

# THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

BY

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## PREFACE

In planning this book, the author proceeded upon the assumption that the junior high school movement is not an isolated phenomenon but an integral part of a much larger movement — the movement which has as its aim the re-making of the American public-school system in terms of true function. This accounts for the fact that the discussion, although focused upon the new institution, proceeds, nevertheless, constantly in terms of the larger whole.

The author has assumed, further, that an adequate understanding of the junior high school movement is in a large measure conditioned by a fairly definite historical and comparative orientation. Accordingly, the historical and comparative background of the new institution has been canvassed with more than usual care. The canvass is, however, decidedly selective, only the more pertinent aspects having been selected for emphasis.

In organizing the materials it seemed best, from the standpoint of the needs and interests of the student, to center the discussion about certain major aspects of the situation — the historical and comparative background, the pupils, the major purposes, the program of studies, extra-curricular activities, and problems in organization and administration — instead of treating many topics in relative

isolation. Some aspects, however, — notably the pupils, the program of studies, and problems in organization and administration, — are so vast that each merits a book by itself. In such cases the author has confined himself, as far as possible, to fundamental considerations.

Beyond this, the author has endeavored to make his account of the new institution representative of the best thought and practice throughout the country. The junior high school has been, and still is, a great coöperative enterprise. It is the product of no one man and of no one section of the country. It is, moreover, although quite beyond the pale of question, still in the making. There is, therefore, urgent need of continued and ever growing coöperation on the part of all concerned. Only thus can the issue be brought to successful conclusion.

Finally, it may not be amiss to state that the book as such has grown up largely in the classroom. The content and the organization are for the most part those of a course on The Junior High School. All the chapters have been used in manuscript form, and the author is in no small degree indebted to the reactions of his students.

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# THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

## CHAPTER I

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

The American school system, after centuries of evolution, emerged finally in the form of a graded ladder scheme. Not only is each of the main divisions — the elementary, the secondary, and the higher — organized in the form of consecutive units or grades, but the main divisions themselves are arranged in sequential order. In consequence, an American child may enter the elementary division, progress regularly through this and the succeeding divisions, and leave in the end thoroughly equipped for one of the learned professions. Such a school system is democratic in theory at least, and the American people believe that it can be made so in practice. It stands in marked contrast to the leading European systems, which consist of two rather separate and distinct branches — one for the upper classes, embracing elementary, secondary, and higher education, and the other for the masses, embracing elementary and vocational education.

The democratic American educational ladder scheme was evolved gradually in the course of several centuries. In tracing its evolution we shall center our discussion about three rather distinct historical periods — the Colonial,

extending from the time of the first settlements to the Revolution; the Early National, extending roughly from the Revolution to the Civil War; and the Modern, extending from the Civil War to the close of the first decade of the twentieth century. Each of these periods had its distinct economic, social, and political characteristics, and the school was strongly influenced by these. But there was something even more formidable, though less tangible — namely, the temper, the traditions, and the ideals of the dominant element of our population. A people with a different temper, with different traditions, and with different ideals would have wrought out a very different system of education.

### THE COLONIAL PERIOD

**Characteristics of the colonial period.** The colonial period was dominantly a period of transplantation. To a marked extent the colonists reproduced on the new soil the institutions and the practices to which they had become accustomed in the mother country. As time went on, and in many instances from the very outset, there was of course marked adaptation to new conditions. Frequently, too, the colonists departed from established institutional practices because they cherished ideals which differed from those of the mother country. In the main, however, the character of colonial institutions, educational and otherwise, was determined by European antecedents.

**Colonial attitudes toward education.** There were in evidence among the colonies three rather distinct attitudes toward education. The settlers of Virginia and the southern colonies generally, for the most part adherents of the Church of England, assumed the prevailing English atti-

tude, which meant, aside from provision for trade-apprenticeship for orphan and pauper children, no state action in behalf of education, its encouragement being left to private agencies, including the church. The settlers of Pennsylvania and most of the other middle colonies, for the most part Calvinists and Lutherans, adhered to the prevailing continental protestant ideal of universal elementary education for religious ends and under church control, and so reproduced in their midst as far as possible the parochial elementary school which had long since taken firm root in the protestant countries of continental Europe. The settlers of Massachusetts and other New England colonies (with the exception of Rhode Island) — for the most part dissenters from the Church of England — believed, in common with other Calvinists, in universal elementary education for religious ends and in such secondary and higher education as would insure intelligent leadership for church and state. In contrast with orthodox England, they regarded the church and the state as essentially one, their ideal being the religious state. Hence at a very early date they made departures from established English educational practices — departures the significance of which it is difficult to appreciate fully. They called upon the state to enforce elementary and secondary education, and they adopted the principle that public money raised by general taxation may be used for the support of such education.

These three attitudes existed side by side, in their respective territories, throughout most of the colonial period. They were in a sense competitive attitudes, any one of which might in the end win out and determine the educational point of view of the country at large. As the settlements spread westward these different attitudes came into

more intimate contact, since the settlers from the various colonies often met in the new communities. This led to a long-protracted struggle for supremacy, with many a bitter conflict. Gradually, in the course of the early national period, the New England attitude won out and became the educational attitude of the whole nation, in the sense that the whole nation came to believe in a school system controlled by representatives of the people and supported by public funds, the religious motive giving way to the civic.

**Colonial schools.** At the time that America was being settled, the parochial elementary school was rather firmly established in the protestant countries of continental Europe. In England elementary education was given largely in the home and in private dame schools, and to a limited extent in charity or pauper schools. There were also in most European countries private writing and reckoning schools. Beyond this, there was rather general provision, especially in England, for apprenticeship training for orphan and indigent children. Secondary education was carried on most commonly in Latin schools of one kind or another. In England these were known as grammar schools. Higher education was furnished by the universities with their varied colleges. As indicated earlier, the colonists transplanted these institutions in a large measure to the new soil, making such adaptations as were demanded by new conditions and varying ideals.

In Virginia and the southern colonies generally, elementary education was supplied largely by tutors and by private schools and to some extent by charity and pauper schools. It was for the most part a private and voluntary affair, neither the state nor the church concerning itself

seriously about it. In Pennsylvania and other middle colonies, it was supplied largely by parochial schools and was compulsory only in so far as the several sects enforced it among their constituents. In Massachusetts and other New England colonies, elementary education was at first furnished by the home, by private dame schools, and by elementary schools maintained by the towns. There was at the outset no enforcement agency except the church, which held that it was the duty of the parents to see that their children were instructed in reading and in the principles of religion. Soon, however, the church called the state to her assistance, and compulsory laws were passed. At first these laws merely required the town authorities to see that parents and guardians complied with their educational duties; later on they compelled the towns, under penalty of fine, to maintain schools wholly or partly at public expense.

*The dame school.* Although the children of colonial New England were sometimes taught to read in the home, they were more often sent either to dame schools or to town elementary schools for this purpose. The dame schools were at first purely private schools conducted by women, usually in their homes. They received children, both boys and girls, between the ages of four and seven and taught them the elements of reading and sometimes, in the case of the girls, also a little handwork. Toward the close of the seventeenth century, with the increasing dispersion of the population, the dame school often came to assume a semipublic character, the dames being not infrequently designated and in part paid by the town authorities. Later on, with the rise of the moving and the divided schools and the coming of the district system, the dame school was,



in the case of the smaller communities and the outskirts of the towns, often transformed into the school of the three R's. As such it became the public elementary school of the community. In the larger and more densely populated communities, the dame school often became the primary department of the elementary school, the town elementary school becoming the grammar department.

*The town elementary school.* A number of New England towns voluntarily established elementary schools at an early date. These schools were supported in various ways — by endowments, tuition fees, voluntary contributions, and general taxes. In time, town elementary schools became more or less compulsory. Thus the Massachusetts law of 1647 provided that “every township after the Lord has increased them to the number of fifty householders shall then forthwith appoint one within their town to teach all such children as shall report to him to write and read.” Similar provisions were made in several other New England colonies. Although the term “children” is commonly used in legal documents, the schools as such appear to have been limited to boys, at least until well toward the close of the colonial period. The formal education of the average girl was essentially complete once she had mastered the elements of reading and sewing, and instruction toward these ends was supplied chiefly by the home and the dame school. In some of the larger communities there were of course private schools where the exceptional girl was able to continue her education. In time, too, some communities began to provide separate elementary instruction for girls, either during the summer or at special hours. The school of the three R's, which came into prominence in the smaller communities during the latter part of the period,