THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ACTIVITY MOVEMENT

APPROVED:

[Signatures]

Major Professor

Minor Professor

Director of the Department of Education

Chairman of the Graduate Council
THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ACTIVITY MOVEMENT

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By

Lila Elizabeth Glover, B. S.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nature and Purpose of the Study

The problem of this research is to analyze the philosophy of the activity movement in the United States from a sociological point of view. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to discover whether or not the activity movement grew out of the social conditions of the times and was designed to meet the staggering problems of social development and reconstruction in America.

Sources of Data

Since the nature of this study is historical, data have been secured exclusively from secondary sources. Professional books, embodying economic, historical, and sociological information on the past 140 years have been consulted. Professional books interpreting the philosophical and educational concepts of the traditional curriculum and of the activity movement have furnished data necessary to the study. In addition, reports and recommendations of professional groups have adequately supplemented other sources of information. Especially vital to an understanding of the problem were the yearbooks of the National Society for the Study of Education and the third yearbook of

Treatment of Data

When all available information was assimilated and classified, the logical discussions were included by sequence in the designated chapters. This, the introductory chapter, contains a statement of the problem, an explanation of its purpose, a designation of informational sources, and a description of the method of treating the problem.

Chapter II is an interpretation of the sociological background of the problem from 1800-1850, briefly depicting a historical drama of American life during the period. It contains a resume of the early physical conquest of the continent dominated by concepts of the familiar property motif: hard work, self-denial, absorption in physical exploitation, and the acquisition of a competence.

The discussion of the physical conquest of the continent has been augmented by an interpretation of the sociological and educational development of the country which paralleled the physical development.

Chapter III is a continuation of the story begun in the previous chapter. It contains a discussion of the same factor during the period of 1850-1900. Difficult economic, political, and social questions confronted the citizens of American society as that society progressed from one stage to another. It was necessary for them to decide how a democratic government in a
vast heterogeneous nation could provide an adequate economic basis for complete living. They also were faced with such questions as how to assure continuous employment for all, how to divide the social income equitably among the people, and how to set up a national school system that would be endowed with the power and facilities to produce an informed, thinking citizenship. These and other crucial questions presented themselves in the building of a national social program in America.

Throughout the discussion, the status of the child has been kept in mind, and the effect on his life of the socio-economic changes has been noted. The sociological discussions serve as a background for discovering whether the public school activity movement was propagated by prevalent social forces and existing conditions.

Social problems and educational principles in the period from 1900 to 1940 are discussed in Chapter IV. Underlying the difficult and varied sociological problems that confronted American society in its progress were important psychological questions that tended to hold educational practices of the public schools. They included questions of knowledge and of individual and social action. People began to ask educators and psychologists to explain the ways of knowing. They sought an analysis of how problems are solved. They inquired as to what constituted growth. These concepts led to a discussion of what desires propel behavior and shape conduct. In short, the psychological foundation for a democratic society was being
unearthed. Previously, Charles Pierce and William James had sketched an outline of the experimental method of knowing; then John Dewey came. He laid much intellectual groundwork for a timely philosophy, a social program, and educational practices which resulted in the present activity movement.

A summary of the study makes up Chapter V, the final chapter of the thesis.
CHAPTER II

THE PHYSICAL CONQUEST OF AMERICA, ACCOMPANYING SOCIAL PROBLEMS, AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES FROM 1800 TO 1850

Physical Conquest

A century and a half of American independence were marked by the physical conquest of this continent. The physical America, with its land and forests, its rivers and deserts, its mountains and plains, its harbors and highways, so spurred man's activity to conquer them that little concern was manifested in the parallel development of his social and cultural life.¹

The natural environment of this continent affected the ways of living, the distribution of population, man's general cultural occupations, and standards of living; it has also been fundamental in agriculture and in rural life. Through the exploitation of natural resources and the use of machinery in industry, economic progress has been made.

Man, since his first venture from Europe to the west by water, continued his trek westward across the American continent. He was driven by an innate desire for political, economic, social, and religious freedom and an extension of interests, and he steadily moved westward into new fields. He continued such a

movement until he reached a water barrier or the geographical limits of this continent.

The westward movement began as a result of the efforts exerted by the New England colonists and the aristocracy of the South to free themselves of their creditors in England and on the continent. During the trying post-revolutionary days, land-hungry colonists, eager for a new start, pushed westward into forests which they transformed into grain fields, interspersed with cabins made of logs, hewn from the neighboring trees. By 1800 this group had been augmented by colonists who had left Europe to escape the militarism of the day, and this great horde had reached the Mississippi.

For another half-century the Americans moved westward, eager to conquer the barriers before them, driven by the economic impulse to acquire more land and property.

This exploration into the West created new trade interests which initiated an epidemic of road and canal building. Insignificant trails were transformed into dirt roads over which rumbled the heavy wagons, while marshy wagon paths became log roads. Plank and stone roads also came into prominence in this orgy of road-building.

As the caravans of westward movers increased, the starting places moved steadily to the new frontier. The big rivers formed the arterial trunk lines for the location of frontier settlements, for ultimate travel, and for the transportation of the products of the West. By 1800 frontier posts had advanced from Fort Pitt
and Cincinnati to Louisville, then known as Losantiville. Behind this movement was the impelling economic force, clamoring for the trade of the West. New England and Middle Atlantic cities between the mountains and the Mississippi vied with each other in the construction of macadamized roads and other improved means of transportation. New transportation experimentations materialized into realities with the successful accomplishment of Clinton's Folly in 1825, which joined Lake Erie and the Atlantic. Various products of the pioneers in the West were carried by boat either to New York, by way of the Great Lakes, the Erie Canal, and the Hudson River, or to New Orleans for shipment to foreign ports. The flat-boats, which had in their time replaced the Indian's canoe, were being supplemented by steamboats in 1830.

Soon the people of the South cleared the forests to the west, replacing them with snowy-white fields of cotton. These fields of cotton inspired the inventive mind of Eli Whitney of New York to the extent that he presented the cotton gin to the industrial world. With the increased production of cotton encouraged by this invention, the number of slaves mounted rapidly. The resultant opposition in the North to slavery in the South produced a social problem which created a dissension later recognized as sectionalism.

Although methods of transportation changed more completely than those employed in manufacture, inventions of the first half of the nineteenth century practically revolutionized
industry. Among the more important innovations were the introduction of the steam printing press, the use of the hot-air blast in the smelting of iron ore, the introduction of the power loom, and the invention of the reaper, the sewing machine, and the steam hammer for use in steel work. Improvements in methods of cotton manufacture brought an increase in the number of employees in that work. The number of persons engaged in cotton manufacture in Massachusetts in 1831 was 13,543; in 1850 the number totaled 28,730. During the period of industrial awakening east of the Mississippi, pioneers of the front were moving westward at the rate of thirty miles per year. These pioneers were establishing an agricultural civilization hitherto unknown on the prairies west of the Mississippi. They pushed into Kansas and Nebraska after those states were opened for homesteading. Texas and the Southwest were settled and developed as agricultural lands. Accompanying this expansion west of the Mississippi was the problem of slave labor. Slave power had paralleled the growth of the cotton kingdom, creating in its wake the three classes—the slave owners, "poor whites", and blacks.

In the meantime, the profits from the California gold mines,


3 Frank Tracy Carlton, *Economic Influences Upon Educational Progress in the United States*, p. 52.

or from the industrial plants of the East, manifested them-
sele as a counterpart to the greed for profits from slave
labor in the cotton fields of the South. Economic problems
arose and formed a basis of political issues almost unnoticed
by the people whose activities were producing them. The
solution of these economic and political issues called for
trained minds which the schools of the day failed to produce.
Throughout the mad scramble for territory, the status of the
child fluctuated as communities changed population. Insecurity,
unrest, and fear pervaded the child kingdom as the pioneers
spanned the continent. Children were not considered a part of
society, and they received little social consideration or
recognition. Their lot was one of subjugation and repressed
activity.

Social Problems

As America developed her institutions, the people were
constantly confronted by many social problems and issues--
problems bound up in an emerging national culture.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the United
States was a weak nation, possessing an unknown immensity of
undeveloped resources. By the nineteenth century, it had
grown to be one of the richest and most powerful nations of
the earth—an acknowledged great power. Development of resources
was the demand and the necessity of the period. Exploitation of
natural treasures and constant expansion was the program of the
century. Resourceful, self-reliant, and individualistic men who were willing and able to devote unbridling energy to the task of building up the material strength and resources of the nation, were needed; they became the familiar, successful, and progressive type of American manhood. The fundamental, all-absorbing economic question was production, which was carried on chiefly through the exploitation of natural resources. The rough and crude form of frontier life reacted upon the entire people, and left an imprint which many generations will not entirely eradicate.

This epoch of 1800 to 1850 was one of rapid transformation from household industry to the factory system. It was the era of the extension of suffrage, of the abolition of imprisonment for debt, of various humanitarian movements, from religious revivals to the establishment of communistic settlements, from temperance reform to efforts toward the abolition of slavery, which reached a climax a few years later. During this period, the growth of the cities was rapid, and important labor movements arose.

The early part of the period was characterized by the rapid growth of urban population, the development of manufacture, and a multiplicity of important inventions. In the three New England States of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, during the period from 1820-1840, the number of persons engaged in agriculture increased approximately one-fourth; those engaged

\[5\] Frank Tracy Carlton, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
in commerce decreased about one-third; and those engaged in manufacture and trades increased nearly two and one-half times. 6

The immigration into the United States during the decade of 1820-1830 was 143,439; during the next decade, 599,251, and during the period 1840-1850, it increased to 1,718,251. 7 The state census of New York (1845) found that more than one-eighth of the entire population was of foreign birth, and that more than one-third of the inhabitants of New York City were foreign born. The character of the population was rapidly changing. Many immigrants were finding homes in the North Atlantic States, and many of the home stock were migrating westward. This shift in population carried mammoth social problems with it. These problems truly were of concern to the country at large, but they also affected the homes and the school. The child, as a result, suffered at the hands of industrialists.

Among the important inventions and innovations of the period were many which practically revolutionized industrial methods; for example, the introduction of anthracite coal into iron smelting, the introduction of the mower, the reaper, the sewing machine, and the friction match, the introduction of the steam printing press, the use of the screw propeller on steam boats, and the invention of the steam hammer for steel working.

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6 Ibid., p. 32. 7 Ibid.
Methods of transportation and communication changed even more completely than did those employed in manufacture. Because of the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, the succeeding ten years saw a rapid development of canal systems in the northern states. The use of steamboats, which began before the opening of this period, increased at a rapid pace. More important, however, was the development of the railroad system. The first steam railroad, three miles in length, was built in 1826. In 1840 the mileage of the steam railroads of the United States was 2,640; in 1860, 9,021. Locomotive construction in the United States began about 1830. The first telegraph line was constructed in 1844. Each of these inventions and industries affected the child of the nineteenth century because each one affected the homes of the land.

The extension of the privilege of casting the ballot, which was an interesting and important phenomenon of the first half of the first half of the nineteenth century, was closely connected with the educational movements of the times. Both were parts of the democratic movement which aimed at benefiting the masses. The extension of suffrage enabled the workers, congregated in the cities, to become important factors in the political arena, thus giving their demands a potency which otherwise would have been lacking.

The social movements of the nineteenth century were so closely connected and interwoven with the educational advance of the period that it is necessary to note the sources of these two

\[8\text{Ibid., p. 33.}\]
movements, and to notice the cause which led to their decline or dilution. After the termination of the War of 1812 there came a period of anxiety and distress for the artificially stimulated manufacturing industries which the war and the Embargo Act had fostered. This period terminated in the crisis of 1819.

With the revival of industries, beginning about 1822 and becoming quite apparent in 1825, came the rapid growth of town population and the stimulation of immigration. A new set of industrial and social problems was placed before the people of this young republic, particularly those residing in the northern and eastern states. The peculiar evils of modern urban life became apparent; but experience gained from rural life afforded no adequate guide as to the proper and effective methods of coping with these new evils. Idle and uneducated children appeared upon the streets of the cities and towns, on the one hand, and on the other, the problem of child and woman labor in factories or in intensive domestic industry pressed for solution. The rush into town, the consequent change from outdoor and active life to indoor and comparatively sedentary life, and the greater opportunities for association with others, made more noticeable, if it did not actually increase, the evils of intemperance. Pauperism and crime became crying evils. Societies for the prevention of crime, for the aid of the poor, and for other benevolent

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purposes, sprang into existence seemingly by magic.

In 1833 it was reported that 6,069 criminals and vagrants were committed to local prisons in New York City; the number of public paupers was estimated to be 24,326, making a total of 30,396, or about one-eighth of the total population of that city. The amount of public money needed for the support of these classes of the population was about $300,000. In addition, the number of dramshops in the city of New York in the year of 1833, was approximately 3,000.\textsuperscript{10} These conditions were an index to prevailing conditions in other parts of the country.

The following statistics give an idea of the amount of woman and child labor in the cotton industry during the opening years of the decade 1830-1840: males employed, 23,301; females, 39,178; children (under twelve years of age), 5,121.\textsuperscript{11} These conditions gave rise to weighty social problems that affected childlife in the early nineteenth century.

Humanitarianism was a product of the social and economic change and unrest of the new century. The leaders wished to continue the old semi-paternalistic method of domestic economy into modern industrial and city life. They saw the existing evils of child and woman labor, pauperism, juvenile crime, intemperance and unemployment. They were strongly impressed by the disintegrating effects upon the family of crowded city and town life. They magnified and glorified the desirable features of the earlier form of domestic industry with its

\textsuperscript{10} Frank Tracy Carlton, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 38.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
intimate personal relations between workers and employers. The hurry and bustle of business and the keenness of the race for profits offended and shocked them. They saw a new class of men rising to control not merely the wealth but the political and social affairs of the state and union. They were animated by very different ideals and motives from those which appealed to this new economic and social class. The two classes were instinctively antagonistic, and the humanitarians struggled against that which seemed to them to be evil. These men more or less unconsciously joined hands with the new-born labor movement. The two dissimilar forces united in aiding in the educational advance toward tax-supported schools. Educational progress was most marked in the cities where these two forces developed their greatest strength.

In this study, it is not wise to enter into an intensive analysis of the labor movement which waxed and waned during the period. Its inception was, of course, the natural, or rather the inevitable, result of the aggregation of workers in towns and factories. Various industrial classes were at this time struggling for the mastery of America. The plantation South in alliance with the pioneer West held the reins of power. However, their interests were by no means identical, and there were many points of disagreement concerning a political program. In the North the commercial class was just giving way to the manufacturing class; arrayed against this latter were the new social forces of the proletariat. The resulting confusion was felt in every state of the union.
Since the home was the foundation of society, the social problems that accompanied the industrial revolution and other developments of the period from 1800 to 1850 meant the disturbance of child life in the United States.

Educational Practices From 1800-1850

Educational history during the first half of the nineteenth century must be studied by the aid of the light given by industrial history. This first era of westward movement was passing at the time when the leaders of New England and of the South were busily engaged in drafting the Constitution of the United States. Since the Constitution did not provide for educational units, the United States government had no direct authority over schools. To what, then, did the public school systems owe their origin?

The Federal Constitution's provision for religious liberty led to an early abandonment of state religions, religious tests, public taxation for religious purposes in the old states, and to the prohibition of these in the new states. The importance of this solution of the religious question for the future of popular education in the United States was great, for it laid the foundations upon which the systems of free, common, public, tax-supported, non-sectarian schools were built. 12

Constitutions of the New England States referred to education only in the most general terms, leaving the legislatures free to

organize the state school systems from time to time as seemed best in the light of conditions. After 1837 all states organized state departments of education; the complete control of schools remained in the hands of the states. The federal government supplemented educational pursuits by making grants of land and money and by supervising the use of educational grants in the states. Schools were directly related to taxation, public construction, public protection, and all the other general aspects of community life.

With the eventual establishment of the public free school system, there did not come a curriculum which met the needs of the youth of America. The current of American life was attended on the one hand by rapid industrial development and extensive exploitation of natural resources, and on the other hand by a sluggish educational process. During this development of American institutions, the public school continued to sleep, content to give to its youth selections from "The Idylls of the King," the forty-seven irregular verbs, the conservation of energy and a few theorems from algebra. The youth had schools to attend but received no preparation for keeping space with the new political, economic, and social developments in their nation.\footnote{Harold Rugg, \textit{Culture and Education in America}, p. 60.}
of universal education, crowned by a national university. They projected institutions of learning extending from the primary schools to a national university in charge of research, general instruction, and training for the public service. They dealt with the nature of American society and government as they served the progressive development of individuals and society. These schemes emphasized the practical and political arts, but they went beyond any narrow utilitarianism in that they included pure science, letters, and all the arts deemed necessary for a rich, secure, and enlightened civilization. They recognized the truth that both government and economy rest upon wisdom, knowledge, and aspirations, wider and deeper than the interests of immediate market-ability.

Freedom of inquiry was emphasized, and as never before, the works of nature, institutions of Church and State, the forms and distribution of property, the relations of property to government, the processes of government, the driving forces of social life, the family and its historic role, the maxims of industry and commerce, and international affairs were brought up for critical examination. Education planners for the nation proposed to throw off denominational control of education, emphasized unhampered scientific research, and upheld the unfettered right of exposition.

George Washington took a broad view of education and advocated national aids. Thomas Jefferson made education a
primary interest, and John Quincy Adams emulated the example of Washington; but the times were not favorable for the promotion of plans for education. The population of America consisted of between three and four million persons by 1800, thinly scattered over a wide area.  

Rural civilization predominated. Less than five per cent of the total population lived in the thirteen cities of eight thousand or over in 1820. Slow means of transportation and communication resulted in isolation for most of the people. Collective action was difficult. Moreover, the war for independence had exhausted the resources of the government and had left a war debt which threatened to keep the treasury depleted over a period of years. The people were engrossed in political matters. As a consequence of these adverse conditions, education declined to its lowest point since schools were founded by the colonists.

In 1828 when Andrew Jackson became president, events provided a new setting of ideas and interests for the period in which institutions of popular education were actually created. Educational philosophy was adapted to the spirit of the age. It was conceived as an aid in sustaining democratic government. Horace Mann, successor of John Quincy Adams in the House of Representatives, turned to universal education as the best insurance against mobocracy, confiscatory legislation, threats to judicial supremacy and the spoils system. It was

\[14\text{Ibid., p. 146.}\]
argued that public education would develop good citizens and make the success of democracy possible. It was also advocated that the assimilation of aliens was a function of education. Foreigners poured into the country as the growth of industries and the development of agriculture opened the way for them. The task of education was to teach immigrants the English language, to prepare them for crafts and callings in the United States, and to instruct them in respect to the spirit of American democracy.

The depression of 1830 and the era of economic prosperity which followed it, gave Horace Mann an opportune basis for the introduction of educational reforms. Mann proposed the installation of and the use of school libraries, the adjustments of materials and methods of teaching which included the word method of teaching of the subject; oral language instruction, observation and object lessons outside the school room for such subjects as geography and nature study; and the Pestalozzian theory of mental arithmetic. In his opinion the Latin-grammar schools and academic schools of 1830 were inadequate in the face of the new spirit of freedom and democracy.

The textbooks of the early eighteenth century were nature, formal, dry, barren, designedly intricate, and perplexing. Yet they formed the chief instruments of instruction, as the following quotations show:

\[15\] Ellwood Cubberly, A Brief History of Education, p. 418.
Most of the questions (in the survey tests) might be answered by children who are familiar with the textbooks used in our schools, all of them by children to whom these textbooks had been fully and familiarly explained by good teachers. (Survey Committee)

In what condition are these children (failures in definitions test) to read the Bible, or to hear a sermon? In what condition are they to read an essay, or a speech, or any instructive subject? The great end of education is to fit them to become men. Where is the evidence that the minds of these children have been trained to precision and exactness of thought? (Horace Mann)

All pupils of average ability who have been properly taught should have a command, not merely of the particular fact, or the general statement of a truth or principle, but also of its connection, relations, and applications. Textbooks contain a much greater proportion of isolated facts and of abstract principles, than of relations and applications. This is the circumstance which gives pertinency and significance to their distinctive appellation, textbooks. They are books containing texts. These texts the teacher is to expound. Each one of them should be the foundation of a discourse, or a series of discourses. This is teaching. It is the exposition of the principle contained in the books; showing its connection with life; with action, with duty; making it the nucleus around which to gather all related facts and all collateral principles; it is this and this only, which can appropriately be called teaching. All short of this is mere journey-work, rude mechanical labor and drudgery. 16

The conclusion to be drawn from these and many similar statements is that in 1845 education on the intellectual side was conceived as a process by which the children acquired knowledge and skill as a result of the instruction and exposition by their teachers of the texts in the textbooks. The children's business was to learn and to recite; that of the teachers to expound and to appraise; and the function of the training given was supposedly a preparation for living. There were usually one small blackboard to a school, a few small

16Otis W. Caldwell and Stuart A. Courtis, Then and Now in Education, p. 17.
gloves, no maps, no supplementary reading, and no legitimate child activity, much routine memorization, endless drill and recitation, and constant repression of childish desire for exercise and play.

In one respect the Boston schools of 1845 differed markedly from those of the present day. The religious and moral elements were much in evidence. There was daily reading of the Scriptures. The Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments were required to be read and repeated at least once a week.

Between 1820 and 1860 history and geography became rapidly established as widely prevalent units of the elementary school curriculum, and geography was finally required by law. 17

As was true of the geographies, the content of the histories was primarily an encyclopedia presentation of militaristic developments of old world history, supplemented by a little of the American chronicle. Political history was dominated by the recital of names of rulers, officials, dates of battles, legislative enactments, and constitutional provisions. Industrial history was never mentioned, nor the economic and social problems shaping on the frontier and in the towns. The civic books came into the curriculum largely in response to the demand of educational leaders and laymen before 1860 for the development in the minds of the young of an understanding of government. The prevailing conception of that day, however, was that under-

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standing of government would come from the memorization of
the American Constitution.

Arguments for the free tax-supported schools, or for
the educational advance in the early nineteenth century, may
be arranged approximately in the order of importance: (1)
Education was necessary for the preservation of free institutions.
(2) It prevented class differentiation. (3) Education tended to
diminish crime. (4) It reduced the amount of poverty and
distress. (5) It increased production. (6) It was the natural
right of all individuals. (7) It would rectify the false ideas
as to unjust distribution of wealth. These arguments set forth
one of the first demands for a workable curriculum. Specifically,
the germ of the activity movement was sown when educators, in
this period, began to disseminate the benefits that could be
expected from education.

In 1839 Robert Rantoul made the following statements,
which interpreted the public's realization of the necessity
of a school program that would meet the needs of a changing
society. Between the lines, there is a plea for such
curricular activities that characterize the modern activity
movement:

A self-governing people without education is an
impossibility; but a self-governing people, imperfectly and
badly educated may continually thwart itself, may often fail
in its best purpose, and often carry out the worst.

\[\text{Frank Tracy Carlton, op. cit., p. 46.}\]
The following two quotations present the same view from
the standpoint of the workingmen. The first shows clearly a
feeling of class antagonism.

Indeed, to conceive of a popular government devoid of
a system of popular education, is as difficult as to conceive
of a civilized society destitute of a system of industry.
This truth has been generally received in this country, and
never, I believe, directly denied; although its force has been
attempted to be evaded by the rich, who have heretofore,
unfortunately, been our sole law makers, through the odious
system of charity schools—the bare idea of which impresses
a consciousness of degradation, and leads to results the
very reverse of those that ought to be produced by popular
instruction.  

Seth Luther in his address on the "Education of Work-
men," delivered in 1832, also expressed the radical position of
the workingmen.

In our review we have seen the large body of human
beings ruined by a neglect of education, rendered miserable
in the extreme and incapable of self-government; and this by the
grinding of the rich on the faces of the poor, through the
operations of cotton and other machinery.

Luther emphasized the evils of the factory system, dwelling
particularly upon the evils of the long hours and child labor.
He held that the factory system, with its overwork, unhealthy
conditions, and accompanying crowded home conditions, rendered
the common people unfit to govern themselves, because the physical
energies of the operative man, woman, or child were wasted and
the mind was dulled.

A legislative committee on common schools in Ohio reported
(1825) that the system of free schools seemed most consonant

\[\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 48.\]
to the principle of their constitution, that it placed the children of the rich and poor more nearly upon a level, and counteracted that inequality which birth and fortune would otherwise produce. Even in the South during this period were found advocates of a system of public schools. About 1830, the **Southern Free Press**, published in Charleston, South Carolina, contained the following statement: "Our great object will be to urge you to break down the barrier which separates your children from those of lordly aristocrats by the establishment of national schools." This statement was another plea for an educational program of which democratic principles were the foundation. It was a visionary attempt to describe what modern educators call "the activity program."

Out of the West came this literary gem: "It is far better to pay taxes which will rise like vapors to descent in refreshing showers, than to build jails, penitentiaries and almshouses, to relieve wretchedness and punish crime which a wholesome education might have prevented." This is another interpretation of the principles of the activity movement, although the particular name had not been applied to it.

To summarize, it may be said that this early eighteenth century presented three phases in the development of public education. Early political leaders saw in education a pledge of national unity, a support for popular government, an instrument

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of emancipation, a servant of the practical arts, and a
guarantee that talents would be supplied for public or
private affairs. In the middle period, when public education
was actually established, the humanitarians sought to make
education democratic and universal, a protection against the
evils and excesses of popular tumults in government, an
agency for taking advantage of the opportunity presented by
American life and economy. Thereafter, while the American
continental domain was being developed and exploited, while
economic opportunities were unfolding rapidly, while American
society seemed to be advancing steadily without any profound
disturbances, professional leadership made the schools, theo-
retically, more effective agencies of education through research,
studies of individual differences, the perfection of methods,
the extension of teacher training, and the improvement of
administration. This progress was an additional step toward
the modern principles of pragmatists, but the advance was more
in theory than in practice.
CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF AMERICA AND PRINCIPLES OF THE
ACTIVITY MOVEMENT FROM 1850 TO 1890

Social Problems

After the disappearance of the frontier, a different set of conditions confronted the people of the United States. Widely separated farming communities or sparsely settled mining districts, the presence of immense tracts of practically free land, demanded one system of ethics, one code of human relations, and one kind of educational principles and precepts; while densely populated cities, the scarcity of free land, and increased mutual interdependence made imperative a new scheme of social relations. The disappearance of a frontier induced a weakening of the individualistic qualities and a strengthening of the social qualities of the American people. Sociological, as well as psychological, principles began to creep into the educational world. Society had to adjust itself to a more crowded environment. New social, industrial, agricultural, commercial, educational, ethical, and legal forms became necessary. Changed environment, crowded cities, more intensive, and more scientific agriculture, quicker and more regular methods of transportation and communication produced effects which were plainly noticeable in the life, thought, and action of the entire nation.
Necessarily, the status of the child fluctuated with the status of society.

The rapid development of American frontiers, paralleled by the rise of a new civilization, gave birth to sectionalism. In terms of the North and South, sectionalism led to the war between the States.¹ This Civil War, which gave added impetus to the industrial forces of the North, virtually stopped the wheels of industry in the South. It meant a revolution in the social and economic fields. During this period, small shopowners were driven out of business by the large corporations; the lumber of the forests was taken by greedy rivals; and the mines were under the control of a few men. In the midst of the war, when the nation’s food supply was in jeopardy because of the difficulties which beset agriculture and its allied industries, the Congress of the United States gave clear expression to the social demand for improvement of farming through the development and application of science. In 1862 the federal government made liberal grants of land to the states for the establishment of institutions which were to cultivate the science of agriculture and of the mechanical arts. The institutions of higher learning of that period were wholly without such practical lines of instruction.² During

²C.H. Judd, Education and the Social Progress, p. 54.
the years between 1870 and 1890 the natural resources were exploited, bringing profits to a few and bringing financial disaster to many. However, in 1880 it was found that 71.4 per cent of the people of the United States still lived in rural districts and derived their support chiefly from agriculture and from animal husbandry. 3

The many modifications in home, industrial, and social life inevitably lead society toward new social, educational, and moral ideals. During the previous years, industrial and scientific progress outran all other forms of development. A problem of this period was to bring the educational, legal, economic, and social values and ideals into harmonious relations with the industrial situation.

After 1880 one of the most influential changes made was that which took place in the industrial system, due to the vast development of machinery and the accompanying increase in child labor.

The percentage of children from ten to fifteen years of age engaged in gainful occupations increased steadily from 1870 to 1910 with the most rapid increase taking place between 1870 to 1890 when machinery was beginning to change the character of the country's industrial system.

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The census of 1880 showed that 1,118,358 children between the ages of ten and fifteen or 16.8 per cent of all American children of those ages, were engaged in gainful occupations. 4

By 1880 the nation had new economic problems with which to cope and for whose solution the school had not prepared its students. Corporations had appeared, and the small business men were becoming few in number. Capital was in the hands of the organized industries which, with the concentration of private ownership and control, was to produce monopoly. These problems seemingly were for men and not for children, but in reality, they affected the child to an inestimable degree.

Labor, during an era of such industrial expansion, became highly specialized. Immigrants from southwestern Europe came in large numbers to supply the manual labor at low wages in the industries under the direction of the natives and alongside the skilled workmen. Such apparently harmless immigrants produced little settlements of their own; they made a foreign city within an American city, and yet it retained its peculiar racial customs. Resulting from the new industrialism and immigration were problems of restriction of population, wages, mixture of cultures and distribution of wealth and income; industrialism and immigration gave rise to nationalism.

With the disappearance of frontiers in America systems of production, distribution, and exchange were established for the

4Ibid.
nation by 1890. The capital from industrial sources mounted until foreign markets were sought for its employment, thus forming the basis of an American economic imperialism by 1895.

In addition to these problems created by the rapidly developing industrial movement, came an avalanche of scientific discoveries and inventions that completely transformed American life and changed the place of children in society. The nation's wealth was augmented not only by the phenomenal rise of the automobile and new modes of rapid transportation and communication but also by the increasing use of water power during the last two decades. Water became a basis for the production of wealth, whereas it originally afforded routes of discovery and commerce for frontiersmen whose energies were exerted in establishing the trading posts during the westward movement.

Just as coal and oil played a vital role in the improved industrial field and newer modes of transportation, so water power became the essential factor in the production of electricity. With the increased supply of electricity, made possible through the construction of reservoirs, came innovations in means of communication.

Possibly the newspapers benefited most by the application of electricity to their machinery. Certainly they became essential in the daily schedule of the average American. Because of the trend toward centralization and commercialization,
newspapers no longer confine their news to that of the community in which they are published. Such a change was described by Robert Lincoln O'Brien, former editor of the Boston Herald: "These changes from the newspapers of the old time, focusing about a personal editor, to a cog in the great chain of modern business, certainly constitute one of the most momentous economic and cultural overturns of our era." With this wide dissemination of knowledge, the status of the child was changed again.

The changing social and industrial conditions produced direct effect upon the life of children in the United States. The extensive use of complicated machinery, the relatively small number of children in the population, the demand of the complex processes of modern business and industry for superior training, the profits desired and a national wealth produced by increased general productivity all contrived to make childhood a pertinent problem.

Significant for national culture and for education was the loosening of the family bonds that existed when industry and agriculture were localized. As long as the family was intact, its members assumed responsibilities for education and group welfare; but when machines and industrial specialization disintegrated the household and destroyed the homestead arts, they drew members of the domestic unit, young and old, into factories.

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and other enterprises beyond the home. With the practice of child employment rapidly declining and with the transfer of the population from rural to urban districts new social problems were presented. The industrial system compels children to live in congested urban areas that restrict their freedom and often deprive them of normal and wholesome surroundings, so it became necessary to secure effective means of providing children with proper conditions of life. During the last part of the century, a need arose for constructive recreational activities to meet the demand of increased leisure time.

A generalization of facts relating to the social problems appearing in the period of 1850 to 1900 leads to the conclusion that, during that time, America was beginning a transitional period that called for a revision of educational principles.

Society was in a state of upheaval; the status of the family was changed; the child found himself in a strange world of seemingly in calculable problems. Confronted by such obstacles, he turned, in the last analysis, to school and education as the surest step for reconstruction.

The School Curriculum from 1850-1900

During the second quarter of the nineteenth century another great transformation took place in the public schools of America.

Industrialism, the growth of cities, the extension of suffrage and other social issues had evoked almost insurmountable obstacles in the path of education.

The content of the materials of the culture curriculum lagged two and three generations behind the content of American life; the method of its presentation, and the atmosphere of the classroom totally negativized the possibility of producing the desired understanding of American culture or the ability to contribute to the development of it. The evolution from the formal and mechanical type of education that was conceived to meet the cultural desires of a favored few to a practical dynamic curriculum that would deal courageously and intelligently with the issues of a growing democracy was a sluggish process. Educational reformers insisted that the school program was too far removed from the problems of practical living, but these progressive ideas were largely un reciprocated.

Following the conclusion of the Civil War, history and civics were turned to teach patriotism. In the hysteria of the reconstruction area, many states passed laws requiring a study of the Constitution of the United States and of the pupil's state constitution. Gradually, under the impetus of Misedale and others, this analytical, dissectional, memorizing study of the Constitution was transformed into a study of the national,

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8 Harold Russ, Culture and Education in America, p. 57.
municipal, or state government. However, the emphasis was still on the machinery, upon the form of government—not upon the problems and issues which faced the American people.

The chief burden of introducing young America to the cultural elements of life fell upon that department which during the middle 1800's came to be known as "English." So rapidly did the movement spread that by 1900 English had entrenched itself as the most important unit in the secondary school course of study. Two thirds of our high schools offered courses in rhetoric, about two-thirds in English literature and about one-third gave a course merely called literature. More than one half offered courses in composition and grammar. Between 1885 and 1900, furthermore, English became of such recognized importance that systematic year courses were organized. In 1900 many high schools of America offered courses called "First Year English," "Second Year English," "Third Year English," and "Fourth Year English."

In this book-knowledge era of curriculum-making, the English curriculum of the schools did not train in literary judgment and did not create the habit of enjoyment of fine writing and did not develop the tendency toward creative, self-expression. It continued to be a formal study in which grammar, word analysis, and memory work were dominant. Instead of letting children read and deeply feel and developing an appreciation of American life through its literature, the teachers
drilled the children in mastery of sentence structure and the mechanical forms of grammar. The thought of the reading materials was overshadowed, even hidden, by the excessive drill on the critical analysis of the construction of the work in prose or poetry. Without understanding, no appreciation of literature could be developed within the children. The idea was that learning, to be most enduring, must come from hard and disagreeable work. Rarely were children ever given American writings to study. Even the high schools depended largely upon selections from British authors. The mechanics of reading overshadowed the understanding of the literature read while the English curriculum of Civil War days held sway. However, by the 1870's and 1880's the tradition became fairly well established in curriculum-making that new subjects should be added in response to the demands of the changing times, but that the old subjects should be retained. New types of social studies pertaining to occupational guidance, and a varied number of regular grade courses, and many interests of a practical nature clamored for a place in the curriculum. As new subjects were introduced, they came in addition to the already established courses. Chief among the new subjects introduced about 1850 was science which by then had made a strategic place for itself. In its various divisions, it failed, however, to teach people how to live together. As in other courses of the curriculum, the aim continued to be for mental discipline or religious training. The textbooks were
often prepared with scriptures, and the content was primarily
classified and descriptive data. Only in a remote manner did
the natural sciences give youth an understanding of "why we
behave like human beings."9

A term which has been borrowed from science describes
the school curriculum prior to 1900. It was essentially
"morphological." Its designers were interested in classifi-
cation, in naming parts and describing forms rather than in
developing an understanding of conditions, and institutions,
of adult and child life. The school rarely dealt with them
as problems and conditions which confronted Americans under a
changing political and economic regime; it really dealt with
the institutions which were being built up by the American
people.

And the gap between curriculum and society persisted.
The same gap which was evidenced between the curriculum and
political, industrial, and social life in America, existed
between cultural life and the curriculum. Toward the end of
the nineteenth century a new culture of industrialism was
beginning to take shape. In the high school during this time,
however, there appeared only the faintest outline of a correspond-
ing culture curriculum. Before 1900 the fine arts and dramatics
found their way hesitatingly into the program of studies, being
offered timorously in certain progressive quarters as optional

9Harold Rugg, Culture and Education in America, p. 71.
or elective courses. Music, practically confined even to the present day to auditorium and assembly singing in the high school and formal class singing in the elementary school, appeared upon the schedule list of courses. But it, too, was a formal thing. "Standardization" was developing in the social arts of the school. Technique was mastered at the expense of musical appreciation and joy of being. Thus the curriculum prior to 1900 failed to offer the social, cultural, and even political training needed by the youth of America.

Far-sighted educators were conscious of the fact that the static curriculum of the school was failing to meet the needs of a dynamic society. They realized that the function of a school system was to preserve the solidarity of the group. They also realized that the perpetuation of the existing social order must be assured. As the social life of America began to change, living became more complex and dynamic. The attitudes, knowledges, habits, customs, and skills which had enabled man to cope with the problems of early American existence were of nominal use in helping him to cope successfully with the new social conditions under which the citizens lived. The educators who realized that education must go beyond the instruction of the youth in the residual customs of the past advocated that the school change its static program to meet that of a dynamic society. They believed that instruction should be individualized and flexible, and provided with a rich course of study
based on child activity. These protagonists of change were led at first by Charles W. Eliot, William T. Harris, and Francis W. Parker; later by Harper, Greenwood, Burk, and Dewey.

In order to meet the responsibility of elevating and directing the progress of the social group, the school system has developed certain philosophies of education. Hopkins\textsuperscript{12} says that a philosophy of education is a well-rounded, specifically organized, comprehensive statement of the end toward which education must move or the end which social life as influenced by education should approach.

In order to better understand the attitudes of these early progressive educators a brief study is offered of their philosophy of education. In 1902, John Dewey said the following:

Our problem is rather to study the typical necessities of social life, and the actual nature of the individual in his specific needs and capacities. Our task is on the one hand to select and adjust the studies with reference to the nature of the individual thus discovered; and on the other to order and group them so they shall most definitely and systematically represent the chief lines of social endeavor and social achievement.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{10}Harold Rugg, "Three Decades of Mental Discipline: Curriculum Making Via National Committees", The Foundations and Technique of Curriculum-Construction, Twenty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, XII, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}


\textsuperscript{13}Dewey, John, \textit{The Child and the Curriculum}, p. 15-16.
In regard to the curriculum, Norton\textsuperscript{14} said that it is not a body of subject matter to be memorized or recited. It is a series of experiences by which the child’s personality is modified.

In addition to the foregoing statement, Bonser\textsuperscript{15} says that the principles of progressive education are not fads or frills, but are basic, working principles for helping children and students to achieve a life-long growth in all their powers of attainment and development of character.

Such philosophies as expounded by these and other educators eventually bore fruit and by 1900 the American public school system was characterized by a slight diversity in curricula.

The first movements for reorganization, however, were primarily administrative in character and dealt only casually, if at all, with the nub of the educational situation—the vitalizing of the activities and materials of the curriculum.\textsuperscript{16}

The first definite movement for reorganization of the high school curriculum was launched in 1892 with the appointments of the Committee of Ten.\textsuperscript{17} This committee dealt with problems relative to secondary education and their work led to the appointment of the Committee of Fifteen in 1893. The work of these early committees led to the establishment of

\textsuperscript{14}John K. and Margaret A. Norton, \textit{Curriculum Building}, p. 2548.

\textsuperscript{15}J. G. Bonser, \textit{Life Needs and Education}, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 36.

\textsuperscript{17}Harold Rugg, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 32.
of national committees. By a process of gradual evolution, these committees eventually succeeded in injecting their theories and philosophies into the world of education to such a degree that the activity movement resulted.
CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND THE ACTIVITY MOVEMENT
FROM 1900-1940

Social Problems

The turn of the twentieth century witnessed the production of interdependency and its accompanying problems for American citizens.

The industrial revolution loosened forces which could be dealt with only through group cooperation in the twentieth century. Health protection, fire control, police service, and similar agencies were no longer private affairs but were indispensable public enterprises. In addition, public finance was charged with the responsibility of correcting maladjustments which appeared in the operation of private enterprises; financing a rapidly increasing number of public services, including education, meant the improvement of social life.

In the twentieth century, interdependence grew space with the application of science to the development of communication, recreation, transportation, and other social factors. The motion picture and the radio went hand in hand with every increasing social problem, because it was extremely difficult, and in some cases impossible, to separate the life of the citizenship from the facilities and standards which originated
from mass demands and tastes. All of these problems directly affected the status of the child, but what adjustments the school should make were the matters of controversy.

Another problem confronting the twentieth century civilization was that of rebuilding the physical and personality ruins which resulted from depression. According to recent researches of the United States Office of Education, at least 6,000,000 children (nearly one-quarter of the thirty million pupils now attending school) are suffering from physical handicaps, such as weak hearts, tuberculosis, impaired sight and hearing, defective speech, and undernourishment.

The United States Public Health Service, after studying the health of 33,000 white school children in 1930, found that sixty-six per cent of the children had decayed teeth, thirty-two per cent had defective vision, and thirty-one per cent had bad tonsils. According to the Bureau of Home Economics of the United States Department of Labor, approximately 16,000,000 families, sixty-seven per cent of the American people, are compelled to exist on an emergency or subsistence diet.¹

How much worse does the condition become under a crisis such as that which the present generation now faces. The undernourished child loses alertness; he cannot learn easily; the worried child is unable to put his mind on his studies.

¹Harold Rugg, *Democracy and the Curriculum*, p. 111.
Thus the depression undermines the educational morale of the nation. A recent national report says "Unemployment, because it means lowered family standards, anxiety and dread, the loss of savings, and the mortgaging of the future, has a direct and disastrous effect upon the welfare of children." 2

Invention was well-financed and highly specific profession in the twentieth century. The effect of this factor was the origin of innumerable social changes, because it engendered a diversity of cultural backgrounds. The bringing together of many races tended to change the status of the American child, because it changed the status of the country at large. It demanded practical application of the ideas of democracy.

Another social problem of the twentieth century was the variance between the incomes of the group at the top of the economical scale and the incomes of the group at the bottom of the scale. In the United States, the urban population increased 214 per cent from 1890 to the middle of the twentieth century. In the same period, rural population increased thirty-two per cent. At the beginning of the Civil War, only three cities in the United States boasted a population of 200,000; the 1930 census classified forty-five cities with that population. The significance of this new factor in American life was stated at the White House Convention in the following words:

2Ibid.
In the last half of the century we have herded 50,000, 000 more human beings into towns and cities where the whole setting is new to the race. We have created highly congested areas with a thousand changes resulting in the swift transition from a rural and agrarian people to an urban, industrial nation. Perhaps the widest range of difficulties with which we are dealing in the betterment of children grows out of this crowding into cities. Problems of sanitation and public health loom in every direction. Delinquency increases with congestion. Overcrowding produces disease and contagion. The child’s natural play space is taken from him. His mind is stunted by lack of imaginative surroundings. Even aside from congestion, the drastic changes in the modern home greatly affect the child. Contact of parents and children are much reduced. Once the sole training school of the child, the home, now shares with the public school, the great children’s clubs and organizations, and a hundred other agencies, the responsibility for him both in health and discipline, from birth to maturity.\(^4\)

The vital problem of wealth distribution is closely associated with the status of the child in America, because the economic conditions of society determines, in a large measure, the outcomes of life. Economic privation has obvious bearing upon social development in adolescents.

The uneven distribution of wealth is seen from the following statistics: forty-two per cent of all the families in America, totaling 11,650,000, receive less than $1500 per year, which is less than one-half of what they could receive if the wealth of the land were evenly distributed. These figures are most startling when it is found that 36,000 rich families receive as much as 11,650,000 poor families.\(^5\)

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 14.

\(^5\)Harold Rugg, Democracy and the Curriculum, p. 115.
moral standards which have been lowered as a result of the influence of gigantic industries, powerful corporations, and complicated governmental systems. The lowering of morals appears in the elevation of criminals and young violators to places of honor which results in the dominance of material gain and the loss of the sense of personal responsibility. To correct these lax moral standards, society must develop in the child, and ultimately in the adult, the right habits of life in relation to the lives of others. Social service must be the aim of business, of the individual, and of the school. Sad is the fact that the theory of social service has scarcely a place in the entire range of our public school curriculum.

In order to meet the need of its constituency, the school must offer the young people an opportunity not only to be trained in the three R's, but also to study the work of the banker, the manufacturer, government officials, men of other occupations and the relation of these men to the social life of the community in which they work. Society has looked on too long with the passive attitude that pupils, after having learned the content of their texts, will somehow be able to adapt themselves to the complicated social life in which they are thrown.

A summary of problems that confront twentieth-century civilization and which affect the status of the child and
the school program includes the following findings of a study made by Hockett:

1. The problem of making the goal of all effort the welfare, happiness, freedom, and development of all human beings. Counteracting the socially and spiritually paralyzing effects of industrialism, and securing for all persons the conditions of full physical, mental, and spiritual development. Elimination of poverty, destitution, and slums.

2. The problem of developing the plastic, dynamic social organization, and intelligent modes of modifying our obsolescent habits and institutions to meet inevitable changes. The development of critical and flexible attitudes.

3. The problem of overcoming the inertness and indifference and counteracting the blind optimism of people who believe that social progress is inevitable. Arousing people to grip their problems and make effective their aspirations.

4. The problem of securing application of the spirit and methods of natural science to the social sciences, educating people to attack fundamental causes of evil rather than symptoms and particular persons; to substitute positive modes of action for negative restrictions and purgings.

5. The problem of securing and using for the nation's advantage the highest type of expert, responsible leadership, in politics, in industry, in the pulpit, in schools and colleges.

6. The problem of developing a free, vigorous intellectual life. Getting men to think scientifically in terms of realities, with tolerance and critical open-mindedness. Combatting prejudice, superstition, worship of shibboleths, and slogans and irrelevant analogies, fear of facing facts, credulity, gullibility, and mental laziness.

7. The problem of developing, stimulating, freeing, and conserving creative ability, initiative, and originality, and relating them to worthy purposes in the life of the community. Promoting art, literature, invention, and discovery through direct encouragement and the removal of censorship, restriction, repression, hostility, and fear.
8. The problem of preventing stratification of society into antagonistic classes, and decreasing class prejudice, antagonism, and exploitation.

9. The problem of discovering the laws which govern human nature and applying them to practical affairs; discovering the deeper demands of human nature and finding civilized satisfactions for them.

10. The problem of purifying our social atmosphere by wide-spread disapproval of extravagance, greed, exclusiveness, frivolity, place-hunting, and vulgar envy; and effecting a simpler life, especially among the rich. Abolishing the average man's emulation of the servility towards the wealthy.

11. The problem of providing more leisure and improving opportunities for recreation, for creative, constructive, self-expressive use of leisure.

12. The problem of increasing the opportunity for forming acquaintance and friendship and for the formation of wholesome character and habits of life in our relatively impersonal life.

13. The problem of eliminating race hostility ....

14. The problem of abolishing religious prejudice, race hatred, and propaganda ....

15. The problem of restricting and regulating immigration in the interest of the whole country. Determining the number to be admitted and bases of selection of immigrants.

16. The problem of assimilating and Americanizing immigrants.

17. The problem of eliminating disease and improving the public health (of adults and children), through the promotion of medical research, protection against contagious disease, improved sanitation, and health-giving recreational facilities, and the extension to all qualified medical service.

18. The problem of protecting the public from injury and loss of life by accident; from automobile, railroad, ship, storm, fire, and flood.

19. The problem of insuring the propagation of a sound and healthy race, through the development of high personal
standards of mating, and through suitable eugenic means to prevent the propagation of crime and insanity.

20. The problem of securing such regulation of the growth of population as will insure a good life and a satisfactory standard of living to all who are born, through strengthening of the sense of responsibility of parenthood and spreading the knowledge and practice of birth control.

21. The problem of providing adequate, free education from kindergarten to university for all persons willing and able to partake, and insuring such a universal minimum of education as will enable all persons to fulfill their places in society.

22. The problem of securing in education a true understanding of the actual conditions and functioning of the social order.

23. The problem of securing in education, free, vigorous, thought, intellectual initiative, honesty, and discipline.

24. The problem of securing in education greater development of the individuality and more respect for the personality of pupil and teacher.

25. The problem of securing wider vocational and general education for workers.

26. The problem of promoting adult education, through libraries, books, newspapers, clubs, and factories. Devising means to continue education through contact with the college after graduation.

27. The problem of securing better education in rural areas.

28. The problem of securing more rapid and widespread adoption of advances and improvements in educational methods.

29. The problem of lessening the amount of crime and vice, adult and juvenile. Securing recognition of the community responsibility for crime and removing the conditions and handicaps which cause it. Redirecting impulses to crime by better education.

30. The problem of securing reformation and education of criminals, delinquents, and incapacables through the use of
the best scientific, psychological, and humane treatment. Restoring them to usefulness whenever possible; at the same time protecting society and posterity from the effects of social disease, elimination of retaliation, brutalization, and degradation.

31. The problem of improving our divorce laws; securing more uniformity.

32. The problem of insuring adequate care of the children of divorced parents.

33. The problem of abolishing war and insuring world peace. Harmonizing conflicting national interests; mobilizing the world's peace sentiment.

All of these problems, and many more, have tended to change the status of the child in America. Because of them, the home was changed; because of them the school curriculum has failed to meet the need of the school population; and because of them the activity program has been evolved.

Educational Practices from 1900-1940

In 1900, American life had so developed that it needed definite social programs and a philosophy of education. The answer to that need was the inception and development of the activity program. This program gradually evolved from the theories introduced by Pierce, James, and Dewey. Chief among these revolutionary theories was the philosophy of pragmatism which was briefly mentioned in the conclusion of the preceding chapter.

According to the thinking of many, Dewey's philosophy has been the cause of the recent curriculum movement. It has not

been so many years ago when, if you wanted to find what should
go into a spelling curriculum, you searched out those words
used by adults and included them in the primary and elementary
courses of study. The same procedure was carried out through
all of the subjects. Of course, this idea had no relation to
modern pragmatic philosophy which says that children should be
helped to spell those words that they need most in their school
work; they should learn those facts of geography and history
which they will need in their interpretation and understanding
of the material they read in newspapers, magazines and books,
and in the discussions they hear at school, at home, or over
the radio.

The same schools that taught preparation for future life,
also stressed preparation for promotion to the next grade.
Then, the problem of the elementary school was to prepare for
college or adult life.

Another concept that preceded the activity movement was
"knowledge idea." Not so long ago the children went to school
to get knowledge. The aims and objectives of teaching were
to impart facts. Children were like so many cans in a canning
factory; all of them had the same amount of content. There was
no provision made for individual differences. Today, pragmatic
philosophy implies that as far as the child and subject matter
are concerned, the teacher's problem is to see that the child
and not the curriculum is served. When the child and the
curriculum do not fit, it must be the curriculum and not the
child that is altered or adjusted. Teachers are encouraged to consider their schools as cross sections of life where such things as character, citizenship, and happiness are participated in daily and are developed as valuable by-products of the day's work. Teachers are expected to offer opportunities for children to form those habits, mental, moral, and physical, that will serve them in living and in making a living. Changes in purpose, philosophy, and method, as a result of the widespread scientific research in education, have had much to do with the present revival of interest in our public school educational programs, particularly in stimulating a nationwide movement toward curriculum revision. Outside the immediate realm of the school, many social and economic changes are taking place. A more comprehensive type of education, which provides for both child and adult, and which is interpreted as a continuous and effective process for improving the social order, is now considered necessary in order to preserve a fairly adequate economic system for society as well as to safeguard democratic institutions.

Many profound thinkers believe, moreover, that the social and economic difficulties in which we find ourselves would have been less severe had the school program been directed toward certain socio-economic goals interpreted and projected with national and world-wide implications. Whatever part the schools should play in remaking society, there is a predominating
belief that the curriculum has not kept pace with the growing needs of children and with social changes. This dissatisfaction has no doubt stimulated the widespread movement in curriculum revision.

In public education one function of the school is to promote social progress. Two prime considerations which affect integration in education are the nature of the child and the social function of the school. The method of organizing and conducting the school must harmonize with its social purpose and the nature of the child. The school should become a constructive social force, the pupils being stipulated to practice and to participate effectively as members of society. Not only should the school assist the individual in getting hold of the tools of learning common to a social group, but it should also provide a maximum opportunity for the pupil to cultivate his special interests and aptitudes in the realm of thinking, appreciation, and creative effort. There should be no serious conflict in the development of the individual in making him responsible both as an individual and as a member of the social group who participates in promoting social progress.

In order to meet these responsibilities, the school must be organized in such a way as to introduce meaningful, expressive, and self-directive activities which provide opportunities for developing citizens prepared to participate effectively in directing social changes. To this end, Dewey proposes making the school an embryonic community.
The introduction of active occupations, of nature study, of elementary science, of art, of history; the relegation of the merely symbolic and formal to a secondary position; the change in the moral school atmosphere, in the relation of pupils and teachers—of discipline; the introduction of more active, expressive, and self-directing factors—all these are not mere accidents, they are necessities of larger social evolution. It remains but to organize all these factors, to appreciate them in their fullness of meaning, and to put the ideas involved into complete, uncompromising possession of our school system. To do this means to make each one of our schools an embryonic community life, active with types of occupations that reflect the life of the larger society, and permeated throughout with the spirit of art, history, and science. When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lively, and harmonious.

The limitations of the conventional schoolroom are also well stated by Dewey in the following quotation:

*The evils of the traditional, conventional schoolroom, its almost complete isolation from actual life, and the deadly depression of mind which the weight of formal material causes, all cried out for reform. But rebellion against formal studies and lessons can be effectively completed only through the development of a new subject matter, as well organized in any vital sense of the word organization—but having an intimate and developing relation to the experience of those in the school.*

The integrated curriculum organizes the educational program in such a way that the child will be the focal center for growth and development. Thus, learning becomes effective only to the degree that the whole child is interested.

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7 John Dewey, *The School and Society*, pp. 43-44.

Socially effective education should have for its chief purpose the improvement of living. So conceived, education must begin with the world as it is, with life and human nature in their complexities, and seek ways of promoting natural growth and development through learning as a means of making living more enjoyable and satisfactory. Viewed in this setting, education is an integral part of life and should receive the same care in planning as other life activities. Kilpatrick says:

Education is...of the very warp and woof of life itself, a life in which any particular individual has indefinitely many and varied connections with others, near and far, about him. Life especially manifests itself in the creative grappling with situations which the world continually puts before us. This creative grappling considered in its continual effect on us is exactly education. Herein education is life itself, to nurse it, to help it grow, to help enrich itself, always so that more of life may result in the person himself and in all whom he touches. There is no richness but life itself.

Dewey has advanced four concepts on which the activity program is built. The first is that education is life. There was a time when even the most advanced educators believed that the child existed for the sake of the man or woman that was to be. This is true to a certain extent, of course, but education is more than the preparation for life. Education is life. It is continuous as a process of experience from the beginning to the end of life, both in and out of school. The pragmatist has convinced most educators that they should

10 John Dewey, Schools of Tomorrow, p. 54.
deal with the child each day as an individual, with the
real problems to solve and a real life to live, and when he
reaches maturity, he will be more able to solve the problems
of life that confront him then.

Dewey's second concept is that when a child grows from
what he was yesterday into what he is today, the process of
education has taken place. As long as growth continues,
pragmatists believe that real education is going on.
Pragmatism implies that it is the function of the school and
the teacher to see that this growth continues day by day,
and in the most favorable direction.

The third concept advanced by Dewey is that education
is life and growth; then it must be life in a social group.
At one time, teachers believed that education was best
accomplished in a quiet place where the learner was uninter-
rupted. It may be true that the learning takes place under
such conditions, but education is much more than learning;
it is living. Schools must be democratic communities where
children live natural, democratic lives with their companions
and grow into adulthood with good citizenship as a part of
their experiences. In sharp contrast to this method is the
one which would have children learn the rules for good
citizenship. These rules may be taught in a non-democratic
way by a teacher who is autocratic. The difference between
the results of the two methods is that, in the first case, the children, through experience, are good citizens, while by the second method, through knowledge, they merely know how to be good citizens.

Dewey's fourth concept is that education is the continuous reconstruction of experiences. Pragmatism is "a stream of experience." The activities participated in by pupils each day are based on past experience. However, if education is growth, some new element is also added when the new experience if fused with old, it is all reorganized in the light of the new experiences. Dewey says that the reconstruction, rebuilding, or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience and which increases the ability to steer the course of future experience is education.

In the activity program, pupils are encouraged and helped to bring into the classroom as much as possible whatever interests them in the out-of-school environment. Interests from out-of-school hours and from summer vacations have carried over into school as well as interests from school into out-of-school hours and into summer vacations. In this way, the whole life of the child in school more nearly approaches real life situations. Real learning, which will be made use of in solving any problems of life, takes place in situations approaching those under which

11William James, Pragmatism, p. 70.
the problems are likely to arise. The child draws upon all fields of information and skill. He assembles facts, and by seeing new relationships, finds his solutions. The principle underlying this method of education goes back to the pragmatic definition of truth—truth is a synonymous term for any idea that will bring results that are desired. An idea is true for a pupil not only for tangible, concrete objects but also for mental objects. Since the units of works used in the present-day curriculum set-up develop from real life situations, they are intimately close to the child and tend to supply opportunities which satisfy his present needs as well as supply stimulation for more and larger needs.

In constructing the integrated curriculum, the organizing determinants are derived from an interpretation of life needs rather than from fixed subjects to be learned. The learning products sought are desirable informations, insights, attitudes, appreciations, and skills. Guided by the aims and objectives set up to achieve these learning ends, this curriculum makes use of more carefully selected subject matter and provides for greater flexibility in methods of teaching. In short, it attempts to bring about the transmutation of subjects and lessons in order that learning may become both natural and more effective, and much of the waste resulting from the curriculum of separate subjects may be eliminated.

Experience is the great potent educative force in human development. The most pressing problems of education are to
find the best methods and means of aiding the learner in the selection, stimulation, and interpretation of experiences. Much of the waste in the educative process results from the fact that too many learning experiences in the classroom are isolated and therefore do not contribute to the learning process. Those who guide the processes of education must take into consideration the fact that the whole child is involved and that the ultimate goal is an integrated personality. This goal makes education the most strategic of all human influences.

Still another example of the pragmatist's idea of satisfactory experiences is found in the extra-curricular activities of the modern schools.

What we today term extra-curricular activities represent, after all, only an orderly organization and redirection and extension of those pupils activities characteristic of adolescent youth which have always been more or less present among young people in their teens. The Friday afternoon literary exercises and plays and spelling matches represent such activities as the older schools knew them; wild parties, dances, ball games, the swimming hole, gangs, and various back-lot and back-alley activities were less prominent than now, and were largely ignored by the school, and few teachers of the older generation manifested any interest in what took place outside the classroom, or possessed any ability to organize and redirect these activities into more orderly and more useful channels.

Largely within the past decade, and wholly within the past two, and entirely new interest in the extra-curricular activities of youth has been taken by the school.12

The main function of the school through the ages has been to create good citizens. Good citizens have meant different things among different people. To some people it has meant brave and efficient soldiers; to others, individuals well versed in art, music, and the so-called cultural subjects; to others, it has meant individuals who are not only supported themselves vocationally, but who also took an interest in the welfare of their community and country, although such an interest did not benefit financially.

But no matter what the ideals of the particular peoples have been looked upon as the maker of citizens who take their places in the existing state of affairs and contribute to further development of the ruling type of civilization. Exponents of the activity movement believe that the state, the community, the parents, the teachers, and the pupils themselves make up the school. All these five groups, to the full extent of their several abilities, should share in the planning. The sharing in the planning should exist in order to develop the best school possible; a school in which there is a favorable opportunity for the educative experience for all those involved in this conscious, cooperative, intelligent planning for the common good.

Thus it seems that philosophy of the movement has been generally accepted; people have come to believe that, if the gap between practical living and the school is to be
bridged, the curriculum should contribute primarily to enabling boys and girls to be efficient in what they are doing, only secondarily preparing them to be efficient later; that the curriculum should be selected directly from real life and should be expressed in terms of the activities and the environments of society.
CHAPTER V

Summary

This study represents an effort to analyze the physical and sociological development of America from 1800 to 1940 in order to discover the ways and means by which the modern activity movement was motivated. For convenience, the study was divided into the following three periods: 1800-1850, 1850-1900, and 1900-1940. Each period was discussed in relation to the physical conquest, the allied social problems, and the principles of education that were in evidence.

From this investigation it was found that, since the world was one vast moving panorama, new scenes, new conditions, and new kinds of people constantly came into view during the development of America. Industrial, economic, educational, and moral forms and problems were always subject to modification. Everything was dynamic; nothing was static.

Slow-going methods of the handicraft system, where every man worked for himself with his own tools, or worked for other persons who were not far above him in the social scale, began to give way to the factory system in America in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

During the nineteenth century, greater changes in manufacturing, commerce, and agriculture took place than during preceding ten centuries. The farmers, brought up in the
traditions of the individualism of New England and of the
South, where individualism was far more pronounced, found
that it took a long time to learn how to live together in
the west where association and cooperation were required to
carry on irrigated agriculture.

The military basis of civilization was hastily swept
away and replaced by industrial foundations. New classes
of people and new economic interests arose, and old ones
disappeared or sank into relative unimportance. Manners,
customs, and ways of living were transformed. The ends of
the earth were drawn into vital contact; the continents were
moored side by side. In a word, social and industrial life
was revolutionized.

The use of power manufacture, made possible by the
great mechanical inventions, brought about that far-reaching
and rapid change in the industrial life which was known as the
Industrial Revolution. It ushered in the era of capitalism,
the wage system, and the extensive use of credit. It then
became necessary for the laborers to leave their homes and
assemble in factories to use the expensive machinery which
each one could not own for himself.

Modern industrialism in itself has not operated directly
to disintegrate the family. Indirectly it has made family
life somewhat more difficult. It has intensified an aggressive
individualism and has tended to take the center of gravity from
the family and to locate it outside in the factory, in the school, in the amusement center, and in the health office.

In so far as education affects, in any manner, production, distribution or consumption, or in so far as it changes or modifies the efficiency, the tastes, or the ideals of men, it has an economic and a social significance. The growth of democracy and the increasing participation of the masses in political activity and in the educational heritage of the age were accompanied by the dawn of a number of new economic and educational concepts. Thus, the history of modern education can be properly studied only from the view of industrial evolution. The economist and the educator here joined hands; but unhappily neither was able to grasp the real situation. Democracy, a wage-earning class, and universal education were the social institutions which developed side by side out of the same soil—one strengthened and protected the others. Early democracy was aristocratic; early education was likewise intended for the elect. The progress of democracy has been to admit one class after another into the circle from which the lowly were once sternly excluded; during the same time, however, education was broadening its scope and enriching its content. These phenomena were not isolated and unrelated; they were intimately and vitally joined to each other.

The science of education, like economic science, has passed through important and fundamental modifications. The
emphasis has shifted from the leisure class ideal of education for culture and discipline to the industrial, utilitarian and democratic ideal of education as a means of improving civic and industrial efficiency. The older methods and concepts of education originated at a time when the older view of the workingman and of his sphere of life and activity was held. Education, except perhaps the three R's, was not, in earlier periods of our history, intended for the laboring man; it was only for the "cultured" classes. Thus it appears that two periods of scientific economic thought may be distinguished in the United States during the nineteenth century. The early period opened approximately with the educational revival of the early period; the second was formally ushered into existence by the organization, in 1885, of the American Economic Association. A new birth of economic thought seemed to be approaching; economists were becoming impatient with the old formulae. Theory and practice were drawing closer together; a new school of economists might be said to be in the process of formation. The concepts of education and of political economy held during the first half of the last century were narrow, much narrower than those then generally accepted. The earlier political economy, as a rule, considered man to be an animal in whom all other ambitions, aims, desires and loves were subordinated to the desire for wealth getting. The theory was purely a mathematical or mechanical one.
As a necessary result of the expansion in the scope of economic science, the relation between economics and the science of education became intimate and important. However, the schools could not keep abreast of this great, throbbing, changeable world current, because the industrial development and social changes were affected so rapidly during the decades that educational development lagged far behind.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the American public school system was systematized and standardized. All the children of the nation were crowded, pushed, or pulled through similar courses of study at as nearly uniform speed as possible—a common mold was used for each and for all. The teachers were obliged to teach according to a minutely prescribed system. Each subject was presented in a certain manner at a scheduled hour, and that by another method at another hour. No matter whether the child was well or ill, over or under-worked, naturally quick or slow of comprehension, or whether he was or was not aided at home by the parents, school routine never varied; the system operated like clockwork in the vain attempt to produce a fictitious, although much talked about, average child.

Stern financial necessity was the father of much of the routine, overcrowded system found in the public schools; on the other hand it was in no small measure, due to the worship of a methodical business administration which turned out fine,
accurate, and minutely detailed reports at the expenses of the spontaneity, originality, individuality and health of both teachers and pupils. All educational innovations seemed to lay stress upon those elements which were least important to the mass of the people. In colonial New England compulsory education was insited upon a religious grounds in order to benefit a pitanical priesthood or ministerial element. Great stress was laid upon higher education--the classics, theology, and literature. The motive for elementary education was also purely religious. Early education began with the abstract, rather than with common sense and pedagogical science, or with the concrete and the near-at-hand. This fact can be explained on the basis of conflict of economic interests. Only within a few generations has the working class reached a position in the community from which they were able to effectively voice their demands. A twofold weakness of the educational system was at this point. The curriculum and the methods of the city school had not been sufficiently modified to meet the requirements of children, who live in a crowded city and have little opportunity for constructive work or healthful recreation. Some progress had been made in this direction, but there was great need for further improvement. On the other hand rural school had assisted in augmenting the growth of the cities and in encouraging the drift away from the farm. Its curriculum had absolutely ignored, with a few exceptions, the
fact that the farm presented problems which required education and training to solve.

The separation of industry and education was a result of the carrying down of old conceptions into modern times. When science, industry, commerce and agriculture were first recognized as proper fields for school work, it was natural, perhaps inevitable, that machinery and methods similar to those which had been applied to the teaching of the classics and mathematics should still be used. However, the segregation of students, rigid class systems, the isolations of the students from the practical things of life, and the cultivation of the scholastic ideals, are, with slight modifications, still adhered to.

The problem of education in the nineteenth century was to develop, along with the purely cultural and disciplinary work of education, new functions which would increase the industrial, social, and civic efficiency of young men and young women in the industrial era. Both government and education needed "democratizing" in the best sense of the term. Education needed to be concerned with much more than the teaching of reading, writing, literature, and the like; it needed to be an integral and vital part of the experience of every future efficient member of the community.

By the end of the nineteenth century, not only had the last frontier disappeared in America, but the monetary frontier had disappeared also. Society had perfected a great material
fundamental of production, distribution, and exchange. Huge
capital had rolled up an enormous earning-power. Through
giant industries founded about standardization, and specializa-
tion, American life was dynamic. The dominant theme was
change and movement. A great breach was evidenced between
the curriculum and political, industrial, and social life of
the people. Living was complicated, defective, and hard to
understand.

The twentieth century is not without its social problems.
A rapidly mounting number of inventions has harnessed the
growing resources of physical power. There has been a con-
tinued, acute transition from an agrarian to a highly indus-
trialized civilization, causing the concentration of enormous
populations in small and highly congested areas. The application
of science and invention to industrial and agricultural pro-
duction has produced an economic condition in which an abundance
rather than a scarcity prevails; as a result, problems of
distribution are in evidence. The conquest of power and its
application to production through machinery has produced
leisure-time problems. Adult education has given rise to a
curriculum revision that supersedes all other efforts at
adjustment. This civilization is marked by an increasing
degree of cooperation and interdependence. Stagnation or chaos
are apparent consequences if society fails to discover means
and methods of coping with political, religious, social, and
economic problems. The significance of these facts for
education probably have not been truly estimated. However, it has been realized that an interdependent society demands a workable school curriculum. As a result, the activity movement has gradually evolved until it has reached a fair degree of efficiency.

This integrated curriculum is a type of curriculum organized and constructed about certain desired outcomes. The term "integrated" is used to distinguish this curriculum from the type which is set up in divisions by subjects. The activity curriculum is planned to provide better selection and organization of teaching materials and to promote better methods of teaching and learning. Moreover, it is organized in such a way that the teacher may find readily at hand the proper aids and subject matter content for directing the learning processes, to the end that better unification of effort and greater integration of learning may be achieved. Thus the teacher's task is twofold: first, provision must be made for many and varied opportunities for expression of the child's basic tendencies; second, skillful guidance must be present in order that the child will express himself in ways that are socially desirable and acceptable. Thus the activity program takes the child where he is and builds upon his tendencies to respond and act. It is a curriculum which provides well-selected activities for different levels of growth; it offers opportunities for children to engage in worth-while, satisfying activities, and at the same time permits them to
carry on challenging purposes that are of definite interest. The activity movement has had its new name for only a few years, but it had its inception in previous centuries. The physical conquest of America and the accompanying social problems demanded educational practices that were not in evidence when they were needed; throughout all the periods of development, there is evidence of the formation of educational principles and practices that lagged behind social demands. Down through the centuries there has been a cry for a curriculum that met the needs emerging from social progress.

With the changing status of children, brought about by the changing character of society, there was a need for discovering the interests and purposes of childhood, and that need has been partially met, at least, through the modern activity program of American schools.
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