

The Contribution of Connecticut
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Common School System of Pennsylvania

BY
PAULINE WOLCOTT SPENCER

THESIS

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR
OF PHILOSOPHY

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF CONNECTICUT TO THE COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM OF PENNSYLVANIA

INTRODUCTION

Of all the colonies in America, Pennsylvania was the most mixed in population, religion and language. Among the nationalities represented were Dutch, Swedes, English, Germans, Scotch-Irish, Welsh, Swiss and a few French. In religion there were Quakers, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Catholics, Baptists, Lutherans, Reformed and the various other German sects whose number it is difficult to estimate. With all these groups the working out of a common educational practice was far more difficult and a slower process than among the homogeneous settlers in the New England states. Religious and consequent political antagonisms appear as a prominent factor in the final educational adjustment which was wrought out in our Commonwealth by the adoption in 1834-5 of a state system of common schools.

The larger and dominant groups in this educational development were the English, including Quakers and Episcopalians, the Germans of the various sects and the Scotch-Irish. The part played by these has been studied and recorded more or less fully; and the debt of Pennsylvania to them and to their zeal for education in the beginning of our history has been acknowledged. A potent educational force, limited however to a small area, and exercised under conditions which were most unfavorable, appears in the group of New Englanders, largely people of Connecticut, in what is known as the Wyoming region in the northeastern part of the State about the middle of the eighteenth century. The steps by which in planning and finally carrying out their design of planting a colony in this region, they also attempted to introduce the educational ideals

which they had brought from the home colony sixty years before the well-entrenched groups were ready to adopt a common school system, are worthy of a more systematic study than has as yet been made. Such a study should be a contribution to the educational history of our State not without interest, especially in the light which it can shed upon the better known activities of the previously mentioned groups.

The history of the Wyoming invasion, the resulting conflict and the tragedies which it entailed have been repeatedly recorded, both by the earlier historians, Chapman, Miner and others who drew from local sources and records, and from the personal narratives of actors in the occurrences described; and more recently by Fisher, in "The Making of Pennsylvania," Chapter X, which contains a brief and spirited account of the New England enterprise from the time of the attempt at the establishment of the charter claim of Connecticut to the northern portion of Pennsylvania down to the final legal adjustment by acts of the legislature of our State early in the nineteenth century. Still more recently Mr. Harvey has issued two volumes of his "History of Wilkes-Barre" which is a scholarly and exhaustive study of the history of the city which "up to about the year 1800," as Mr. Harvey says, "is really in a wide sense the history of the Wyoming Valley." The second volume brings the narrative down to the year 1780; a third volume is promised later.

The educational ideals of the New Englanders and the first steps by which they planned to execute them in the pioneer community which they proposed to build up are set forth in the records of the Susquehanna Company, organized in Connecticut in 1753. The Wyoming settlers, on their arrival in Pennsylvania; immediately undertook the execution of the proposed plans. The records of the town meetings held by the people of that region from the time of their settlement there, and during the years in which the portion of the State claimed by Connecticut was a town and later a county of the latter State, were kept in the "Westmoreland Records." These manuscripts, or a portion of them, were consulted and quoted by Miner in his history. They have since in large part disappeared; only a fragment of them remains, now in the possession of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society at Wilkes-Barre. For

forty years from the time of the coming of the New Englanders until the final adjustment of the difficulties and the land claims growing out of these, the region was involved in a series of tragedies, including "border" warfare, Indian massacres and civil disorders, leading to questions of ownership and conflicts of authority, all of which were unfavorable both to the making and the preservation of records. Beside the Westmoreland Records, which, as above mentioned, have almost entirely disappeared, the earliest town records of Wilkes-Barre and other public and private documents were lost or destroyed in the disasters of 1778 and during the later difficulties between the New England settlers and the people of Pennsylvania.¹ Therefore the attempt to study any educational developments which may have occurred in those times of confusion and tumult meets at the outset the discouragement of finding few records. During the period intervening between the Trenton Decree and the adoption by the State of the common school system, there being no authority in education, such matters were dealt with at the option of local communities; and it is probable that in many cases records were not kept by the school committees representing the various townships. County and local historians have recovered and preserved some township data and personal reminiscences of school intentions and proceedings. The Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Pennsylvania for 1877 contains valuable historical chapters compiled by the co-operation of county and city superintendents, in response to the request of the State Superintendent. Within recent years an attempt has been made to collect all possible items of local record or reminiscence in all lines, and these have been published in the Wyoming Historical Record at Wilkes-Barre, under the editorship of the late Dr. F. C. Johnson, and in the "Proceedings and Collections of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society" in the same city. There is but a slender amount of material with which to make a historical study; yet in this case such details can be fortified by the test of inference, by reference to contemporary newspapers and by a comparison of the accounts which remain with like records of the Connecticut school authorities of the time. Wickersham in his "History of Education

¹ Harvey: Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 25.

in Pennsylvania" says in reference to the system of free public schools brought by the Connecticut settlers into the Wyoming Valley: "Pennsylvania as a Province had nothing to do with establishing them, in principle they were an advance upon the schools then existing in Connecticut; and in most respects were similar in design and management to the public schools of the present day."¹ Fisher says: "One characteristic those heroes succeeded in impressing on the land. That was the New England school system. One of their first acts, amid their poverty and misfortunes, was to make provision for public schools. All through their ancient records we find entries to maintain this institution, without which the New Englander is not of New England. When in the second quarter of the present century, the State adopted that system, it was simply extending to the whole commonwealth what had been in force in the Valley for nearly a hundred years."²

It is not without significance that in the great educational movements in our State many leaders have been men of New England birth. The debt of Pennsylvania to such New Englanders as Benjamin Franklin, Timothy Pickering, Thaddeus Stevens, Samuel Breck, Walter Johnson, John S. Hart and others has been acknowledged. It remains to gather up from all available sources the facts concerning the contribution which the sturdy group of Connecticut pioneers made to the educational life of our great State in the nearly three quarters of a century which intervened between their coming and the adoption by the State of the common school system in 1834-45.

The bibliography contains a classified list of the works and sources from which material has been drawn, or to which reference has been made. The arrangement in each case is alphabetical, except in the first and last classes, where it seemed desirable to follow the chronological order of publication. No marginal reference is used in the case of citations from newspapers where the date of publication is stated in the text. In legal citations the usual form of reference for such has been followed. The Appendix contains matter which, while not bearing directly on the argument, seemed of too great incidental interest to be omitted.

¹ Op. cit., p. 74.

² Op. cit., p. 316.

The writer desires to acknowledge obligation to those who have assisted in or contributed to the work: to the Reverend Dr. Horace E. Hayden, Secretary of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, for his many courtesies in affording opportunity for the use of the valuable collections in the possession of the Society, and for numerous helpful suggestions; to Mr. Oscar J. Harvey of Wilkes-Barre, not only for the light thrown on the study of the Wyoming region by his History of Wilkes-Barre, but also for the privilege of a personal interview which illuminated the subject and pointed out its limitations; to Miss Elizabeth B. Gendell, Librarian of the Philadelphia Normal School, for a thorough search through periodical literature for material bearing on the theme; and to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania for many privileges and courtesies afforded during the prosecution of the work.

Special and grateful acknowledgment is extended to Dean Frank P. Graves of the School of Education of the University of Pennsylvania, for his interest in the work and for suggestions and corrections in the manuscript; and finally, but by no means least of all to Dr. A. Duncan Yocum, Chairman of the Department of Education of the University of Pennsylvania, under whose sympathetic supervision, constant encouragement and numerous wise and practical suggestions the work was begun and has been carried to completion.

PAULINE WOLCOTT SPENCER.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

May 20, 1915.

CHAPTER I

THE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

A Brief Survey of the Elementary Education Conducted by the Leading Nationalities and Religious Sects in Pennsylvania

The democracy of America is sustained by the public school supported by the State, and free to all. The public school providing a universal education had its origin in the Reformation. Its basis was the idea that each individual must be capable of reading the Scriptures, and of making a rational application of religious doctrine to his own eternal welfare.¹ The great educational leaders in the movement were Luther, Calvin and Knox. The influence of Luther was supreme in Germany, while that of Calvin was stronger in the Protestant parts of France and Switzerland, in Holland and England.² Knox's field of course was Scotland. The Puritans in England and in America were under Calvin's sway. Luther announced in the famous "Address to the Mayors and Councilmen of all the German Cities" in 1524 that "for the maintenance of civil order schools are necessary, and the civil authorities are under obligation to compel the people to send their children to school."³ The doctrines of Calvin contained a similar implication. It was Protestantism, the desire for religious freedom, that brought the Pilgrims and Puritans to Massachusetts and the Quakers to Pennsylvania. It was inevitable, therefore, that in these and other states so colonized, this idea of universal popular education supported by the state should find early expression.

Since in Pennsylvania there were so many diverse factors and warring elements engaged in working out the political and educational policies of the future, the educational ideas and activities of the leading groups should be briefly summed up. The Dutch, although the first comers to Penn's future province,

¹ Monroe: Text Book in the History of Education, p. 407.

² Fiske: Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America, Vol. I., p. 33.

³ Painter: Luther on Education, p. 65.

were numerically ~~unimportant; nevertheless~~ they represented the nation which earliest of all the European states is held to have made literacy common to all, even the peasants, and to have established a system of public schools. Guicciardini, the Florentine historian, is said to have stated that before 1540 the peasants in Holland could commonly read and write their own language, and that free schools, supported by public taxes, were the subject of legislation at various times during the sixteenth century.¹ From an earlier date the Dutch were interested in the public control and support of education, and a number of cities maintained schools.² Salaries of the schoolmasters were sometimes paid from the town treasury, sometimes from church funds sequestered from the church orders at the Reformation.³ Owing to the many religious differences and to the attempt on the part of the Calvinists to dominate the state, religious and secular authorities worked against each other.⁴ By the middle of the seventeenth century throughout the country, both cities and rural districts were provided with schools of various grades, controlled and often supported by the public secular authorities.⁵ The children of the poor were taught gratuitously.⁶ Girls appear to have been admitted to the elementary schools with the boys, although excluded from the privileges of higher education.⁷

The view has been frequently advanced that Holland furnished to both Calvinistic New England and Quaker Pennsylvania the ideal of the public school. Wickersham says: "It was during their twelve years' sojourn in Holland that the Pilgrim Fathers obtained the germs of that system of education which has made New England so famous in our educational history; and it was in Holland, too, almost certainly, that William Penn learned those broad principles of educational policy that are embodied in the first Frame he constructed for the government of his Province,

¹ Fiske: *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 18. See also Kilpatrick: *The Dutch Schools of New Netherland and Colonial New York*.

² Kilpatrick: *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 24.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 21, 24.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

and that he endeavored to have incorporated in laws for the benefit of the people."¹ Eggleston traces the Dutch law of the Synod of Dort in 1618 to the scheme proposed fifty years earlier by John Knox in his "Book of Discipline."² But fifty years prior to that date (1618) the reformers in Holland had begun to care for schools and schoolmasters.³ Fiske holds that not the example of Holland, but fundamentally the principles of Calvinism furnished the motive power which led to the movement in behalf of universal and compulsory education in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the Protestant portions of Europe.⁴

The Swedes were the next comers to Pennsylvania. At home as in other Protestant countries, educational activities were carried on by the co-operation of Church and State authorities. The Swedish government was not neglectful of the educational interests of the colony on the Delaware.⁵ Neither Dutch nor Swedes, however, were important factors in the educational development of Pennsylvania, since numerically they were not strong and were soon overshadowed by the more numerous and powerful groups.

With the grant of the territory to Penn and the establishment on Pennsylvania soil of the Quaker province, Penn gave immediate attention to the question of education. In the well-known Preface to the Frame of Government written in England in 1682 he says: "That therefore which makes a good constitution must keep it, namely, men of wisdom and virtue, qualities that because they descend not with worldly inheritance must be carefully propagated by a virtuous education of youth."⁶ This Frame contained the following educational provision: "Twelfth, that the Governor and Provincial Council shall erect and order all public schools, and encourage and reward the authors of useful sciences and laudable inventions in the said Province."⁷

¹ Wickersham: History of Education in Pennsylvania, p. 4.

² Eggleston: Transit of Civilization, p. 232. Cf. Kilpatrick: op. cit., p. 20.

³ Ibid., p. 19.

⁴ Fiske: Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 33.

⁵ Wickersham: Op. cit., p. 7.

⁶ Charter to William Penn and Laws of the Province of Pennsylvania, p. 93.

⁷ Ibid., p. 95.

A Committee of Manners, Education and Arts was to be appointed, that improper conduct might be suppressed and the youth trained in virtue and useful knowledge and arts.¹ Puritan and Quaker alike looked upon the school as a vital element in the State. In the "Great Law" adopted by the first Assembly held at Chester after Penn's arrival the following provision was included: "That the laws of this Province from time to time shall be published and printed, that every person may have the knowledge thereof; and they shall be one of the books taught in the schools of the Province and Territories thereof."² A subsequent addition was made in a later Frame adopted the following year, which made compulsory upon parents and guardians the instruction of children in letters and industrial skill, and such instruction was to be universal, alike for rich and poor.³ Ten years later under Governor Fletcher this law was modified and practically nullified by requiring such instruction to be given only by those having sufficient estate and ability to do so.⁴ In the Frame of Government drawn up in 1696 by Deputy Governor Markham and accepted by the Assembly, the educational provisions which had been contained in the charters of 1682 and 1683, but omitted from the Petition of Right of 1693, were renewed.⁵

The founder of our Commonwealth had undoubtedly the idea of a universal and compulsory education. The religious belief of the Friends implied a democracy. All men stood on common ground; titles and rank had no significance; even the priestly order was abolished, and the time-honored distinction between clergyman and layman was swept aside. It may be possible that by the elimination of the clergyman who had during centuries of mediaeval development represented the educational ideal of the old world the Quaker was unwittingly taking the first steps toward the discouragement of popular education, and the lowering of popular intellectual standards. This may sound like a paradox, but when the development of Quaker

¹ Ibid., p. 96.

² Ibid., p. 123.

³ Ibid., p. 142.

⁴ Ibid., p. 238.

⁵ Clews: Educational Legislation and Administration, p. 283. (Cf. Charters and Laws, p. 251.)

ideals in Pennsylvania is compared with that of the New England basic conception, and the logical and inevitable sequences of both are laid side by side, its truth will probably be admitted.

The first school in the province appears to have been one established in 1683 in which such children were taught as had parents who were able and willing to pay the specific sums which were agreed upon by the Governor and Council and the teacher, Enoch Flower, for instruction in the various branches. No provision was made for those who had not the means to pay.¹ But Penn had in mind the establishment of a school of higher grade, and also of giving educational opportunity to more than a favored few. Clarkson² says that in 1689 Penn instructed Thomas Lloyd "to set up a public grammar school." This was effected by the establishment of the "William Penn Charter School," first chartered in 1697. By the phrase "public grammar school" it is generally supposed that Penn had in mind a school similar to the type so designated in England. Much discussion has centered about the significance of the term, also of "free school" often used. The question is of interest in determining just what the colonial founders meant, not only Penn, but also the New England colonists when they spoke of a "grammar school," a "free school," or a "public school." By the phrase "public grammar school" Penn was probably thinking of an institution of the sort with which he was familiar at home. Towns in England established such schools and provided in various ways for their support, a mode which was effective in New England from the outset. Even in the Middle Ages a sense of municipal responsibility for the support of schools was found in England, Scotland and Germany.³ The

¹ Wickersham: *Op. cit.*, p. 41.

² Clarkson: *Life of Penn.*, p. 209.

At a meeting of the Council in 1697, a petition was presented from a number of Quakers, who affirmed that many desired that a school should be set up in Philadelphia where poor children might be freely maintained, taught and educated in good literature, until they were fit to be put out as apprentices, or capable of being masters or ushers in the school. All children and servants, male and female, were to be admitted to this "public school," the rich at reasonable rates, and the poor for nothing (Clews, *op. cit.*, pp. 284, 285). The school was probably already in existence and was probably chartered in response to this petition (*Ibid.*, p. 286).

³ Brown: *The Making of our Middle Schools*, p. 43.

idea of provision for education by local authorities developed in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and the history of state aid in education dates from about this time.¹ Dr. Brown quotes Christopher Wase, an Oxford man, who writing in 1678, stated that "there are of late Grammar Schools founded and endowed in almost every Market Town of England in which the children of the town are to receive instruction free of charge."² The term "public school," as is well known, applies in England today to similar schools founded and endowed either by a private individual, a corporation or a municipality. Eton and Rugby are famous "public schools." The term "grammar school" indicated the grade as secondary, not elementary, at least theoretically (practically the pupils often had still to master the elements of instruction); and the curriculum as including the classical languages, particularly Latin.³ Such schools were often called "free schools," and the exact interpretation of this term is naturally the crux of the discussion. It has been held to mean not a school in which instruction was necessarily given to all without fee, for this was not the case; but a school "free" or open to the public, free also from the jurisdiction of any superior institution, for a "free," i. e., a liberal education,⁴ tuition in the classics only being free.⁵ Dr. Brown⁶ quotes Leach as "giving the latest and perhaps the last word on the subject." Leach discusses at length some suggested interpretations, dismisses them and arrives at the following conclusion: "It is impossible if the phrase is regarded in its historical development . . . that it could have meant anything but what it was popularly supposed to mean,—a school free from payment of tuition fees. Entrance fees and all sorts of extras and luxuries, such as fires, light, candles, stationery, cleaning, whipping, might have to be paid for; but a free school meant undoubtedly a school in which, because of endowment, all or some of the scholars, the poor or the inhabitants of the place, or a certain number,

¹ Monroe: *Cyclopaedia of Education*, Vol. II, p. 431.

² Brown: *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

³ Brown: *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁴ U. S. Bureau of Education, *Report of Commissioner, 1896-97*, p. 1168, Note 3.

⁵ Barnard: *Journal of Education*, Vol. XVI, p. 402, note.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

were freed from fees for teaching."¹ Dr. Brown calls this "a clear and carefully guarded statement, and adds that in our early colonial period a 'free school' was generally one in which school fees were regularly paid by all but the poorest pupils; moreover it was a school of secondary grade, that is a Latin grammar school."²

One further comment may be added concerning the use of the word "public" in England as describing such schools. In their origin, as the history of English education shows, they represent the popular development in education which attended the Renaissance. Renaissance and Reformation were closely allied movements in Northern and Protestant Europe. The revival of classical learning in England and Germany was associated with the new attitude in religion; and the people, or "public," as distinct from the clergy, were now to be provided with education in classical learning and religion. Municipal, corporate, private or royal endowment, including free tuition for the poor, following the example of the church schools of the mediaeval period,³ now provided education generously for the people.

This question has been discussed at length at this point because it is of interest not only in determining the kind of school that Penn had in mind in his suggested plan for his Province, but also because it relates equally to the intentions of the New England colonists in the beginning of their educational foundations. It is to be especially noted, however, that the charter of Penn's school of 1701, the first actually on record, placed the management in the hands of the Monthly Meeting, and the later one of 1708, took its direction from that body and appointed a Board of Overseers, "fifteen discreet and religious Friends," to assume control.⁴ It thus became a private or denominational institution, and so continues at the present time. Branch charity schools of elementary grade were established in different parts of the city, and these continued to exist for more than a hundred and fifty years, and provided an education for the poor

¹ Leach: *English Schools at the Reformation*, pp. 110-114.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

³ U. S. Bureau of Education, *Report of Commissioner, 1896-97*, Chapter XXIV, p. 1168, Note B. cf. Barnard, *Journal of Education*, Vol. I, pp. 298, 299 note.

⁴ Wickersham: *op. cit.*, p. 44.

when as yet there was no public school system in our modern sense, and even after there was. Some of them were free, some charged for tuition, and both boys and girls were taught.¹ It will thus be seen that in the practical working out of Penn's plans for a universal education the English ideal, with its aristocratic social tendencies, rather than that of Puritan New England appears from the first. With the development of popular education in England from the time of Elizabeth to the nineteenth century the principle prevailed that it was not the function of the State to provide or enforce education. The Church or individuals might make charitable provision for the poor. England had therefore not accepted, when Pennsylvania was founded, the ideal of the universal and compulsory education maintained by the State, as proclaimed by Luther and Calvin; but still adhered to the older religious and social ideal, which established under the Protestant dispensation schools for instruction in liberal knowledge and religion in which the poor were to be taught free. From the founding of the William Penn Charter School until after the close of the third decade of the nineteenth century Pennsylvania adhered to the plan of a free education for those who could not afford to pay for it, while the ideals of Penn, which might have worked out into something more like the democratic arrangements of Puritan New England, were suppressed by a reversion to those of the mother-country. Penn himself may have realized the impracticability of enforcing his ideal in the clash of sectarian and governmental policies which followed the rapid growth of the colony. Perhaps he saw that the logical application of the theory of popular education would endanger the foundations of the provincial structure which he had reared.² His Charter of Privileges of 1701 contains no educational provision.³ "Little affecting the interests of education can be found on record emanating from the Proprietor, the Governor, the Provincial Council or the General Assembly from Penn's time to the breaking out of the Revolution."⁴

¹ Graves: *History of Education in Modern Times*, p. 99.

² Report U. S. Commissioner of Education, 1893-4, Vol. I, p. 701.

³ *Liberty Bell Leaflets*, No. 3.

⁴ Wickersham: *op. cit.*, p. 52.

As the state relinquished the original design of the founder for providing and compelling education, the work was taken up by the various religious bodies. In 1712 an act was passed by the Assembly enabling Protestant religious societies to hold property for religious and educational purposes. This was repealed by the Queen's Council the following year.¹ A similar act was passed in 1715 but again rejected by the English government, and repealed by the Lords Justices in Council in 1719.² In 1730 a law was again enacted similarly enabling Protestant religious societies to hold property for educational purposes. This was apparently never considered by the Crown but allowed to become a law by the lapse of time in accordance with the Proprietary Charter.³ The reasons for this sequence to the original broad-minded plan of Penn for a democratic and universal education are to be found in the political and religious conflicts which attended the development of the Commonwealth, resulting from the great diversity of interests which it contained. Penn had offered a free asylum to men of all religious beliefs and had founded a democracy. As was inevitable at that date, the result was a struggle for supremacy on the part of the leading groups which disturbed the theoretical harmony which was the basis of the structure. From the middle of the eighteenth century the Quakers were unable to maintain a dominant position, and with the Revolution and its determined military resistance to English tyranny the Quaker supremacy was lost.

The various religious sects were devoted to their ecclesiastical views and most of them were active in education. The Friends conducted schools in meeting-houses or in schoolhouses connected with them. Money was raised by subscription, legacies and contributions; endowments were provided and the poor were liberally assisted. These schools were often open to all the children of a neighborhood, irrespective of creed. Institutions of higher than elementary grade were founded, and the training of teachers was encouraged.⁴ The Episcopalian congregations also established schools in connection with their churches, show-

¹ Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania, Vol. II, p. 424.

² Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 37, 440.

³ Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 209, 210.

⁴ Wickersham: op. cit., pp. 80-94.

ing too, a liberal policy in admitting children of other creeds in the neighborhood and interesting themselves in higher, as well as in elementary and religious education.¹

The Germans who came to Pennsylvania, like the other sects, because they found here an opportunity to establish civil and religious liberty, were devout people and usually brought with them when they came in numbers, clergymen and schoolmasters. The first public building erected by these communities was ordinarily used both as church and schoolhouse. Where they had one for each purpose they generally stood side by side. By the middle of the eighteenth century the Germans formed more than one third of the population, but they were scattered and isolated and they lacked religious organization. In spite of the fact that many of their leaders were learned men, and that their ministers and schoolmasters made creditable attempts to maintain schools for their congregations, educational facilities were inadequate and the more thoughtful among them saw with dismay that illiteracy was increasing. Even churches were insufficient in number.² An appeal sent to the Lutheran and Reformed congregations in the mother-country brought a response in the sending of clergymen and money to aid the cause of religion and education in America.³ An organization was formed in London in 1753 called "The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge among the Germans in Pennsylvania."⁴ In addition to the original religious motives for the work among the Germans, political considerations were added, and the desirability of providing education in the English language for the German population, in order to make them more thoroughgoing English subjects appealed to the people of England who were interested in the plan. Through the endeavors of Dr. Smith, the first Provost of the College and Academy of the City of Philadelphia, afterward the University of Pennsylvania, contributions were secured from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, from royalty as well as from other individuals and a board of trustees in the colony was appointed.⁵

¹ Ibid., p. 98.

² Wickersham: Op. cit., p. 129.

³ Ibid., pp. 130-134.

⁴ Weber: The Charity School Movement in Colonial Pennsylvania, p. 25.

⁵ Ibid., p. 30.

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This plan involved a more general aim than was implied in its original purpose. The Society proposed to educate children of all denominations, and those of English, as well as of German parentage. The fact that State officials were trustees in the movement has caused it to be spoken of as the first general system of public instruction in Pennsylvania.¹ The history of the latter part of the movement is closely identified with that of the University of Pennsylvania, as most of the Trustees of the charitable scheme, including Dr. Smith and Benjamin Franklin, were connected with that institution,² whose origin goes back to 1740, and to a building constructed for the charitable education of poor children.³ The Society continued its work for ten years, when its support became irregular, and the funds remaining after the close of the schools in 1764 were applied to the Charity Schools maintained by the University. The influence of this institution and especially of Franklin, its founder, on the educational life of the state, would be matter for a volume and beyond the limits of this chapter.

The actual scope of the work accomplished by the Charitable Society was somewhat broader than was indicated in their designs, with the religious and political motives that lay beneath these. In some quarters they stimulated local initiative for education of an unsectarian kind, and therefore led to the growth of "neighborhood schools" which represented a transition to the ultimate common school. A manuscript in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania records that a number of persons at Easton on July 31, 1755, "being duly sensible of the great advantages our posterity may reap from the excellent Charitable Scheme lately formed in England for the education of Protestant youth," engaged with a number of Deputy Trustees appointed by the Trustees general, "to pay the sum of money and do and perform the works, labour and service in the building and erecting of a School-House which may occasionally be made use of as a church for any Protestant minister." The document is signed by sixteen persons and states the amount and kind of labor or

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

³ Clews: *Op. cit.*, p. 300. Cf. Montgomery: *A History of the University of Pennsylvania*, p. 110.

materials which each will contribute, such as digging, carting, so many days' work or weeks' work, shingles, sashlights, stone, etc. William Smith on behalf of the Trustees, promised thirty pounds.¹ The readiness for religious co-operation is to be noted. Another similar manuscript is preserved in the same collection, a petition to the Trustees general of the Charity Scheme from "divers poor Germans settled in and about Easton, of Lutheran, Reformed and other Protestant religions, who are entirely destitute of Ministers and Schoolmasters, . . . and fearful of having their children grow up in a Protestant country without the Knowledge and Benefit for want of a School all being new settlers and poor, . . . have laid aside all religious differences and asked to be made sharers in the Charitable Scheme." They asked for an allowance toward building a suitable schoolhouse and paying a pious, sober English schoolmaster; they promised to do and even exceed all that can be expected from people in their low condition.²

The numerous German sects were undoubtedly zealous in education as in religion, and there were many learned men among them. The Moravians were active and enlightened in education of all grades, and in missionary enterprises. They had endeavored at first to establish "union" schools in various places, but by 1754 these had been given up and they confined their educational efforts to children of their own people.³

The Scotch-Irish were to the west of the other groups and on the frontier. These people made a significant contribution to education both of elementary and higher grade. They had brought with them from home the intense Calvinistic conviction of the value of sound and liberal scholarship, and especially the desire for an educated ministry, the ideal which, strong in New England, had been rejected by the Quakers. Nor were they lacking in energy to pursue this purpose in the pioneer conditions on which they had entered. The church and the schoolhouse were close neighbors, as with the other sects; but since the Calvinistic idea never lost its emphasis on the "state" or civil

¹ Miscellaneous MSS., 1727-1758, Northampton County, Pa., p. 159 in Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

² Ibid., p. 161, indexed as "The Lower Saucon Petition for a Free School."

³ Weber: Op. cit., p. 21.

ideal in education, their views as to the purpose of the school became more liberal, helped too, by the frontier life which tended to break down the older prejudices. They too were influential in establishing schools generally in their communities and in maintaining instruction of a liberal and practical character.¹

The long and detailed catalogue of the educational activities of the numerous religious bodies in Pennsylvania is not within the scope of this chapter, nor is that of the higher schools, academies, and colleges founded by them or by private individuals. The aim has been to summarize the conditions under which elementary education had developed in the Province under the fostering care of the leading groups of its people.

Speaking generally it may be said that in towns and in more thickly settled regions the sectarian schools were firmly entrenched. In the outlying districts, on the frontier where such facilities did not exist it was inevitable that the people of a neighborhood should be drawn together by their common educational needs for their children. This spirit developed rapidly after the Revolution, which broke down the barriers and united the people more closely in a common aim for the welfare of all. In this connection reference may be made to an unsectarian association which was formed in 1791 in Philadelphia called "The First Day or Sunday School Society." The aim was to provide an elementary education for poor children, especially such as were employed during the week.² The Society applied to the Legislature for aid, and the question of schools for the people supported in part by taxation was broached. The Quakers opposed the plan, and it failed.³ The idea that the education of the poor was a philanthropy, emanating from the religious spirit, not a civic obligation, was firmly grounded in the province, and continued to be a controlling principle in educational legislation and in the practice of the greater portion of the State until the nineteenth century was well under way. Nor had this sectarian and charitable education proved its right to existence in the century following its establishment. "In 1775 not only was

¹ Wickersham: *Op. cit.*, pp. 104-114.

² Graves: *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

³ McMaster: *History of the People of the United States*, Vol. II, pp. 84, 85.

the number of scholarly men in the province small, but comparatively few grown persons could do more than read, write and calculate according to the elementary rules of arithmetic, and many remained wholly illiterate."¹ Educationally speaking this was the State into which just before the Revolution a new group, small in numbers, but strong in persistence and courage, were to fight their way and take up their abode, bringing with them the clear convictions and well thought-out ideals of the common school as established in their New England home, ultimately to identify themselves and their conception with the great Commonwealth of their adoption.

¹ Wickersham: *Op. cit.*, p. 255. Cf. Report, U. S. Commissioner of Education, 1895-96, Vol. I, p. 256.

CHAPTER II

THE CONNECTICUT INTRUSION

A digression must be made at this point to review the events which led to the foundation of the civic and educational life of the Connecticut colony, and to the settlement of a group of these people in the northeastern part of Pennsylvania, known as the Wyoming region; and their energetic and finally successful struggle with the Proprietaries to secure that attractive territory.

On November 3, 1620, James I granted a patent to the Plymouth Company, numbering forty noblemen, knights and gentlemen, for a territory from forty to forty-eight degrees north latitude and from sea to sea, this being the general charter of New England.¹ In 1630 the Plymouth Company are said to have sold to their President, the Earl of Warwick, that part of their grant which includes the present state of Connecticut. This patent is not of record and is probably purely mythical.² On March 19, 1631, the Earl of Warwick granted to William, Viscount Say and Seal, Robert, Lord Brooke, and others to the number of eleven, the part of New England which extends "from the Narragansett River for forty leagues upon a straight line near the seashore towards the southwest, west and by south or west as the coast lieth toward Virginia, and extending from the western ocean to the south sea." This admittedly vague grant is the original patent of Connecticut.³

The region about the Connecticut River was visited by men of the Plymouth colony in 1631 and 1632.⁴ The next year Plymouth invited the Massachusetts colony to join her in establishing trade and in keeping off the Dutch. The first part of the invitation, at least, was declined. But the future founders of Connecticut pursued their enterprise with characteristic energy, several vessels going for trade and some Dorchester

¹ Trumbull: *History of Connecticut*, Vol. I, p. 20.

² Johnston: *Connecticut*, p. 9.

³ Trumbull: *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 27, 28. Cf. Appendix, p. 495.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 29, 30.

men going overland in 1633. The same year William Holmes of Plymouth and a small company established a trading post on the Connecticut River at the present site of Windsor.¹ Soon afterward the company of Lord Say and Seal and Lord Brooke were stirred to action, and Saybrook was established in 1635 under their auspices by a party of Boston men with John Winthrop, Jr., as leader.²

In the meantime, while these sturdy adventurers were leading the way into the wilderness and opening up new sites for homes, religious and political differences were splitting up the various settlements. The aristocratic and theocratic ideas so strong in the Plymouth and Massachusetts colonies were vigorously opposed by groups of people in Dorchester, Watertown and Newtown. The Massachusetts policy was the limitation of the elective franchise and office holding to church members.³ The result was the settlement by a migration of the "opposition," of Wethersfield by Watertown people, of Hartford largely by Newtown people and of Windsor by Dorchester men. These events occurred in 1634 and 1635.⁴ The new towns were under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts for a time, but a legislature made up of magistrates and deputies from each town met at Hartford, May 1, 1637, and the separate existence of Connecticut had begun.⁵ On May 31, 1638, Mr. Hooker, the former Newtown pastor, preached a sermon which "contained the fundamental idea of the Connecticut Constitution," adopted the following year.⁶ It was the first written Constitution known to history that created a government,⁷ and "Hartford is the birthplace of American democracy."⁸ The town was the unit of government and was the basis of the development of the Commonwealth; and since the towns represented previously completely organized churches, church government and town

¹ Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 33-35.

² Ibid., Vol. I, 60-61.

³ Johnston: Op. cit., p. 18.

⁴ Trumbull: Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 60. Cf. Johnston: Op. cit., pp. 22-24.

⁵ Trumbull: Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 79.

⁶ Johnston: Op. cit., p. 71.

⁷ Fiske: Beginnings of New England, p. 127.

⁸ Johnston: Op. cit., p. 73.

government were strictly co-incident.¹ The congregational system, moreover, under which they were organized arose in the mother country, and with it the first foundations of their educational systems were laid. The three churches of Windsor, Hartford and Wethersfield were gathered antecedently to their settlement in Connecticut, "and it does not appear that they were ever re-gathered." The organization of the churches in the mother country in conformity with the custom of the Reformed faith, included not only a pastor proper, but an additional minister with the function of teacher, who had the oversight of the doctrinal defense of the church, and took charge of the instruction of the people.² Thus the Connecticut settlers carried with them from the Massachusetts jurisdiction the essential beginning of their system of public instruction for the citizens of the democracy which they were about establish. The colony of New Haven, founded in 1638, one year after its establishment, took similar steps toward laying secure educational foundations, and these two colonies began therefore one of the first public school systems in the world's history.³ The educational developments arising from these important beginnings are to be considered later.

With the accession of Charles II the Connecticut people sought and received a charter, which gave to the colonies a corporate existence, "and a legal sanction to the community which had already been established by popular will."⁴ By the charter the colony was to include "all that part of the New England dominion in America bordered on the east by the Narragansett River commonly called the Narragansett Bay, where the said river falleth into the sea, and on the north by the line of the Massachusetts plantation, and on the south by the sea; and in longitude as the line of the Massachusetts colony running from east to west; that is to say from the said Narragansett Bay on the east to the south sea on the west part, with the Islands thereunto adjoining."⁵ The limits of the charter grant thus

¹ Ibid., p. 59.

² Trumbull: Op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 23, 26.

³ Bureau of Education Circular of Information, No. 2, 1893. Steiner, *The History of Education in Connecticut*, Introduction.

⁴ Johnston: Op. cit., p. 166.

⁵ Trumbull: Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 249.

included the territory in which the colony of New Haven was situated; and as was customary in most early patents, dominion over the land west to the Pacific Ocean. The charter to Connecticut was followed in 1664 by the grant of the New Netherlands province, including New Jersey and part of New England, to the Duke of York. This was interpreted by Connecticut as interrupting but not terminating her claim west of the New Netherlands grant.¹

Nineteen years after the grant of the Connecticut charter, in 1681 William Penn received from Charles his grant of Pennsylvania, thus establishing a counter claim to that part of the province already claimed by Connecticut, almost a third of the northern portion of the present state. Penn took the precaution to secure a release from the Duke of York of any right which the latter had to his Pennsylvania grant.² But the question of ownership of this territory became a vital one in the development of the future state of Pennsylvania, and led to a series of tragic events resulting from the tenacity with which the Connecticut people insisted on what they claimed as their charter rights, and pursued their plans for settlement outside of their immediate territorial limits. It brought to the two states legal controversy as well as warfare, and the problems which were not finally adjusted until after the opening of the nineteenth century.

In the period following the grant of his province to Penn until about the middle of the eighteenth century Connecticut was growing in population, increasing the number of her towns, and taking up the "land that was fit for planting."³ What remained was calculated rather to develop energy, perseverance under difficulties, and stern moral fibre than to hold out alluring prospects of easy returns for human labor. By 1762 all the soil had been laid out in townships, and after that new towns were laid out from those already existing.⁴ About this time the people turned to the fairer land of promise toward the western part of their charter claim. Exploring parties went from 1750 each season through the wilderness and reported the charms and

¹ Fisher: *Making of Pennsylvania*, p. 239.

² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³ Johnston: *Op. cit.*, p. 266.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

beauties of the Wyoming country to those at home.¹ The first route by which the Delaware and Susquehanna were connected is said to have been over an Indian path leading from Cochecton in New York on the Delaware across the Moosic mountain to a point near the present site of Scranton, thence into the Wyoming valley.² The wagon road from the Hudson valley led to this trail because it was the most direct route from Connecticut to Wyoming.

These longings now crystallized into a definite attempt to colonize the Wyoming region, thus making it in fact as well as in theory a portion of the home colony. The originators of this scheme are unknown, but it was soon published and discussed in several townships of Windham county.³ In 1753 the Susquehanna Company was formed consisting of six hundred and seventy-three persons, ten of whom were Pennsylvanians, and the rest people of New England, principally of Connecticut, who had formed themselves into an association for the purpose of planting a colony in that territory. They had already laid their plans before the General Assembly of Connecticut, stating their desire to settle on the Susquehanna within the charter limits of the colony of Connecticut, no English inhabitants living in the land, the tract containing sixteen miles square on both sides of the river. Their plan was to purchase it from the Indians, and in case they should be able to hold and possess the land they promised to live always under the laws and discipline of the home colony, provided that the subscribers should settle the territory and lay it out in equal proportion within three years.⁴ Commissioners were sent during the same year to explore the

¹ Peck: History of Wyoming, pp. 14, 17.

² Egle: History of Pennsylvania, p. 1148.

³ Hoyt: Brief of a Title, p. 11.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 12, 13.

Note: In the development of new towns in Connecticut it was usual for a speculator to buy land from the Indians, with the approval of the General Assembly. As soon as the rates became sufficiently large to need the extension of the Assembly's taxing power over the community a committee was appointed by that body to bound out the town; it was then in order to choose constables and send delegates to the Assembly. Clark: History of Connecticut, p. 196.

region and establish a friendly relation with the Indians.¹ The project soon spread through the colony and residents of several counties were received into membership in the company.² The price of shares increased rapidly.³ The company proposed subsequently to apply to the King for a charter of government, first securing by purchase from the Six Nations the Indian title to the land. At a general treaty of the Indians with the colonies held at Albany on July 11, 1754, the Susquehanna Company purchased from the Indians a tract of land described in the deed as "beginning from the one and fortieth degree of north latitude at ten miles east of the Susquehanna River and from thence with a northward line ten miles east of the River to the forty-second or beginning of the forty-third degree of north latitude, and so on to extend west two degrees of longitude one hundred and twenty miles, and from thence south to the beginning of the forty-second degree and from thence east to the above-mentioned boundary which is ten miles east of the Susquehanna River."⁴ This deed granted the Pennsylvania territory to six hundred and ninety-four persons, of whom six hundred and thirty-eight were from Connecticut, thirty-three from Rhode Island, ten from Pennsylvania, five from Massachusetts and eight from New York.⁵ The purchase included the Wyoming Valley and the country westward as far as a line extending through the present McKean County (including the eastern portion of the county) and continuing through Elk and Clearfield County.⁶ The name Wyoming was subsequently used in two senses; in the limited sense, it meant the valley twenty miles in length and three to four in width; but in a larger usage it referred to all of the territory included in the Susquehanna purchase and later claimed by Connecticut, extending westward as above indicated.⁷ The country lying between the line running ten miles east of the Susquehanna and Delaware River was later purchased informally by another association called at first the Delaware Company,

¹ Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, Vol. XVIII, p. 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³ Larned: History of Windham County, Vol. I, p. 558.

⁴ Chapman: Sketch of the History of Wyoming, p. 55.

⁵ Hoyt: *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁶ Harvey: *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, map: p. 790.

⁷ Miner: *Op. cit.*, Introduction, p. xi.

later the Connecticut-Delaware Company.¹ Pennsylvania tried ineffectually to prevent the sale to the Susquehanna Company, and communications with reference to the matter passed between the governors of the two colonies. The attention of the Connecticut authorities was called to a deed of 1736 in which the Indians had engaged to sell all the lands of Pennsylvania to William Penn and to no one else. But the numbers in the company were increasing, prices of shares were rising, and in 1755 the Company applied to the legislature of Connecticut asking their concurrence in a request to the King for a charter for a new colonial government in the limits of their purchase. The legislature passed a resolution approving of the measure, and recommending the Company to the King's favor.² The King, however, never acted favorably on their petition.³ In the spring or summer of this year (1755) some of the proprietors of the company visited Wyoming, with a view to planning for the settlement.⁴ The Delaware Company commenced operations on their purchase in 1757, effecting a settlement at Damascus on the Delaware (in the present Wayne County). This settlement seems to have prospered for several years.⁵ By a vote of the Company on April 9, 1761, the operations of the Susquehanna and Delaware Companies were to be conducted jointly, and their purchase made into one civil government.⁶

In September, 1762, the Susquehanna Company sent more than one hundred men to Wyoming. They commenced a settlement near the present limits of the city of Wilkes-Barre, but not having sufficient provisions for the winter in November they concealed their tools from the Indians and returned home.⁷ In the spring of the following year they returned with their families, and took possession of their former settlement. The

¹ Harvey: Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 293.

² Chapman: Op. cit., p. 62.

³ Hoyt: Op. cit., p. 14.

⁴ Harvey: Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 317.

⁵ Miner: Op. cit., p. 70.

⁶ Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, Vol. XVIII, p. 36.

⁷ Harvey: Op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 402-404.

Note. An attempt had been made in 1670 by Connecticut people to establish a colony at the Minisink near the Delaware Water Gap, but the plan was given up because the Indian title had not been extinguished. Miner: Op. cit., p. 70.

Indians were still on the warpath and a general massacre followed which put an end temporarily to the undertaking; and the settlers fled for their lives.¹

In the meantime at a meeting of the Susquehanna Company on April 17, 1763, it was voted to lay out townships for the speedy settlement of the land; eight townships were to be laid out on the river, each to be five miles square. All beds of mine ore and coal were to be reserved for the use of the company, and for their after disposal.² The Connecticut people were thus already entering on a policy of conservation and public ownership of public utilities. At the same meeting it was also voted that "some proper well disposed person, or persons, be procured by those persons who shall undertake to settle on the Susquehanna lands, . . . in order to be as a head or teacher, to carry on religious instructions and worship among the settlers, to wit., of such denomination as by any particular number may be agreed upon, and to be at the expense of those persons of such denomination, as such persons so procured shall be until some further regulation can be had."³ This action carries strong proof that while the settlers had the old-fashioned New England conviction of the necessity of religious ministration and education, yet they had gone far on the road to the separation of religious and civil interests, and were ready not only to exercise religious toleration, but to make the maintenance of religious exercises a private, rather than a public charge. The Indian hostilities delayed the enterprise but meetings were held at intervals during the next five years for the purpose of forwarding the Company's interests with the King. At a meeting on January 6, 1768, definite steps were taken to secure his Majesty's confirmation of the purchase and his consent to their formation "into a distinct colony for the purpose of civil government."⁴ The Proprietaries of Pennsylvania were alarmed at the advance of the Connecticut movement and both colonies sought legal decisions in the matter of the ownership of the land.⁵

¹ Chapman: *Op. cit.*, p. 64 ff. Cf. Harvey: *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 431.

² Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, Vol. XVIII, p. 47.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-57.

⁵ Chapman: *Op. cit.*, pp. 65-68. Cf. Penna. Archives, Second Series, Vol. XVIII, p. 88.

In 1763 a deed to the Susquehanna Company confirming the sale of the Wyoming lands was executed by the Six Nations.¹ The Proprietaries of Pennsylvania, however, secured in 1768 from the Six Nations a deed for all the lands in the province not previously sold to them, this including most of the lands of the Susquehanna and Delaware purchases.² The Company took immediate steps, therefore, to prosecute their claim by possession; and at a meeting held in Hartford, December 28, 1768, it was resolved that forty persons upwards of the age of twenty-one years, proprietors in the purchase, should be sent to take possession of the land by the first day of the February following; that two hundred more were to follow early in the spring. Two hundred pounds were allowed for the expenses of the expedition. Five townships, each five miles square, three on one side of the river and two on the other, were to be laid out. The first forty were to have their choice of one of the townships, the four remaining to belong to the two hundred. Three whole rights or shares in each township were to be reserved and appropriated "for the public use of a gospel ministry and schools in each of said towns." As before, all beds of mine ore and coal were reserved for the after disposal of the company and the resolution of the meeting of April 17, 1763, making provision for the securing of a minister was repeated. It was also voted "to grant to Dr. Eleazar Wheelock a tract of land in the easterly part of the Susquehanna purchase, ten miles long, and six miles wide for the use of the Indian school under his care. Provided, he shall set up and keep said school on the premises." A committee of five was appointed to order the affairs and proceedings of the forty, which might be increased to nine when the two hundred arrived. Appeal might be made from the decisions of this committee to the company at a later meeting of that body.³ The five townships so assigned and laid out were Wilkes-Barre, Hanover, Pittston, Kingston and Plymouth.⁴

The Proprietaries had laid out the "manors" of Sunbury and

¹ Harvey: *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 10.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 452.

³ Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, Vol. XVIII, pp. 59-62.

⁴ Hoyt: *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

Stoke in the limits of the Susquehanna purchase,¹ and they now made a counter move by leasing one hundred acres in Wyoming for seven years to three men who were to establish a trading post and defend the region against all enemies. These arrived in January, 1769, taking possession of the improvements which had been left by the Connecticut people when they fled from the Indians in 1763.² On February 8, the forty sent by the Susquehanna Company reached the ground. Trouble ensued, and in spite of the two hundred who arrived in the spring, according to the program, the net result at this time was the abandonment of the undertaking and the return of the settlers to their homes. Still they were not discouraged, and returning later with the assistance of some Pennsylvanians from Lancaster County, after a series of military encounters of the "border warfare" style, in 1771 they were left in possession of the field. This preliminary conflict closed with a victory for the New England men.³

In the meantime unsuccessful attempts at a negotiation of the difficulties had been made by Connecticut, and by 1771 Pennsylvania was ready to seek an adjustment. When Governor Trumbull of Connecticut was asked whether the Connecticut proceedings were authorized he replied that the General Assembly would countenance no violent or hostile measures to vindicate the rights of the Susquehanna Company.⁴ Fisher comments on the shrewd position taken by the authorities of Connecticut. In their official capacity they disowned the aggressions of the company, while as individuals they were financially interested. When accused as a company they called on the government to shoulder the blame, and vice versa.⁵ By this time the Wyoming settlers with their constantly increasing numbers were too strong for the Proprietaries, and the Pennsylvania troops were withdrawn. In the meantime the settlers had petitioned the General Assembly of Connecticut to erect Wyoming into a county.⁶ Northumberland County,

¹ Harvey: *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 456.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 457-460.

³ Chapman: *Op. cit.*, p. 94. Cf. Harvey: *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 703.

⁴ Colonial Records, Vol. 10, pp. 3, 4. Cf. pp. 112, 143.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 274.

⁶ Harvey: *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 509.

comprehending the Wyoming Valley, was erected by Act of the Pennsylvania Assembly in March, 1772. The Susquehanna Company, at a meeting in Hartford on June 2, 1773, "having applied to counsel learned in the law in Great Britain for their advice which the colony had not yet received, and there being no civil authority in said settlement," adopted the "Articles of Agreement" for the government of the settlers. These provided for the election of three able and judicious men in each town, and a constable, these to meet on the first Monday in each month, or oftener if need be; the directors of each individual town or plantation were to meet once every quarter and come to resolutions for the good of the settlement and hear complaints of such as were entitled to appeal from the decision of the directors in the several towns.¹

In 1774 Connecticut erected the town of Westmoreland out of the disputed territory, annexing it to Litchfield County. A "town" in Connecticut is a municipal district equivalent to what is called a township in Pennsylvania and elsewhere. Within it may be several villages and cities.² This "town" comprised the whole of the territory which had been purchased from the Indians by the Delaware Company, and a small portion of that included in the Susquehanna purchase. Its eastern boundary was the Delaware River, its western a line running north and south fifteen miles west of Wilkes-Barre. The western boundary was twice extended in 1775, finally reaching a line fifteen English miles west of the east branch of the Susquehanna.³ In 1776 Westmoreland was erected into a county, with the same limits as the town.⁴ The "townships" were the local districts five and six miles square laid out by the Susquehanna and Delaware Companies. The laws of Connecticut were in force and representatives were elected to the Connecticut legislature from 1774 until the time of the Trenton Decree.⁵ Lines from the district formed the twenty-fourth Connecticut regiment in the Continental army.⁶

¹ Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, Vol. XVIII, pp. 81-91.

² Harvey: Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 248. Note.

³ Harvey: Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 864. Cf. map opp. p. 790.

⁴ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 907.

⁵ Miner: Op. cit., p. 308.

⁶ Johnston: Op. cit., p. 278.

It is not to the purpose of this discussion to follow the later details of the Wyoming difficulties; the narrative has been fully told in the older and the more recent histories. Nor is it a part of this discussion to enter into the disputes concerning title to land. Hoyt¹ sets forth the claim of Connecticut, and the paper attributed to Dr. Smith, the first Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, that of Pennsylvania.² Of recent historians, Johnston³ discusses briefly the Connecticut rights, and Fisher⁴ sums up for Pennsylvania. The Revolution changed the face of the controversy by crystallizing in Pennsylvania the popular effort to get rid of the Proprietaries. The Penns had sold land to private individuals in the two manors of Stoke and Sunbury. This gave to the controversy the aspect of a private dispute about land. The Connecticut people were now serving in the Continental army, and private feuds were necessarily to a large extent ignored in the face of a common danger. Some New Englanders had established in 1771 a settlement outside of Westmoreland, and fresh quarrels and disturbances occurred.⁵ British alliances with the Indians brought on the terrible tragedy of the "Wyoming massacre," or invasion, of 1778. With the close of the Revolution Pennsylvania appealed to Congress to settle the dispute. A Court of Commissioners was mutually agreed upon, and a decision in favor of Pennsylvania was rendered in 1782. The Connecticut people were ready to acquiesce, but troublesome questions of titles to land remained. In a bungling attempt to settle these Pennsylvania reaped the consequences in another "Pennamite War." These proceedings were denounced by the people of the state and by the Council of Censors.⁶ Meetings of the Susquehanna Company were held at various times from 1783 to 1801 to support their claims.⁷ A project was formed for making a new state, and Oliver Wolcott drew up a Constitution for it.⁸ By act of the Pennsylvania

¹ Op. cit.,

² Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, Vol. XVIII, pp. 125-214.

³ Op. cit., Chapter XV.

⁴ Op. cit., Chapter X.

⁵ Miner: Op. cit., pp. 166-168.

⁶ Fisher: Op. cit., pp. 300-317.

⁷ Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, Vol. XVIII, pp. 104-122.

⁸ Hoyt: Op. cit., p. 73. See Appendix A.

legislature in 1786, Luzerne County was established containing a large portion of the disputed territory. Timothy Pickering worked energetically to pacify the people and win them to submission to the government of Pennsylvania. They now had representation in the General Assembly of the State, and the controversies which remained were legal. These final adjustments were made by a series of legislative enactments by the close of the first decade of the nineteenth century, and peace descended upon the district which had known little else than conflict for forty years.¹

The territory in question embraced the whole or part of the present Wayne, Pike, Monroe, Carbon, Luzerne, Lackawanna, Wyoming, Susquehanna, Bradford, Sullivan, Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Union, Centre, Clinton, Lycoming, Tioga, Potter, McKean, Elk, Cameron and Clearfield counties. Luzerne County as organized in 1786 included the great body of the New England settlers. By later enactments of the Legislature other counties or portions of such have been set off from Luzerne, or county lines otherwise altered so that these settlers were mainly in the present Luzerne, Lackawanna, Susquehanna, Wayne, Pike, Bradford, and Potter counties. The population of Luzerne County at the time of its erection has been estimated as about two thousand seven hundred.² The settlement had been nourished in calamity but its growth had not been stifled.

From this survey of the conditions which attended the settlement of this region it is now in order to turn to its educational history; and to trace the origin of the ideals and practices which the Connecticut settlers brought with them from their native state, endeavoring to build up a similar structure in the home of their adoption.

¹ Laws of Pennsylvania. Smith's Laws, Vol. III, pp. 367, 368.

² Proceedings and Collections, Vol. XIII, p. 111.

CHAPTER III

THE EDUCATIONAL INHERITANCE OF THE WYOMING SETTLERS

Education in Connecticut to the Close of the Eighteenth Century

The seeds of the system of public education which had developed in Connecticut by the middle of the eighteenth century were sown in the old world, when in conformity with the custom of the Reformed faith, a pastor and a teacher were chosen by the three congregations which migrated to New England and later became the founders of the Connecticut colony. The roots of their educational, as of their religious and political life, intermingled at first with those of the older colony. But Calvinism was a progressive ferment, and political dissent led to the separation of the congregations from their brethren and to the establishment in 1634 and 1635 of the Connecticut towns. Here, as already indicated, democracy underwent a further development, church membership not being required for the exercise of the right of suffrage. This is the first appearance in New England of the cleavage between Church and State, and it was the entering of the wedge which, working slowly but with irresistible force, was ultimately to drive out ecclesiastical domination from state and from public education.

The educational developments of Connecticut were necessarily at first identified with those of Massachusetts, and even after the separation, the younger colony was influenced by the older. The demand of Luther and Calvin for an education which should fit men to live in the state, as well as to die and leave it, has already been noted. In New England the value of education from a civil standpoint was early emphasized and developed rapidly. The unanimity of the theological belief of the New England colonists and the nature of that belief were favorable to educational unity and educational progress. They had learned from hard experience that there could be no religious liberty without civil freedom. The town meeting was primarily

a meeting of the body politic for the regulation of civil affairs. The ecclesiastical proceedings were a portion of the lay business of the town meeting and not vice versa. The educational matters which were considered in the town meeting became therefore necessarily a civil, not an ecclesiastical function.¹ The common school of New England was in no sense a child of the Church; it was a child of the people.² The civil interest was prominent from the outset, and in the earliest legislation of both colonies the "learning and labor" that were profitable to the Commonwealth, and a "knowledge of the capital laws" were prime considerations.

About the time that the Watertown and Dorchester congregations were preparing to go out into the wilderness and lay the foundations of their new settlements, in the spring of 1635, Boston was taking steps toward the establishment of her first school, the famous Boston Latin School. In this, as in similar foundations in New England, the colonists were transplanting to their new homes the familiar ideals of the mother country. This school was therefore probably designed by its founders as a "public" or "free" school intended primarily to give instruction in the classical languages to all classes of children; but, as in similar schools of England, providing necessarily also some elementary education.³ The import of the terms "public" and "free" school has already been considered. At about this time, or within a few years most of the Massachusetts towns had taken similar steps. The support of the schools was provided for by grants of land, by gifts or bequests of individuals, by allowances made out of the common stock of the town, by rates of those not contributing, by tuition fees paid by parents, or by various combinations of these.⁴ There was at first no uniformity in support; and apparently no direct taxation; nor were tuition fees at first commonly employed.⁵ The claim has

¹ U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1894-95, Vol. I, p. 1458.

² Ibid., p. 1523.

³ U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1896-97, Vol. II, pp. 1166, 67.

⁴ U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1896-97, Vol. II, p. 1168.

⁵ Martin: Evolution of the Massachusetts Public School System, pp. 48, 49.

been made for Dorchester that there was made the first provision in the world for a free school supported by a direct tax on the inhabitants. This was in 1639.¹ While the towns generally maintained an oversight of the schools, in Dorchester in 1645 at a town meeting a school committee was appointed, consisting of three members, who were termed "wardens" or "overseers of the school." This is believed to have been the first school committee appointed by any municipality in this country.² While formerly it was supposed that corporate provision was made at first only for "grammar," *i. e.*, Latin schools, it has recently become evident that as in Boston, so in other places, elementary education was generally maintained by the towns in one way or another. Theoretically children were supposed to have mastered the art of reading before entering the grammar school, yet this was not always the case, and in various ways provision was made for elementary instruction either in the grammar school or in another school provided for that purpose. The "dame school" of England was reproduced in the younger country in answer to the necessities of the situation.³ Harvard College founded in 1636 by a vote of the Court is famous because it is said to be the first instance in which the people, acting through a representative body, ever gave their money to found a place of education.⁴ The system was therefore complete, elementary, secondary and higher education being accessible in due order within six years of the foundation of the settlement in at least one town, and opportunity for the first two forms within a few years in others.

The law of 1642 of the Massachusetts colony is famous and has been often quoted.⁵ It recognized the responsibility of the state in respect of every member of the same, the duty of parents and employers toward minors, and the right of the state to add the civil compulsion to the moral obligation of parents and guardians. It emphasized the necessity of intelligence and of skill in industry for the moral and religious, as well as for the material

¹ U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1896-97, Vol. II, p. 1170. Note 5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1172.

³ Martin: *Op. cit.*, pp. 53, 54.

⁴ Boone: *Education in the United States*, p. 20. Note.

⁵ Clews: *Op. cit.*, pp. 59, 60.

advancement of the commonwealth. Schools, however, were not established under this enactment. The law of 1647 laid the foundation of subsequent educational legislation in New England. It added to the previous legislation the significant provision for elementary and grammar schools to be set up in every township respectively which had increased to the number of fifty and one hundred families, the wages of schoolmasters to be paid either by the parents or masters, or by the inhabitants in general, with a penalty for neglect of the law.¹ This has been called the first distinctly civil act in respect of school legislation in the history of modern Christendom.² In laying these educational foundations New England was carrying out the ideals of the Renaissance-Reformation age in the mother country. The awakened religious spirit was associated with the zeal for learning, especially such as would reveal the "true sense and meaning of the original tongues."³ The clergyman was esteemed in New England not only by reason of his religious function, but also and quite as fully because of his command of learning. Because of the new civil importance of both religion and learning, the latter came as the years passed on, to occupy a unique place of importance and dignity in the commonwealth, overshadowing even the religious interest.

The law of 1647 was carried over into the first Connecticut law concerning education in the code of 1650. To the educational beginnings of that colony consideration must now be given.

The settlers of the Connecticut towns had the intense religious convictions of the Massachusetts colonists, the same zeal in behalf of learning, and a more thorough-going belief in democracy. Practice in education preceded legislation, and before any provision was made by law for the regulation and support of schools, the ministers and magistrates are said to have made a plea in town meeting and among the families that an allowance should be made out of the common stock of the town for the support of a common school, and that parents of all classes should send their children to the same school.⁴ "The outlines and most of

¹ Clews: *Op. cit.*, pp. 60, 62.

² Brown: *Op. cit.*, pp. 65, 66.

³ U. S. Bureau of Education, *Report of Commissioner, 1893-94*, Vol. I, p. 658.

⁴ Barnard: *American Journal of Education*, Vol. IV, p. 658.

the essential features of the present system of common schools will be found in the practice of the first settlers of the several towns which composed the two original colonies of Connecticut and New Haven before any general law was made for the regulation and support of schools or the bringing up of children."¹ In both colonies there is some evidence of the existence of schools in 1639.² New Haven records show that in 1641 the court noted that "a free school shall be set up in the town," the pastor and magistrates to consider what yearly allowance should be given to it out of the common stock of the town.³ In 1644 New Haven established a public grammar, or "free" school to train the youth for public service in church and commonwealth, and as before, the magistrates with the teaching elders were "entreated to consider . . . what allowance may be made for the schoolmaster's care and pains, which shall be paid out of the town's stock."⁴ The early records of Hartford are lost, but in 1642 the voters appropriated thirty pounds a year to the town school,⁵ and six years later a schoolhouse was ordered to be built, not to be devoted to any other use or employment.⁶ It is believed that all of the original settlements had within twenty years established schools.⁷ The mode of support in Hartford was adopted by the other Connecticut towns, and was partly a charge on the general funds or property of the town, and partly by a rate bill or tuition, paid by the parents or guardians of children attending school, "paying alike to the head."⁸ The poor were taught free of charge.⁹ The General Court of Hartford made provision in 1644 for an annual collection in every town in the jurisdiction for the maintenance of scholars at Harvard College.¹⁰ The New Haven Court made similar provision

¹ Ibid., p. 657.

² Brown: Op. cit., p. 45.

³ U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1896-97, Vol. II, p. 1176.

⁴ Barnard: Op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 662.

⁵ Ibid., p. 658.

⁶ U. S. Bureau of Education, Circular of Information No. 2, 1893. Steiner: The History of Education in Connecticut, p. 16.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 16, 17.

⁸ Barnard: Op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 659.

⁹ U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1896-97, Vol. II, p. 1176.

¹⁰ Clews: Op. cit., p. 73.

and renewed the vote from year to year.¹ The records of New Haven from 1641 to 1660 are full of entries respecting appropriations of money to teachers and reports of committees on schools; and on these committees the governor, minister, magistrates or deputies were always placed. Barnard says that before New Haven ceased to be an independent colony a system of public education had been established through the influence of Theophilus Eaton and John Davenport, which was without a parallel at that time in any part of the world, and not surpassed in its universal application to all classes, rich and poor, in any subsequent period in the history of the state.²

Connecticut took steps in 1646 to codify her laws, and appointed Roger Ludlow who had held various offices in the colony, and who had probably assisted in framing the educational laws of Massachusetts, to compile a code of laws.³ This was completed in 1650, and was a codification of all the laws passed by the general court together with local practices which had grown up in the towns which seemed worthy of adoption by the whole colony. Many provisions were borrowed from the Massachusetts laws. Under the title "children," it was required that children and apprentices should be taught to read English and understand the capital laws, and a penalty was attached to the neglect of the law. Children and servants were to be taught and catechized in the grounds and principles of religion, and also to be brought up in some honest calling or labor if they could not be educated for higher employments. The selectmen were empowered to remove minors from the care of such parents and masters as were negligent of the law, and to place them with suitable masters, boys until the age of twenty-one, and girls to eighteen. Under "Schools" it was enacted that in order to preserve learning in the Church and Commonwealth every town of fifty householders should establish an elementary school, the teacher to be paid either by the parents and masters or by the town, and every town of one hundred householders, a grammar school to prepare youth for the university. A penalty was attached to the neglect of the law.⁴ Provision was also made for

¹ Barnard: *Op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 662.

² *Op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 665.

³ Clews: *Op. cit.*, p. 73. Note.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-76.

the religious instruction of the Indians.¹ With slight modification these laws remained on the statute books of the state until almost the close of the eighteenth century.² New Haven had a code of laws drawn up about 1648 or 1649, revised in 1655, and published in 1656, which contained an educational provision similar to that of Connecticut.³ With the union of the two colonies in 1655, the laws of the latter colony superseded those of the former.⁴ The school code was repeatedly revised and during the eighteenth century legislation was frequent, much of it looking toward the increase in the efficiency of the schools and their better and more effective administration. In 1712 the colony took the first steps backward in the administration of her schools by withdrawing their direction from the towns and placing it in the hands of the newly created "parishes."⁵ The practical effects of this retrograde movement, however, were at first slight and of slow development. The inner workings of the school "society" and the differences representing this transition stage are an open question.⁶ As long as the people were of the same mind ecclesiastically, the school was managed by the same group of persons who voted in town and "society" meetings in the administration of their respective civil and religious interests. In spite of the "steady tramp of the Church and clergy"⁷ as they sought to obtain control of popular education and of public funds appropriated for educational purposes, the climax of the slowly growing difficulties between Church and civil society, sure to follow, was not reached until the acts of 1795 and 1798, when the whole system was revolutionized, and the ecclesiastical influence and power in educational matters were confirmed.⁸ The authority of the towns, the old-

¹ Barnard: Op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 665, 667.

² U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1896-97, Vol. II, p. 1176.

³ Barnard: Op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 664.

⁴ Ibid., p. 665.

⁵ Steiner: Op. cit., p. 30.

⁶ U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1896-97, Vol. I, pp. 773, 774.

⁷ U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1894-95, Vol. II, p. 1580.

⁸ Steiner: Op. cit., p. 35.

time agencies in education, had disappeared and the "school societies" had taken their place. Together with the change in the mode of supporting the schools by the great increase at this time in the public funds largely from the sale of the Western Reserve lands in Ohio, and by the removal of the obligation of raising money by taxation, the result was ultimately disastrous to the educational system of the state.¹ During the eighteenth century, however, the educational standards were maintained; and up to 1798 the law enforced the keeping of schools in towns or societies of more than seventy families for eleven months of the year, and in those of less than seventy for at least one half of the year. It also enforced the keeping of a grammar school in the head town of the several counties. It imposed a tax for the support of schools which was distributed to towns or societies complying with the law.² The educational system of Connecticut until the time of the Revolution has been described as "the nearest approach to our present system of any then existing in the colonies." At this time illiteracy was practically non-existent in the colony.³ Education was by law compulsory and the law was enforced. Barnard says "While the course of instruction in the common schools prior to 1800 was limited to spelling, reading, writing and the elements of arithmetic, these studies were pursued by all the people of the State; so that it was rare to find a native of Connecticut 'who could not read the holy word of God and the good laws of the State.' " These schools such as they were, were the main reliance of the whole community for the above studies. There were but few private schools, except to fit young men for college or carry them forward in the higher branches of an English education."⁴ "In no part of the world is the education of all ranks of the people more attended to than in Connecticut," says an English writer in 1796. "Almost every town in the State is divided into districts and each district has a public school kept in it a greater or less part of every year. Somewhat more than one third of the moneys arising from a

¹ Barnard: *Op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 705, 706.

² *Ibid.*, p. 709.

³ U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1894-95, Vol. II, p. 1578.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 709.

tax on the polls and ~~rateable estate~~ of the inhabitants is appropriated to the support of schools in the several towns, for the education of children and youth."¹ The schoolmaster was esteemed equally with the clergyman or magistrate. In an old bill for fitting up a meeting-house in Windsor, there is a separate item for wainscoting and elevating the pews which were to be occupied by the magistrates, the deacon's family and the schoolmaster.² The teachers of the district schools were drawn from a superior grade of the people, because of the professional standard and the honor in which the office was held. This is true not only of men, but also of women.³ College and academy students recruited the ranks of the teaching body and this maintained the standards of the school and the dignity of the profession in the state. In addition to these in some smaller New England towns it was the custom to open a subscription school for three months in the autumn, where a higher grade of studies, including the classics, could be pursued. The teachers were college graduates of the preceding summer, or students of theological schools.⁴ Thus the benefits of the higher education were extended in the community. "No State," says Hinsdale, "has a more honorable educational record, taken altogether, than Connecticut. No other of the old states can show such a connected series of public and private transactions relating to schools and education extending from the foundation of the Commonwealth down to the opening of the present educational era, some fifty or sixty years ago."⁵ Moreover here were laid the foundations not only "for a universal education, but for a practical and social equality which has never been surpassed in

¹ Barnard: *Op. cit.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 144, citing "Extracts from Rev. W. Winterbotham's View of the United States of America," London, 1796.

² Barnard: *Op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 659.

³ *Note:* There is some reason to believe that girls had earlier consideration in Connecticut than elsewhere, even in Massachusetts. While in some towns of the latter colony they were excluded until almost the close of the eighteenth century, they are said to have been taught in the public schools in and around Hartford in 1770, sitting on separate benches, but not in separate classes. Brown: *Op. cit.*, pp. 251, 253.

p. 1595.

⁴ U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1894-95, Vol. II, p. 1595.

⁵ U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1892-93, Vol. II, p. 1240.

the history of any other community. The people of Connecticut were the most enlightened of all the Colonies at the dawn of the American independence."¹

These were the ideals which had been fostered for more than a hundred years in the home state when the Wyoming settlers went out to build new dwellings in the Pennsylvania wilderness; this was the educational inheritance which they carried with them and endeavored to maintain as they laid the foundations for their new community, for its civic, religious and educational life.

¹ U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1893-94, Vol. I, p. 659.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATION IN WYOMING

The Wyoming settlers, therefore, brought with them to Pennsylvania the results of more than a hundred years of educational endeavor for the Commonwealth, and an established conviction of the value to the state of the common school. The first steps in the provision for religious and moral care of the new community were taken by the action of the Susquehanna Company at Windham on April 17, 1763, when it was voted that a suitable person or persons should be procured by the settlers to carry on religious instruction and worship. This general provision for religious care found specific expression in the later action of the Company in 1768, when it was resolved that three rights or shares in each of the five townships planned should be appropriated for the support of religion and education.¹ All the towns settled by the company were under the same conditions as the first five; and the three rights or shares were subsequently devoted by the settlers exclusively to school purposes.² The appropriation of several thousand acres in the eastern part of the state for the use of the Indian school maintained by Dr. Wheelock has been previously mentioned.³ The offer was not accepted, and the school was established not in Pennsylvania, but in New Hampshire and later became Dartmouth College.⁴

The educational history of the Wyoming region began in 1770, when the Wilkes-Barre town plot was surveyed and lots were drawn by the proprietors of the townships.⁵ The will of the Susquehanna Company was carried out by the setting aside of two lots, containing about four hundred acres of land, for the first settled minister and for schools. The spirit of religious

¹ *Supra*, p. 28.

² Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Pennsylvania, 1877, p. 374.

³ *Supra*, p. 28.

⁴ Dexter: *History of Education in the United States*, p. 265.

⁵ Harvey: *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 653.

tolerance was shown by the fact that when it appeared that a number of the people were Baptists (the majority being Presbyterians), the vote was rescinded which demanded a tax from them, and an arrangement made which was satisfactory to all, by which the former group might attend the ministrations of their own denomination in Kingston.¹ The sum of money promised to the pastor was then raised by subscription.² It is evident that the Connecticut settlers were here laying the foundation of the modern non-sectarian public school system, and separating the business of the church from that of education; and in this respect they were taking a step in advance of their home colony. With the adoption of the "Articles of Agreement" by the Susquehanna Company the townships began the direction of their local affairs through their chosen representatives.

At a town meeting in Wilkes-Barre in 1773 a vote was passed to raise three pence on the pound in the district list to keep a free school in the several school districts of the town; and a subsequent meeting, "specially warned," adopted measures for the keeping open of free schools, one in the upper district of the town, one in the lower, and a third on the town plot.³ At a town meeting held in Kingston the same year three persons were chosen to divide the town into three districts for the keeping of schools.⁴ Eight town meetings were held in 1774 and at the last held on December 6, a School Committee was chosen, consisting of fifteen persons to act for the ensuing year.⁵ This body so chosen at the "town" or general meeting of the settlers has been regarded as a sort of county organization whose function was to co-operate with the local committee of the various townships. It has been inferred that the action taken by Wilkes-

¹ Miner: Op. cit., pp. 143, 144.

² Proceedings and Collections of the Wyoming Historical Society, Vol. IV, p. 49.

³ Miner: Op. cit., p. 144.

Note: The survey of Wilkes-Barre in 1770 established what is known as the Town Plot, showing a division of lots and an open space along the river on which the lots bounded. This is the earliest authentic evidence of an intention by the first settlers to leave an open space in front of the town, along the river for public uses. Harvey: Op. cit., Vol. II, map p. 655.

⁴ Report of State Superintendent, 1877, p. 377.

⁵ Miner: Op. cit., p. 159 (quoting the "Westmoreland Records").

Barre was duplicated in the other townships. The fragmentary records which have been preserved and collected by local and county historians furnish evidence sufficient to support this conclusion. One township set aside land for church and school purposes.¹ Another voted in 1806 that the interest of the public moneys for three years past be appropriated to schools. Six trustees were appointed to divide the township into three school districts, a census of the school population in each division was made, and schools were established in each district.² Thus into the Wyoming region generally was introduced and maintained the fundamental principle of the common school system, education for all free from sectarian bias, schools supported by a general fund or tax, or both, with local management and responsibility. It was the first appearance on Pennsylvania soil of the system of public education of which today our state is justly proud. It established the modern ideal that education was not a charity, nor was it to be fostered in the spirit of sectarian bias or denominational coloring; it was the education for a democracy through the medium of the public school. With the erection of Westmoreland into a county and the levying of state and county taxes, an attempt was made to open and support schools. Throughout the proceedings of 1777 education engaged more than ordinary attention. In spite of the taxes paid into the treasury at Hartford, an additional tax of a penny in the pound was paid for the support of schools. Each township was established as a legal school district with power to rent the lands sequestered by the Susquehanna Company for the use of schools, and also to receive of the School Committee appointed by the town their part of the county money according to their respective rates. The value of higher education was not forgotten, for it was entered on the record that for the first time during the year a student had been sent to Yale.³ In 1778 came the terrors of the Wyoming massacre, but educational interests were not long neglected, for in 1779 at a town meeting on December 6, the usual officials were chosen, including a School Committee.⁴

¹ Report of State Superintendent, 1877, p. 373.

² History of Luzerne, Lackawanna and Wyoming Counties, p. 326.

³ Miner: *Op. cit.*, p. 197 (quoting the "Westmoreland Records").

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

Since the records of actual achievement of the various townships during the years of the Connecticut jurisdiction and after the Trenton Decree are so scanty, there are few details to show what was accomplished in the first years of the settlement or in the early portion of the nineteenth century in the carrying out of the educational policies which were so wisely and energetically planned by the settlers as they laid the foundations of their new communities. In the disasters of the "Pennamite" and Revolutionary wars, in the clash of authority between Connecticut and Pennsylvania, in the hardships, poverty, factional feeling and legal strife which were their lot, the plan to support free public schools by taxation was apparently not carried to a conclusion. Miner asserts that by 1775 schoolhouses were erected in every district.¹ This is hardly credible in the existing state of affairs; and it is probably truer, as has been elsewhere stated, that "few or no buildings were erected especially for school or religious purposes until after the Compromise law of 1799 was carried into effect, and the settlers quieted in their homes and property. Schools, however, were held in private houses, in barns, in structures temporarily fitted up, or even outdoors, before schoolhouses were built; and at no time was home education neglected, even after the building of schools."² The meager and uncertain body of data concerning the Wyoming schools makes all attempt at historical statement of early schools and teachers unsatisfactory; but as has already been indicated, occasional records which have been gathered up, together with much reminiscence dating back often to a period before the opening of the nineteenth century show that the plan originally proposed was not abandoned. The names of several teachers in Wyoming previous to and at the time of the massacre in 1778 have been preserved.³ The early efforts of Wilkes-Barre have already been described in connection with the policies of the Susquehanna Company. The exact sequel of these endeavors seems not to be known, but apparently there were provisions for education, either of a public or private nature, or both. At other points in the settlement, schools were an early care. In Kingston town-

¹ Op. cit., p. 164.

² Report of State Superintendent, 1877, p. 377.

³ Ibid., pp. 375, 376.

ship a plot of ground containing ten square rods was leased by one of the citizens for school purposes on April 14, 1796, and the school was opened on the 26th of the month. The building was erected by the co-operation of a group of interested persons, each one bringing a share of materials and contributing his part to the labor, which was therefore promptly completed. The teacher was to receive for a term of twelve weeks the sum of thirty Spanish milled dollars and to board around.¹ The names of many of his successors have been preserved, and it is stated that most of these men and women were possessed of superior abilities, and were of high standing in their communities. There were among them men who were judges of the courts, or members of the legislature; one was the editor of a newspaper of recognized authority. An early teacher in Wilkes-Barre was a graduate of a German university.² At other places in the district, schools are said to have been erected and used in the early years of the nineteenth century.³ William L. Horton advertised in 1802 "a School is just opened at the Lower School House in Kingston for the term of six months. Those who may see fit to commit their children to the care of the subscriber may depend upon their being instructed in the best manner with respect to both morals and education."⁴ Beside the elementary schools the academies of New England were reproduced in Wyoming by the founding of similar institutions for higher, including classical education. The famous Wilkes-Barre Academy was opened in 1804 and incorporated in 1807. Under the care of its second principal, Garrick Mallery, sent from Yale in response to the request of the trustees, the school acquired a reputation for its thorough classical and higher instruction, and many students came from a distance to enjoy its advantages.⁵ Kingston had an academy founded in 1812,⁶ and Plymouth one in 1815.⁷

Of the present Wyoming County (formerly a portion of Luzerne) few records exist, but there is some evidence that a

¹ Ibid., p. 378.

² History of Luzerne, Lackawanna and Wyoming Counties, p. 200.

³ Report of State Superintendent, 1877, p. 380.

⁴ Luzerne Federalist and Susquehanna Intelligencer, March 14, 1802.

⁵ Report of State Superintendent, 1877, p. 387. See Appendix B.

⁶ Wyoming Historical Record, Vol. VI, p. 174.

⁷ Ibid., Vol. X, p. 160.

school was held as early as 1800, that the first schoolhouse was built in 1802, and that in several townships educational facilities existed during the first and second decades of the nineteenth century.¹

Wayne County contained the site of the first Connecticut settlement in Pennsylvania. It was not, however, of permanent duration. A school is said to have been organized in 1794 by the later settlers, and other schools and teachers are mentioned in 1799, 1800 and 1801. The first schoolhouse is said to have been erected in 1798. In 1808 and for several years following, a school in Salem was taught by the Rev. William Woodbridge, author of a well-known geography. He gave instruction in mathematics and natural science.²

In Susquehanna County, also formerly a part of Luzerne, records of schools show the latter to have been established from 1794. The names of several teachers and locations of schools have been recorded and others doubtless not on record were maintained. This county, too, had an academy, the Susquehanna Academy, incorporated in 1816, and a classical school established in 1817 which in 1830 was incorporated as Franklin Academy, and a third in Dundaff established in 1833.³

In Bradford County, also originally a part of Luzerne, where were numerous New Englanders, a similar school plan arose. The earliest school is believed to have been conducted about 1788 or 1789 at Athens, which was the oldest township in the county, and recognized with the "certified townships" by the law of 1799. A number of schools were in existence apparently by the close of the first decade of the nineteenth century, and many names of those who taught are on record. Bradford County also early planned an academy. In 1797 twenty-five of the leading citizens of Athens subscribed to a fund for the erection of a building for the instruction of youth, and for the occasional uses of public worship, or other public business. The plan moved slowly but the academy was incorporated in 1813.⁴

¹ Report of State Superintendent, 1877, p. 607, 611.

² Ibid., pp. 585, 586. Cf. Wright: History of Plymouth, p. 269. See Appendix C.

³ Ibid., pp. 521, 525.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 82-84.

Lackawanna County, also formerly a part of Luzerne, with its present capital city of Scranton, is recorded as having been the recipient in 1812, for educational purposes, of a large tract of land originally belonging to the proprietors of Providence township. This land later became the subject of litigation and the financial returns were therefore not ultimately large.¹ Its existence, however, is evidence that the same principle was applied here as elsewhere. Similarly with other localities in which these settlers were found, the school for the people, often resembling in its form the "neighborhood school," followed their footsteps. It is said, moreover, that there is no record of schools in Wyoming founded by the Pennsylvania claimants,² and it is probable that there were no schools founded and supported by churches.

The data above quoted are given by way of illustration of the general situation. The Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Pennsylvania for 1877 contains numerous similar statements, representing the known or probable school activities of the various localities of this region. County and local historians have collected further data. Founded often on reminiscence and not on documentary evidence, the reliability of these from the historical point of view may be questioned; but it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the spirit of the pioneers was maintained, and that their achievement was effective in proportion to their means and circumstances. Whatever lapse there may be in records, and whatever failure to carry out the plan so boldly inaugurated by the early settlers, it remains true that education was almost their first consideration. A study of the Report of 1877 indicates that in all the counties representing the New England settlements schools had been organized early in the nineteenth century, or before, and that they were of a character and standard resembling the schools of the mother state at the time. One writer says: "Whenever the forty families considered requisite for the occupation of a township were enlisted, their qualities, occupation and talents enumerated, the minister and school teacher were estimated as among the indispensables. Therefore schools were never neglected, and

¹ History of Luzerne, Lackawanna and Wyoming Counties, p. 400.

² Report of State Superintendent, 1877, p. 377.

books and paper were brought from the home colony."¹ Another, a woman who had been educated in the pioneer schools, and who had taught in them for nearly fifty years wrote: "Our ancestors, coming from New England, principally from Connecticut and Massachusetts, and being well informed, intelligent and practical men and women, brought with them people capable of usefulness in all the requirements of an early, progressive and permanent colonial settlement. They were of the best, most learned and influential families of their several New England colonies. Education was ever considered by them the basis of prosperity, independence and happiness."² As education according to the standard of those days was general in the home state, many families of those who came had sons and daughters who were qualified to teach. The social status of the teacher in the community was high, in accordance with the New England tradition of respect for that profession. Teachers were not infrequently college graduates, or students or graduates of the academies which had begun at that time to flourish at home. True to the Connecticut tradition, as soon as possible the people endeavored to secure good schoolhouses, not sparing expense, in proportion to their means, in the building and equipment of the structures which served for the education of their children, for places of religious worship, and often also for the administration of justice or other purposes of the community life.³ It is significant of their attitude that the evidence points to the fact that schoolhouses were promptly built and used for religious services by the various denominations in common. The building of churches in most localities seems to have followed rather slowly.⁴ The first schools were built, like the first homes, of logs, but in many of the school districts frame buildings are said to have existed for some years prior to 1820.⁵

¹ Wyoming Historical Record, Vol. III, p. 191.

² Ibid., Vol. V, pp. 1, 3.

³ Proceedings and Collections of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, Vol. VI, p. 172.

⁴ Note: In Wilkes-Barre a house of worship is said to have been built before 1778, and services held when war was not being waged. This was destroyed in the Wyoming massacre, and services were then held in the schoolhouses, of which there were several, and at the homes. Proceedings and Collections of the Wyoming Historical Society, Vol. IV, p. 52.

⁵ Wyoming Historical Record, Vol. V, pp. 1-3.

The Wyoming teacher above quoted states that the school building of the period which forms her recollection was a frame structure, quite old and weather-beaten. It was about twenty-five feet square, lined, ceiled and seated with planed boards of white pine, with pine floor unpainted, as were also the weather-boards of the other coating. It was lighted by four twelve-pane windows of eight-by-ten glass. It was heated by a wood stove, the fuel supplied by the patrons of the school district.¹

The income from the land set apart for the maintenance of schools provided the building and equipment. This was not always the case, however, for schoolhouses were sometimes built, as already noted, by the co-operation of interested patrons of a district. Sometimes under the direction of the township school committee a meeting of subscribers toward the erection of a schoolhouse was called. This took place in Pittston in 1810, when such a meeting of subscribers for building a school was held. A committee of three was appointed and authorized to obtain a deed or lease of a plot of ground, and to contract with a carpenter for the work. In accordance with the above, public notice was given of the letting of the contract to the lowest bidder for a building one story high with two chimneys. The contract was awarded for two hundred and fifteen dollars. By 1812 the school was completed, and used for school purposes, elections and other public business.² The School Committee employed teachers and exercised a general supervision. The salaries were frequently paid in whole or part by the patrons in proportion to the number of days they had sent their children to school. A "rate-bill" was made out by the teacher and handed to the Committee, who collected [the amounts.³ In this method the people were resorting to the well-known practice of New England, in which the school was supported by the joint contributions of the town and the parents. Often, doubtless, the method of support was simply that of the subscription or neighborhood school. Mention has been made of fuel contributed by parents. In respect of the education of children

¹ Ibid., Vol. V, pp. 1-3.

² Volume of Newspaper Clippings of Luzerne County, p. 52 (in the Pennsylvania Historical Society).

³ Wickersham: Op. cit., p. 77.

whose parents were not able to pay, it is to be remembered that few, if any, were wealthy, and all were socially of the same status. From the earliest days the practice of the home state had accorded free education to those unable to pay for it; and pioneers are not less generous than other people, but rather more so, owing to the conditions of their life. The law of 1809 providing for the education of the poor will be referred to later.

The salaries paid to teachers were meager even for those days, and the practice familiar in New England and elsewhere in the colonial communities of "boarding around" supplemented the teacher's income.¹ A local historian is authority for the statement that the contract made by the teacher with his employers included a monthly allowance, with board and lodging, and occasionally a confidential arrangement was made by which he was to be relieved from sojourning with certain families.² Teachers worked at other occupations, such as farming, when schools were not in session.³ In the carrying out of the action of the Susquehanna Company the teacher did not, like the minister, have land set apart for his use.

Schools were held winter and summer, men teaching often during the former session and women during the latter. Boys went to school in winter and girls in summer; even in the latter season the smaller children chiefly attended the elementary schools, the older girls being occupied at home. Customs grew out of the requirements of life, and were similar to those of the home state. There is no reason to suppose that girls and boys were not taught together whenever it was convenient since girls were more tolerantly viewed at an early date in some parts of Connecticut than elsewhere.⁴

The curriculum of the elementary school of Connecticut during this period was a limited one. A letter written to Henry Barnard by President Humphrey, of Amherst College concerning the schools of the state between 1790 and 1800 contains the

¹ *Note:* Men teachers apparently received about ten or twelve dollars a month and board, and women one dollar, more or less, with board. (See Report of State Superintendent, 1877.)

² Wright: *Historical Sketches of Plymouth*, p. 280.

³ *Wyoming Historical Record*, Vol. X, pp. 160, 184.

⁴ *Supra*, p. 41.

following: "Our school books were the Bible and Webster's Spelling Book; one or two others were found in some schools for the reading classes. Grammar was hardly taught at all in any of them, and that little was confined almost entirely to committing and reciting rules. Parsing was one of the occult sciences of my day; we had some few lessons in geography by question and answer, but no maps nor globes; as for blackboards, such a thing was not thought of until long after. Children's reading and picture books we had none; the fables in Webster's spelling book came nearest to them. Arithmetic was hardly taught at all in the day schools. As a substitute there were some evening schools in most of the districts."¹ This represents the average facilities of the schools at about the period in which the Pennsylvania settlements were made and enlarged; and it is therefore, a general statement of the amount and kind of elementary education, more or less, to which the settlers had had access. It represents the standard toward which they would aim, if not one which, meager as it is, was in all cases attained. The Wyoming teacher quoted above (speaking of the early part of the nineteenth century) says "all were taught spelling, reading and writing. Grammar and history were taught to any who wished to study them, or who were advanced in the elementary branches. Webster's Spelling Book and the Dictionary were used; the New England Primer, the English Reader, Columbian Orator and American Preceptor were used as reading books. Daboll's, Bennett's and Pike's arithmetics were used. Lindley Murray's Grammar was generally in use until superseded by Kirkham's about 1835."² A historian of Wayne County mentions in addition to some of the above, Webster's Elements of Useful Knowledge, The Second and Third Parts, Woodbridge's and Morse's geographies.³ Most of the above mentioned text-books are of New England, many of them of Connecticut origin. Daboll, author of the well-known arithmetic, was born in Connecticut, and his book for years held a prominent place. Caleb Bingham, author of "The Columbian Orator" and "The American Preceptor," was born

¹ Clark: Op. cit., pp. 218, 219.

² Wyoming Historical Record, Vol. V, pp. 1-3.

³ Goodrich: History of Wayne County, pp. 393, 394.

in the same state. Noah Webster was born in Hartford, and Jedediah Morse, author of the first geography published in America, was a native of Windham County, Connecticut. The Reverend William Woodbridge, author of a well-known geography and for several years a teacher in Salem, Wayne County, Pennsylvania, as above mentioned, and in Wilkes-Barre was a native of Massachusetts. Pike's arithmetic was published in Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1788. The author was a graduate of Harvard College. A review of these titles representing the subjects taught and the books used in the Wyoming schools shows that the influence of the mother state was strong in the younger settlement. The list of subjects represents, no doubt the maximum efficiency of the Wyoming schools in the early years of the nineteenth century, as well as the course of study of private schools and academies, rather than that of the common schools of the elementary grade. But it was, after all, the teacher who in those days made his school and shaped the course of study according to his own equipment, thus leading his pupils along the path of knowledge which he himself had trodden. Some, perhaps a considerable number, of those who taught were competent to give instruction in the classics. A well-known teacher of the early days, Thomas Patterson, of Irish birth, taught the classics in Plymouth Academy, and is said to have urged upon his pupils the advantages of a college education.¹ The elementary schools in their less ambitious forms, in the more thinly populated districts were probably no better than those of corresponding grade in Connecticut. Moreover in some settlements schools were not immediately established. As new townships were laid out in the latter years of the eighteenth century, in the midst of the hardships, uncertainties and dangers of the pioneer surroundings, there was little time for organized educational effort. The compulsory educational provision of Connecticut was by no means enforced or possible of enforcement. Many men and women grew up with only the most meager opportunities. It is to be borne in mind, however, that the Wyoming settlers had never been an isolated group. They were in constant and sympathetic association with the home state. New settlers were constantly arriving in the dis-

¹ Wyoming Historical Record, Vol. X, p. 161.

puted territory. These naturally brought with them the unimpaired and advancing standards of Connecticut. Evidence of this contact and influence has been shown in the text-books used, which were those of recent origin or general use at the time in New England. Henry Barnard taught for a time after his graduation from Yale in Wellsboro, in the present Tioga County, a close neighbor of the New England section. He is said to have remarked that the intellectual atmosphere and educational stir recalled to him the similar aspect of a New England town.¹ Again it must not be forgotten that in New England the home was emphasized as the natural place for the earliest training and instruction of the child in knowledge of secular, as well as of moral and religious import. Children were not neglected in Wyoming even where schools were not immediately established. The school discipline of New England, effected by the rod, was practiced in Wyoming, as it was generally at that time. Several writers refer to its use, but this depended there as elsewhere largely on the native temper or conviction of the teacher. Only thoughtful or exceedingly gentle schoolmasters at that period refrained from that mode of attack upon the evil believed to be deeply rooted in the mind and heart of the child.

Another custom imported from New England which made for the general intellectual advancement of the community, adults as well as children, was the "spelling-school," to which reference is made in Wyoming reminiscences. One teacher is said to have conducted a spelling-school at his residence on three evenings in the week.² This furnished not only actual instruction in a school art which was everywhere at that time in a rather precarious condition, but it also sharpened the school wits of those who attended and provided beside opportunity for social intercourse. "Singing schools" are also referred to in the accounts of some districts.

The Sunday School, which in its origin in England and in our own state was closely related to secular instruction, appeared in the Wyoming region in its later, and as we view it today, its legitimate function, namely as an institution whose object is to

¹ U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1896-97, Vol. I, p. 772.

² Wyoming Historical Record, Vol. IV, p. 4.

care for the religious training of the child. As such it is not directly related to the subject of this discussion. Since the aims of these people in education from the beginning embodied the non-sectarian idea, the separate administration and support of church and school followed. Sunday Schools arose in Wyoming, and it is of interest to note that according to a county historian, previous to their organization, children were met by the office bearers in the church more or less frequently and instructed in the catechism and in religious truth.¹

The absence of any public educational organization in Pennsylvania at the time of the Revolution has been noted. The Constitution established by the General Convention at Philadelphia in 1776 contained the following provision: "A school or schools shall be established in each county by the Legislature for the convenient instruction of youth, with such salaries to the masters paid by the public as may enable them to instruct youth at low prices. And all useful learning shall be duly encouraged and promoted in one or more universities."² In the Constitutional Convention of 1789-90, the committee reporting a draft of a proposed constitution submitted on December 21, 1789 the following: "Article VIII, Section I. A school or schools shall be established in each county for the instruction of youth, and the State shall pay to the masters such salaries as shall enable them to teach at low prices.

"II. The arts, sciences, and all useful learning shall be promoted in one or more universities.

"III. Religious societies and corporate bodies shall be protected in their rights, immunities and estates."³

On January 30, 1790, the first section of the eighth article being under consideration, it was moved by Mr. McKean, seconded by Mr. Findley, to add the following words to the said section: "And the poor gratis." A motion was then made by Mr. Pickering, seconded by Mr. Sitgreaves, to postpone the consideration of the said first section with the amendment proposed in order to introduce the following in lieu of the first and second section of the eighth article: "Knowledge generally

¹ History of Luzerne, Lackawanna and Wyoming Counties, pp. 227, 228.

² Minutes of the Convention of 1789-90, p. 21.

³ Ibid., p. 44.

diffused among the people being essential to the preservation of their rights, it shall be the duty of the Legislature to provide for the instruction of children and youth, by the establishment of such schools in the several counties throughout the commonwealth. And the arts, sciences and all useful learning shall be further promoted in one or more universities." The question on postponement was determined in the negative, as was also the previous motion of Mr. McKean to amend.¹ On February 25, the eighth article being under consideration, it was moved by Mr. Hubley, seconded by Mr. Wilson to insert the following as the seventh article of the Constitution:

"Section I. A school or schools shall be established in each county for the instruction of youth, and the state shall pay to the masters such salaries as shall enable them to teach at low prices.

"Section II. The arts and sciences shall be promoted in one or more seminaries of learning.

"Section III. Religious societies and corporate bodies shall be protected in their rights, privileges, immunities and estates."²

The following day this motion recurring, it was moved by Mr. McKean and seconded by Mr. Findley to insert at the end of the first section, "And the poor gratis." It was then moved by Mr. Pickering and seconded by Mr. Edwards to postpone consideration of the amendment in order to introduce the following: "The Legislature shall provide by law for the establishment of schools throughout the state in such manner that the poor may be taught gratis." The question on postponement being decided in the affirmative, a motion was made by Mr. McLene seconded by Mr. Lincoln to insert after "Legislature" the following: "As soon as conveniently may be." This was agreed to; the section as amended was adopted, and it was ordered that the three sections as agreed to be inserted as the seventh article of the proposed Constitution.³ The article as ultimately adopted and approved in the Convention on September 2, 1790, was as follows:

"Section I. The legislature shall, as soon as conveniently may

¹ Minutes of the Grand Committee of the Whole Convention, pp. 75, 76.

² Minutes of the Convention, p. 140.

³ Ibid., p. 144.

be, provide, by law, for the establishment of schools throughout the state in such manner that the poor may be taught gratis.

"Section II. The arts and sciences shall be promoted in one or more seminaries of learning.

"Section III. The rights, privileges, immunities and estates of religious societies and corporate bodies shall remain, as if the constitution of this state had not been altered or amended."

Timothy Pickering was a delegate to the Convention from the newly-established Luzerne County. He was a native of Massachusetts, where common schools had long been accepted as part of the existing order. He was an ardent lover of liberty and thoroughly democratic in his convictions. Education was no incidental concern in his life; he had already demonstrated his active and vital interest in the educational needs of the young.¹ The common school was a well-established idea in Luzerne County, where he was now a property owner and resident. His special interest in the Convention was the desire to insert in the Constitution a provision which should secure the opportunity for education to all the people.² It may well be believed that Mr. Pickering and his colleagues supposed that they were laying the foundations of a system of free common schools,³ but the public opinion of the state was not yet ready to accept this idea. For years following the adoption of the Constitution, charitable enterprise and legislation endeavored to secure to those unable to pay for it the educational advantages provided for in that document.⁴ The subject of public education formed the theme of many gubernatorial messages. The Act of 1809⁵ requiring parents unable to pay for the education of their children to make public acknowledgment of their poverty and to send them to school branded as paupers was generally admitted to be a dead letter, and to have failed of its purpose. In the Wyoming region it is probable that the "poor schools" common in

¹ Pickering and Upham: *Life of Timothy Pickering*, Vol. II, pp. 165-168, 531, 532.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 433.

³ Wickersham: *Op. cit.*, p. 259. Cf. the citation from Governor Wolf's message of December, 1834, below.

⁴ *Laws of Pennsylvania*, 1802, March 1; P. L. 76. 1804, March 19; P. L., 298.

⁵ *Smith's Laws*, Vol. V, p. 73.

the older communities where social distinctions had become significant, if indeed they were not so from the beginning, were never in vogue. The law everywhere unpopular with those for whose benefit it was enacted, was most of all so in this democratic community.¹ The Wyoming Herald of November 23, 1821, quotes from the National Intelligencer an article entitled "Yankee Notions." "A Massachusetts paper observes 'there is not a native that can not read and write; every child is educated; every child is entitled to education as a right. The rich tax themselves to educate the poor. By her constitution and laws schools must be everywhere supported, enough to educate her whole population.' We wish such notions as these were prevalent in other states." The Wyoming Republican of November 26, (after the passage of the law of 1834) said: "The Act of April 4, 1809, does not provide for the establishment of schools at all. A man must go before the assessor and prove himself a pauper, and should this be questioned, again he must present himself before the County Commissioner to prove the truth of his former statement. Then his child might go to school, to be known as a poor child, schooled at the public expense and pointed at as such by his schoolmates . . . Such humiliation of God's creatures was never contemplated by the framers of the Constitution." The "common schools" established by the early settlers continued to be the general practice of this region until 1834, when the state law establishing a system of free public schools was enacted and adopted by the people of these counties.² In the meantime further attempts at legislation had been made by the Assembly in 1824³ (this law was repealed in two years⁴) and in 1831 when a Common School Fund was established.⁵ These successive enactments prepared the way

¹ Note: For ten years after 1824, only about three thousand five hundred dollars were paid by Luzerne County for the education of the poor. Pearce: *Annals of Luzerne County*, p. 26. In Wayne County in 1810 the assessors returned twenty-seven poor children, in 1811 twenty-nine, in 1834 two hundred and thirty-five. It is not known how thoroughly the law was executed. The entire amount spent in the county during the operation of the law was apparently ten thousand dollars. State Report, 1877, p. 587.

² U. S. Bureau of Education, Report of Commissioner, 1893-94, Vol. I, p. 668.

³ 1824, March 29; P. L., 137.

⁴ 1826, February 20; P. L., 52.

⁵ 1831, April 2; P. L., 385.

for the last stages of the conflict which resulted in the passage in 1834, of a law establishing "a general system of education by Common Schools." "No other subject," says Wickersham, "was ever debated with so much heat and bitterness."¹ New England energy and leadership did good service at this time in the cause of education. Samuel Breck, a native of Massachusetts and a resident of Philadelphia, had accepted a seat in the Senate for the purpose of securing the passage of a law establishing a system of common schools. He was Chairman of a Joint Committee of the two Houses to prepare a law to this end. Contemporary newspaper comments show how bitter was the struggle. Poulson's Daily Advertiser of November 24, 1834, in reporting the result of the election in the various townships, said: "It is now ascertained that the friends of free schools have triumphed over the combined efforts of selfishness, ignorance and demagogism in this Commonwealth. The triumph is a signal one and more glorious than all the party triumphs in this State since the adoption of the Constitution." The Luzerne County papers fought valiantly for common schools. The Republican Farmer and Democratic Journal of Wilkes-Barre on September 18, 1833, contained an article by a correspondent signing himself "A Citizen of Luzerne." Referring at some length to recently suggested school plans, he concludes: "I am still unchanged in my opinion, that a very important improvement can be made in our Common Schools, and I hope soon to have the pleasure of hearing that Luzerne County has arisen in her strength to devise some general system to carry it all over the country, and be hailed with delight by every lover of education." The Wyoming Republican (called after January, 1835, The Republican and Herald) during 1834, 1835 and 1836, the years of conflict, repeatedly in its columns drove home the doctrine of free schools for rich and poor alike,—the common school. On January 29, 1834, a Connecticut paper was quoted, referring to a statement in the recent message of Governor Wolf as to the number of uninstructed children in the State, "Who in New England would have believed that in the old, rich and prosperous state of Pennsylvania nearly one hundred thousand more children than there are in the State of Connecticut

¹ Op. cit., p. 318.

are entirely uninstructed and growing up in ignorance, and that the state never appropriated a dollar for the intellectual improvement of its youth?" On July 16, 1834, the same paper said of the School Law: "One of the most important laws enacted in this State is the one providing for a general system of education, by common schools. In this law every citizen of the State is interested." The Wyoming Republican of October 29, 1834, said "At the recent election in many sections of this State the School Bill was made a political question. We were humiliated to mark some tickets headed 'No School.' This political watchword indicates a spirit which we blush to find within our borders." Similar quotations from Luzerne County journals could be multiplied; but a sufficient number has already been included to demonstrate the undoubted attitude of that section to the new educational enactment of the State.

Under the provisions of the law of 1834 the school districts in each county were to elect directors, and subsequently a delegate from each school district was to attend with the county commissioners a meeting to decide whether the tax should be levied for the support of schools. Districts voting against the county tax were to receive nothing from the state, such districts being allowed to educate their poor under the Act of 1809.¹

The results of the election showed that in the western, northern and some of the middle counties there was no opposition. In the middle counties the opposition was most formidable, but even in these a portion of the townships accepted the law, with the exception of Lebanon, in which opposition Directors were elected in every township.² In the New England counties a heavy vote was cast in favor of the new system. In Luzerne County, consisting of thirty-one districts, twenty-three accepted the law, three rejected it, and five were not represented. In Susquehanna, consisting of twenty-two districts, twenty-one accepted, one made no return. In Wayne, having sixteen districts, thirteen accepted, one rejected, one was not represented, and one made no return. In Pike, with nine districts, six accepted, three were not represented. In Bradford, with twenty-nine districts, twenty-three accepted, four were not represented, and two made

¹ 1834, April 1; P. L., 170.

² Wyoming Republican, October 15, 1834.

no return. In Potter, of fifteen districts, eleven accepted, four were not represented. In the six counties, therefore, representing at that time the bulk of the New England population (Lackawanna and Wyoming had not been erected in 1834) of one hundred and twenty-two districts, ninety-seven, or more than seventy-nine per cent. accepted the law. A comparison of these figures with the returns made by the counties in the older portion of the state, Chester, Delaware, Berks, Bucks, Lancaster and Montgomery, is interesting. (Philadelphia had already been provided for by the Act of 1818.¹) Of one hundred and ninety-one districts in these counties only sixty, or something more than thirty-one per cent, accepted the law, while of the one hundred and thirty-one remaining, eighty-nine rejected it, and forty-two were not represented, or made no return.² In Wilkes-Barre, when the directors assembled in the November following the election, as instructed by Act of Assembly, they resolved to levy a school tax equal to double the sum appropriated by the state for school purposes.³

In his message to the Legislature at the opening of the session of 1834-35 Governor Wolf in commenting upon the passage of the law during the previous session made the following significant statement: "At the last session of the Legislature an act was passed for establishing a general system of education by common schools throughout the Commonwealth, in compliance with a constitutional provision which until then, although not entirely disregarded, had never been carried into effect in the manner intended by the members of the convention to whose sagacity and profound political wisdom we are indebted for the present excellent Constitution of our state This may be emphatically pronounced to be a measure belonging to the era of seventeen hundred and ninety, and not to that of eighteen hundred and thirty-four. To insist that it emanated either from the Executive or the Legislature, however desirable it might be to appropriate the proud distinction of being its progenitor, is an entire fallacy. Such a monument of imperishable fame was not reserved for the men of modern times,—it belongs to

¹ 1818; March 3; P. L., 124.

² Wickersham: *Op. cit.*, p. 322.

³ Wyoming Republican, November 12, 1834.

the statesmen of by-gone days. To the patriots who formed the constitution under which we live and under which we have been pre-eminently prosperous and happy belongs the proud trophy, it is to them we are indebted for this wholesome measure."¹

The struggle was not ended, however, by the law of 1834. The law did not represent the public opinion of the state. The question was agitated the next year in the state and in the Legislature. The repeal of the law was proposed and the re-enactment of that of 1809. Numerous petitions for repeal or modification of the law were sent to the Legislature, and others were sent remonstrating against the repeal.² Mr. Almon H. Read represented in the Senate the eleventh district, composed of Bradford, Susquehanna and Tioga counties, and he strove to preserve the common school system for his own district and for Luzerne. The New England section was resolved to retain the school law. The Harrisburg correspondent of Poulson's Daily Advertiser of March 20, 1835, wrote: "The Senate agreed on second reading to repeal the school law of last session; a strenuous exertion was made by Mr. Read of Susquehanna to have the counties of Luzerne, Susquehanna, Bradford and Tioga exempted from the repeal, but a majority of our enlightened Senators were determined that the constituencies of other Senators should not enjoy the advantage of what they termed an aristocratic law, though they earnestly desired it. Our Jack Cades seemed determined to destroy every vestige of a general and enlightened system of education." The same writer had asserted that one-fourth of the adult population of Pennsylvania were unable to write their names. "By way of contrast," said the Wyoming Republican and Herald, "how does this matter stand in Connecticut? Chief Justice Reeves of that state says that during twenty-seven years of professional practice every one of his clients could write his name."³ Once more Pennsylvania was indebted for educational leadership to New England, and this time the forces on the side of the common school were marshalled by Thaddeus Stevens. A law was

¹ Journal of the Senate of Pennsylvania, 1834-35, pp. 18-20.

² Journals of the Senate and House of Representatives for 1834-35.

³ Wyoming Republican and Herald, April 15, 1835.

finally enacted and approved April 15, 1835, which established permanently the free common school in the state.¹ The law of 1836, "An Act to consolidate and amend the several acts relative to a general system of education by common schools," finally shaped the educational policy of the state.²

The long-established practice of the Wyoming district merged easily into the new system, the financial basis having already been laid. At a meeting of School Delegates from different townships of the County of Luzerne, held on May 27, 1835, it was resolved that a tax be authorized in the county of three thousand dollars, and if that sum should be found insufficient to entitle the county to the State appropriation, such a sum should be levied as would be double the amount of such appropriation by the State. It was also resolved that a form of Certificate be used in the different districts of the county: "The Undersigned School Directors of.....District hereby certify that we have examined and find.....to be of good moral character and qualified to teach Reading, Writing, Arithmetic,....." ³

By the law of 1831 the state had begun the creation of a fund for the support of schools. School funds had long been established in Wyoming by the lease or sale of the lands set apart by the Susquehanna Company in the various townships. These were known as the "Proprietors' Funds." In consequence of the early lease or sale of these tracts only small sums had been realized in many cases from lands which at this date would have yielded large amounts. Under the Act of 1799 certificates had been issued by the Commissioners to the School Committees for the time being for such lots as remained in trust for the use of the proprietors of the townships. As these Committees had from time to time sold or let upon leases for a long term of years large parts of the lots, reserving the rents for the use of the proprietors, and since they were not vested with the legal titles, these sales and leases were not valid. Moreover, rents and dues had increased but they could not be recovered without legal authority. The legislature therefore passed an Act on April 2,

¹ 1835, April 15; P. L., 365.

² 1836, June 13; P. L., 525.

³ Wyoming Republican and Herald, June 24, 1835.

1831, incorporating the trustees of the township and borough of Wilkes-Barre, those of the township of Plymouth and of Hanover, and providing for the election in each township of three persons to be called "proprietors," to constitute a body corporate and politic.¹ On April 14, 1835, a supplement to the above Act was approved, extending its provisions to the township and proprietors of Providence.² "Had the government of Pennsylvania made similar provision for each township in the Commonwealth," says a Wyoming writer in 1830, "its advantages, judging from all experience, and particularly from the Connecticut system of Common School support from which the original settlers in Kingston took the hint, would have been invaluable. The day is past for this species of provision; but it is believed if Pennsylvania prosecutes and completes her system of internal improvement, the time is not far distant when its income will be abundantly sufficient to extinguish the debt incurred, and make ample provision for the Common School education of every child in this Commonwealth."³ These words embodied a prophecy and a hope which were destined to a speedy fulfilment, when a few years later the great State made up of the descendants of so many peoples delivered to her children the charter of their democracy in education, and sealed to the childhood of the Commonwealth forever the inestimable privileges of the common school.

¹ 1831, April 2; P. L., 367.

² 1835, April 14; P. L., 274.

³ Chapman: *Op. cit.*, Appendix, pp. 166, 189.

APPENDIX

A. In volume XIII, p. 111, of the Proceedings and Collections of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society Mr. Harvey writes: "Colonel Pickering, writing to his brother in November, 1787, with respect to certain disturbances in Wyoming said: 'The principal conspirators (in a plan to erect a new state in the Wyoming region and adjacent country of New York) lived in the States of Connecticut and New York. Their plot was so far advanced that Major (William) Judd, a Connecticut lawyer, had actually drawn up a Constitution for their intended new State, which was to be called Westmoreland, the name of the Wyoming district when a county under Connecticut jurisdiction.'"

B. The *Susquehanna Democrat* for December 4, 1812, contained the following announcement: "The Trustees and Managers of the Wilkes-Barre Academy inform the public that the Superintendence of that institution is now intrusted to Mr. Jennison under a permanent engagement for the term of three years at least. Scholars are instructed in all or any of the following branches: viz., Spelling, Reading, Penmanship, Book-keeping, Arithmetic, English Grammar, in its various parts, Geography and the use of the Globes, History, Composition, the Latin and Greek languages in all their respective classical authors, Rhetorick, Logic, Mathematicks in all the different branches, including Natural Philosophy and Astronomy; and generally all the branches of Science which are taught in any of the Academies of our country. The studies of scholars, if requested, will be so calculated as to prepare them for admission into any college which may be desired, or the pupils by a longer continuance at the Academy may obtain the substance of a complete scientific education."

C. The *Susquehanna Democrat* for May 7, 1813, contained the following: Mr. and Miss Woodbridge from Philadelphia announce that a Boarding and Day School is opened in Wilkes-Barre for the instruction of Young Ladies in the following branches of Education: Writing, Grammar, Letter-Writing and

Composition, Arithmetic, with its ready application to bills and accounts, Geography with the use of the Globes and Maps. A general course of useful Science and Polite Literature, including Chronology and History, domestic, ancient and modern, Rhetoric and Poetry, the Elements of Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Natural History, Chemistry, Moral Philosophy, explaining the powers, operations and improvements of the mind, the relations, virtues and duties of humanity. "The proper study of Mankind is Man."

The whole will be reviewed, exemplified and explained by a course of Lectures, calculated to render the progress of the Scholars and the review of Studies entertaining and useful A Committee of monthly visitation of the School and general observation of the manners and morals of the Scholars will be appointed from the Parents, Guardians and respectable inhabitants of Wilkes-Barre.

We, the undersigned, certify that the above Rev. William Woodbridge has been employed as Principal in a Young Ladies' Academy for many years past, that he has resided and taught with honor to himself and great improvement to his pupils, and in testimony of our confidence in him as the able and faithful Instructor we propose to place our Daughters under his care and tuition in his Boarding School.

LORD BUTLER
ROSEWELL WELLES
EBENEZER BOWMAN

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