examination had just graduated from Bellevue Hospital. His brother was also a doctor and on a return to his Franklin homestead the local correspondent reported that Dr. Gilson thought that he would join his brother in a Paterson, New Jersey practice.[61]

A reprinted Newark Daily Journal article in the Herald on February 4, 1891 compared Sussex County in New Jersey to the relationship that Ohio had in the Federal government under Republican administrations. Ohio men had jobs throughout the government. The editor noted that Sussex was a county that everyone came from but no

one ever went to. The Newark writer noted that Sussex was a small county with only one assemblyman. Its ratables were $6,000,000 less than they were in 1873, but her wealth was "in her sons." The mother county had given them not capital but brains, an eye to the main chance, and a dexterity in taking advantage of that chance.[62]

County youth were not only effective and efficient, they were also deemed patriotic. Joseph Dennis of Beaver Run, a district in Lafayette Township was one of 800 recently hired Chicago policemen. Following the Haymarket Affair and other disturbances in the city, Chicago officials decided to hire "Americans" for the force. Dennis may have been a member of a young, farming generation who could not buy a farm or profitably operate one. He may not have inherited land or had the money to buy land even in the depressed post-1873 land market. Like many others from the villages and uncultivated farms Dennis left the county in search of wages. The county's proximity to New York, Philadelphia, and the anthracite regions of Pennsylvania assured that the railroads would bring them quickly and cheaply back to old Sussex as often as they wished.[63]

Real, if exaggerated, stories such as these counteracted the constant series of essays, poems, and editorial opinions warning country youth about city dangers. Editors who controlled the news in the county had a schizophrenic attitude toward out-migration. They knew it reduced their readership and market for advertisers. Conversely, they were intensely proud of county youth who went into the cities and succeeded because the success confirmed their feelings and understanding about the intrinsic and enduring values of life in Sussex County and the strength of its impoverished but effective schools.

A generation later Theodore Roosevelt's Commission on Country Life sent out 550,000 questionnaires designed to learn more about rural public opinion. There was a 17% return. The poll asked the question, 'are the schools in your neighborhood satisfactorily training boys and girls for life on the farm?' 60% of the farmers said "no." 69% of the teachers said "no." Had the poll been taken in Sussex County twenty years earlier a similar response would have probably occurred. But, a second question asking if schools prepared students for the job market place were used it would have produced a strong favorable response.[64]

Chapter 5 End Notes

[1]Bonfield, Lynn A. and Mary C. Morrison, Roxanna's Children. The Biography of a Nineteenth Century Vermont Family, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 1.

[2]Stephen Hamilton, Apprenticeship for Adulthood: Preparing Youth for the Future, (New York: Free Press, 1988), 122.

[3]W. Susman, Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century,(New York City: Pantheon, 1984).

[4]Daniel Rogers, "Socializing Institutions, Fables, and Work Values in Nineteenth Century America." N. R. Hiner and J. Hawes,eds., Growing Up in America: American Children in Historical Perspective, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 120-132.

[5]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 13 January 1883.

[6]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 9 February 1887 and New Jersey Herald 21 December 1884. See Appendix C

[7]New Jersey Herald, 20 January 1868.

[8]New Jersey Herald, 2 July 1863 and 18 March 1869.

[9]New Jersey Herald, 23 July 1863.

[10]David Tyack, and Elizabeth Hansot, Learning Together, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

[11]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 7 March 1872.

[12]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 24 July 1879 and Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 8 September 1874. Over the period 1865-95 there were often letters to the press or editorial comments concerning the female servant "problem." The schools were only obliquely criticized for giving students ideas to think about working in the new shoe factories or leaving the county. Young females were told that servants jobs were always readily available and paid good wages. They were useful to the growing tourist economy and always performed in proper health conditions.

[13]Sally McMurray, Families and Farmhouses in the Nineteenth Century: American Vernacular Design and Social Change, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 202-203.

[14]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 14 July 1886, 18 July 1883.

[15]Sussex Independent, 19 August 1891.

[16]Sussex Independent, 30 June 1892, 7 July 1892 and Newton (New Jersey)

[17]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 14 July 1892.

[18]Sussex Independent, 28 October 1892.

[19]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 16 June 1864.

[20]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 14 May 1865.

[21]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 14 December 1865.

[22]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 14 December 1865.

[23]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 21 December 1865.

[24]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 16 March 1865 and 1 February 1866.

[25]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 8 August 1869.

[26]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 9 December 1869.

[27]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 4 February 1870.

[28]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 10 March 1870.

[29]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 15 August 1870.

[30]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 22 December 1870 and 16 November 1871.

[31]Newton (New Jersey)Sussex Register, 6 April 1870.

[32]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 6 May 1874.

[33]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 10 February 1876.

[34]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 11 June 1879.

[35]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 10 February 1879.

[36]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 25 March 1886.

[37]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 27 September 1886, 10 October 1886.

[38]Newton (New Jersey)New Jersey Herald, 10 January 1887.

[39]New Jersey Herald, 13 October, 1890, 6 June 1890.

[40]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 21 October 1892.

[41]Stanhope Eagle, 14 July 1885.

[42]New Jersey Herald, 15 March 1894.

[43]Minnie Smith, Sussex County Sojourn in the 1890s, (Belvidere, New Jersey. 1964. Smith produced a privately printed memoir which successfully illustrates the lives of many rural Sussex County people who were not farmers but were in various ways tied to the land and its relationship to nearby industrial markets. Minnie's father was inseparably linked to urban interests since even his small provisioning business was eliminated when city dwellers started to visit the Delaware for "get-away" fishing camp experiences in the 1890s.

[44]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 7 October 1881.

[45]Sussex Independent, 30 November 1888, 7 December 1888.

[46]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 7 July 1881

[47]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 2 April 1894.

[48]Stuart Blumin, . The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experiences in the American City, 1760-1900, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 301. Blumin notes that in Lynn, Massachusetts in 1854 only two of fifty four males in the local high school were from worker's families. John Rury Education and Women's Work: Female Schooling and the Division of Labor in Urban America 1870-1930, (Durham Duke University Press, 1982)

[49]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 14 November 1884.

[50]New Jersey Herald, 14 March 1888.

[51]New Jersey Herald, 16 November 1883.

[52]New Jersey Herald, 13 May 1885.

[53]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 9 January 1889.

[54]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 22 November 1882.

[55]New Jersey Herald, 13 June 1882.

[56]Interview with Sonya Hulbert, Branchville, New Jersey. 21 July 1992.

[57]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 2 January 1884.

[58]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 25 July 1888.

[59]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 6 February 1889.

[60]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 22 March 1888, 2 May 1888.

[61]New Jersey Herald, 4 February 1891.

[62]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 13 February 1888.

[63]Olaf Larson and Thomas Jones, "The Unpublished Data from Roosevelt's Commission on Country Life," Agricultural History 64, no. 4, (Fall 1990): 139.

CHAPTER 6
ROMAN CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN SUSSEX COUNTY BEFORE 1896: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOL STRATEGIES

During the nineteenth century Sussex County had an extremely homogeneous Protestant population. Only three percent or 900-1000 people were Roman Catholic. Primarily of British, Irish, and German origins, nearly all were native Catholics. They mainly lived in Newton or in the Ogdensburg-Franklin mining areas, and rarely engaged in farming. The Catholic population participated in local politics through the county's dominant Democratic party,. Catholics in Sussex County had two strategies to ensure the education of their children. In Newton they sought public funds for their private schools. They also used the political process to ensure that public schools offered equal opportunities to both Catholic children and Catholic teachers.

Catholics created parochial schools in Newton from 1863 to 1866 and again from 1881 to 1896. The absence of permanent parochial schools was due to Catholic integration into the majority protestant public education system. Catholic children were easily absorbed into majority protestant schools for two major reasons. Their number was very small and they spoke English. Second, their poor rural churches resembled a protestant evangelical church. As a result, many Protestants had a favorable or tolerant attitude toward priests and their churches. Using their church as an organizing point, lay Catholics created numerous voluntary associations contributing to the social and charitable life of the County. They were led by young, educated, and very poor Irish priests. In their public life they advocated a strong American nationalistic spirit which hearkened back to the Revolution. They compared it to their own on going Irish resistance against the British.

In the eighteenth century itinerant priests from Philadelphia entered and served the county's tiny Catholic population through its westernmost Delaware River townships. During the first half of the nineteenth century priests from Paterson, Madison, and Dover also served local Catholics. The country also produced clergy. In 1848 Fr. Senez traveled to Montague Township where he baptized John Grady's son who later became a priest. Michael Hoban, who was baptized in Byram Township, later became the second Bishop of

Scranton. Then in 1853, shortly after taking over the newly-created Newark Diocese, Bishop James Bayley received letters from Matthew Lynch of Andover and William Brown representing fifty to sixty Catholics in Vernon's Wawayanda mining community who asked that a permanent priest come to Sussex.

In November, 1854 Bishop Bayley responded and sent Philip McMahan to Newton where he said Mass in the home of Edward McCormick on Spring Street. Bayley had instructed McMahan to seek a proper place for a parish center. He finally choose Newton over Andover, a town five miles to the south. Both were on the rail line but Newton was the county seat. In the Fall, 1855 McMahan started construction of St. Joseph's Church which was finished in 1856. The small church project had cost only $1405. In 1857 McMahan left the parish and went to Canada.[1]

James McKay another young Irish priest educated at All Hallows College, Dublin, came to Newton in 1857. His 1858 Church Report, to the Notitiae, Diocese of Newark, estimated that nearly 700 Catholics lived in his mission district which included all of Sussex County and the northwest part of Warren County. He estimated that there were 200 men, 300 women, and 200 children. 30 attended catechism classes. There was no school. That year McKay baptized 78 children and 5 adults. He married 19 couples and during the year 606 of his 700 parishioners had received communion. He noted that 94 did not comply, "liquor being the cause." The young priest charged no pew rent and collected $100.00 for the year with a single extraordinary collection gathering $20.00. The entire year's parish operation cost $635.00 and McKay took $25.00 a month for his basic needs.

McKay's June 1, 1860 Notitiae reported 900 Sussex/Warren Catholics. The Sussex population was nearly 23,000. Bishop Bayley's report also asked for other information deemed important to the interests of religion in the mission. McKay noted "I can only say that Protestant prejudice is very much diminished in the counties of Warren and Sussex for the last twelve months. Protestants and Catholics are most amicably disposed towards each other at present and we amen." McKay's comments indicate that those Catholic children attending Newton and other county schools were not subject to Protestant religious prejudice. McKay left Newton in 1861.

From 1861-1880 Edward McCosker, a young seminary graduate, was St. Joseph's

next parish priest. Under his leadership the Immaculate Conception mission church was built in Franklin Furnace, ten miles northeast of Newton, on Cork Hill Road halfway between Franklin and Ogdensburg, a neighboring mining village. In December, 1867 Immaculate Conception became the second county parish. McCosker lead the new parish saying Mass every other week in Franklin. In 1881 the St. Thomas of Aquinas church was built in Ogdensburg and a second priest, Fr. Kammer appointed pastor for Immaculate Conception in Franklin.

McCosker's second achievement was starting a school in Newton which opened for the 1863-1864 school year. There were 48 students, 25 males and 23 females. One lay teacher was hired for $420.00 per year. McCosker's private school was organized in a community where other private schools had long been subsidized by public school district trustees. The trustees of the Newton District did not operate their own public school building and for years they either rented rooms or buildings in the town or gave public funds to trustee or proprietarily managed Newton private schools from local taxes, the State's School Fund allocation, and the special 1837 federal funds invested and distributed to local trustees by the County Freeholders.

The private school subsidization policies of the Newton trustees had started in the early 1830s and continued until 1870 even though in May 1851 Attorney General Lucius Q. C. Elmer had rendered an opinion stating that this policy was legal only if that aid was given to schools which existed at the time of the 1846 legislation. In addition, funds could only be given to schools whose "church discipline provided for the establishment of schools and the appointment of trustees." Many of the Newton private schools were single manager proprietary schools with no trustees. Since the state had no administrator in the county to ensure fiscal accountability, these practices continued subject only to public opinion and elections when school politics might become an issue.

An 1857 State report by Newton Township Superintendent Henry Chapin noted that within the twelve district Township system the town of Newton was District 7. It contained three private schools, two operated by female proprietors, and one precollegiate academy whose trustees had a similar position in the Presbyterian Church. These schools received public aid from the trustees of District 7. Chapin's report took no position either

for or against this funding.

By 1859 Chapin had changed his mind and called the actions of Newton town trustees "wrong and illegal." He commented that the cause of this defect was that the trustees sent their children to these schools and deliberately funded them reducing their personal fees. His reports in 1860 and 1861 reported additional public aid to private schools.

In 1863 and 1864 Nathaniel Pettit, the rector of the Episcopalian church, was also Newton township superintendent. His reports noted the continuing existence of the private schools but he had no negative comments about their use of public funds. The State Superintendent's 1862 report had published a series of questions and answers on various school laws and in response to a question about funding private schools that did not have a governing board of trustees Superintendent Frederick Ricord said the procedure was clearly illegal. But the legislature and governor chose to overlook the possible legal violation in a remote and small county with significant political weight in the state Democratic party.[2]

When Edward McCosker took over St. Joseph's parish he found no public school for Catholic, or indeed any, children. He noted that private schools secured public funds and decided to start his own school and seek public funding especially at a time when the church's leadership supported the union in the Civil War. The school opened in September, 1863 without public aid and in March, 1864, the school created a controversy in Newton. On March 11, 1864, at the town council's annual election and reorganization meeting, a resolution was passed that no sectarian distinctions be made in the apportionment of school money and the schools of all denominations should be awarded an equitable share of the revenues. The Sussex Register commented that this resolution would give public money to the newly established Catholic school. The editor believed that this action would be a first anywhere in the State and concluded that the resolution's legality might well be questioned because only the school district trustees and not the town council could distribute school aid funds. He pointed out that trustees should follow the law and directives of the State Superintendent rather than the instructions of an excited partisan crowd on an election night.[3]

The controversy quickly developed. The district school trustees led by Nathaniel Petitt petitioned the State Superintendent for advice. The trustees were told they could not give money to any school except district-sponsored and managed schools. They were to inform all private schools that they would no longer receive aid Once the Superintendent's letter was published, the Republican Register concluded that for years Newton trustees had violated state law when they gave public money to private schools. Now, in an effort to continue this pattern and consolidate its power, a local Democratic political faction was using the promise of public school aid money to get Catholic votes. The dilemma was that if the aid stopped public education would also cease because there was no public school in Newton.

Once it became clear that following the March school meeting the trustees were taking their case to Trenton, the pro-Democracy Herald published a letter from "Veritas" stating that the reason the Catholic school existed was to bring low cost education to the town's poor students. He stressed that the school was not conducted in the parish hall and was open to all students regardless of their religious beliefs. There was no religious instruction. Saturday was set aside for religious instruction, "when all attend who choose." While the writer did not note the fact, he could have also stated that the school employed a lay teacher. "Veritas" concluded that a Catholic school in North Orange had already received aid and Newton would not be the first public school district to equitably distribute its aid to all sectarian denominations which sponsored a school accessible to all children.[4]

Rev. McCosker had simply created another public, open enrollment private school in Newton where there was no trustee-sponsored school operating in a district-owned building with board-contracted teachers. He wanted equitable public assistance. The trustees had given money to the local college preparatory academy whose trustees represented the three major Protestant denominations, an infant school, a private, select school, and proprietary schools which used rented space in private buildings. McCosker wanted to join a traditional but possibly illegal Newton school aid system. With political allies on the Democratic Town Council he expected to receive a share of the public aid.

The trustee private school aid policy meant that none of the trustee-supported

schools could be a totally free school. Funds which might have been concentrated on one board-sponsored public school were fragmented to different private schools forcing even the one proprietary school that accepted all applicants to offer only one free instructional quarter. Students paid tuition for the other school quarters. In theory, McCosker's school expanded the range of options and possibly the quality of opportunity available to the town's children who might not have the money to pay fees at the other schools. In reality, the trustee policy precluded the possibility of any board operated school from offering a less expensive if not a totally free education to all students who wished to attend.[5]

On September 21, 1864, McCosker and two lay trustees, James Daly and James English, took another significant action when they went to the County Clerk and arranged for the incorporation of St. Josephs as a legal religious corporation giving the Diocese ownership and managerial rights. This action was authorized by legislation that spring which may have been a quid pro quo for official Roman Catholic support of the Union cause.

In September, 1864 the Catholic school opened for its second year with 44 students, 20 male and 24 female. A lay teacher was again employed and now paid $450 for the year. In early February, 1865 "C" wrote to the Sussex Register noting that Newton now had no less than eight schools, receiving public money the law had authorized for a district operated school. These eight schools represented five types described as "private, select, Catholic, infant, and the collegiate institute. All charged fees and even the subsidized proprietary school operated by teacher Henry Chapin could not remain open on a free basis for the entire year.

"C" asked his readers to consider the advantages of a system where a free, first class, public school might be created to operate year-round with competent staff equal in all respects to those in New York or Philadelphia. The current system a wasted public resources. Concluding, he also noted that Edwin Harrison, the State Superintendent had recommended the repeal of Section #12 in the 1846 law which permitted the use of public funds for private schools.[6]

On February 17, 1865 "C" presented a plan for Newton's schools. The District

had 545 eligible children. Since each student was eligible for $2.50 in local tax support, this amount when coupled with state aid would give the District $1762.50 for its school. Currently, eight schools were getting public money. Each school had about 40 students or about 340 students. These private schools were charging $4.56 per ten week quarter or $18.25 for the year. The cost of educating the 340 children was $6201.60. Over $2000 of this tuition cost was public money. If these children were united in a graded school they could be educated for 50% of the cost. A public school would take the $2000 state aid and require only another $1000 in tuition for its operation. "C" reasoned that the money spent by parents on tuition would be reduced if they would agree to send their children to a public school. "C" argued that a new school building was needed since the District had never owned a school building and the rental spaces could not be modified. "C" knew and did not mention that a building to educate 500/600 students would cost $35,000 and require a staff of at least 10 teachers.

He also argued that as a result of these trustee policies, poor children were now deprived of a free education. They were ignorant, left to wildly run the streets. "C" did not want to antagonize the private schools and noted that their merit was appreciated and more wealthy residents would continue attending them. If they did, they should pay tuition and not try to get some of the public's money to support their private schools. The principal of the Newton Collegiate Institute should not have to go to the Town Superintendent to get a part of his salary.[7]

Even though the issue of giving public aid to a new Catholic school divided the Newton community it did not stop the practice. Amidst this controversy, McCosker's school entered its third year in the fall of 1866. The school enrolled 24 males and 17 females for the 1866/67 school year. The teacher was again paid $450. The parish had 286 members and assuming that one-third were between the ages of 5-18 the school was attracting nearly 50% of its eligible population. 1866/67 was the final year for the school. After the school closed in June, 1867 it would not reopen for another fourteen years. McCosker's report to the Bishop on January 1, 1868 noted that there was no parochial school in 1867/1868 "for want of a school room." Apparently, the school was operating in rented space but it remains unclear why alternative space was not secured. In 1867/1868

all Newton's children had less educational opportunity because Mr. and Mrs. Henry Chapin left their proprietary school for New Hampshire. Without their own school Catholic children could apply for other publicly subsidized schools.[8]

Newton's population grew from 2071 in mid-1865 to 2280 in September, 1867. There were 605 eligible students between the ages of five and eighteen. In April the Town council had voted $4.00 per. student in the coming school year. During April, 1867 the Newton trustees met to discuss plans for a new school. They computed land, construction, and annual maintenance costs but no action was taken. The decision to delay was related to the possibility that a wealthy ex-Newton businessman, Alfred Dennis of Newark, might donate money for a school. He was prepared to give $25,000 for a library and the trustees thought that he might shift the donation to a school.[9]

The Newton trustee's indecision may have also been related to the new 1867 education law which eliminated the Township Superintendent position and created a new County Superintendency. An old colleague of the Newton trustees, Nathaniel Pettit, who had resigned as pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church in January, 1867, was the new County Superintendent. Given the uncertainty of the new law and the pending fundamental change in policy, they hesitated to build. On February 13, 1868 the Herald noted that finally trustees decided to construct a graded school. The editor warned that their $20,000 estimate might not be sufficient to accommodate all eligible students. In the meantime, McCosker's families and their children waited for a public school that would ensure access and meet their needs.[10] When the first publicly owned school building was eventually opened in September, 1870 many Catholic students enrolled. One writer commented that if Catholics would, for some reason, create their own private school there would be more money available for the remaining children.[11] Catholics attended the Newton school between 1870 and 1881.

Father G.W. Corrigan, the new Bishop's younger brother, was assigned to Newton in the late summer, 1880. Corrigan remained for only one year but during his tenure he had three significant achievements. He built a mission chapel in Deckertown, eight miles northwest of Franklin, converted a local war hero, Brigadier General Judson

Kilpatrick, who while Grant's ambassador to Chile, had married a niece of the Bishop of Santiago, and on September 5, 1881 he opened the second Roman Catholic school at St.Joseph's in Sussex County. [12]

While G. W. Corrigan started the new school on September 8, 1881 he was fulfilling a goal of Fr. McCosker whose 1874 report noted that while "he had started no school that year with God's pleasure he would have one the following year." In 1874 there were 375 in the parish. 191 were children. Given the departure of McCosker in 1880 and Corrigan's arrival in the summer of 1880, it seems probable that Corrigan implemented McCosker's mid-1870s plans, developed during a period of intense state-wide religious and political rivalry over the degree to which state institutions should reflect specific Catholic needs. By 1880 Corrigan's access to any public funds was prohibited by the 1875 Constitution which now clearly prevented the use of public funds for the general support of private educational institutions.[13]

St. Joseph's first teacher was Miss Florence Field, an experienced educator and musician from Hoboken, a Hudson County community adjacent to New York City. Miss Field was paid $300.00 to instruct 22 males and 28 females. Eighteen years earlier her lay counterpart was paid $420. Corrigan staunchly supported the school saying that he would rather close the church than the school. Forty eight students enrolled in the first year and 50 in the 1882/83 school year. Between 1884 and 1887 enrollment fluctuated from a low of 30 to 55. Field taught at St. Joseph until 1886 when she made $330.00 per. annum, a salary comparable to her colleagues in the public schools. A new financial reporting system for 1887 showed school income at $263.50 indicating that tuition was not sufficient to meet costs. A subsidy from general parish revenues made up the difference.

Fr. Corrigan remained in Newton for fifteen months departing in the fall of 1881 for the Short Hills parish in Essex County. On November 24, 1881 Reverend M. A. McManus came to St. Joseph's from Bridgeton in southern New Jersey and became a staunch public advocate for his new school. On September 15, 1883 the Herald published a letter from "M. A. McManus" arguing that Catholics were being taxed twice for educating their children. He asked why should Catholics have to pay fees to support their own

children and taxes to support other children in the public school? Recognizing that a direct public subsidy was impossible, he called for a tax refund plan to redress the grievance and believed that reasonable and honorable men would develop a solution. A desire for "fairness and squareness" and no religious motive influenced him.[14]

In September, 1886 Miss Field left Newton for a position in Passaic. Her work was continued by Agnes and Celeste two members of the Sisters of Charity who were sent to St. Josephs from the convent house in Madison, Morris County. The sisters were paid $300.00, a slight savings on Field's single salary, but McManus had to find them lodging at $135.00 a year in Newton. Enrollment fluctuated between 30 in 1886, 52 in 1887, 60 in 1888, and then 45 in 1889, the final year of McManus' tenure at St. Josephs.[15]

During the first four years of the sisters' work at St. Joseph, McManus continued his aggressive efforts to get public aid for his school. At the 1887 Newton School District budget discussion and in front of an audience of 300 people he asked for a "slice" of the money. The meeting adjourned without further discussion of his plea for fairness to Catholics.[16]

The second opening of St. Joseph's school and the absence of an enforceable compulsory education law caused increased public scrutiny of the Newton public school. Costs had increased each year and the number of students was decreasing. "Citizen" wrote a letter to the Herald in late August, 1883 noting that the district had 640 eligible children between the ages of 5 and 18. Citizen figured that 125 were attending school elsewhere, 50 were in Miss Fields' class, and perhaps 75 were "engaged in business." There were 440 who could attend the school. The average daily attendance in the preceding school year was 221. Scores of wild children wandered Newton's streets and some could not read or write. If their families had no money for books the school board would provide them. Community protection required that they be in school. "Citizen" was not using the Catholic school as a reason to reduce public school costs. The Catholic school simply drained additional students from an already underenrolled, expensive public school.[17] "Citizens" comments may have had some effect since by September, 1886 public school enrollment had increased to 260 from its spring, 1883 enrollment.[18]

With the Catholic school continuing to take students from the public school, in August, 1887 A. F. Fellows wrote the Herald bitterly protesting about Newton's per pupil costs. He objected to the trustees' effort to increase enrollment by soliciting tuition students from other districts. Fellows maintained that the school was built for Newton's students. The trustees were only trying to save teachers' jobs by getting out-of-district students. Fellows had written to State Superintendent Chapman and reproduced parts of Chapman's response in his letter. The trustees may have been recruiting students for the upper school since Fellows criticized the trustee argument that Newton's school could help train teachers; since only upper school students would be old enough to take the state examinations.

In 1890 McManus left St. Joseph. His replacement was Rev. John Baxter who continued the school. Student enrollment was 49 in 1890, 50 in 1891, and ranged between 65 and 75 during the 1892-94 period. Then in 1895 and 1896 enrollment dramatically declined to 40 students in 1895 and to only 26 students in 1896. Parish enrollment had increased from 301 in 1881 to 412 in 1896. Yet, in the summer, 1896 Fr. Baxter closed the school.[19]

There was one clear reason for closing the school. Baxter was in extremely poor health. He submitted no end-of- year reports for the period 1896-1898. There may have been two other reasons for the school closing by 1895. Although some Catholics may have severely suffered following the 1893 depression enrollment did rise from sixty five students in 1893 to seventy students in 1894. The more significant reason for the school closing may lie in the Catholic belief and expectation that their children would be respectfully and effectively educated in the Newton public school.

Catholics were always less than 5% of the county's population. Public schools and their Protestant majority easily and responsibly enrolled the small Catholic population. The Catholic Church and Catholic life in Sussex County also closely resembled Protestant churches and the majority Protestant social culture. Their Irish led churches had many appealing activities which softened religious differences.

Sussex Catholics spoke English and lived side-by-side with Protestants in the county's villages and Newton. They were led by young, poor Irish priests who disdained

genteel ostentation and worked endlessly to counter Protestant stereotypes that the Church was a creature of centuries-old superstition and institutional avarice. Edward McCosker even owned the furniture he used at St. Joseph's. The parish priests managed their churches and personal lives as progressive, enlightened evangelicals. Their policies and behavior attracted Protestant interest and even public admiration which led to decreased overt hostility and general ignorance about the Church. The general work of the priests affected how Protestant school trustees and teachers viewed and educated Catholic children.[20]

Sussex Catholic churches sponsored revivals, anti-alchohol programs, non-denominational charity drives, and supported American nationalism and patriotic events. The Sussex Roman Catholic Church promoted an intense form of personal revivalism within its traditional liturgy of symbols and saints. The Catholic revivalist tradition came to Newton in 1885 Frs. McNerny and Huber visited St. Josephs. They were Redemptionist Order priests from New York City whose work was dedicated to organizing revival meetings in Catholic parishes. They spent a week in Newton starting their day at 5A.M. with a mass followed by a sermon. A service was then held from 7:30 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. when the church bell rang and all knelt in prayer for those who were absent. Fr. McManus had prepared the congregation for their revival meetings during the previous year. A similar revival was held in 1895 at St. Thomas Aquinas, Ogdensburg.[21]

Like Protestants, the church recognized human weakness and encouraged personal daily restraint necessary to ward off the unending presence of human frailty and evil. In July, 1883 Bishop Wigger's decreed that his office reserved the authority to approve all parish picnics, fairs, and excursions. While the local priest administered parish affairs, the right to raise money through these social entertainments was the Bishop's decision. Richard Goodman's Register remarked that the ideal was sound but the implementation was too individually restrictive.

The Sussex County Catholic church also took an aggressive pro-temperance position. In December, 1885 Father Hill of Franklin traveled to Newton and preached temperance at St. Joseph. He conducted a lengthy sermon to an audience of several

hundred including many non-Catholics. Father McManus personally took the pledge that evening. Earlier, in June, 1885 Bishop Wigger issued a decree prohibiting beer and all intoxicants at any parish sponsored picnic or excursion. [22]

Whenever disasters struck the Catholic church and its members joined other churches in relief efforts. An 1869 mining disaster in Ogdensburg left several widows and their children without any means of support. The local Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and Episcopalian churches unified with the Franklin Immaculate Conception congregation in a relief effort.[23] When the great 1889 Johnstown Flood struck that Pennsylvania community citizens in Newton organized a fund-raising dinner and entertainment at Library Hall. The Register noted that all classes and religions were represented. Fr. McManus gave the organizers a $63.00 parish contribution.[24]

Like their Protestant counterparts Catholic women did community service by sponsoring fairs and entertainments to raise money for building maintenance and improvement projects. The Catholic church also organized pew rental campaigns. The school also organized entertainments as fund-raisers and promoted them for greater public outreach at Library Hall rather than on church property.[25]

Sussex County's rural Catholics supported American nationalism and by example demonstrated that their loyalties were not directed by foreign Papal conspiracies. In January, 1886 a letter addressed to the Herald editor came from Charles Bennett in Des Moines, Iowa. Bennett related that he had just learned of Rev. James McKay's unfortunate death in Waterside county, Derry, Ireland. This sad news surely caused a deep pang of grief among McKay's many friends in Newton, Phillipsburg, Franklin, and Orange. Recalling McKay's early life and education at All-Hallows College in Dublin, Bennett characterized McKay as an Irish nationalist who revered George Washington and the Union.

Bennett recalled, in May, 1861 when companies B and D of the 3rd. Regiment, New Jersey Volunteer Infantry prepared to depart from the Newton station he was among the soldiers. McKay came to the station to see them off. Bennett shook his hand and McKay gave him a $10.00 gold piece and with tears in his eyes he wished Bennett well

telling him that unfortunately this would be a very long war. McKay hollered "farewell Charley and God bless you, be a good boy, you will come back safe after the war." The train departed to the strains of the Sussex Cornet Band playing "The Girl I left Behind Me" as "two hundred as noble boys as ever shouldered a musket bade farewell to all that was near and dear to them and went to the front." Bennett ended his letter noting that three years later when he left the service he went to Orange, New Jersey and spent two weeks with Fr. McKay. Bennett testified that McKay was a man of more than ordinary worth. He fulfilled all of his priestly functions and kept a steady vigil for the welfare of the downtrodden regardless of their creed.[26]

The St. Joseph school children also demonstrated their nationalistic piety in April, 1889 when they had school celebrations and, following one Sunday mass listened to Fr. McManus read a special prayer composed one hundred years earlier in honor of George Washington's inauguration. Irish nationalism, American Catholicism, and American nationalism came together that Sunday at Mass in the Halsted Street church.[27]

In the Fall of 1892 there was a massive school parade led by Civil War veterans in honor of the 400th anniversary of Columbus' voyages. The St. Joseph school children participated in the parade with Sisters Agnes and Celeste leading the way through the streets of Newton to the courthouse.[28]

The Franklin Immaculate Conception priests took a lead in secular educational development when they organized the opening of the Columbus Lyceum. The Lyceum was constructed using a $1750 donation from the New Jersey Zinc Company. On Wednesday evening January 17, with opening comments by Fr. Hill, Rev.Fr. Cunneeley, and Fr. Brady, the Lyceum opened with a musical performance by the Franklin Band. The facility contained a club room, lyceum meeting hall, and a library. It was available to all residents.[29]

Catholic Church participation in popular forms of adult education, national days of celebration, disaster relief, temperance movements and piestic revivals were demonstrations of Americanism. These actions formed the favorable context within which Catholic children attended public schools under equitable conditions and Catholic teachers competed

for jobs.

Many Catholic children attended the Newton Public School even when St. Joseph's operated a school between 1881 and 1896. Often, a Catholic child like Mary Dunn excelled and joined others representing the school in public performances. The Newton school trustees hired Catholic teachers such as Mary's sister Ella and Ellen Connell. Some Catholics who realized their children had academic talent knew that if they wanted them to attend the Newton upper school they would have a better chance if they were graduates of the Newton common school rather than applicants from other schools. Unlike Fr. Funche of Dover, Morris County who told parents that he would not offer sacraments to children who attended the public schools, the Irish priests who ran St. Joseph's school never made this threat.

The only other significant Catholic population in Sussex County was in the Ogdensburg-Franklin area. Even after a parish priest was assigned to Immaculate Conception Church in Franklin, these Catholics never attempted to operate their own school. Catholics, particularly the families in Ogdensburg, always had significant influence in the public schools which ensured the fair and effective education of their children. Catholic children were very successful in the Ogdensburg school. Graduation ceremonies featured speeches by Catholic students and they always appeared prominently in all school entertainments. Peter J. Dolan represented their interest serving on both the Ogdensburg Board of Education before 1894 and on the consolidated Sparta Township Board of Education was Peter J. Dolan.

Catholic influence and satisfaction with the public school system reflected their integration into the school board's decisions and the town's social life. P. J. Dolan was a significant town politician and businessman. He married Ada Lyons, a Protestant and daughter of the town's most significant hotel keeper. The house parties that P. J. and Ada often hosted brought prominent town families together represented a mixed, religious social circle.

This social and political influence provided opportunities for Catholic educators. In July, 1898 E. S. Brady, a Catholic, was made supervising principal of the entire Sparta Township system. Brady taught the upper grades in the Ogdensburg school and was now

responsible for all staff in the district. Elizabeth Hyde, another teacher in Ogdensburg was Catholic as was Ellen Crowley who taught miner's families at the Edison School atop the mountain just to the east of the town where Thomas Edison started an iron extraction plant in 1889. In nearby Franklin, a part of the Hardyston Township School District, Margaret Hyde was a principal in the graded school.

Adult, male Catholics in Ogdensburg were small businessmen, tradesmen, railway workers, or teachers. They were in both political parties. P. J. Dolan's family held the postmastership during and after the Cleveland administration and Peter Madden held the same position during Republican administrations. Unlike Edward McCosker's experience in Newton during the mid-1860s when he could not secure public aid for his parishioners, public education in Ogdensburg was always supported and indeed often managed by progressive Catholic citizens who shared the same general educational expectations as the Protestant majority.[30] By 1894 Sussex Catholics maintained one small private school in Newton which would close in 1896. Elsewhere they ensured their children's access to equal opportunity through participation in the local political processes that governed school operation.

Chapter 6 End Notes

[1]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register,. 22 March 1888 and Raymond Kupke, Living Stones. A History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Paterson. (Clifton: Diocese of Paterson, 1987). 62-63.

[2]The controversy started by Edward McCosker's first Roman Catholic school in the Democratic Party stronghold of Newton can be followed in the New Jersey Herald, 24 April 1864 and 16 June 1864., in the Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, for 15 March 1864, 24 June 1864, 1 July 1864, 3 February 1865, and 17 February 1865. McCosker's reports to the Bishop are found in ADN Folders 12, 14, 16, 18, 21, and 23 at the special archives, Walsh Library, Seton Hall University. For Attorney General Elmer's opinion see the Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, for 21 May 1851. See also New Jersey Herald, 27 February 1865 for Harrison's recommendation to end private school aid, New Jersey Herald issues of 18 April 1867 for the Dennis library proposal, 1 August 1867 for discussion on the proposed new building, 5 September 1867 for census information, and 13 February 1868. for construction information. See Annual Reports of the Superintendent of Schools of the State of New Jersey, 1847-1865 for information about Newton Township Schools. The town of Newton was a part of a larger township until 1864 when two new townships were created and Newton become a one school district township.

[3]New Jersey Herald, 15 April 11864.

[4]New Jersey Herald, 24 April 1864.

[5]New Jersey Herald, 16 June 1864. and Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 24 June 1864.

[6]New Jersey Herald, 3 February 1865.

[7]New Jersey Herald, 17 February 1865.

[8]Annual Reports of the State Superintendent of Schools. 1857, 226, 1859, 154, 1860, 210, 1861, 138-39, 1862, 60, and 1864, 161. These reports contained comments from the Newton Township Superintendent which always centered on District No. 7 within the Township which was the town of Newton. In 1864 Andover and Green Townships were established and the Township of Newton and the town were synonymous.

[9]New Jersey Herald, 18 April 1867.

[10]New Jersey Herald, 13 February 1868.

[11]See McManus essay in Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 22 March 1888.

[12]New Jersey Herald, 13 October 1870.

[13]See Newark Diocese Archives, 1874. Folder 43.

[14]See Newark Diocese Archives, Folders 82, 87, 92, 97, 102, and 107.

[15]Father McManus "lost" Ms. Fields to a better paying job in the public schools, a situation which still severely affects Catholic schools where outstanding young teachers get some experience and then leave for higher paying jobs in public schools. See Newark Diocese Archives, Folders 112 and 116 and Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 8 September 1886 as well as "St. Josephs Church, 100 Years of Service to God", (Newton: 1965).

[16]New Jersey Herald, 15 September 1883. and Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 16 March 1887.

[17]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 29 March 1883.

[18]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 8 September 1886.

[19]See Newark Diocese Archives. Folders 121, 127, 133, 140, 147, 154, and 161.

[20]R. Finke, and R. Stark, The Churching of America, 1776-1990. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 16.

[21]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 25 July 1883 & New Jersey Herald, 7 May 1884.

[22]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 9 December 1885, 1 July 1885.

[23]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 23 September 1869.

[24]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 17 June 1889.

[25]New Jersey Herald, 14 June 1894.

[26]New Jersey Herald, 20 January 1886.

[27]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 1 May 1889.

[28]New Jersey Herald, 31 October 1892.

[29]Sussex Independent, 9 January 1894.

[30]Information about the Dolan family and the Catholic community in Ogdensburg was provided by Patricia Dolan, whose grandfather was a brother of P. J. Dolan. Ms. Dolan is a retired Superintendent of the Ogdensburg Borough School District who for nearly three decades provided executive leadership to the children of her town and Sussex County.

CHAPTER 7

THE 1894 TOWNSHIP CONSOLIDATION ACT: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, SUSSEX COUNTY REACTIONS AND THE SPARTA TOWNSHIP SCHOOL SYSTEM: 1894-1905

If representative government and its supporting institutions, such as public schools, were the democratic social inventions of the 18th and early 19th centuries, state law and bureaucracy were the regulatory legal responses of the mid and late 19th century. In 1894 the state consolidated all local district schools. However, this decision did not eliminate or even drastically alter the ability of local township leaders to run their schools. Township trustees still wanted more state money and authority.

In 1894 the state seemed to initiate a new aggressive era in its policies and relationships with local school leaders. On May 24, Governor George Werts signed Chapter 335 of the 1894 New Jersey Public Laws abolishing 1403 local district school systems and replacing them with 374 consolidated township districts. On July 1, 1894 the old districts ended their legal existence and on July 17th new trustees were elected through a secret ballot procedure. In Wantage Township, for example, the previous eighteen districts were replaced by a single nine member township board of education and fifty four local district trustees lost their positions. The new township district acquired all properties of the former districts and inherited all debts.[1]

The Township Consolidation Act culminated twenty-seven years of State Board and State Superintendent efforts to legislatively abolish the district system. The legislature and the governor passed the Act in response to the persistent pleas of state officials who opposed the local, neighborhood district form of organization managed by "educators in overalls," an apt description of local district trustees used in one Midwestern rural education study.[2]

Between 1867, when State Superintendent Ellis Apgar first proposed a township reorganization system, and 1894 when his successor, Addison Poland, implemented a township system, the State tried different consolidation management strategies. The first

policy assumed that if the local districts could not be legislatively eliminated their numbers could be stabilized or reduced. In 1871 Public Law Chapter 527 required that no new district could be created unless it had at least seventy five children between the ages of five and eighteen. The same law encouraged small districts into voluntary consolidation by annually giving $350 state aid to districts that had forty five or more students and only $200 to districts with forty four or fewer students.[3] In 1876 this policy was reversed when the state board authorized the County Superintendents to recognize a new school district even if it had only twenty five eligible students. This policy continued from 1876 to 1885[4]

Between 1885 and 1891 the State Department of Education, under the leadership of Edward Chapman, a former Assemblyman from Hudson County, did not aggressively pursue consolidation. In 1889, a voluntary approach was promoted that recognized the right of local districts within a township to not only consolidate into larger districts but also to eliminate all districts and create a single Township-wide district.[5]

The centralization concept always remained popular with state level teacher groups. They believed larger schools would offer a better curriculum with more financial support and perhaps higher salaries. At the 1891 New Jersey State Teachers Convention, the featured speaker, Charles Bardeen from Syracuse, New York, presented a spirited proposal for New York's consolidation and by implication for New Jersey. However, Superintendent Chapman followed Bardeen's remarks and restated his opposition to a state-mandated township system.

Gradually, more and more State Board of Education members became consolidationist and in 1892 they appointed Dr. Addison Poland, State Superintendent. With the state board, superintendent and teacher association in policy agreement the road was now clear to promote administrative reform. Only the legislature and governor needed convincing. State Board members supported Addison Poland's efforts to influence key legislators and the state's major newspapers.[6] Poland's reports and public announcements used corporate and industrial metaphors to describe the premises and goals for his policies. "No one factor has cut so large a figure in the remarkable industrial progress of the last

twenty-five years as that of combination and co-operation. Witness it in the large manufacturing and commercial enterprises of the present day; witness it in the unions of various kinds to control labor and production. It would be surprising if with our eyes wide open to what is going on around us in the industrial world, we should fail to catch the spirit of the times, and hence not be able to utilize it in the improvement of education. Isolation was the fundamental principle of the old system; union that of the new. In union there is strength."[7]

Poland's 1891-1892 report revealed a new state official with extraordinary intellectual power and ambition. Formerly Superintendent in Newark, the sheer bulk and comprehensiveness of his proposals signified that a powerful new consolidation advocate now led the State Board. Edward Chapman's report for the 1889/90 school year was fifty three pages. The fifty page 1890/91 report was done by a department administrator. Poland's first report for the 1891/2 school year required 185 pages and centered on three themes: revenue, improvement of teachers, and the consolidation issue. However his report contained policy goals that did not sway the legislature.

Small districts were Poland's most important concern. There were 264 districts that had less than 45 students.[8] Sussex had sixty six such districts with an actual enrollment, as opposed to potential enrollment, of less than thirty students.[9] The smallest district had only eleven students. State law gave a minimum of $275 in aid for all districts. Twenty dollars could be spent on incidentals leaving only $255 for a teacher's salary and fuel. This was not enough tax support to operate a school for nine months with a qualified teacher. Districts that had forty five or more students received $375 and frequently districts just under forty five actual students "discovered one or two students" and exaggerated their census figures.[10] Poland was sure that the consolidated Township system would meet student needs, close small, uneconomical schools, increase educational quality in centrally administered schools, obtain better school trustees since they could be chosen from a wider and deeper leadership pool, avoid duplication, offer better instruction, and assure that all children could attend the district's high school, if one existed.[11]

Poland stressed that the old district system emerged when the population was more

evenly distributed. Now the farm population was decreasing and the urban population was increasing. Poland called rural schools "stagnant," their teachers "poorer", and the expenditure disparity between rural and city schools unfair and uneconomical. He pointed out that teachers could effectively work with thirty to forty students in a class. But many rural schools had wasteful classes under fifteen students.[12]

Poland also pointed out how earlier state standardization policies to organize a graded curriculum, a system for rating schools, and county graduation examinations would be retained and become more effective in a township system. Consolidation and a different administrative system could improve education for students and eliminate six conditions harming children. They were the poorly funded and ill-constructed schools, irregular attendance, untrained and inexperienced teachers, frequent teacher change, the unwieldy number of instructional groups within ungraded schools, and the lack of a professional teaching esprit de corps.[13]

Poland and other pro-consolidation leaders believed that effective schools could not be built from isolated communities which competed with one another for scarce state aid. Communities should be served by a cooperating union of township residents which could standardize their schools and integrate their resources. Through combinations like those in industry, schools would improve. Poland's policies did not find sufficient legislative support in the 1892 and 1893 sessions.

With the Panic of 1893 and the 1893 Republican legislative victory in the State Assembly There was added support for the republican pro-combination and modernizing industrial ideology which argued that consolidation would both improve education and save money. The 1894 legislative session was the appropriate time for a bill which reflected a shift away from Jacksonian, Democratic, local rule concepts to a centralized, bureaucratic state school policy.

The 1893 depression led to an extraordinary Republican victory in Sussex County in November, 1893. For the first time the entire county Republican slate and William Coursen as Assemblyman was elected. The Republicans took over the Assembly with a 41-19 margin although the Senate remained narrowly Democratic with 11 Democrats and

10 Republicans. The 1893 victory only capped a long-term Republican voter growth trend.

The Coursen victory had it origins in a slow but consistent trend toward Republican power in Sussex County. In 1888 the Democracy took the Assembly seat by 999 votes of 5653 cast. They also elected a senator by 981 votes and gave the Democratic candidate for President a margin of nearly 1000. By 1892 the Republican candidate for Assembly lost by only 235 votes of 5455 cast. Cleveland carried the county by 972 votes while Governor Werts and the Fourth Congressional District Democratic candidate won by 722 votes and 515 votes respectively. In pre-depression 1892 Republican sentiments were clearly gaining.

In 1893 only the Assembly seat was up for re-election. The Republican candidate swept into office on a 568 vote margin of 4706 votes cast. However, in 1894, Republican Coursen voted against the School Consolidation Bill and Sussex Democrats could only criticize him for very passive resistance against it. He may have realized that his vote was not essential for its passage and voted against it. The bipartisan bill moved through a split legislature and was signed by a Democratic governor.

Coursen's vote did not hurt him since he was returned to office in 1894 with a slim margin of 37 votes. In 1895 he won again with a 134 vote margin of 5254 votes cast. In 1896 Republicans took the county for the Presidency with a margin of 70 votes. The assembly seat was retained with a margin of 145 votes. A return to Democratic normalcy finally came in 1897 and 1898 when Democrats won election to the Assembly by margins of 440 votes and 483 votes respectively.[14]

Sussex officials feared that the Township Consolidation Act and other similar centralizing movements represented an ominous threat to local democratic school control. Seventy years later revisionist historiography argues with similar logic and moral outrage that state-imposed consolidation would harm children since the content of their education would be dictated by their social and economic class antagonists.

Consolidation reflected the beliefs and practices of modern corporate organization and efficiency. "Combinationism," a metaphor from the age of trust growth, would stop citizens from managing their own schools and using locally controlled education to struggle against the corporate economic inequity affecting their families. State standardization also

would prevent the growth of teachers as independent professionals. They would now be centrally managed in a hierarchical organization responsible to central Boards of Education.

For Addison Poland, and other centralizers, consolidation was the critical, administrative center piece of a new era in state school law. Instead of attending 1403 small districts, children would attend 374 township school systems. How actual classroom education would be affected was unclear since consolidation's first impact only rearranged school management. State policy leaders assumed that improvements in the quality of teaching and learning would inevitably flourish from different legal, administrative systems.

First Reactions to Consolidation in Sussex County

The public response to the Consolidation Act was very much like the 1875 Act to amend the state constitution. The highly partisan Sussex County press could not directly attack consolidation and use it for partisan benefit since it was passed by a Republican Assembly, a Democratic Senate, and signed by the Democratic Governor counseled by a nominally Democratic State Superintendent of Schools. During April and May, 1893 when the bill was debated in Trenton the Newton press focused on local public utility issues. Just before the law took effect, the Register told its readers that it could not even summarize the new law but would distribute copies to those who visited the offices. On Saturday July, 19, just before Luther Hill had his first county meeting to explain the new law, the Herald's editorial concerned the value of pure milk. Clearly the law did not concern local editors.[15]

Once the law took effect it drew increased but not always hostile attention. In a response to a letter from a worried teacher in neighboring Warren County, The Register told readers that the new township boards would honor contracts already signed by the old boards and mistakenly told them that taxpayers in districts with paid up school construction bonds would not have to pay for the bonds of other districts. Technically, this was true since the old districts no longer existed, but as township residents all taxpayers were

responsible for debts of the old districts.[16]

The Deckertown press was opposed to consolidation. In early June trustees were warned that under the new law they could represent unknown areas and politics was sure to enter the races for the township-wide seats. In late June the local writer "Rambler" said the new law might work in cities but it would not work in rural areas.[17]

The views of the abolished district trustees were reflected by J. V. Little who asked if "only nine Vernon residents knew more about their schools than the previous thirty nine trustee residents?" Vernon Township was a large area divided by numerous ridges and valleys and Little believed that nine trustees chosen at large from around the township could not understand the educational problems of local neighborhood schools as well as the old district trustees. He also did not believe that the taxpayers of one neighborhood district should have to pay for the indebtedness or new school construction of other township residents. He questioned the law's constitutionality. He asserted that combining districts to form a larger corporate nature was not in their best interest. It redefined the way in which Vernon citizens shared common goals for their children. Trustee Little represented a local area with a proud record of educating its children.[18]

Teachers also expressed their views about consolidation. Warren Hursh, a thirty year veteran teacher from Sandyston Township, called it a "bad and vicious piece of legislation." Hursh's experience was that in the past thirty years the three district trustees had never visited his school. He believed that nine trustees from a large township would have even less knowledge and interest. Hursh also said that new law requiring anti-alcohol education within a physiology course was nothing more than a $375,000 state giveaway to the American Textbook Company. Hursh did not believe the text cost was worth the benefits. Since the course did not meet the needs of students who needed to spend more time on the basic branches. Students knew and liked the taste of beer and cigarettes. And while a few might be persuaded to abstain the majority would go right ahead and enjoy the vices just as their adult friends did.

Hursh also disagreed with an earlier letter from W.A. Haase, a Sparta teacher, who believed the new law would unify teachers and give them uniform salaries. Hursh argued

that this could not occur because teachers had different certificates and the new township Boards could set different salary levels. Finally, while Hursh favored the new free-text law, he noted that there was no increase in state aid to pay for the books.[19]

In a late August letter to the Sussex Independent, Haase continued his support for the new law noting that the Sparta trustees had called a meeting for September 18. They would decide how their school facilities could be improved. This showed the new board was sensitive to the needs of all former districts. Haase felt the new system could help students and asked everyone to suspend judgment and see how the law worked during the coming school year.[20]

During June, July, and August the Herald's Sandyston correspondent regularly opposed the law. He called it un-American since the members of a local school community could not elect their own trustees who hired the teacher. District clerks who had voluntarily conducted the student census would now charge for the service since there would be one clerk responsible for the entire township. The clerk would have to travel extensively, spend long hours visiting houses, and prepare lengthy reports. However, when the new trustees for Sandyston were elected Hursh thought they would give "excellent satisfaction."

When Luther Hill visited the district in late August he confirmed Hursh's prediction that consolidation would not automatically improve teacher salaries. Teachers were not given uniform salaries for the same positions or certificates. He also noted that consolidation did not change trustee habits. While the central board clerk would buy fuel and supplies for all schools, a neighborhood trustee resident would carry a key for the nearby school and tell the teacher to take good care of the school. The special role of local trustees on the central township board was critical in eventually gaining local acceptance of the new system.[21] Even though a new nine member board represented the entire township, within that board local trustee residents were given special privileges, resources, and responsibilities for the neighborhood school creating the impression that very little had changed.

One writer was opposed to a little known provision of the consolidation law which

required that local boards support the tuition costs of students on the borders of their district who might attend a nearby school in another district. The writer noted that in Deckertown the district had good schools with well paid teachers. With potentially more such non-district tuition students, teachers would now spend less time with local students to the detriment of the local community. If non-Wantage students could attend the Deckertown public school in the Wantage District they would have no incentive to attend Professor Seeley's excellent private school which was an asset to the town. The new law was "flagrantly evil." because it might harm his enrollment.[22]

Luther Hill's Reorganization Plan

The new law presented a major leadership challenge to the cautious and diplomatic Hill. In a letter to friends and patrons of public education, he differentiated the consolidation law from other recent mandates for free texts, temperance education, and patriotic days. He stressed that consolidation was not a partisan measure. Hill was positive about consolidation and did not dwell on the differences between districts that it might solve or create. These questions were best solved at the local level without his intervention. He concluded that similar laws had worked in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and other states giving general satisfaction. Township trustees would be elected at meetings held throughout the county on Saturday, July 18.[23]

On July 23, 1894 the county papers carried the results of the township reorganization meetings. All had successfully elected their trustees. Some districts had very low voter turnout showing general public apathy. Frankford's election was carried out by only 23 voters. In Lafayette only 20 voted, including two women. At the Stillwater and Montague meetings there was considerable controversy but trustees were finally elected. In Sandyston twenty people ran for the nine positions. In Andover, the correspondent simply noted that the election was held and trustees met for business three days later.

Aside from a a few letters to the press, there was no opposition to the law.

Members of the old dissolved district boards did not hire attorneys and challenge Chapter 335 in the courts. Members of old boards were not unified through state-wide organizations and meekly accepted the lawful decisions of their elected representatives. As individual old board members they might campaign for politicians who would repeal or amend the law but this was a struggle for another day. There was a general understanding that consolidation was acceptable because it was not a threat to local school authority. The law simply redefined and extended the meaning of the school community.[24]

The newly formed districts now faced the need to find money to buy texts for all students. The new text law was passed after the old districts had set their 1894/95 budgets in March, 1894. The Newton Board met in late July and discussed the need for a $800 to $1000 budget supplement. They decided to take no action until a September meeting. Districts in nearby Warren County voted against book purchases by votes of 86 to 29 and 34 to 9.

In late September the Newton Board met again and in a spirited debate the Board's strategy was clear: It wanted the public to decide the textbook question rather than risk a split trustee vote. In a non-binding vote, the audience, including thirteen women, voted 100 to 60 to buy the books. The Board then adopted a similar resolution. The Newton Board which consisted of some of the town's most wealthy and distinguished notables tactfully turned to public democracy before taking their representative action. The following spring a 42 to 5 vote appropriated $400 for texts. In rural Sandyston Township the new Board met and took no action appropriating text money. They were counting on a legislative repeal the following spring.[25]

The Newton press reported a novel approach tried by the Phillipsburg Board of Education which gave free texts to only those students who were promoted. Those students who failed examinations did not receive them. These trustees believed the lack of academic achievement should not be rewarded with free texts.[26]

The 1894 Election and the Consolidation Issue

School consolidation, free texts, and temperance mandates did become political issues during the 1894 election campaign. In mid-September the Democratic Herald took a decidedly partisan position.. It refused to print a letter from a teacher who advocated free texts claiming that the law merely gave a monopoly to big businesses forcing poor farmers and others to foot the bill. The following week the Herald noted the success of New Jersey school exhibits at the Chicago World's Fair pointing out that these students were educated without the benefit of free books. The editor also published a long essay urging people to oppose the free books resolution at the next Newton Board meeting. Just before the election the Herald published a detailed analysis of Republican Assemblyman William Coursen's voting record and accused him of forcing heavy, new taxes on the voters since he supported the text and temperance laws. The Herald also published a quote from the Salem County County Superintendent who claimed the law was a Republican responsibility since they controlled the Assembly.[27]

The Republican Register tactfully pointed out that the free text law was directly connected to a free school law. If schools were free then books should also be free. Richard Goodman pointed to other states who, he said, were in the vanguard of educational progress. He stressed that a Democratic Senate and Governor had favored the bill. The bipartisan nature of the bill and Coursen's meaningless opposition provided enough votes for his surviving another close election and he was returned to Trenton in January, 1895 with a margin of 37 votes. The school consolidation bill was not as important a campaign issue as the free text and temperance instruction mandate which required additional local taxes.[28]

In November, 1896 another Republican, Horace Rude, won election to the Assembly. In a post-election letter to the Register he rebutted the anonymous charges circulated against him by certain County benevolent societies. Rude had favored giving free texts to all students but felt this should be gradually accomplished, adding new books to the old stocks. If a Board of Education decided to throw out all old texts and replace

them with costly new books he could not be held accountable for their actions.

During the campaign Rude was also charged with infidelity to the Bible. He told his readers that when he taught he always used the New Testament as a text for each child who could read. But if he were in a community where a significant number of parents wished to have religious instruction confined to family and church teachers he would abide by their wishes and not use the Bible in the class. During the election Rude was also accused of favoring the use of the Catholic Bible. He vehemently denied this charge maintaining that the readings were the same in each Bible and he would continue using the one he had always used.[29] By 1896 the Consolidation Act was no longer an issue in county politics.

Consolidation: A Ten Year Analysis in the Sparta Township System, July, 1894-June, 1904

A ten year record of the official Sparta Township Board minutes and news analysis from both Sparta and Ogdensburg villages within the Township describe how the elected leadership of one rural township responded to consolidation. Early twentieth century school centralization advocates ardently believed that consolidation was necessary to replace conservative trustees whose ideas did not promote the best interests of rural children or farming communities. Modern revisionists such as Katz and Karier have viewed consolidation as a distant, elite imposition of alien corporate managerial ideas on rural democratic communities in the name of efficiency, standardization, and social control. An analysis of the Sparta Township experience indicates that neither interpretation fully comprehended nor assessed the effects of consolidation among rural adults, between adults and children, and among children.

The Sparta Board of Education used four distinct strategies to manage the new Township school district. These strategies were continuity, adaptation, retrogression to previous district practices, and innovation. Using these four distinct policy styles, by 1904 the Board eventually moved toward a more centralized management. During the decade the elected-at-large, nine member Board faced only one major political crisis when it survived

an 1895/96 legal and political effort to establish a new township district trustee election process.

Between 1894 and 1904 the continuity strategy enabled the Board to meet both its legal obligations and new community expectations and demands. The Board kept public education financing on a secure and predictable basis by paying the debts of the former district boards. They retained public confidence by reorganizing every March following township-wide elections. A secret ballot process elected trustees. The board then selected its clerk as the official enrollment census manager for an additional $30 a year. Tuition fees from out-of-district students were also maintained. Finally, its most important fiscal policy was keeping the old practice of paying each teacher on an individual basis. The Board retained the prerogative to pay its teachers different wages for the same type of work. No uniform incremental salary scale was established acknowledging years of experience or certification level. These stable fiscal policies created public confidence in the new board resulting in decisive annual budget victories. In March, 1895 the budget passed by a vote of 122 to 1. In March, 1896 the first budget passed 143-0 and even when the Board went back to the public for an additional $500 the voters approved by a 177-22 majority.

Important continuity policies also included the use of three member trustee teams to inspect school buildings, permitting religious meetings in schools which were started in 1894 and then stopped in November, 1897 when a Catholic priest asked for permission to use a facility. Other carryover policies led to the expulsion of students from neighboring Jefferson Township who were illegally attending a Sparta school, and funding a Sparta student to attend high school in another district. Long-accepted old district personnel policies were maintained when the Board pledged to hire qualified local school graduates.[30]

Adaptation was another strategy the new Board used to meet novel demands or expectations. When the state mandated free texts for all students without providing state aid or taking into consideration that the local districts had set their budgets in March, 1894, the Board held a special meeting in October, 1894 and secured additional tax money by a 58-10 vote. Each year the Board publicized a district budget which was voted following the trustee election. The Board met new personnel and facility needs when it voted by a 5-

3 margin to transfer the Sparta school principal to its largest school in the Ogdensburg section of the township. It considered plans to close a very small school in the Pullis area but eventually decided to retain the school even though its daily attendance was only five or six students.

The Board adapted its district organization structure to local neighborhood demands by using district board members resident in local township communities as the decision-making representative in that area. Residents were asked to privately bring any complaints they might have to this particular trustee before publicly bringing them to the entire Board. In this way they hoped to handle local interests through a local representative from the larger Township Board. The Board fully understood that its district policies were first experienced as local neighborhood school policies. Sometimes, the board crafted its authority to meet the unique needs of one school When one student in the Hopewell school reportedly contracted smallpox only that school closed. When Ellen Crowley in the East Mountain school disciplined Frank Lozier by expelling him for insubordination the district board of education supported her action. When the Principal of the Odgensburg school suspended a teacher the Board supported his actions. Through adaptation it crafted central bond power to meet local, unique needs.[31]

Centralized innovation was another critical management strategy because its use convinced reform-minded Sparta voters and teachers that the new district trustees were willing to change many old district school policies adopting new approaches to management. The Board to created a new supervising principal position. The principal would also lead the largest district school in Ogdensburg. He would also supervise and evaluate the work of other teachers in the entire system. The supervising principal was responsible for preparing a district budget and assuring that the new district attendance and school calendar was maintained. The Board acted on the educational recommendations of the principal who was the highest paid employee in the district. Schools now opened and closed on the same daily schedule. Not one child in the Sparta district attended school on October 9, 1901, President McKinley's burial day.

The Board used the supervising principal to administer its approved courses of study and charged him with creating curriculum achievement standards for all students.

The elementary or common branch curriculum consisted of physiology, reading, arithmetic, history, spelling, grammar and composition, geography, penmanship, and a new course in drawing. Final examinations were given and had to be passed before a student could graduate from the eighth grade. Students had to attain a 70% score on examinations to pass into the next grade. 50% was a failing grade. Apparently, students were given successive opportunities to pass examinations if they scored above 50% but below the passing 70% mark. There was an all township graduation ceremony at the Ogdensburg school. The expanded upper school curriculum at the Sparta school included natural philosophy, advanced geography, algebra, literature, Latin, and German.

In September, 1894 the Board of Education told its teachers to form a professional organization and instructed them to meet one afternoon a month and discuss teaching strategies and curriculum matters. Teachers from other county districts occasionally visited Sparta and modeled their professional groups after the activities of the Sparta teachers.

The Board also adopted innovative business practices. All teachers were paid monthly from a central payroll system. The Board adopted a single purchasing system for materials and supplies. They created district stationery and business forms establishing a uniform district identity with suppliers and the public. A central management system also meant that trustees were accountable for all schools. The Board used a volunteer truant officer, purchased a typewriter for the Ogdensburg principal, and in 1900 even adopted resolutions with two absentee board members telephoning their votes to the District clerk.[32]

The final management strategy the Board used was one that retained the previous decentralized decision-making of the old district school system. The Board used this strategy when it wanted to defer to special local needs or if they did not want to deal with a controversial topic. The old district style management was a valuable and necessary way of retaining and allocating resources and privileges which had been the prerogatives of the old district trustees.

This management style decentralized authority after a central management decision. The first example of this policy occurred when the Board continued the old district school maintenance system. If a local school needed repairs, the trustee from that area found a

repairman and negotiated an agreement for the work. In this way old economic and political ties were retained. A second example occurred when a scarlet fever epidemic broke out in the Ogdensburg school. The decision to close the building was made by P.J. Dolan, the trustee from the village. He was the town's political leader and his authority was sustained through this management policy.

Teacher hiring for the community school was managed by the local trustee who took responsibility for approving the new teacher and later introducing a hiring resolution to the full board. Board minutes from February 6, 1902, nearly eight years following the 1894 consolidation act, reveal how the decentralization policy worked when hiring teachers. P. J. Dolan, Ogdensburg area trustee, made a resolution which Board Clerk William Ross first recorded in his minutes that "local members have the authority to hire in their several districts." Realizing his error, Ross stroked a line through the word "local" but the altered word remained in the official minutes. Dolan had asked the board for the authority to hire and then report his actions to the full board which would concur and issue a contract. In this manner the local community Dolan represented would hire the teacher it wanted in the consolidated Township system which operated a school in the Ogdensburg village. At one meeting a prospective teacher for the Edison school was not appointed because the trustee representing that part of the Township was absent. The other eight Board members would take no action without his official presence and approval. Whenever a teacher had a complaint for the Board, the teacher first went to the local trustee for discussion and possible resolution of the problem.

Religion was another potentially divisive issue for the central board. In one of its first actions in the summer, 1894 the Board of Education decided that the selection of each school's daily religious prayers would be determined by the teacher assigned to that school. The teacher was given the right to select the passage as long as no laws were broken. In this way, the trustees avoided being placed in the position of having an official schedule of district-wide Bible readings. The teacher would bear the responsibility for any subsequent arguments. The Board also determined which religious groups could use a school as long as they paid for fuel and cleaned the building before they left.[33]

A final example of old district policy concerned the principle of no work, no pay.

When Ellen Crowley, an East Mountain school teacher, fractured her arm, school was closed for two weeks and she was not paid. In the midst of a severe snowstorm William Ross Jr. walked through a blizzard and deep snow two consecutive days and spent the day alone in the school. On the third day following the storm students returned. Had Ross not been present and prepared to teach, he would have been docked two day's salary.

Decentralized policy management convinced local district advocates that their specific needs and expectations could still be met in the new centralized system since critical contracting and hiring actions remained within their control. During its first two years the central board varied its policy styles to meet the needs and anticipations of its parents and voters. Then in February, 1896 a political crisis emerged which threatened to topple the entire board. A number of people in the township wanted to divide Sparta into separate election districts giving each old district neighborhood at least one representative on the board. This group was clearly unimpressed by the board's management strategies. At a meeting on February 4, 1896 all present board members agreed that "this system would be worse than a return to the old district system and it clearly subverted present school law." But they could take no action since that evening at least five board members who may have wanted the district election system retained or did not want to discuss the issue failed to attend the meeting and the board could not get a quorum. Members in attendance opposed the multiple election district idea maintaining that it would deny the district a "broad, progressive spirit.." The meeting ended without any action and subsequent minutes indicated that a letter was sent to the State Superintendent. Minutes of March 3, 1896, indicate that a response was received but there is no notation of the letter's contents. In any event the attempt to change township voting district election system failed. The nine member, at-large township voting structure was never again challenged.[34]

Decentralized contracting and hiring was avoided for ten years until May 17, 1904, when the Board adopted resolutions reaffirming that only the full, voting central board could hire staff. They recognized the right of the public to appear before the Board and they would listen to the advice of the supervising principal on all matters of student discipline and professional dereliction of duty. But the full Board alone could finally act on these issues. A copy of these resolutions was sent to all teachers. The Board also decided

on May 31, 1904, that whenever local schools needed repairs the Board clerk would manage them. The Board would advertise its needs in the county press and award the contract to the lowest bidder for the job.[35]

Consolidation achieved its aims for those supporters who believed in the goals symbolized by managerial hierarchy and standardized teaching and learning.It did so without seeming to be a state-imposed threat to local expectations. Between 1894 and 1904 the Sparta Township Board of Education adopted policies and regulations which profoundly altered the relationships of adults to adults in the district. The Board established a hierarchy of authority and specific means for allocating resources and granting recognition to its employees. It also changed the relationships of adults to children when it adopted a district-wide curriculum with enforced standards of achievement and professional development time for teachers.

For students, the record of consolidation benefits was more mixed. Pre-consolidation learning conditions remained. Except for closing one very small school on West Mountain Road, the Board continued to operate very small, one room schools where children did not have specialized teachers or learning materials. An eighth grade student at Pullis, East Mountain, or Houses schools did not have the same opportunity to learn as students at the larger Sparta or Ogdenburg schools where there were graded classes that would permit a student to receive specialized instruction with other similar age students. The more educated teachers were also located in the graded schools. Yet the students from the ungraded, one room schools had to pass the same final examinations as other students. The Sparta Board of Education never took full advantage of its consolidation authority to create more effective learning conditions for students. Distance, transportation cost, and parental influence probably account for the decision to retain the old district one room schools. Even though it was only several miles from the one room schools to the graded schools, the Board did not entertain plans to transport at least the older students to these superior schools.

The administrative experiences of the Sparta Township Board of Education and other Boards in rural Sussex County, New Jersey responding to state bureaucratically administered consolidation laws illustrated a practical example of the conceptual,

sociological framework developed by the German social theorist Frederich Tonnies. Tonnies made the distinction that social relationships or contracts to codify or systematize personal rights and individual liberties could be fulfilled in two ways. He believed that late nineteenth century society was in a transition from a "gemeinschaft" system of social relationships based on particularism whose roots lay in kinship or friendship in local, face-to-face communities to a system of "gesellschaft" in which rights and obligations were attained through a more distant universal authority based on a uniform application of law. Professional technical competency ensured that these universally and consistent means for carrying out bureaucratic procedures would enable a school social system to integrate and achieve its goals. During the decade 1894-1904, the Sparta Board of Education used four distinct, pragmatic management strategies which gradually and with differing effects moved the district closer to a "gesellschaft" system of relationships between adults.

The shift from the particularism of community "gemeinschaft" to a more abstract sense of community based on universal "gesellschaft" principles was not based on a single, clear or policy suddenly transforming local district, neighborhood schools to township, consolidated, hierarchically organized schools. Rather, the change was analogistic to a new law which, instead of being implemented in an identifiable uniform manner, diverged into three policy paths before reaching its goal. The paths corresponded to the different management styles of continuity which sustained previous administrative practices, innovation, adaptation merging old district ways with the consolidation, and retrogression to an older decentralized administrative pattern when the Board wanted to avoid a conflict on a divisive problem.

School consolidation was surely not a celebration or inevitable progression of democratic principles for students and teachers and it was not a blatant and damaging imposition of state or local elite power on families who had previously controlled their own schools through locally known trustees.[36] It was and remains a mixture of universal principles and local practices that retained important and often crucial elements of old kinship and personal, friendship relationships which determined who received certain resources and power necessary for reaching the expectations of both adults and students.

Consolidation: An Analysis of Addison Poland's Principles and Sussex Experience, 1894-1904

Before and after the 1894 Township School Consolidation Act State Superintendent Addison Poland outlined a list of eleven positive effects that would definitely occur after the district school system was abolished. Evidence from the ten year Sparta Township consolidation experience and Luther Hill's annual reports provide a means to describe educational changes in Sussex County and relate them to the goals that both state-level and local authorities had for township consolidation.

Poland began his list of consolidation benefits by noting that $200 in state aid would still come into the district for every teacher employed the previous year. Stable state aid was a critical factor in every district's new budget and Poland's first goal was to establish confidence and continuity. Without the assurance that aid would continue, districts would not proceed with other, novel and difficult management changes. He was able to fulfill his aid commitment since the state legislature would not reduce a benefit program affecting all 374 township districts.

Poland then argued that the wealthier parts of a township should contribute to the poorer areas by providing a stronger tax base for township schools. This funding principle required that residents shift their political and social loyalties from their neighborhoods to a more distant but still well known township entity. This loyalty transfer was not difficult since the township had always been the decision-making and service center for other social needs. Roads were taxed and maintained by township officials. Money for the poor was collected from and administered in the township. There were township elections for offices ranging from assessor to pound keeper. As long as township school officials assured a fair distribution of funds the voters could shift their allegiance to a different but known governing body.

Sparta's administrative style considered this loyalty tension when trustees, who could act as a full board of education, deferred decisions on hiring and contracting to local, neighborhood trustees who used them to distribute services and privileges to their constituents. But they resisted creating a township trustee election system based on

neighborhoods within the township. They preferred at-large elections for all members creating a central board which then acted informally to decentralize authority. Addison Poland had been superintendent of schools in Newark and he surely knew that while a system might be centrally organized and professionally managed it had to serve the unique needs of the city wards which controlled urban political life.

Poland's third anticipated benefit was that consolidation would afford better school buildings. Instead of maintaining schools in each district, new buildings would be placed where they could most economically serve the greatest concentration of students. In Sparta between 1894-1904 Poland's ideals were unrealized since the district did not create any new schools. Luther Hill's reports for the period show school repair and additions in the villages of Hamburg, Branchville, and Ogdensburg and only limited new construction in rural areas. One building funded by a major water company that was constructing a nearby reservoir for urban customers.[37]

If schools were equitably funded from a broader township tax base Poland assumed they would all have better equipment. The Sparta trustees did assure equity in distributing funds since they charged the supervising principal with developing a budget for every school. Trustees who represented the area could monitor budgets and expenses. In theory, if districts did choose to raise expenditures students would receive better learning materials. If they did not, the potential went unrealized and if the township chose to keep very small schools the funds would be distributed to many small schools. The prospect of financing the needs of many small schools could have slowed any expenditure growth. Sparta's experience did not support Poland's argument that consolidation would improve school resources for children.

The township system would also produce longer school terms. Poland reasoned that many districts broke the law which required that they operate for nine months because they would not pass a district tax to supplement their state aid. If they did remain open for nine months they would hire the cheapest possible teacher and reduce the quality of instruction. Consolidation would change this policy by giving the township board a broader tax base ensuring they would fulfill the nine month attendance law. This assertion was moot in Sussex County because the districts were open nine months before

consolidation and even with a broader tax base many townships still looked for the cheapest teachers for their small, ungraded schools. Hill's 1896/97 report noted how some township trustees cut costs and services just as the previous district trustees often did. "A serious shrinkage in our public funds compelled us to shorten the time of keeping our schools open, and, exempting where very liberal township levies have been ordered, the outlook is no better for next year. In the apportionment, after giving $200 for each teacher employed, the per capita is but $1.64, the lowest point reached under the township act."[38] The Township Act gave trustees the authority to raise funds but it did not mandate their doing so and a board's inaction did not trigger monitoring by the County Superintendent. The law simply reorganized local trustees and assumed they would act in the best interests of their children.

Poland also believed that the Township system provided a better age group distribution of children in graded schools. The Sparta Township experience shows that the trustees did not improve educational quality in its small outlying one-room, ungraded buildings. They did invest in new staff and facilities in the larger Sparta and Ogdensburg village schools. But they also refused to close all of their small schools, group students by age, or even transport older students to the graded schools leaving younger children in schools near their homes. The Sparta and Ogdensburg schools had been graded under the old district system. If consolidation were to have any beneficial daily impact on children it had to change their daily learning experiences in the one room school with the youngest, least experienced, and poorest paid teachers. In Sparta these conditions did not improve and Poland's expectations went unfulfilled.

Poland's seventh anticipated benefit was that consolidation would insure more carefully selected teachers. The record here is mixed. The Sparta Board of Education clearly deferred hiring actions to the wishes of local trustees. In 1904 they seemed to reaffirm the power of the central board to approve and hire new staff but it is not clear if beneath this language they still deferred to the interview and recommendation of a particular board member before acting as a full board. Poland also believed that consolidation would save money and some of this money could be used to hire more qualified teachers who might remain longer in their positions. In July, 1894 there were 116 contracted teachers in

the County. By July, 1897 only 33 remained. As in previous years, even with consolidation, the teaching staff experienced an 62% turnover. It is not clear why teachers left but it is clear that consolidation did not result in their being offered more money to remain and did not reduce the rate of teacher turnover in small one room schools.

Poland was correct in his assertion that consolidation was the "absolute prerequisite condition for any efficient supervision." The Sparta Board's first personnel action was the appointment of the Ogdensburg principal as the district supervising principal. Through a single appointment it consolidated the budget preparation, staff supervision, and curriculum maintenance functions in one person. This action alone could not insure improved instruction and learning unless adequate funds were forthcoming and the small, ungraded schools were closed permitting at least some students to who had to prepare for the district's and County Superintendent's examinations learn with students of similar age and academic needs.

Attendance would be improved if education improved. The way to improve education was to grade schools. Poland argued that at least one graded school should exist in each township where children from age thirteen up could obtain suitable instruction. Students in the ungraded Pullis, Houses, Edison, New Prospect East Mountain, and Hopewell schools were not afforded this opportunity.

Consolidation would also lead to more economical management. Poland believed that a consolidated district would hire a central purchasing agent and hence save money through economies of scale. The Sparta record shows that this change did occur in purchasing but did not occur in school maintenance where each board member was able to contract for needed repairs.

Finally, Poland asserted that "let well enough alone" could not be education's guiding principle. There was a natural law operating that forced schools to either evolve forward or decline. He believed that common sense would prevail and the people of New Jersey would not repeal the consolidation law. Consolidation had many supporters in Sparta Township. Budgets were always passed with almost no dissent. One writer to the Sussex Independent commented that "taxes should be assessed with equity to all. A corporation worth a hundred thousand dollars should pay tax in the same ratio as the farmer

who owns a farm worth five thousand dollars. The same farmer should pay tax in equity with the owner of a house and lot worth five hundred dollars. With perfect equity in taxation, corporation and individual alike must be the gainers, ultimately."[39]

Consolidation in Historical Perspective

Without advance warning for those who might have opposed it, the 1894 Consolidation Act was quickly legislated. The weekly County press only noted the law after it was signed. Passed in the midst of a significant economic depression the law was intended to save money through centralization and effective management. More significantly, it represented a new belief that there was a need to establish new relationships between children, their families, local communities, the larger society as represented by the state, and a changing economy. Centralization would enable a better and more efficient application of scientific knowledge which could rationally be applied by trained professionals and trustees whose personal lives and homes would be more distant from their communities than their district predecessors. Distance from emotional local politics and dispassionate judgment would compliment one another and all citizens would benefit.

The theory of consolidation was not illogical. It simply failed to understand the complexities of social organization in so-called "rural" counties and it did not foresee how centralized boards might consciously choose to act in atavistic ways to ensure their power or to avoid difficult decisions. Rural Sussex county society included the county seat, numerous growing villages, people living on nonoperating farms, and finally farmers. In the larger villages and Newton graded schools existed before consolidation. In the farm areas consolidation did not automatically lead to small school closings or graded schools.

In his 1902 Report Luther Hill emphasized the effect of reduced state aid for small districts and the absence of interest in consolidating these small schools. By 1901 little had changed. Even the offer of free state transportation did not convince township trustees to close these small schools. Parents would willingly let their children ride miles to market on the coupling pole of a lumber wagon but they would not permit their riding in a safe, enclosed vehicle to and from a graded village school. They cherished their local schools

regardless of how small or underfunded they might be. In 1902 Sussex County still had a school with average daily attendance of only three students, three schools with only four students, two with five students, two with seven students, and three with eight students. After twenty seven years, Hill had come to the end of his patience and indicated that more drastic measures were needed in these cases to ensure quality education and effective use of public money.[40]

The Consolidation Act supporters could not foresee the intertwined impact of other municipal laws which permitted the creation of boroughs from larger townships. These new municipal boroughs also created their own new small school districts. In 1894 Branchville became a borough leaving Frankford Township. In the first two decades of the twentieth century Ogdensburg was created from Sparta Township, Hopatcong from Byram Township, and Hamburg from a part of Hardyston Township. The reasons for new boroughs varied but their creation had one effect: more small school districts.[41]

Some historians have used inaccurate rural school stereotypes which flaw and misdirect their analysis of consolidation. Carl Kaestle argues that consolidation advocates wanted an urban discipline applied to all schools. Urban discipline required the behavioral qualities of punctuality, order, regularity, and industry. Thus these personality features would be instilled in rural children by consolidation. To assume the absence of such behaviors from rural personalities and pre-consolidation schools is both illogical and not supported by evidence. Twenty years before consolidation Edward Stiles and Luther Hill used teacher observation-evaluation forms which recorded and encouraged these very qualities in classroom organization and teacher behavior.[42]

David Tyack, discussing urban school systems, argues by extension that centralization laws affected citizens by taking away their local authority and placing it in the hands of more distant and fewer individuals. The Sparta Township experience shows that centralization did not always have this effect.[43]

Unlike Hal Baron's Chelsea, Vermont, study where consolidation was a response to decreasing enrollment consolidation in Sussex County derived from the 1894 law. Most significantly, consolidation reflected the absence of any significant public educational

vision in rural, Jacksonian democratic theory which could respond to the long-term depressing impact of industrialization and market integration in Sussex County.[44]

The leaders and general citizenry of Sussex County did not expect or promote the 1894 Consolidation Act. On several Saturday afternoons in mid-July 1894 they rather peacefully gave up their old district management systems. Voters did not punish the Republican Assemblyman who failed to alert them to the pending law or fight vigorously against its passage. Within consolidation, they discovered how the law could work to their benefit and help children. They saw that it did not inevitably lead to closing their cherished, small neighborhood schools which were now centrally managed. Communities continued receiving state aid whether they consolidated schools or did not. Local officials met their long enduring expectation that they could secure more state aid and still manage their own affairs.

Chapter 7 End Notes

[1]General Public Laws of 1894.Chapter 335, 512. The bill was known as the Olcott Bill for Assemblyman, George Olcott of East Orange, a Newark suburb.

[2]Wayne Fuller, The Old Country School. A History of Mid-western Rural Education (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1985). Fuller uses the term "intellectuals in overalls to describe rural trustees.

[3]General Public Laws of 1871, Chapter 527. 196.

[4]General Public Laws of 1876, Public Law 113. 24.

[6]Robert Bole," A History of Educational Financing in New Jersey Public Education" (diss., New York University, 1979), 243.

[7]Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the State Board of Education for year ending 30 June 1895, 14. In 1880 40% of New Jersey's population worked in the manufacturing section. This was twice the national average. The majority of people lived in Census department-defined "urban areas." The Census reported that 37% of families in the state earned less than $500 per annum which was also established as the poverty level for adequately feeding and housing a family of four. 44% of the population earned between $500-$799 per annum, and 19% earned over $800 a year. The average worker family was 4.8 people.

[8]Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the State Board of Education for the year ending 30 June 1892. This report was Poland's first effort to summarize his case for consolidation. He assembled endorsing documents from other state superintendents and data to support his contentions.

[9]Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the State Board of Education for the year ending June 30, 1894. This report summarized the first year of the consolidation act. It along with the free textbook act and temperance education law which also required a textbook were not as the summary achievements of the year.

[10]Poland Report for the year ending 30 June 1892, 41.

[11]Poland Report for year ending 30 June,1892, 42.

[12]Report of the State Superintendent for Public Instruction to the State Board of Education for the year ending 30 June 1893, 24.

[13]Poland Report for the year ending 30 June 1893, 28-34.

[14]New Jersey Election Returns. 1876-1892 and 1893-1903. Trenton, New Jersey. Each election year is subtitled Annual Return of the Election Year. See New Jersey Herald, 16 November 1893 and 23 November 1893 for detailed analysis of Democratic defeat. See Wantage Recorder, 26 October 1994.

[15]New Jersey Herald, 19 July 1894.

[16]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 30 June 1894.

[17]New Jersey Herald, 29 June 1894, 7 June 1894.

[18]Sussex Independent, 15 June 1894.

[19]Sussex Independent, 15 June 1894,18 May 1894. The writer pointed to the obvious harm that tobacco and alcohol caused and questioned why educators thought that education could substitute for common sense.

[20]Sussex Independent, 31 August 1894.

[21]For Sandyston Township responses to consolidation see New Jersey Herald for 7 June 1894, 14 June 1894, 26 July 1894,22 August 1894.

[22]Wantage Recorder, 14 September 1894.

[23]New Jersey Herald, 11 July 1894.

[24]New Jersey Herald, 26 July 1894.

[25]New Jersey Herald, 21 March 1895.

[26]New Jersey Herald, 20 September 1894.

[27]New Jersey Herald, 12 September 1894.

[28]Newton (New Jersey) Sussex Register, 19 September 1894.

[29]Sussex Independent, 20 November 1896.

[30]Sparta Township Board of Education Minute Book (STBOEM) 72., 74, and 92.

[31]STBOEM, 17, 72, and 97-8.

[32]STBOEM, 69.

[33]STBOEM, 107.

[34]STBOEM, 77.

[35]STBOEM, 199.

[36]Talcott Parsons Essays in Sociological Theory (New York: Free Press, 1949), 15.

[37]Report of the State Superintendent of Schools to the New Jersey State Board of Education for the year ending 30 June 1896. See Report of Luther Hill, 151.

[38].Report of the State Superintendent of Schools to the New Jersey State Board of Education for the year ending 30 June, 1897. See Report of Luther Hill. 189.

[39]Sussex Independent, 15 February 1895.

[40]Sussex Independent, 18 January 1895.

[41]Sussex Independent, 5 June 1902.

[42]Kevin Wright, "Punkin Duster Finds the Woodchuck Borough, A Centennial Review of Bergen County Borough Fever, 1894/95." Bergen's Attic 22 (April 1995): 6-10.

[43]David Tyack, The One Best System, A History of American Urban Education (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 40-41. See David Tyack, "City Schools: Centralization of Control at the End of the Century", Jerry Israel (ed.) Building the Organizational Society: Essays of Associational Activities in Modern America (New York: Free Press, 1972),58-59.

[44]Hal Baron, Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth Century New England (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 46-47.

CHAPTER 8
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

During the eighteenth and the first two decades of the nineteenth century Schools were expected to achieve many ambitions for Sussex County's children, family and community. These goals grew from educational beliefs in a rural democratic culture that stressed self-directed work and personal responsibility. Three significant factors guided school evolution. They were their indigenous democratic origins, the relationships these schools and their families had with the rapidly changing economy, and the various effects of significant nineteenth century institutional, organizational innovations. These nineteenth century school expectations and government relationships have had an enduring effect on the late twentieth century political traditions now governing public schools in Sussex County.

Sussex County Schools: Indigenous Institutions

From their origins, public schools in Sussex County were indigenous institutions created by local leaders and parents to meet civic, moral, economic and political expectations. Unlike European societies where the government attempted to be the source, builder, or guardian of the nation and its traditions, the federal government had assumed no such role, although the Revolution and the Constitution did provide ideas which school leaders used in their school management. New Jersey had no tradition of authoritarian institutions such as those which developed in Massachusetts and New York where the state legislature mandated uniform state-wide requirements for local communities.[1]

These local communities were affected by widespread changes in Protestant religious belief. Religious revivals in the 1730's and 1740's preserved the belief that at death a person faced either damnation or salvation. However, these destinations were not preordained by pessimistic and anxiety-ridden inevitability. Rather, these moral judgments were attained by autonomous individuals whose moral success or failure were influenced by personal achievement. Schools interacted with religious reform to change old ideas of

fixed and inferior human status in an era of new republican, democratic belief. Schools were also an expression of non-institutional rational deism though public and private moral growth could be developed outside a formal church.

Sussex County's schools were institutions created by masterless men with self-defined authority. Most were independent producers, citizens who rented land or worked for wages and wished they could become independently self-employed. Their schools were based on the democratic premise that all citizens needed minimal literacy to achieve personal self interest and equal political status. These men recognized the social value and status inherent in the independent farmer and believed that both the republic and national well-being depended on their competency and communal support for educated self-sufficient families in a genuinely revolutionary, democratic community.

After 1875 Sussex leaders understood that both the national economy and the democratic Republic did not depend on the prosperity of northeastern, independent farmers. They continued to support schools that would permit meritorious children an opportunity in an integrating national economy even though they might leave their local communities.

The first schools were not legislated by state leaders responsive to the demands of nineteenth century secular or evangelical leaders, or businessmen anxious to develop consumer markets or docile, literate labor forces. They were started by men for children who were expected to follow in their footsteps and pursue personal happiness and prosperity in a self-regulating community. The organizational arrangements of Sussex schools calling for lay male control through elected trustees were modeled on Protestant church governing traditions. If each Christian citizen was equal before God and imbued with the potential for salvation, then children needed education for conscientious self-restraint and self-direction. The earliest schools were created by voluntarily associated adults interacting as an intermediate institution lying between their established government and families.

Two types of autonomous public schools emerged. Privately funded schools open to all children in a local community who could pay subscription fees were started by farmers. Through education, leaders hoped that children might learn how to integrate their

cherished moral and political rights and ambitions into the growing market place so that they might reduce growing material inequalities among citizens.[2]

The second type of school was the privately operated, select school designed to offer a more advanced and genteel education to the sons and daughters of professional or mercantile families in Newton and the larger villages of the county. These schools were managed by a proprietor or a church affiliated board of trustees. They prepared children for active participation in the cultural life and economic opportunities offered in the nearby Atlantic coastal towns with their access to state and national culture. After 1829 these schools also received public funding and served as the entire public school system in Newton until January, 1870.

During the nineteenth century, Sussex public schools did not contest the state's assumption that it had a significant role to play in the education of their children. But local leaders did not accept the premise that the state should constrain or direct school expectations. They recognized that the state had money and could assign them the authority they needed. For these leaders and their supporters their greatest challenge was and remains using the state for their own purposes.

After 1829 school leaders obeyed certain minimal teacher licensing laws. They complied with accounting requirements, negotiated boundary disputes, and resisted administrative consolidation efforts until 1894. When local trustees realized that even the dreaded consolidation did not dictate how many schools they should operate and where they should be located they did not oppose its other benign centralization features. Through their legislators, they resisted state curriculum standardization but encouraged their students to take state examinations earning credentials might lead their talented students to further opportunities. For local leaders, the state was a flask of money and privileges which they attempted to drain and divert to their communities. For local school districts, the state's best function is as a wealthy uncle-like eunuch visiting their communities.

Sussex schools and trustees achieved their goals by cooperating with state officials or, in rare cases, through legislative intervention by their representatives. Goals were never achieved through judicial appeal. They expected state legislators and officials to treat

local schools with both respect and assistance.

In 1997 New Jersey had 604 independent districts. These school districts exist in a federated relationship linking local communities to state governments. These relationships represent a complex and often confusing example of power diffusion between state agencies and local school districts which is then further influenced by inter-relationships between executive, judicial, and legislative units at the municipal, county and state levels.[3]

Sussex County Schools: Relationships to the New Liberal Market-Oriented Economies

During the nineteen century rural schools were one of many local institutions that were ruled by little more than experience, experiment, and common sense. Schools were not designed or operated to either heal or change social and economic inequities. After 1865, as Sussex's population growth stagnated and economic depression reduced the number of independent farmers, schools did not become part of a comprehensive rural, social revitalization strategy to keep youth on farms and stop rural depopulation. Schools both academically sorted and helped children to describe "who he or she was" rather than "what they intended to do following school." They did not use curricula which prepared students for specific jobs. Rather, they started students on the never-ending path toward personal self- development, economic success, private moral redemption, and civic responsibility. During the nineteenth century there was a discernible addition to earlier civic and moral goals by adding economic, individual self-interest goals. Throughout the nineteenth century schools reinforced a society where men and some women believed that they should have the power to define their own work, worth, and position in the world.

Schools also offered an introduction to social and cultural gentility without the necessity of family breeding or money. In school, children began to construct their cherished reputation, public reputation, and academic success which might start them on the path to social respect and public acknowledgement of their personal character and value. If a child came from a poor family he learned that his poverty was either the result of misfortune or personal character defect. School would teach him how to reduce the

possibilities of the former and through positive personal action avoid the latter. Schools were not explicitly designed to fulfill an economic role in a growing market economy. They did help a child learn the fundamental literacy and mathematical skills absolutely necessary for success.

Economic changes did not dictate what they learned or how the schools taught children. These changes had not created the schools and did not dictate their evolution and operation. Geography, demographic features, and endemic rural poverty governed school development.

Guided by trustees and teachers, schools did react to marketplace changes, and the threats or opportunities parents perceived these changes presented to local moral and democratic values. Unlike contemporary schools that measure their effectiveness when they count their computers or achieve internet access in all rooms. Sussex schools responded to economic change by continuing to stress individual academic achievement and the moral development.

Yet, rural schools were not stagnant, tradition-bound places unreflective of wider social change only seeking moral value and helping students achieve membership in local communities. They always taught students that the liberal values of individual success and self-interest would give them access to material goods and services in life's difficult race. Schools emphasized the skills needed in a demanding, ever changing, competitive society. In endless spelling bees and numerous contests children learned to compete with one another. They understood that they were always being ranked to help them enter and succeed in the larger society. By honing their arithmetic skills doing complex commercial interest problems they knew the skill and behavioral demands of the market and believed that schools would place them on a level playing field. New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman erred in 1994 when she commented "the school system we have today was developed in the nineteenth century to prepare children of farmers and new immigrants for the Industrial Revolution that wanted bodies to do repetitive factory work."[4] Schools developed as a moral and civic response parallel to recognized economic differences. They taught students that through individual effort and achievement the personal effect of these differences could be avoided or reduced.

The industrial and commercial nature of nineteenth century American occupational life did not require skills and knowledges different from those many educated Sussex County children brought to the marketplace. Sussex men had many jobs in the first, horse driven Newark public transportation system because they could manage horses and had basic arithmetic and language literacy. They had learned about horses in their villages and on their farms and they learned how to calculate and read in their schools. As white, Christian Americans they had unique cultural access and claim to whatever entry-level job opportunities the new growing economy produced. In that economy, both outside the county and within industrializing Newton, their schools gave them the required skills. In this type of industrial age their impoverished schools were successful not dysfunctional.

Schools and the Nineteenth Century Organization Revolution

Rural Sussex County schools were changed but not dominated by the increasingly complex organizational revolution which affected many American institutions between 1870 and 1900. By 1900 some township schools had started the transition from ungraded, informally-organized schools to graded institutions with specialized teachers, hierarchical administration, and management through budget forecasting, staff evaluation, professional on-the-job development, and bureaucratic procedures regulating student and teacher behavior.

Some school districts managed teachers as a corporation would manage its personnel resources. But for most teachers, encountering "management" still meant signing a contract, seeing the district clerk for wages, meeting the visiting County superintendent once a year, and finally sending the district clerk a note asking for reappointment or announcing a resignation. The organizational revolution which affected other institutions came unevenly to Sussex County school districts and mainly affected adults rather than students.[5]

The gradual school administrative revolution coincided with very slow and unarticulated changes in public expectations. Better school management through graded schools and specialized teachers would help students experience education as both a

received culture with its roots in the ways and mores of a small community and as preparation for an uncertain future. Teachers and trustees tried to teach children the character virtues and personality skills their adult experiences told them were crucial in helping a young adult make his way through the random, uncertainties of the marketplace while still retaining self-respect and community esteem.

The 1894 Township School Consolidation Act seemed to threaten traditional local community power. It did redefine the scale and meaning of the educational community making the township rather than the district the source of funding and identity. But daily school life hardly altered for most students since one room, neighborhood schools continued to operate. Children did not travel to distant consolidated schools. Their teachers might spend one afternoon a month meeting with other district teachers in addition to going to state-sponsored teacher institutes. The adult who visited the school was now called the "supervising principal." Students might have to pass common township, eighth grade tests. They graduated with all township eighth graders. But until safe, motorized transportation could speedily move children from home to graded schools in the villages or at central rural points consolidation was not considered.[6]

Future research into the effects of the 1894 Township Consolidation Act might investigate the social and economic status of the new trustees as contrasted with the previous district trustees who were elected from a local neighborhoods. It would be logical to infer that the new township trustees represented the most educated, mobile, and well-known leaders. Research might prove that the new township committees were composed of more wealthy but still essentially self-made men with only a common school education. Sussex County voters may have never required that their trustees be more or less educated than themselves.

A study of local district trustees prior to the 1894 consolidation would be useful for examining their community, social, and economic standing. But there are no records listing their names in either The Sussex County Office of the New Jersey State Department of Education or in the Trenton Archives. The Sussex County Clerk has school incorporation documents from the nineteenth century. An examination of these names using county documents and census data might begin to answer the question of whether the

conservatism of the schools was due to the absence of the need to change since graduates could find employment or if it was related to the fact that voting landowners did not want to tax themselves to support the children of tenants or laborers.

Nineteenth Century Public Schools: Current Education Policy Implications and Public Debate

The nineteenth century educational goals of community leaders, trustees, state officials, teachers, parents, and children created traditions and behaviors which persist a century later. In the last six decades of the nineteenth century 22,000-23,000 people lived in the county. The total population was very stable. In the last six decades of the twentieth century the population has grown from 40,000 to 130,000. Although the county population's social origins, educational background, and wealth has changed over the past century, the new families and their township school trustees have inherited and fervently embraced the purposes of local district and state interaction developed by their nineteenth century counterparts.

On August 22, 1828, township leaders gathered in the basement of the courthouse and listened to Robert Baird of the American Bible Society explain how they might organize and get public school state aid but avoid state control. In 1976 Sussex County funding needs were met when a deciding vote from their Senator Robert Littell, long-time incumbent of an extremely safe Sussex Republican seat, provided the needed margin for the state's first personal income tax. His vote brought additional and secure state aid to the County's schools. All the tactics used by nineteenth century county politicians and local board trustees to secure the maximum possible level of state fiscal and technical resources with the minimum level of state control remain active in the 1990s.

This aggressive policy to extract state resources for local needs uses traditional, democratic ideas as a controlling ideology. Many Sussex County districts belong to the Garden State Coalition of Schools, a state-wide suburban district consortium designed to influence public opinion and legislators. A recent working draft of Coalition White Paper #1 began with an August, 1786 letter of Thomas Jefferson to George Wythe arguing that

public schools were a good investment given the social costs that ignorance would produce. The Coalition's message extolled a universal system of public education as the most significant creation of America's experiment with democracy. In 1828 and today local districts promote the concept that local education was and remains a state responsibility. The state should increase its aid to local districts and then retreat from all involvement in local affairs save for fiscal accounting and teacher certification. To local trustees, the state provides while they decide.

White Paper #2 raised concerns about the State Commissioner's assumptions that all New Jersey districts have similar curriculum, instructional and fiscal procedures and measures of accountability. Until 1894 Sussex districts resisted township consolidation. They still resist the ideas and efforts of some state political leaders or professional educators who wish to further consolidate small township districts into larger regional, multiple township districts.[7]

Like Sussex families one hundred years ago, the current residents continue their integration into the regional and national economy. Unlike earlier residents who might work in the county or permanently migrate, 60% of the working force commute daily. Many post-Civil War nineteenth century leaders and citizens disliked the new, urban-centered, industrial corporate, financial capitalism that was reshaping American values and national identity. For the past fifty years, new residents have settled in Sussex leaving the hectic, more crowded life "down below" to build a secure, somewhat ideal, pastoral family life in Sussex County. Like their 1890 counterparts they often reject urban political needs but commute in an unavoidable economic relationship with cities and their nearby suburbs.

Today the twenty six local school districts are the largest group employer in the county. School expectations remain rooted in nineteenth century preferences and styles of administrative behavior. One Vernon Township writer commented in the New Jersey Herald that public schools were responsible for generations of poor citizens who now live in New Jersey. Schools created the environment in which individual students experience instructional failure. He argued that poor children can be educated but public schools which now have monopoly access to public funding should not be given another opportunity. Private schools should now have an opportunity to educate children with

public funds.

In 1994 Governor Whitman proposed a voucher policy to give certain low income parents in selected areas a grant that they could use to send a child to a private school. Attendees at the State Department meetings throughout the state were reminded that the purpose of the meeting was not a discussion of voucher's pros and cons but rather designing a workable voucher program. An advisory panel on school vouchers was formed to gather ideas to implement the idea through legislation. The extraordinary 1829-1870 Newton school district school funding policy which used publicly raised taxes from township, district, and state sources to fund a variety of privately operated schools could be carefully studied by Sussex County private school voucher advocates or charter school proponents.[8] But 1997 budget constraints and the absence of legislative support stopped this initiative. These recent State efforts to channel public funds to private schools parallel pre-1867 New Jersey funding policies which either permitted or did not interfere in similar local district trustee decisions.[9]

In 1997, Sussex County residents would probably agree with the sentiments expressed at celebrations for the county's one hundred and fiftieth anniversary held in Newton on September 2, 1903. The day had dawned bright and beautiful and not a cloud marred a perfect sky. Promptly, at 6 A. M. church bells peeled, factory whistles blew, and salutes were fired from the town commons.

Everyone was astir. By 10 A. M. the air was alive with melody and shouts. A telephone message to the New Jersey Herald from Stillwater, a village seven miles northwest of Newton, reported that 100 wagons filled with Newton-bound celebrators had just passed the village mill. Thousands of other visitors had arrived earlier by rail and many Newton houses held ten to twenty guests. A parade assembled at the depot and at 11 A.M. hundreds started marching down Spring Street to the town park. By 12:30 P.M. visitors spread picnic baskets in the park while the town leaders lunched in the Cochran House on the corner of the Newton Town Square. Local residents returned to their homes to eat and return for the speeches which would commemorate the day.

At 2 P.M., before a crowd of thousands circling the Newton Square, Rev. Dr. R.

Richardson gave the invocation thanking God for "so many born in Sussex homes, educated in its schools, and converted in its churches. Today, they occupied positions of honor and trust in other counties and the state."

Then, Rev. James B. Northrup of Branchville, who had just returned from studies in Berlin, read an ode especially prepared for the day by G.W. Floyd, former Presbyterian pastor in Branchville. The second and third verses read:

> Fair homes be ours where love's pure light
> Shall guide the impatient feet of youth
> Warn them of danger, set them right.
> Decrying falsehood, crowning truth.
>
> Clear heads, strong hands achieving worth
> For laboring brain and manual toil,
> Be ever theirs who boast their birth
> Or live their lives on Sussex soil.

Finally, the Honorable John S. Gibson, of Newark, New Jersey was introduced. Gibson pointed out that highly esteemed Sussex men and women could be found throughout New Jersey and the nation. He noted that their farm chores starting at 4 A.M. made school a recreation where they combined learning with life's lessons of labor, grit, frugality, self-reliance, and discipline. Harsh, rural experiences and their education helped graduates succeed in the nearby but different world "down below." Their parents knew that they could always learn manual trades, farming techniques, nature study or simple home economics on the farm or in the nearby village centers. There was no need for worry that their schools could not teach these skills or provide these experiences.[10]

Today's new residents of the 1990's express their twenty first century school expectations within eighteenth and nineteenth century traditions. Most parents realize children will probably not spend their adult lives in the county. For them, as for late nineteenth century citizens, the county has remained a place to enjoy childhood, attend school, and then leave for college and "down-the-line jobs" in the state, national, and world economy.

Chapter 8 End Notes

[1]During the first six decades of the nineteenth century the term "public" school meant either a privately managed school open to all who could pay the fees or a township school operated by publicly elected officials who used public funds to pay for some or all school expenses. Unlike New Jersey's strong local district tradition the New York state legislature adopted a strong, central state policy. Starting in 1784, when a university was organized for education using a Board of Regents empowered "to found schools and colleges in any such part of the state as deemed expedient to them and to endow the same", New York legislators added additional laws in 1787 creating a Department of Public Instruction to administer the schools in an equitable fashion and 1795 providing $20,000 in state aid for a five year period. An 1805 law created a permanent school fund following an act in 1786 which created a Literature Fund from the sale of state lands. See Sylvia Solomon and Irene Shur, Let School Bells Ring: A History of Schools in Rockland County, New York (N.P., Spring Valley, New York: 1978).

[2]Bruce Palmer, Man Over Money: The Southern Populist Critique of American Capitalism (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 206. Ernest Gellner, Conditions of Liberty, Civil Society and its Rivals, (New York: Penguin, 1994), Chapters 2 and 3. Gellner has a theory of civic society which is supported by early 19th.century advocates of education in Sussex County.

[3]James Vernon, Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, 1815-1867 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Vernon's introduction and first chapter have a useful analysis of how modern political culture deemphasized earlier visual and oral political representations and skills in favor of reading and writing skills which in turn required formal education.

[4]Newark Star-Ledger, 9 September 1994. A comment of Governor Christie Todd Whitman whose 1960s private secondary and college education exposed her to revisionist, anti-celebrationist interpretations of American public schools.

[5]Rules and Regulations of the Board of Education of Hardsyston Township, New Jersey, 1905. Eleven years after the Township Consolidation Act Hardyston Township published a twenty three page management manual for its citizens, parents, and employees. The District Rules were in two categories: those for the Board of Education and those for the schools. In the section Opening and Closing Exercises the public was notified that school would open with a reading of a portion of the Holy Scriptures, without comment, and repeating the Lord's Prayer. Vocal music, at the discretion of the principal, may be added to these exercises, but together they shall occupy no more than fifteen minutes.

[6]William S. Link, The Paradox of Southern Progressivism (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992). Link's work is useful illustrating how the New Jersey 1867 school reorganization law establishing county superintendents was carefully studied and replicated in some southern states.

[7]"Garden State Coalition of Schools" (September 1995) pamphlet send to participating districts.

[8]See New Jersey Herald, 11 August 1995. and USA Today, 26 August 1995 for a description of Wisconsin legislative efforts to give qualified parents a state voucher which

they could use at eligible private schools. This law replicated aspects of the 1860s Newton School Board management strategy for funding private schools patrons or trustees so that fees charged by the private schools might be reduced. The effect of the Newton practice was to fragment the potential tax money which might be concentrated on a single public school to serve the entire town's population. In Wisconsin opponents of the voucher system content it would shift money from a currently established public school system. Newton had no Board-managed public school. On August 26, 1995 the Wisconsin Supreme Court stopped the implementation of the law pending judicial review at some time during the coming 1995/96 school year.

[9]New Jersey Herald, 17 June 1995. See also, New Jersey State Department of Education memorandum September 22, 1995 to Chief School Administrators from Leo Klaghoz, Commissioner of Education.

[10]John Bunnell (ed.) The Sussex County Sesqui-Centennial (N.P., Newton 1903). A pamphlet available at the Sussex County Library depicting events and recording speeches given on the 150th. anniversary of the County's founding.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Before 1900 American society was predominately rural with thousands of small towns, villages, and individual farmsteads politically organized within their state, county, and township subdivisions. The expectations for American public education began and grew in these communities as citizens turned these expectations for their children into school organization and practice. Only later did state-level, leaders, who favored centralizing policies struggle to reach and influence these rural Americans and their locally managed schools.

With few exceptions, the history of American rural education in these anonymous and forgotten communities remains unwritten even though such settings offer an opportunity to study how the majority of Americans were educated in the nineteenth century.[1] This absence of rural research continues even though, since 1960, three distinct groups of American historians have significantly reinterpreted the history of American education. Historians continue to rapidly and effectively document urban educational history and state-level legislative and bureaucratic developments. These nonrural settings attract historians interested in conflict studies between different ethnic, religious, and economic interest groups. Rural communities, often very close to metropolitan areas and closely linked with their economies, remain ignored even though they provide the most pervasive and enduring examples of local democracy and community control whose history can illustrate and interpret modern urban and suburban-rural political relationships.[2]

During the past twenty years a number of American social historians have started to comprehensively study rural northeastern eighteenth and nineteenth century communities and their economic systems.[3] Occasionally, their research has noted rural literacy growth rates but there have been no county or local studies of rural school systems, their origins,

growth, and most critically the expectations they represented. This research has also not examined the relationships between these expectations and changing economic attitudes and conditions in rural communities.[4] The current interest in early rural economic and social history could be extended and informed by educational studies which study school expectations and changing forms of local and state governance as rural communities encountered and integrated with industrial and urban America in the decades following the Civil War.

Like publicly-funded rural schools, parochial schools located in rural counties also need more research. American education began with church-sponsored schools which continue to play an important role in educating an increasingly large number of American children.[5] A study of rural education should also examine the relationships between public and private schools within rural communities since these public-private school relationships often reflected both Protestant and Catholic rivalries and state-wide political controversies over school funding during the nineteenth century.

The Early Celebrationist Interpretations

The current state of research in American rural education owes much to early educational historiography. Ellwood Cubberley of Stanford University and Paul Monroe of Columbia University were the first American historians to review the origins and expectations for American public schools. They celebrated these schools whose genesis, rise, and triumph were foreordained to create perfected civic institutions. Through their teaching and writing they reminded American educators of their obligation to this triumphant, democratic past from whose republican soil the American public school emerged.

Cubberley's work was based on earlier Pennsylvania and Massachusetts studies completed in 1886 and 1894 which surveyed legislative and elite reformer actions in these two states. Both studies viewed rural school developments from their respective state capitols. Cubberley was also aided by research completed in 1893 when W. T. Harris,

United States Commissioner of Education, sponsored a state-by-state data compilation by Amory Dwight Mayo, a Massachusetts Unitarian clergyman. Mayo's work was never published as a separate manuscript but, in his report to Harris, he optimistically concluded that the American common school system was a triumph and with it the Republic secured its safety and future progress.[6]

Cubberley and Monroe's work emphasized the beliefs of national and state-level reformers and their struggles to gain legislative recognition, support for public education, and nineteenth century school consolidation management issues. This narrow institutional emphasis did not question why parents sent children to school or the reactions of teachers or children in public schools as both rural and urban America responded to industrialization, immigration, and late nineteenth century business cycles of prosperity and depression. Reformers responded to these disruptive forces by reminding American educators and the general public that they should search the past for those guiding educational principles which would renew traditional republican virtues of liberty, equality, and economic opportunity rather than reform American schools and the society they served. Schools were treasuries of virtue whose history Americans could draw upon in solving complex contemporary problems.

Celebrationist historians gave an early triumphant perspective to American educational history. During the early twentieth century other historians took this direction and premise when they undertook their own research. In a 1965 study of fifteen American education doctoral theses completed at Columbia University between 1899-1918, Lawrence Cremin identified six titles concerning state-level themes, five about colonial history, and four others which investigated such topics as comparative state financing, readers used in schools, education during Reconstruction, and the Lancastrian system of instruction introduced in the 1820s to manage inexpensively increasing numbers of students in urban charity schools. Rural schools were not a research topic at Columbia during the first two decades of the century.

The absence of a rural emphasis in early American history continued after World War II. In a 1969 text Daniel Calhoun selected thirteen readings for graduate students studying the early history of American education in a text section entitled: Republican

Education: Agrarian Education/Urban Problems. Within Calhoun's thirteen readings eleven concerned nineteenth century themes in either Boston, New York City or their respective states. One reading discussed the 1799 revivalist campaign in Massachusetts and its relationship to schools while the final one listed Jefferson's 1782 proposals to the Virginia legislature. No reading had a rural school perspective or related rural schools to such conventional research themes as the expanding frontier, the integration of rural America into a national economy, or the shift in community identity from face-to-face rural settings to a modern anonymous society.[7]

Schools and National Political Economic Integration

Then in 1960 Bernard Bailyn successfully redrew the definition and boundaries of American educational history. In a short book examining the role of education in early American society Bailyn placed education within a more comprehensive description and analysis of American social and cultural history. He criticized Cubberley and other "celebrationists" for separating education from politics, confusing public schooling with other forms and institutions of education, and for using an overly evangelistic, unobjective interpretation. Bailyn's thesis was that education and schooling were institutional responses to the results of family breakdown and uncertainty in an unknown colonial frontier and wilderness environment.[8]

Carl Kaestle, a Bailyn student at Harvard, later extended Bailyn's argument by suggesting that colonial family disruption was more complicated than a direct encounter with the new American environment. He argued that American colonists had also partially separated themselves from European religious and educational institutions. The emergence of schools on the frontier was related to both the uncertainties of frontier life and this separation from older European practices.[9]

Earlier in 1957, Lawrence Cremin of Columbia had taken a position halfway between Cubberley's triumphalism and Bailyn's 1960 disruption thesis when he optimistically argued that literacy and schools advanced the causes of political liberty,

equality, and fraternity in both colonial and early national society. Although reiterating "celebrationist" themes Cremin also stressed that the increase in educational opportunity came from many social and cultural institutions as well as formally organized schools. He called for integrating of educational research into a broader American cultural and social analysis.

By the mid 1960s Cremin, Bailyn, and Kaestle had called for an integration of American educational research into a broader context of American social and economic history.[10] David Madsen documented the results of this new research focus when he identified sixteen dissertations completed between 1935-1969 on education in the early national period. Nine theses still concerned national and state reform leaders. Three centered on state legislative developments, and four others examined such varied topics as common school readers, technology and educational reform, the influence of labor movements, and New England newspaper interest in public schools. Madsen's list, like those of Cremin and Calhoun, showed a continuing emphasis on elite reformers describing their effect on legislation, administration, and general moral stewardship.[11] Even though the new historiographic interpretation called for a movement away from narrow, school institutional studies toward a more general social and cultural analysis, the research still did not recognize the dominant rural nature of pre-twentieth century American society or shift its focus from elites to the expectations of parents, children, trustees, or teachers within periods of significant rural economic change.

During the 1960's Robert Wiebe discussed the role that schools played in the transition of hundreds and thousands of isolated, island-like American communities into a cohesive, integrated national economic system. He argued that within this transitional process state governments first encouraged and then mandated model school principles and forms of organization through which they assumed and hoped every community's children could learn the skills and attitudes they deemed necessary for work and political participation in the newly forming national society. Wiebe's work was a synthesis or conceptual presentation recognizing but not investigating the significance of rural American education.[12]

In a colonial school study, James Axtell was the first historian who explicitly discussed community expectations for schools and how these expectations were carried out in school organization and instruction. He also analyzed the relationships among the schools, parents, children, and the wider adult community. Axtell argued that through schools children learned to recognize and mediate often competing ideals, such as community morality and individual acquisitiveness so that they could grow to adulthood with dependable family social relationships in stable but limiting communities which were also engaging more actively with a market economy.[13]

In another book relating public schooling to general themes in American political development, Kaestle linked school development and expectations to the growth of American nationalism and state-building goals. By linking schools to national political developments he argued that school reformers convinced a majority of voters and legislators that schools were positively associated with modernity, equality, and the language of progress expressed through American nationalism.[14] Kaestle called these schools "the pillars of the Republic." They were publicly funded, centrally regulated, and professionally managed. Their goal was to achieve a balance between freedom, equality and order. Since schools emerged in the broader framework of the perfected republic, Kaestle, like Bailyn, Cremin, Wiebe, and Axtell, placed school growth and expectation within the larger context of state and economic growth. He also believed that after 1840 the common school was a means to protect American Protestant culture in its encounter with immigrant Catholicism. Yet, like the first group of American post -war historians, Kaestle ignored rural schools, their sponsors and participants, and the relationships of these schools to the larger economic and political trends he and others had identified.

Schools as an Instrument of Social Control

In the late 1960s the most significant challenge to both the celebrationist and national integration interpretive models emerged from historians who fiercely argued that nineteenth century common schools were primarily elite-sponsored institutions designed to

control children and their families in a radically changing free enterprise economic system. Capitalism, its growth, and security required new, state-managed institutions to control and housebreak the enfranchised citizen masses. There were and remain two types of "school as control" theme historians: those who believe that schools were created and exist to teach students that they should accept their economic place in an unequal opportunity market economy. There is also a larger, more eclectic, social control group of historians who believe that nineteenth century American public schools were designed as an elite, cultural intervention to protect society from the chaos of rampant and avaricious American individualism. Since democracy was also eroding all forms of deference in an era of unprecedented economic and demographic change, schools could manage this disruptive influence.

The first social control revisionist was Michael Katz whose 1968 dissertation studied the 1860 Beverly, Massachusetts campaign to construct a high school. Using both local sources and census data, Katz concluded that the town's prestigious, industrially oriented affluent citizens imposed this plan on a largely immigrant working population which opposed the school. Katz's study concluded that the irony of the Beverly events was that the citizens who would supposedly most benefit from such a school did not vote for its construction. In 1971 Katz extended his critique arguing that public schools should not inculcate law and order attitudes and pietistic patriotism. Schools were most valuable when they concentrated on basic literacy. Katz believed that public schools were not inexorably opposed to students developing critical minds and concepts of personal freedom. They simply failed to promote these qualities in children since their legislative mandate and bureaucratic system did not foster the growth of educational practices which could produce these abilities. In 1979 David Nasaw also supported a more general social control thesis maintaining that the common schools were agencies of Americanization which identified and prescribed elite values on an increasingly heterogeneous population.[15]

During the 1970s other historians and social scientists also used social control theses to criticize earlier interpretations of the common school movement and its twentieth century progressive reforms.[16] Bowles and Gintis argued that manufacturers and

merchants led the Massachusetts public school movement whose primary goal was to instill a respect for law and authority in future workers throughout the newly emerging capitalist, industrial economy. In a counterpoint to both Katz's earlier works and the Bowles-Gintis thesis, Maris Vinovskis reinterpreted the Massachusetts census and election data and concluded that industrial capitalism and the emergence of the common school movement could not be linked.[17] Vinovskis pointed out that during the great industrial expansion of the 1840s public school enrollment actually declined. He also criticized various revisionist writers for their heavy reliance on Massachusetts data.[18]

In 1976 Alan Dawley's study of industrialization and social change in Lynn, Massachusetts also concluded that public schools were a form of capitalist class control designed to inculcate work-place discipline, the belief that success came through hard work, and worker respect for business ethics. The function of schooling was to teach young workers an understanding of the reciprocal and socially useful relationships between the governed and governing classes as well as learning skills, self direction, and self control. Workers were taught that these beliefs and practices were the foundation of the state's prosperity and their own job security. Schools would teach students to police both their own moral beliefs and those of fellow workers. They would learn that society was carefully balanced between the poor and humble and the great men whose rightful decisions in the workplace were never questioned.[19]

In 1982 Katz again returned to his 1968 thesis that schools' ultimate moral and behavioral mission was primarily political and a tool in class control. Using educational data and labor force participation patterns in Essex County, Ontario, he and two other colleagues concluded that schools legitimized inequality. Since ordinary people had not protested against the disadvantages of the social and economic order this was evidence that the ultimate behavioral goals of education were met.

In 1983 Button and Provenzo criticized Katz's work for its pessimism and unalterable inevitability that schools disintegrated and decayed individual freedom. If Cubberley and Monroe were too triumphant in their views of American education they argued that Katz's conclusions were too fatalistic about the effects of school repression.

The power and disruptive force of the neo-Marxist revisionist critique quickly forced a response from liberal, nationally known historians working in the nation's major teacher and administrator training centers. R. Freeman Butts of Teachers College, Columbia University argued that the result of revisionist thought was to impede and indeed harm the effort to continue building the American political community. Butts believed the attack on the cherished institutional status of public schools was so critical since it forced a needless and negative questioning of faith in American institutions. Butts was an historian who felt a personal degree of stewardship and guiding relationship between his work training administrators and other educational historians and the Republic's very existence. Katz and others did not strengthen his view that schools were critical elements in constructing and maintaining an American political community based on the libertarian values of a democratic polity.

Butts argued that public schools reflected existing American civic values. The common school movement of the nineteenth century was a great idea and not simply a romantic or social control notion. Admittedly, its goals were unfulfilled but its democratic intentions should not be questioned. Butts also criticized some revisionists for being too sociological and class oriented. His methodological advice to both fellow historians and other critics was that the best approach to understanding the origin and development of public schools was through using newly popular modernization theory. This theory could eliminate unjustifiable and romantic notions of unconscious perfectionism in school development and provide a multidisciplinary means to describe and link school growth with economic, social and political change during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Butts' work is a bridge between Cubberly's celebrationism and the national, state building models of Bailyn, Kaestle, and Cremin.

Diane Ravitch followed R. Freeman Butts as the educational history specialist at Teachers College, Columbia University. In 1978 Ravitch wrote a comprehensive critique of the radical revisionist attack on American public schools arguing that while the Cubberley tradition could not be empirically sustained the radicals were intellectually dishonest in applying presentistic ideas to a different historical context. She accused them of selectively attacking aspects of American educational history to carry out a political

agenda. The range of her attack went from critiquing the economic determinism of Bowles, Gintis, and Karrier through Joel Spring's anarchistic solutions to reforming American education. She said Katz was shortsighted for his total rejection of any nineteenth century reforming motives. Ravitch believed American schools could be improved while she argued that radicals had illogically and pessimistically dismissed them as worthless social control institutions antithetic to American democratic ideals.[20]

In 1988 Charles Glenn's common school study also argued that social control and not literacy, job preparation, or political unity was the goal which started the public school movement. Glenn maintained that school reformers were concerned with controlling growing cultural and religious diversity as the newest threats to society and the emerging American nation. He believed public schools were designed to divert the growth of a pluralistic religious sentiment in American society which could use public money in religious schools and replace it with a reformer brand of liberal Protestantism in public schools.

Glenn's thesis is apparent in the recent work of Myron Lieberman, a social policy analyst, who advocates using public funds as vouchers for parents to send their children to both state-approved private non-profit and profit-making schools. Lieberman points to an early pre-1850 period when in some states public funds supported private schools. Following Glenn, Lieberman argues that this process ended when Protestants decided they should not fund any religiously sponsored schools since this action would bring a Catholic claim for the same benefits. The result of this religious struggle was that public schools gained a monopoly for the use of state funds. Lieberman selectively uses Glenn and sees the relationships of private and public schools marked by a struggle for state funds and unrelated to the contemporary political or economic conditions in which they grew. Lieberman and Glenn do not account for the growth of public schools in rural areas where nearly 100% of the population was not Catholic. Their focus is urban although there were numerous rural examples of religious schools receiving public funding in different states before the Civil War.[21]

Other scholars believe that the public schools were created to serve various general

and non-economic forms of social control.[22] They argue that schools were designed and managed to protect society from the perceived chaos of American individualism and a political democracy whose rhetoric attacked various forms of traditional political hierarchy and deference in an era of rapid and unprecedented forms of economic change. These elite fears and responses also occurred in England, Prussia, and France during the same period. In these societies as well as in the United States school reformers promoted state-controlled education as a preventative measure against moral, economic, and social instability and as a collective socializing experience for a nation's youth learning new civic, economic, and moral responsibilities.[23]

Christopher Lasch's work provided a unified theory of "school as social control." He argued that schools were a publicly governed moral enterprise whose most important roots went back to Enlightenment rationality. The enterprise eventually gained the support of three disparate groups: religious evangelicals who wanted schools to restrain humans from the worst excesses of avarice, pride, and ambition found in American individualism, romantic opponents of the Enlightenment who believed that schools could reconnect traditional cultural communities and compulsorily lead their youth into a civic, republican nationalism, and, finally, American deists and Unitarians who wanted to apply the concept of individual perfectionism derived from a religious experience to a school-induced, group moral perfectionism.

Lasch argued that schools would secularize piety helping future American Christians maintain their familial, community traditions which gave a child status and identity based on community-sanctioned habit and prejudice. The school would connect these community traditions to the larger society. In this social setting students could use the school's universal principles of disciplined behavior and intellectual development for individual achievement in an unequal and impersonal economic system and society. In this new society, the economic change which caused wide-spread prosperity was called progress. Expanding material consumption was no longer a moral sin and evidence of chaos and avarice but now a virtue contributing to everyone's happiness through economic growth.[24]

Elite Reformer Interpretations

Historians have also investigated the lives of significant nineteenth century educational reformers such as Horace Mann and Henry Barnard. They identified these common school promoters as members of social groups from northeastern industrial and commercial centers but who themselves were not engaged in business or industry. As highly educated lawyers, clergy, journalists or simply self-assigned promoters of ideas and various social causes, they were intellectual politicians often acting as self-assigned moral guides and arbitrators for society. Whether representing an official state agency or a private association, their goal was uplifting the laity to their version of a unified, cultural value system that the reformers deemed essential to the Republic's prosperity during a period when white, adult males achieved full voting rights.

Joel Spring has also interpreted reformer motives using an analysis centering on their control of ideas and information within a competitive interest group's political system. Common school elite reformers knew that legislators needed information for their work. Administrators had a similar need for policy development. They realized that nineteenth century state governments did not have this capacity so they gathered data, published pamphlets, organized letter campaigns in the local newspapers, and practiced a politics of both partisanship and principle whenever the circumstances required. Evangelical religious groups often provided staff and money to lead such efforts.[25]

Other historians place the emergence of state-sanctioned and supported public schools within the larger early nineteenth century reform effort is to institutionally manage and improve the lives of various dependent or morally wayward populations including the mentally ill, drunkards, prisoners, the elderly, unwed mothers, prostitutes, and children. Traditional Protestant moral stewardship was aligned with secular philanthropy.

These more general reform movements emerged in both urban areas and rural counties faced with growing numbers of the elderly and young mothers without local family support. Drunkenness was often connected to family breakdown and became a

topic in Sunday schools across the country. Unlike many of the privately organized and funded reform movements which sponsored voluntary participation in their services, public school reformers moved toward establishing compulsory student attendance laws. Both the private and public reform movements tried to make people behave and achieve goodness according to the moral precepts of their sponsors.[26]

These reform leaders knew two worlds: the American republic and the kingdom of God. Their goal was to make citizens respect the former and reflect the glory of the latter. The common schools were an insurance policy for both the Republic and Protestantism. Where families and churches were not fulfilling their moral functions teachers would act as surrogate ministers and parents.

A similar relationship was envisioned between corporations and school systems. The emerging factory system with its owners, administrators, and workers found its organizational reflection in a school board trustees, administrations, and students. Both factories and schools were public service institutions using interchangeable and bureaucratically organized parts.

Reformer recognized Christian redemption ideals organized by educated community leaders who were progressive, professional, and scientific.[27] These leaders and their schools would produce a local and national community of Christian Republican children. Jonathan Messerli's and Vincent Lannie's work on Mann and Barnard are biographical approaches which combine various social theories with the humanitarian reformer model of historiography.[28] Gordon Wood's recent work on the American revolution places these reformers and their concerns within a more general analysis arguing that public school systems were a means of reestablishing some form of hierarchical control over a radically democratizing society. He argues that a logical relationship can be drawn between late eighteenth century conservative fears of disorder and mid-nineteenth century elite reformers.[29]

The Progressive Interpretation

The final group of historians who have revised the celebrationist tradition explaining the emergence and expectations for common schools were early and mid-twentieth century American progressive historians who argued that organized, worker movements were the most influential advocates for public schools. The early twentieth century progressives Frank Carlton and John Commoner supported this point of view contending that the schools emerged from competitive, interest group conflict politics.[30] These conclusions were later challenged and revised by Philip Curoe, Sidney Jackson and Jay Pawa who found little evidence to support a significant role for working class labor union leadership in the emergence of common schools.[31] In certain states or cities some influence was clearly found but they maintain that the major reform movements were led by humanitarian, individuals of non-working group origins. Katz's 1968 Beverly, Massachusetts study supports this contention. Clearly, Commoner, Carlton, and other-urban centered progressives did not consider rural common schools in their competitive interest group- centered research.

Other historians, progressive and those more eclectic, working generally in nineteenth century American social and economic history also identified labor movement influence in some public school policy settings. Merle Curti believed that unions had both limited and limiting strength.[32] Their school concerns were limiting in the sense that time and energy spent on school policy diverted them from more immediate economic concerns.

However, Rush Welter believed that working class unions supported public education because while they had read and believed in the educational rhetoric of the founding fathers, they also believed these concepts were authoritarian, limited, controlling, and led to greater and not less social hierarchy. The Jeffersonian ideals for Virginia gave the state too much authority and did not offer universal education or sufficient opportunity for more students to advance into colleges. Unions supported public education as a means whereby the voting power of free, white males could be combined with needed literacy and general knowledge.[33] Education and the franchise could enlarge the people's political

authority and equality preventing future distinctions in a society already overrun with extravagance and wealth gained from state charters and aristocratic innovations such as state aid to private colleges and universities. Welter's work noted the support given both worker groups and public education by such leaders as Robert Owen, Fanny Wright, Robert Rantoul, William Cullen Bryant, William Leggett, George Bancroft, Walt Whitman, and Orestes Brownson.

The Jacksonian scholar Edward Pessen placed the pragmatic and realistic educational goals of the worker associations within the broader context of their striving for a more equitable society. Pessen believed that although labor leaders saw their economic foes supporting public schools, they believed this support should not alter their pro-school views since schools could offer a slow but sure way to meet labor's goals without violence. While schools could not help adult workers, they could benefit the worker's children since education could eliminate intemperance, avarice, the economic conditions which led to criminal behavior and debt, and at the same time create a higher literary culture for all society.[34]

In 1985 Katznelson and Weir concluded that the common school emerged because both workers and capitalists shared a common republican political language.[35] Workers had the vote before public schools emerged. They were willing to join political coalitions supporting public schools because they had already been mobilized as voting citizens by competitive political parties. Schools were not created by property owners as instruments of social and economic control. Opposing the Bowles-Gintis thesis that public schools emerged when capitalists created them in an effort to educate children in ways leading them to accept inequalities in the economic system, Katznelson and Weir maintained that common schools produced students with skills and knowledge that were unrelated to narrow worker-employer relationships.

Social Science Interpretations

During the 1970s historians were joined by social scientists investigating the origins and expectations of the 19th century common school movement. Social scientists added

rational choice concepts and statistical analysis techniques to their analysis of traditional documentary sources. Soltow and Stevens using national census data argued that by the mid-nineteenth century basic literacy had become a cultural imperative associated with protestant morality, a fervent nationalism and the proper socialization of children.[36] This type of statistically reinforced conclusion supported the historians but added little to the debate. However, Soltow and Stevens extended their analysis from merely the culture of literacy to the business of literacy noting how public education was promoted by printers, book companies, and newspaper owners as part of a social formula for independent life and upward socioeconomic mobility. Literacy was not only a means to transform a person's learning ability, it also represented a willingness to submit oneself to the authority of print.

Meyer, Tyack, Nagel, and Gordon argued that the growth of common schools could not be explained using industrialization, urbanization, and state-level, elite humanitarian reform legislation concepts.[37] The emergence and growth of common schools occurred prior to these developments and enrollment in rural areas was higher than in towns and urban centers. They concluded that the spread of schooling in the rural north and west can best be understood as a social movement implementing a commonly held nation-building ideology grafted onto an earlier protestant literacy-driven millenialism. Social science researchers did not go beneath their state aggregate numbers and analyze them at a county or municipal level.

By the mid-1980s it was clear that there was no general agreement among either historians or social scientists concerning the origins and expectations of American common schools during the nineteenth century.[38] The research had centered on national aggregated data, humanitarian reformers, state-level legislation, or urban areas. The work had not considered educational aspirations in thousands of autonomous farming and village communities home to 80% of the American population before 1860. The research emphasis on class and conflict derived from industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and ethnocultural conflict theories. Clearly, these types of research emphases could not explain rural developments in more culturally stable and homogeneous communities whose

documented economic patterns and transitions were more difficult to discern. The research used convenient evidence from state legislatures, urban centers, and elite biographical information. The information and documentary culture of pre-1860 rural America is different and less immediately available.

Newer Interpretive Theories: The Role of Rural Economic Change and Religion

The most significant and favorable research direction providing the concepts and data for studying nineteenth century rural school expectations lies primarily in what Hal Barron has called "rediscovering the majority" or doing the general histories of the Americans in the thousands of non-urban, non-industrial, and non-Catholic immigrant communities in the country.[39] Two essays summarize several decades of research on the relationships between small scale family farming, agricultural productivity and the transition to a market place capitalism in the rural northeast during the 1750-1825 period.[40] These essays do not specifically examine either the general role of education or the development of rural schools.

The research synthesis derive from two distinct historical concepts and moral positions. One group of historians termed "market economy historians" proceed from Hartz's belief that America had no feudal past hence Americans were from the very beginning capitalist risk takers engaging in exchange market price, land, labor, product, and capital transactions for individual self-interest.[41] While there was an earlier time at the very start of each colonial venture when the economy was more subsistence-like or based on communal barter arrangements, Americans were quickly to the market born and were not part of an economic ethical system bound by the restraints of a communal society based on mutual concerns and obligations. Market historians have identified the eighteenth century rural northeast states as a zone where small-scale family farming increased agricultural productivity which stimulated and then shifted consumer goods purchasing patterns from local village to both urban and international sources.[42]

Within this transition successful farmers began or increased their use of sugar, rum,

and tea. They used more semi-durables such as paper, textiles, clothing, glass, and pottery. One estimate is that by 1800 30% of per capita income among northeastern farmers was used for such imports.[43] By the end of this transitional period farmers were no longer occasionally going to market but were now consistently producing for markets. Rural northeastern farmers had increased their productivity and committed their agricultural surplus to both nearby urban and international markets. They used cash on a daily basis and had access to both short and long term credit. The possible relationship of this economic change to the growth of rural schools is not a central theme within this research. Whether schools emerge parallel to these developments or as a consequence is neither evident nor a discussion or argument theme.

A second group of historians has challenged this market capitalistic, market interpretation. Known as "moral historians" they believe that the goal of most colonial farmers was to retain a moral, communal, and pre-capitalist community where prices were set by custom and not the market. This community economy stressed group moral restraints and incentives. Neighborly sensitivities were equally or more important than individual self-interest, and economic life was not a free for all struggle governed by daily, profit-driven market exchange.

Both groups of historians agree that by 1800 a new economic system with distinctively non-communal values, behaviors, and institutions had developed. The moral historians believe that this state of affairs had not always been so and that at one time non-market values prevailed. This interpretation is essential in their analysis of the present economic system in that they now have a usable past to interpret current conditions. Moral historians along with their market colleagues do not focus specifically on the emergence of schools or public schools as an element in the economic transition that both groups agree did occur by the start of the nineteenth century.

When a Sussex County community had enough families, a tax base, and enough leadership schools were started. If schools were not formed using public tax money allocated to all students, they could be formed through the efforts of local leaders who solicited subscribers or other parents to pay fees and attend a school. A transitional system combining private fees with tax support for pauper children was also used in different

areas. The dynamically expanding economy may have loosened earlier hierarchical ties of colonial loyalty. With more capital available and trade increasing men and their families may not have been so closely tied to established wealthy, reputable men. If not loyal and bound, they could now more freely imitate gentry consumption behavior and a more genteel life style which included education for their children. This speculative thesis linking the growth of schools and eventual public funding to the extension of gentility has no empirical studies.

Following the work of earlier economists who related public schools to the growth of a national economy and regulating state, Lee Craig has used rational choice theory to analyze why northeast rural birth rates declined by 50% and public education developed between 1800-1900.[44] Craig argues that the absence of inexpensive land was the critical cause for this demographic transition. Contrasting northeast rural areas with midwestern rural areas that had greater and cheaper land availability, Craig found a 50% greater birthrate in the midwest areas. He concluded that the declining northeast rural birthrate was not caused by industrialization, urban work opportunities, or the subtle and unquantified effects of literacy and education. This thesis and tentative conclusion is then linked to the rise in school attendance through a parallel reasoning which argues since children did not produce wealth for the market in areas where cheap land was no longer available, the more expensive land that did exist was improved through improved technology so parents decided to send children to school. Their taxes or subscription fees became a parental investment in potentially raising the wage earning power of each child. Craig maintains that the mid-nineteenth century school expansion pattern developed parallel with and as an effect of a declining birth rate.

The first generation of American rural parents sending their children to schools may not have been formally educated between 1770 and 1800. For this generation paying taxes or fees was a new cultural demand as their children entered schools between 1790 and 1840. Children who went to schools after the Civil War were from families who themselves may have been formally educated. Craig terms this investment in rural children as a form of "targeted bequest." Education costs were part of a child's inheritance since parents who had some surplus cash could not easily invest it in land because land was too

expensive. The funds were invested in children. By this investment the parents were gambling that their children's wealth earned in non-farming occupations and not farm labor would give the parents some degree of security in old age.

In addition to rational choice theory and the possible relationship of school emergence and expectation to the growth of a rural market economy two other research theses may also explain the emergence and development of rural schools in the northeast during the first decades of the nineteenth century. One thesis points to changes in relationships between parents and children which led to school growth. Based on John Locke's sensationalist, child development epistemology, historians now argue that more parents took on the responsibility for training a child's faculties. These parents believed that affectionate, individualized cultural nurturing and not a child's original fallen nature would ultimately determine the moral and and spiritual character of a young man or woman.

This different parent-child relationship was aligned with the political belief that the new republic required autonomous citizens and self reasoning adults. Schools were the means for creating this new self-developing and autonomous person.[45]

The second new research direction centers on the changes in religious sentiment during the 1750-1825 period. An altered attitude toward organized religion was aligned with changing intrafamilial relationships and the role of individuals in the new state. A new public, religious culture combined two distinctive religious sentiments. The older one was from millennial evangelical Calvinism which emphasized man's struggle with sin and the search for redemption via a conversion experience. In its political application this idea led to the belief that the new nation was also an elect nation acting in a collective manner to achieve sacred goals. The second and newer religious sentiment denied that children were born already damned lacking any formative power to learn and choose righteousness. This new, protestant God was generous, loving, and gave man an improvable and hence educable human nature. This view of man's relationship to God split the Presbyterian and other churches into orthodox and unitarian, deist camps.

Both the change in patriarchal family relationships aligned with the concepts of an individually autonomous and improvable child and a different interpretation of man's fallen

nature found their political analog in radical Whig political ideals which now had a reinforcing and nondivisive religious dimension. People affected by both the orthodox Great Awakening of the 1730-1750 period and the later emergence of New England Unitarian influence insisted on their collective equality before God. These ideals became part of a Whig appeal to a supposedly virtuous citizenry which stressed self-sufficiency and frugality that, along with fear and pessimism, rallied men against the Crown and then, after the Revolution, forced questions about how the new Republic could survive. The thoughts of fear and pessimism came from the realization that revolutionary democratic political change would strike down many of the hierarchical constraints in society without a clear alternative means for regaining social cohesion within an individualistic economy.

Through the last two decades of the eighteenth century American Protestant millenialism was merged with a secular republican ideal giving Americans an optimistic vision of a divinely inspired future and world historical mission. Schools, open to all, would prepare young Americans for both a personal and political triumph of good over evil. The American Republic would achieve an earthly perfection in preparation for individual's achieving eternal divine perfection.[46]

The recent historical emphasis on northern, colonial rural life is now two decades old. No group of Americans has been more studied.[47] But not all colonies have been equally or even partially investigated. Massachusetts county court houses have attracted many researchers. Those in New Jersey have not. The New England Puritan religion and cultures in different towns has been minutely dissected. The cultural life of New Jersey counties and towns has not.

Schools during the colonial and early Republic era have been studied using elite reformer materials and theses. Our knowledge of rural schools and their critical relationships with state-level officials or private elite reform movements remains anecdotal and unintegrated into work and conclusions of the more general research. The many strands within historians' interest in northeastern rural life provide different questions and clues around which a study of northeastern schools and the emergence of common schools can begin. This study would unify elite reformer goals and state actions with the hopes and

actions of different groups of local county people who organized, supported, and sent their children to rural schools. Local notables, school trustees, teachers, parents, and children have never been isolated from the ideas and indeed the laws of state-level reformers or government. Often, they failed to fully respond to these ideas or laws. Often, they ignored them. Useful research requires integrating state-level action with county and township decisions. A balance between the elite and the ordinary is essential to understand the expectations that differing groups had for their publicly supported schools during periods of significant economic change.

In Sussex, schools and the eventual emergence of publicly funded schools were not the consequence of urban capitalism or reaction to Catholic immigration. Between 1790 and 1860 these schools developed parallel with and not as a direct outcome of a market revolution among ordinary farmers. They were affected by but did not come under significant state control when elite reformers brought limited state funds to their townships. These schools were a part of rural northeast history and represented the expectations of local leaders and voters.

Sedlack, Church, and other historians have argued that expectations for schools and other institutions of formal training change dramatically only when a society's vision for its own future changes or when conditions for fulfillment of that vision are perceived to change.[48] Schools are assumed to shape lives. Therefore, they change after social aspirations alter. The study of Sussex County schools during this period integrating both state-level and local aspirations expressed through local, leaders, trustees, teachers, and families qualifies this belief. Between 1865 and 1895 the public vision for the success of independent, small-sized farming changed from optimistic idealism in the 1860s to deep pessimism by 1890 as the county's farmers struggled against increasing domestic and international competition for nearby urban markets. However, the expectations for public schools did not change. Schools produced successfully mobile graduates who could leave the county for training or unskilled employment in the nearby urban areas. In some instances their agricultural experiences helped them get jobs in cities.

The state legislature and Department of Education played an increasingly significant role in the oversight of rural common schools but the long cherished reformer goal which

culminated in the school consolidation act of 1894 did not substantively or critically alter either the management or operation of the schools. Boards of education now represented an entire township rather than one district or neighborhood within a township. These enlarged boards of education carefully monitored and met local needs just as neighborhood boards had done. The numbers of small schools did not decrease and the curriculum remained stable.

Rural schools found neither reason nor capacity to change. They remained a center of local, democratic control within a seemingly larger and more impersonal world of state laws and state officials. These schools were not caught up in a populist or rural progressive reform movement. They remained places where no one asked about a student's personal or future identity. The answers in a face to face community were both known and largely inflexible. School was a path to personal self-improvement and respectability in communities where people knew and judged one another's character and place. While individual and talented common school graduates did go off for education and jobs in the nearby towns and cities of the New York metropolitan area, schools did not prepare their students for progressive self autonomy, personality development, or personal entitlement. They remained fastened to earlier ideals that individuals were part of a rural society practicing discipline, self-control, and moderation. They remained pillars in the republic.

Following the Civil War in 1882 senator Henry S. Blair exhorted his colleagues to "educate the rising generation mentally, morally, physically just as it should be done and this nation and this world would reach the millennium within one hundred years."[49] By the mid-1890s the small, independent farmers of Sussex County and the six hundred families of shoemakers who worked in Newton, the county seat, knew that their future contained not a millennium but rather another day or another season in a competitive market place. They did not believe their schools were part of a grand strategy for educating their children so that they could better adapt to this new economic system. If the economy did not meet their expectations, the schools did providing the common essentials: literacy, practical numeracy, pride in country, community, self, and the virtues of character which would enable a person to make his own way in life.

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APPENDIX B

TEACHERS' EXAMINATION

LIST OF QUESTIONS GIVEN AT THE EXAMINATION FOR COUNTY CERTIFICATES, AT DECKERTOWN OF FEB. 4, 1893

ORTHOGRAPHY - THIRD GRADE

1. Separate the syllables of the following words: dictionary, treachery, religious, logician, vengeance.
2. Give two rules for spelling and illustrate each by several examples.
3. Use the following stems to build derivatives; give the meaning of both stem and derived word: miss, vict, mont, strict, stud.
4. What classes of nouns from their plural with s? With es? Give examples.
5. State the arguments for and against teaching spelling orally.

6–10. Spell the following words to be dictated by the examiners: Parliament, aromatic, families, harangue, occurring, intelligence, merchantable, Chesapeake, omniscient, originally, participate, colonize, village, Mediterranean, disparagement, citadel, indefatigable, infallible, glycerine, gorgeous.

READING. —THIRD GRADE

1. Give examples of words containing the following sounds: a, a, o, u, e.
2. Describe a method of teaching new words to a class of beginners.
3. What should determine the maximum amount of reading to be taught in the first school year? The second? Any year?
4. Is imitation of the teacher's reading a good method of teaching proper emphasis, inflection, &c.? Explain.
5. Mention two advantages of silent reading.
6. How are memory selections best taught?

7–10. read aloud a selection in prose or poetry in the presence of the Board of Examiners.

PENMANSHIP.—THIRD GRADE

1. Explain how to hold the pen properly.
2. Which is preferable, the side position or the front position? Why?
3. Analyze the following letters and figures and describe their elements: m, d, s, 6, 4.
4. Describe the "finger movements," and state its use.
5. Make the four semi extended small letters.

6-10. Copy the following as an example of your ability to write:

ALADDIN

When I was a beggarly boy,
And lived in a cellar damp,
I had not a friend nor a toy,
But I had Aladdin's lamp;

When I could not sleep for cold,
I had fire enough in my brain,
And builded with roofs of gold
my beautiful castles in Spain!

–Lowell.

GEOGRAPHY.—THIRD GRADE

1. What effect have forests upon the rainfall and climate of a country?
2. Mention the principal natural products of New Jersey and give localities where produced.
3. Describe the process of manufacture of some staple New Jersey product.
4. Draw a map of the New England States, giving thereon the most important data.
5. What recent events have called pub- attention to the Panama Canal and Hawaii Islands?
6. Name the five most important foreign possessions of Great Britain.
7. Describe briefly the people and civilization of Japan.
8. Give in order the large cities that you pass through in going by rail from New York to Chicago.

9–10. Fill in the following table:

County	Gov't	Capital	Chief Exports
Switzerland			
Germany			
China			
Rumania			
Venezuela			

ARITHMETIC.—THIRD GRADE

1. What is a man's entire tax on $8,400 of assessed valuation, who pays a state tax of 1 1/4 mills on the dollar, a city tax of 2 per cent, and a special assessment of one-fourth of one per-cent.
2. What per cent is gained, or lost, by deducting 10 per cent from the price of goods marked 10 per cent above cost?
3. A dealer buys coal at $4.25 per long ton and retails it at $5.00 per short ton. What is the profit on 500 tons?
4. Divide 33 thousands by 33 thousandths.
5. What are bonds, coupons, installment, check and dividend?
6. Find what is due on a note of $750, dated August 26th, 1891, payable today, interest at 5 1/4 per cent.
7. A, B, and C engage in partnership. A puts in one-half of the capital, B one-third and C $1,200. On the division of profits at the end of the year C is entitled to $1,750. What is B entitled to?
8. Bought 100 shares of a 7 per cent dividend paying stock at 157 1/2. What rate per annum will the investment pay?
9. From the cube root of 100,592 take the square root of 80,625,156.
10. The product of three factors is 563 1/2. One of the factors is 3 1/2. the other two are equal. What are the equal factors?

GRAMMAR.—THIRD GRADE

"Thou who wouldst wear the name
of poet mid thy brethren of mankind,
And clothe in word of flame
Thoughts that shall live within the general mind!
Deem not the framing of a deathless lay,
The pastime of a drowsy summer day."

"The secret wouldst thou know
To touch the heart or fire the blood at will?
Let thine own eyes o'erflow;
Let thy lips quiver with the passionate thrill;
Seize the great thought ere yet its power be past,
and bind, in words, the fleet emotion fast."

"So shall thou frame a lay
That haply may endure from age to age,
And they who read shall say:
'What witchery hangs upon this poet's page!
What art is his the written word spells to find
That sway from mood to mood the willing mind!'"
—Bryant

1. Show by diagram or otherwise the grammatical analysis of the first stanza of the foregoing selection.
2. Give mood and tense of "clothe" and "deem."
3. What is the syntax, or construction, of "framing" and of "pastime?"
4. Name all of the infinitives and imperatives contained in the second stanza.
5. What is an abstract noun? Give examples from the selection.
6. Parse the italicized words in the third stanza.

7–10. Write in good prose form a paraphrase of the entire selection.

In marking answers, questions 7–10, the Board of Examiners will consider accuracy of translation, correctness of expression, literary style, paragraphing, punctuation, &c.

This is the most important part of the examination.

THEORY AND PRACTICE.—THIRD GRADE

1. What is the best method for securing punctuality at school?
2. To lessen the number of daily recitations, what classes can best be consolidated? Give your reasons.
3. What topics in arithmetic can best be omitted?
4. When should pupils begin the study of grammar?
5. How should the study of geography be begun? Text-book, now used?
6. How may the school library be best utilized to aid the teacher in the ordinary school work?
7. What means to be employed to ventilate the room at recess or at any other time?
8. What practical means to secure an erect posture at study can you suggest?

9. How should instruction in morals and manners be given?
10. What records of the work of your pupils should you leave your successor?

APPENDIX C

THE AMERICAN IDEAL

An independent young man;
A right-kind-of-stuff young man;
A deep comprehensible,
Plain spoken, sensible,
Thoroughly self-made young man.

A not to-be beaten young man;
An up-to-the front young man;
A genuine, plucky,
Happy-go-lucky,
Try-it-again young man.

A knowledge seeking young man;
A real-wide-awake young man;
A working-in-season,
Find-out-the reason,
Not-too-smart-to-learn young man.

A look-out-for-other young man;
A practice-not-preach young man;
Kind, sympathetic,
Not-at-all-theoretic,
One-in-a-thousand young man.

An affable, courteous young man;
A know-what-to-say young man;
A knight of true chivalry,
Frank in delivery,
Making-his-mark young man.

A now-a-days scarce young man;
A hard-to-be-found young man;
A perfect-self-possessed,
Not always-over-dressed,
Kind that-I-like young man.

The model American girl was depicted in the following verse:

THE MODEL AMERICAN GIRL

A practical, plain young girl;
Not afraid-of-the-rain young girl;
A poetical posey,
a ruddy and rosy,
A helper-of-self young girl.

At-home-in-her-place young girl;
A never-will-lace young girl;
A toiler serene,
A life pure and clean,
A princess-of-peace young girl.

A wear her-own-hair young girl;
A free-from-a-stare young girl;
Improves every hour,
No sickly sunflower,
A wealth-of-rare-sense young girl.

Plenty-room-in-her-shoes young girl;
No indulger-in-blues young girl;
Not a bang on her brow,
To fraud not a bow;
She's a just-what-she-seems young girl.

Not a reader-of-trash young girl;
Not a cheap-jeweled-flash young girl;
Not a sipper of rum,
Nor a chewer of gum,
A marvel-of-sense young girl.

An early-retiring young girl;
An active, aspiring young girl;
A morning ariser,
A dandy despiser,
A progressive American girl.

A lover-of-prose young girl;
Not a turn-up-your-nose young girl;
Not given to splutter,
Not "utterly utter,"
But a matter-of-fact young girl.

A rightly-ambitious young girl;
Red-lips-most-delicious young girl;
A sparkling clear eye
That says, "I will try,"
A sure-to-succeed young girl.

An honestly-courting young girl;
A never-seen-flirting young girl;
A quiet and pure,
A modest, demure,
A fit-for-a-wife young girl.

A sought-everywhere young girl;
A future-most-fair young girl;
An ever discreet,
We too seldom meet
This queen-among-queens young girl.

APPENDIX D

EXAMINATION
FOR COUNTY GRAMMAR SCHOOL DIPLOMA
SUSSEX COUNTY, N.J.
FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 1903

Grammar.

1. How are sentences classified as to form? Illustrate.
2. How are sentences classified as to use? Illustrate.
3. Define language, analysis, synopsis, participle, syntax.
4. Classify pronouns and give an example of each class.
5. Name the modifications of a verb.
6. Conjugate the verb help in the Indicative Mode and Passive voice.
7. Give a rule for forming the possessive singular and plural of nouns.
8. Write a sentence containing a verb, adjective, noun and adverb, with the verb in the third person, active voice and past tense.
9. Write two paragraphs on the topic "Vacation."

Geography.

1. Describe Japan as to its surface, climate, inhabitants and productions.
2. Name four things that affect climate.
3. Define volcano. Locate the volcano belt of the Western Continent.
4. What natural causes have contributed to the growth of New York City.
5. What are zones? State name, width in degrees and circles bounding each zone.
6. Explain isothermic lines, meridian, standard time, estuary, sirocco.
7. Tell on what waters you would sail from Pittsburg to Petersburg.
8. Describe New Jersey in regard to physical features, industries and cities.
9. What are the general points of similarity in the relief forms of the continents?
10. Define trade, domestic commerce. State principal four highways of trade. State the aids to commerce.

Elementary Algebra

1. Define monomial; term; equation; elimination; reciprocal.
2. In multiplication, what is the law of signs? Of exponents?
3. Write the following in algebraic expressions?
   (a) The sum of five times a and three times the square of x.
   (b) Seven times the product of x times y, increased by three times the cube of z.
4. Simplify: m plus n -(m plus n - [m-n-(m plus n)-n]
   (x+10)-{x-(3x plus 25)-10}
5. Express as an equation: With x dollars a man paid for three barrels of apples at y dollars a barrel, and two pecks of corn at s dollars a peck, and received 10 z dollars in change.
6. Solve: (x plus 5 divided by y square plus 10x plus 25) times (x square - 23 divided by y-2) times (x square - 1/2 divided by x-5).
7. Factor: x fourth - y fourth; x sixth plus y sixth - 2x cube y cube.
8. How far could a man ride at the rate of x miles an hour so as to walk back at the rate of 4 miles per hour and be gone only 9 hours?
9. If z is added to both numerator and denominator of a certain fraction, its

value is x: but if it is subtracted from both numerator and denominator, its value is 1/2. What is the fraction?

10. Solve: x plus y equals 14
2y plus 8x equals 9
5y-z equals 5

Physiology

1. Name three important cavities of the body, the bones surrounding each, and the organs contained.
2. Through what four processes must food pass before it becomes part of the tissues of the body?
3. Give the structure and functions of the skin.
4. How is the temperature of the body regulated?
5. Draw a diagram of the heart and state the functions of each chamber.
6. What are the functions of the (a) optic, (b) auditory, (c) olfactory, and (d) gustatory nerves?
7. What are the functions of the blood?
8. What is meant by the coagulation of the blood and what are its advantages?
9. State the composition of expired air. Which is the poisonous part?
10. Name the three organs of excretion and the use of each.

Bookkeeping

1. Define account, and state what kind of accounts denotes loss or gain.
2. What does the difference between the Dr. and the CR. sides of the Cash Book indicate?
3. What does the difference between the Dr. and the Cr. sides of a personal account show?
4. What is a trial balance and why is it taken?
5. What is meant by closing an account?
6. What are Bills Payable? What particulars are stated about them in the book in which they are entered?
7. Define posting, journalizing.
8. Write a receipt for money received on account.
9. Write a negotiable note.
10. Write a non-negotiable note.

Reading.

1-3 Reading a selection of poetry from sight.
4-5. Reading a selection of prose from sight.
6-7. Reading a selection of either prose or poetry after study.
8-10. Written reproduction of selection used in 6-7.

Teachers will please report all candidates and their averages to me as soon as possible after the examination.

RALPH DECKER,
County Superintendent

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