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Iowa schoolmarms: The significance of rural schools and the feminization movement, 1865-1920

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IOWA SCHOOLMARMs: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RURAL SCHOOLS AND
THE FEMINIZATION MOVEMENT, 1865-1920

An Abstract of a Thesis
Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Ashley Nicole Loper
University of Northern Iowa
July 2017

ABSTRACT

Approximately twelve to fourteen thousand one-room schoolhouses occupied the Iowan landscape during the late nineteenth century. Rural schools possess a strong connection to the memories Iowans have of their state and have a particularly strong impact on women's recollections. The state was established during the climax of the educational reformation led by Horace Mann and Catharine Beecher. Consequently, Iowa mostly negated schooling by religious leaders and developed public school systems almost immediately upon the state's foundations. The majority of the people settling Iowa already contained firm beliefs on public education being accessible for all citizens. Women began entering the schoolhouse in large numbers during the Civil War that continued to increase over the next several decades. As teaching became an extension of republican motherhood, and education reforms pushed for standardization of the teaching profession, more women enrolled in normal training programs, such as the Iowa State Normal School. This educational reformation and increase of women as teachers created an environment in Iowa that influenced women's rights issues including school suffrage, pay equity, and coeducation.

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Entitled: Iowa Schoolmarms: The Significance of Rural Schools and the Feminization Movement, 1865-1920

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the
Degree of Master of Arts

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*To Ben,
Let's continue our adventure*

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INTRODUCTION

The rural one-room schoolhouse dominated the Iowan landscape from the mid-nineteenth century, until consolidation around 1955. They were formally outlawed in the 1960s. Some are still in operation in local Mennonite and Amish communities—the only communities legally allowed to operate rural schoolhouses. Throughout the century, approximately twelve to fourteen thousand schoolhouses were in operation. Since consolidation, many have been renovated into homes, were preserved by local museums or historical societies, or converted into memorials for the township. Iowans still have a strong connection with one-room schoolhouses.

The cultural identity of the schoolhouse remains strong in Iowa. Several museums across the state house various rural school related objects and documents, but the largest collection in the state is located at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), under the control of the UNI Museum. Eighty-eight of the ninety-nine counties are represented in the collection, although not necessarily equally. The collection contains a variety of documents including: treasurer reports, secretary notes, blueprints, plat maps, superintendent records, teacher contracts, teacher certificates, daily attendance records, county normal school program records, eighth grade examination and graduation records, township meeting notes, township census, school deeds, school census, textbook records, and the occasional personal records from former teachers.

While the UNI Museum's collection provides valuable statistical evidence, the personally diaries and correspondence of former schoolteachers remain scarce in the collection. Fortunately, some historical societies and other museums house a few of these

sorts of primary records for research. And one scholar, Mary Hulburt Cordier, a professor of education, published various records of schoolteachers from Midwestern states in her book *Schoolwomen of the Prairies and Plains: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860s to 1920s*. She followed the lives of five schoolteachers that originated from Nebraska, Kansas, Idaho, Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, Utah, and Iowa. Three of the five overlapped throughout various decades in the aforementioned states, but one schoolteacher, Sarah Gillespie Huftalen, stayed in Iowa her entire life. Sarah was a dedicated schoolteacher who, for the majority of her life, had regular diary entries. Throughout the coming chapters, Sarah's life provides anecdotal evidence as her story is followed through the chapters as she attended teacher training programs, remained a teacher throughout her life, and was politically active on various women's rights platforms.¹

Two groups of historiography are required for understanding the significance of women and education. The first branch—obviously—are education historians. Within this group, the branch can be divided further into two additional segments. The first studied rural schoolhouses and the culture of rural communities and the second group researched educational history in ideological and philosophical terms. The first branch of historians has studied educational history on various levels. For example, Andrew Gulliford led the way in American rural school history, however his work provided a tertiary level analysis of schoolhouses across the county. William Sherman pioneered

¹ Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 209-44.

Iowa rural school history, but again he provided a history on Iowan rural schoolhouses without significant analysis. Some historians have examined education in rural areas of Midwest states, such as in Paul Theobald's book, *Teaching the Commons: Place, Pride, and the Renewal of the Community*, but he analyzed the symbolism rural schoolhouses possessed on Midwestern cultures, and neglected the role of teachers on the community. Research regarding the evolution of teachers was also incorporated in works such as Gulliford and Sherman.

There was scholarly research regarding the Common School, but it often analyzed the standardization of public education from a top-down perspective, especially with influential figures such as Horace Mann, Catharine Beecher, and Emma Willard. Some research has also been published on the evolution of educational beliefs throughout the centuries and how those ideologies were adopted and implemented into the public school curriculum. Scholars have also expanded Mann's and Beecher's histories and influences to a broader ideology that incorporated their philosophies on the standardization of

teaching and have applied it to Midwest states during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²

The second set of scholars have analyzed women's history and the influence of women on American culture beginning in the eighteenth century and continuing through the twentieth century. These scholars have researched women's roles in society and how women assisted in developing and settling the West. Linda Kerber significantly influenced established women's history with her research regarding republican motherhood in *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. In her foundational book, Kerber discussed the integration of women domesticity into the public realm regarding their participation in war, involvement and changes to women's education, and the transition of the status of women beginning in the Revolutionary Era.

² Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984) and Jonathan Zimmerman, *Small Wonder: The Little Red Schoolhouse in History and Memory*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). William L. Sherman, ed., *Iowa's Country Schools: Landmarks of Learning*, (Parkersburg, Iowa: Iowa State Education Association, 1998). Wayne E. Fuller, *The Old Country School: The Story of Rural Education in the Middle West*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Paul Theobald, *Teaching the Commons: Place, Pride, and the Renewal of Community*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997); Jurgen Herbst, *And Sadly Teach: Teacher Education and Professionalization in American Culture*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983); Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973); Margaret Nash, *Women's Education in the United States, 1780-1840*, (New York: Palgrave, 2005); David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, *Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Public Schools*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Polly Welts Kaufman, *Women Teachers on the Frontier*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Andrea Wyman, *Rural Women Teachers in the United States: A Sourcebook*, (London: The Scarecrow Press, Incorporated, 1997); Jo Anne Preston, "Domestic Ideology, School Reform, and Female teachers: Schoolteaching Becomes Women's Work in the Nineteenth Century New England," *New England Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (December 1993): 531-551; and Geraldine J. Clifford, *Those Good Gertrudes: A Social History of Women Teachers in America*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2014).

Throughout the book, Kerber followed an argument discussing the motivation of the culture urging patriotic Revolutionary women to direct their focus toward nurturing and educating the youth of the new nation. Kerber raised the question of female significance of women developing and maintaining aspects of the American culture by exploring women's relationship to politics after the American Revolution. According to Kerber, republican motherhood included "...raising sons and disciplining husbands to be virtuous citizens of the republic."³

Women and gender scholars have implemented Kerber's republican motherhood argument in various historical contexts and topics and continue to do so. For example, shortly after the publication of *Women of the Republic*, Glenda Riley published her book, *Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915* and complicated Kerber's republican motherhood by addressing the significance of republican motherhood and women on the frontier and civilizing the West during the nineteenth and twentieth century. She explored the outside influences on the development of Midwestern cultures and identities including American ideals, European values, and Native American interaction with settlers.

Kathryn Kish Sklar also wrote a foundational book on Catharine Beecher that correlated with Kerber's work. In *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity*, Sklar addressed the environment Beecher created for women's rights as Beecher argued

³ Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 1.

that women were naturally born to teach children while she pushed for the professionalization of normal training and the teaching profession.⁴

One scholar, a professor of education, Mary Hurlbut Cordier, has researched women schoolteachers in Midwestern states including Nebraska, Kansas, and Iowa. In her research, she explored the increase of women schoolteachers in each state, however she does not provide further analysis or comment on the significance on the increase of women rural school teachers.⁵ Historians have explored the development of women teachers by looking at how the “moral guardians” argument influenced the development of teaching being “women’s work” and how economics influenced the hiring of women teachers. These historians primarily analyzed the outside influences of women becoming

⁴ Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

⁵ Mary Hurlbut Cordier, “Prairie Schoolwomen, Mid 1850s to 1920s, in Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska,” *Great Plains Quarterly*, (1988): 103 and Mary Hurlbut Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992).

teachers. Some discussed individual female teachers and teaching offered some independence, but these sources do not address further women's rights issues.⁶

The national progression of the teaching profession during Iowa's early statehood, Iowa's location regionally, the demographics of the state, and the historical events that occurred in the mid and late nineteenth century all assisted in creating an environment that enabled Iowa women to discuss women's rights issues as mentioned previously. The Iowa rural school became the center of discussion on these issues, but it began decades previously on the eastern borders of the United States.

⁶ Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Karen Leroux, "'Lady Teachers' and the Genteel Roots of Teacher Organization in Gilded Age Cities," *History of Education Quarterly* 46, no. 2, (Summer, 2006): 164-191; Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," *American Literature* 70, no. 3 (September 1998): 581-606;); Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983); Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973); Margaret Nash, *Women's Education in the United States, 1780-1840*, (New York: Palgrave, 2005);); David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, *Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Public Schools*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Polly Welts Kaufman, *Women Teachers on the Frontier*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Glenda Riley, *Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984); Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996); Susan Armitage, "Through Women's Eyes: A New View of the West," in Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson, eds. *The Women's West*, (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 9-18; Melody Graulich, "Violence Against Women: Power Dynamics in Literature of the Western Family," in Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson, eds. *The Women's West*, (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 111-125; Richard L. Griswold, "Anglo Women and Domestic Ideology in the American West in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in Lillian Schlissel, Vicki L. Ruiz, and Janice Monk, eds., *Western Women, Their Lands, Their Lives* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 15-34; Kathleen Underwood, "The Pace of Their Own Lives: Teacher Training and the Life Course of Western Women," *Pacific Historical Review* 55, no. 4 (November 1986): 513-30; Courtney Ann Vaughn-Roberson, "Having Purpose in Life: Western Women Teachers in the Twentieth Century," *Great Plains Quarterly* (1984): 107-124; Carl Degler, *At Odds: Women and Family in America from the Revolution to the Present*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); and Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West 1840-1880*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979).

Women schoolteachers are usually the first image to come to mind when discussing rural schools, but this was not always the case. Teaching was originally a man's profession, and women were often barred from participating. This philosophy obviously changed throughout the centuries, as women began to dominate the profession. As teaching feminized and professionalized women in Iowa were able to participate in school elections, attend higher coeducational secondary schooling, and argue for pay equity based on experience.

CHAPTER I

“TO BE A TEACHER”:

The Landscape of the Teaching Profession in Iowa

Sarah Gillespie Huftalen was an Iowan rural school teacher at the conclusion of the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. She was an anomaly to the majority of women school teachers as she continued to teach after she married in 1892 to William “Billie” Huftalen, a pawnbroker forty years her senior. She believed in education for all in order to better a society for everyone and so began teaching. Sarah was dedicated to her schoolchildren and her dedication to teaching was illuminated in her article “The Use of the Hand Book in Rural Schools,” published in *Midland Schools, 1910-1911*. She wrote, “every school home [was] a beacon light of temperate living, sober thinking chaste being, every boy growing more noble and manly, every girl becoming more graceful and womanly.”¹ Huftalen’s philosophy on women in the public sphere, the teaching profession, and education was in line with the common ideologies of the era. Throughout her career as a teacher, she continued to participate in organizations such as the Rural Section of Iowa State Teachers Association where she wrote an article to fellow schoolteachers on the etiquette and responsibilities of being a teacher.²

The female schoolteacher standing at the front of a rural schoolhouse was not the common image prior to the mid-nineteenth century. Preceding formal education, children only had to be capable to the read the Bible or the religious text of the community

¹ Sarah Gillespie Huftalen, “The Use of the Hand Book in Rural Schools,” *Midland Schools: A Journal of Education* 24, no. 10 (July 1910): 300-302.

² Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 225-26.

subsequently resulting in religious leaders teaching children—primarily boys. However, as teaching standardized and professionalized during the Common Era led by Horace Mann, the teaching profession also feminized. Women entered the schoolhouse for several reasons during the nineteenth century, but the majority of these reasons concluded with the moral responsibilities of women compared to men during the era. This concept of “republican motherhood,” the argument spurred by Linda Kerber that discussed women’s responsibility of upholding and teaching American ideals to children while holding men accountable, dispersed into various sectors of the American culture and eventually assisted Horace Mann and Catharine Beecher in arguing that women belonged in the schoolhouse to teach the morals of society, and to civilize the West.³

In addition to the nationwide culture shift during the Common School Era with society becoming more accepting of women entering the rural schoolhouse as teachers, the Civil War and industrialization further assisted women in Iowa to become schoolteachers. With male teachers leaving the schoolhouse, women filled the role as the Iowa educator. Industrialization reinforced the need for tender and caring women to teach children the values of rural life and the hazards of city life. Iowa experienced a large number of women entering the teaching profession beginning around 1860 and continuing into the twentieth century.

Also during this time frame, some women became more politically active for women’s rights issues and teachers assisted in this fight. One woman in particular, Sarah

³ Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

Gillespie Huftalen, was also a women's rights activist, a characteristic she adopted from her mother. Sarah's mother, Emily, considered herself a suffragette and follower of Susan B. Anthony.⁴ Sarah embraced her mother's philosophy with women's rights and became an advocate by speaking at rallies and publishing articles.⁵ By the conclusion of the nineteenth century, teaching transitioned from being considered a short-term job for men to becoming a profession for women. In 1898, Sarah presented an address on the fiftieth anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention at the "Women's Sphere" in Manchester, Iowa and stated, "Thus we see that with the advancement of the history of our nation, woman too, as time and place demanded, has met these changed surroundings until we find her to-day capable of filling innumerable positions. With keen intuitive perceptions and with intelligence equal to brothers and fathers, she feels that she is a necessary factor in the upbuilding of a nation..."⁶ She aligned herself with the concept of republican motherhood and considered it a great responsibility to teach young children how to be proper American citizens. Miss Etta Lamon also closely identified herself with the honor of teaching in her address published in *The Iowa School Journal* where she stated,

⁴ Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 212.

⁵ Sarah Gillespie Huftalen, "The Use of the Hand Book in Rural Schools," *Midland Schools: A Journal of Education* 24, no. 10 (July 1910): 300-302. Also printed in, Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 217-218.

⁶ Sarah Gillespie Huftalen, "Woman's Sphere," newspaper clipping, Manchester, Iowa, Wednesday, August 10, 1898, in "Personal No. 1, 'I Rember [sic] This & That,'" 20, box 8, vol. 10, Manchester Historical Society. Also printed in, Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 218-219.

“While in school they [school children] receive that which is to discipline and fit them for true usefulness in life. It is not only the teacher’s work, but high privilege to give this instruction.”⁷ Iowa educators centered the state’s curriculum on the idea of creating a proper citizen and believed firmly in upholding this philosophy throughout the profession.⁸

In the same edition of *The Iowa School Journal*, another article was published discussing the injustice to girls for “...not qualifying them in a way for gaining a livelihood when they grow up.”⁹ The article proceeded by discussing how girls are drilled with textbook material, but then had no option of work after school. By providing girls with a profession, the article argued that girls and society would better benefit the workforce. Allowing women to receive specialized training, women could decide on whether they would prefer domestic tasks or working in a professional setting.¹⁰ Teaching offered women professional opportunity.

Prior to formal public education and the development of one-room schoolhouses in rural areas, ministers, priests, and other religious officials often taught children the basics in reading. Colonial Americans believed the general public had to be capable of

⁷ Etta Lamon, “The Teacher—His Duties and Obligations,” *The Iowa School Journal* 14, no. 15 (November 1873), 597.

⁸ J.L. Pickard, “Education of Women,” in *Proceedings of the State Teachers’ Association*, (Dubuque: The Iowa State Normal Monthly) 1877, 19.

⁹ Rutland Herald, “Educate the Girls,” *The Iowa School Journal* 14, no. 15, November 1873, 607.

¹⁰ Rutland Herald, “Educate the Girls,” *The Iowa School Journal* 14, no. 15, November 1873, 607-08.

reading the Bible in order to be a productive member of the community.¹¹ This colonial concept of basic education traveled west with the settlement of the Midwestern frontier, including Kansas, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. Religious and educational factors remained intertwined during the settlement of Iowa. Even though Iowa had a rich diversity of European cultures—including German, Dutch, Swedish, and Danish—and religious denominations—mainly Roman Catholic and various branches of Protestantism—the commonality among all was the importance of educated and religiously active citizens. A unique characteristic emerged from the Catholic Church involving women fulfilling religious responsibilities. The Catholic Church called upon nuns to assist in establishing various institutions including schools and hospitals. A significant portion of nuns derived from France and Ireland and settled in the eastern half of Iowa. For example, in 1843 the Sisters of Charity established Mary's Academy, and in 1877 the Sisters of the Holy Humility of Mary developed a school for parish boys with the invitation of Monsignor John Kreckel in Ottumwa.¹²

Even though women were afforded some credit with establishing schools, that responsibility was limited. Women rarely taught in the schoolhouse, and their appearance in teaching remained infrequent until the 1880s when state officials implemented teaching certification requirements. Prior to these requirements, men viewed teaching as a temporary job to assist in paying college tuition or something they did to earn money while training for other professional positions. Once teaching certificates became

¹¹ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 36.

¹² Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 109-112, 118.

required, men pursued other, more lucrative careers, such as positions in legal, medical, and political fields, without working stints in schools. This educational requirement for teachers further spurred the feminization process in teaching.¹³

This new cultural belief continued throughout the nineteenth century. Women were viewed as holding the morals of society, especially during the industrial revolution when it was feared the morals of American identity would be forgotten in a world of brutal and aggressive capitalism. Beginning in the 1820s, and rapidly moving through the 1830s to the 1860s, a movement began to provide women with education that was equivalent to men. The argument for those in favor of women's education was the moral debate. For if women were the moral guardians of American civilization, then women should receive the same education as men to understand the possible situations men may experience in their future social and political encounters.¹⁴ This argument assisted women in receiving secondary education and helped them in achieving a working position outside of the household that differed from other more labor-intensive jobs.

According to some Protestant ministers such as Reverend Thomas Bernard, women naturally held higher piety and moral virtues. This ideology allowed more women into the educational field as they were expected to teach children the moral responsibilities of being a good citizen with firm republican ideals and patriotism.¹⁵ With

¹³ Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 120.

¹⁴ Glenda Riley, "Origins for the Argument of Improved Female Education," *History of the Educational Quarterly*, 9, no. 4 (Winter 1969): 456.

¹⁵ Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

advocates asserting that women held the ideals of American democracy, an educational push for women surfaced. It was believed that if women were to teach republicanism and patriotism to their children and hold their husbands responsible for upholding these ideals as well, then women should have some sort of educational background on challenges men could face in the public sphere. In addition, as the public education and teaching became an extension of the women's domestic sphere, it also became a symbol of American democracy and patriotism. Schoolhouses acted as community centers and usually the location where voting occurred. One-room schoolhouses were not only the place where children learned about how to act as an American citizen, but they also frequently became the location where adults actively participated as an American citizen.¹⁶ This idea of motherhood swept the nation and this argument became deeply intertwined in not only women's identity, but also American identity.¹⁷ The foundations of democracy became tangled with motherhood.

The Civil War allowed the possibility of women to more easily enter the profession in Iowa. The state had the highest ratio of civilians enlisted in the armed forces to population. According to the federal census, by 1860 the total Iowa population was 674,913.¹⁸ The total number of Iowans that fought for the Union were approximately 80,000 and the majority, 76,000, were volunteers. Approximately 16,000 were single

¹⁶ William L. Sherman, ed., *Iowa's Country Schools: Landmarks of Learning* (Parkersburg, Iowa: Iowa State Education Association, 1998), 3-11.

¹⁷ Glenda Riley, "Images of the Frontierwoman: Iowa as a Case Study," *Western Historical Quarterly* 108, no. 2 (April 1977): 192.

¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, "Resident Population and Apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives," <https://www.census.gov/dmd/www/resapport/states/iowa.pdf>.

marriageable men. With this high volume of men in the military, the demand for people to fill positions in nursing and teaching increased. Another factor that encouraged women into teaching was the necessity of earning money. The majority of the Iowan population lived in rural areas on farms. When the men left to fight in the war, the wives had to try and manage the farm. Husbands usually trusted their wives to handle the financial and daily management of the farm, but not the daily livestock and farm chores. As a result, families either had to sell a portion of their livestock and animals, hire extra hands, or lease their farm out to young men while the wives moved back home with their parents during the war. The majority of women participated in the latter option, but by ceasing farm responsibilities, women had the opportunity to teach.¹⁹

The older wives with young children did not teach as frequently as young women of marrying age. With the high volume of marriageable men serving in the military, these women stayed at home with their families instead of leaving. Consequently, with families not needing as much help on the farm either due to extra hands or from older sisters returning home or hired help, these women shifted their attention to the local rural schoolhouse. The demand for work outside the traditional domestic responsibilities and

¹⁹ J. L. Anderson, "The Vacant Chair on the Farm: Soldier Husbands, Farm Wives, and the Iowa Home Front, 1861-1865," *The Annals of Iowa* 66, no. 3 (Summer, 2007): 241-265. For additional information regarding Iowa and the Civil War see, Dorothy Schwieder, "Iowans and the Civil War Era," in *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 67-82. For information on women in the American economy during the Civil War see, W. Elliot Brownlee and Mary M. Brownlee, *Women in the American Economy: A Documentary History, 1675-1929*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 18-21.

the additional income was appealing for these young women. As a result, young women flooded the public school system as teachers.²⁰

The local school districts also had another appealing solution to hiring young women. These women, especially the ones that were not trained or contained experience in higher education, cost less. During the Civil War, as with all wars, the economy became strained in order to support the war effort. As mentioned previously, women were cheaper labor because their futures were often assumed by the school boards who hired them. The assumption was that women would marry relatively quickly and during this era, men had the responsibility of financially supporting a family and so required more compensation than women. Nevertheless, women became the more conservative economic choice when staffing the rural one-room schoolhouses. After the Civil War concluded, women remained in the schoolhouses for various reasons including an increase of men returning from the war with disabilities with insufficient pensions causing wives and daughters to work or women becoming widows.²¹

In addition to the Civil War, railroads developed in the 1850s and 1860s assisted in Iowa's population growth by connecting the state's abundance of agricultural products to eastern markets and commercial centers, which resulted in Iowa developing into a central agricultural producer. Even with the population growth and fundamental connection to larger eastern commercial centers, Iowa prided itself on remaining

²⁰ J. L. Anderson, "The Vacant Chair on the Farm: Soldier Husbands, Farm Wives, and the Iowa Home Front, 1861-1865," *The Annals of Iowa* 66, no. 3 (Summer, 2007): 241-265.

²¹ W. Elliot Brownlee and Mary M. Brownlee, *Women in the American Economy: A Documentary History, 1675-1929*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 21-23.

independent through farm culture and consequently remained a relatively rural state throughout the industrial revolution.

This transition of women in the public workforce began during the middle of the nineteenth century when more women left rural areas and began working in industrial companies such as with the textile mills. The textile factories allowed some women to transition from traditional household and domestic sewing to industrial factory life. Another factor for women entering the industrial workforce was the surplus of females left behind in New England during the early nineteenth century until about the 1840s. As more single men left the East for the West, a demand for women to fill “women positions” increased.²²

The demand for women shifted from factories to other urban industries during the late antebellum era. According to some historians, factories allowed for the development of a middle class which in turn allowed more young women educational opportunities. Immigrants and working class citizens filled factory jobs while American-born women continued their common school education and pursued careers that required more well-educated employees. Teaching was one of the first professions to take advantage of the need for higher educated and more qualified women.

A factor for the increase of women during industrialization and urbanization was a demographic shift during the last decades of the nineteenth century and early years of

²² W. Elliot Brownlee and Mary M. Brownlee, *Women in the American Economy: A Documentary History, 1675-1929*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 13. See also, Julie Matthaei, *An Economic History of Women in America, Women's Work, the Sexual Division of Labor, and the Development of Capitalism*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1982).

the twentieth century. During this era, there was an increase of European immigration. This peak in immigration coincided with the increase of women laborers nationwide. Overall, immigrant-born women were more likely to participate in the labor force compared to their native-born counterparts. Another factor of urbanization resulted in an increase of women waiting to marry and an increase in the divorce rate. According to some historians, these statistics suggested society became more tolerant towards women in the labor force and with the idea of women not always fulfilling traditional gender roles of the early nineteenth century. Whatever the reason, the increase of single women resulted in more women working; teaching and nursing offered two options for women to participate in more of a profession rather than a factory or entry level job.²³

During influxes of immigration, American men and women were often eliminated from the factories as foreign-born citizens or African Americans were hired to work the factory lines as these groups of individuals were cheaper. Nevertheless, there was an increase of competent and well-educated women in society.²⁴

In addition to job creation for women, the industrial revolution created a cultural concern. During the climax of the industrial revolution between 1880 and 1910, the middle class continued to solidify in Iowa.²⁵ Women continued to be the bearers of these morals and were expecting to teach these ideals to school-aged children. The idea of

²³ W. Elliot Brownlee and Mary M. Brownlee, *Women in the American Economy: A Documentary History, 1675-1929*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 23-26.

²⁴ W. Elliot Brownlee and Mary M. Brownlee, *Women in the American Economy: A Documentary History, 1675-1929*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 23-26.

²⁵ Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 109-185; 211-251.

womanhood and motherhood being synonymous solidified the necessity of women to teach and civilize children in the rapidly developing industrial culture. Women continued to hold the obligation of teaching and civilizing children in a public school setting, but faced the hypocritical situation of the modern society. Women began to question how they could teach democracy and the proper ideals of a civilization that restricted their rights.²⁶ A unique aspect about teaching was that it required women to teach moral values to students. This philosophy had always been true in teaching, but as the centuries progressed in America, this became less religious and more political. Instead of being a good Christian, it developed into becoming a good citizen in order to maintain a good government.

In 1880, men still accounted for forty-two percent of teachers in Iowa but by 1900, that percentage had slipped to approximately thirty percent in the state. These statistics suggest that men in Iowa were discouraged from teaching while women were encouraged.²⁷

This shift from male to female teachers was not a linear transformation. The gender proportions of teachers in Iowa fluctuated in the post-Civil War era until 1880. At the conclusion of the Civil War, females represented seventy-three percent of Iowa public school teachers. This number declined to sixty-five percent by 1867, but then became fairly consistent between sixty-one and sixty-four percent between 1868 and 1880. The

²⁶ Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 109-185; 211-251. See also, W. Elliot Brownlee and Mary M. Brownlee, *Women in the American Economy: A Documentary History, 1675-1929*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 28-29.

²⁷ Thomas Morain, "The Departure of Males from the Teaching Profession in Nineteenth-Century Iowa," *Civil War History* 26, no. 2 (June 1980): 162.

year 1880 signified an important year for women teaching in the state. Although the number of employment opportunities in the discipline continued to increase, 1880 marked the first consistent decrease in male teachers.²⁸

Iowa also experienced a high turnover rate of teachers from 1865 to 1880. Many Iowa communities were still in the early stages of development during this time period and school systems throughout the state struggled to retain teachers as they proliferated and tried to maintain steady growth. Even though districts struggled to retain teachers, the burgeoning school systems still created an increasing demand for teachers.

The combination of turnover rates and school development created approximately a twenty-five percent increase in first year teachers in the early 1870s. Due to the expeditious nature of this development, regulations for hiring school teachers were rarely enforced. Local school boards hired teachers completely at their own discretion. The teacher examinations required for proper certification were frequently ignored, and teachers—both males and females—simply had to pass an oral and written examination administered by the county district. The community school boards hired teachers term by term, with a preference for male teachers in the winter. The winter term was when most of the older schoolboys attended school and women were not trusted with implementing and enforcing proper punishment on these older male students. This concern was often

²⁸ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Annual Reports of the State Superintendent of Schools, 1870-1871*.

justified, especially if the district employed an eighteen-year-old female to teach and discipline boys her age or older.²⁹

Even though women began to dominate teaching, male teachers usually held a higher classification of certificate. Teaching certificates were awarded based on educational training. The more education a teacher received, the higher gradation of certificate was awarded. Males held a higher ratio of professional certificates compared to females in this scenario. Table 1 provides statistics on the relationship of male and female certificate holders and hires from 1874 to 1890.³⁰

When the state implemented regulations that required both men and women to attend institutions for educational training, teaching became a less desirable position for men. Early local normal institutions required those pursuing teaching to pay tuition along with room and board for anywhere from two to four weeks, depending on the program. As a result, men no longer saw the value in pursuing temporary teaching careers. The requirements became too extensive to pursue for a few school terms. Additionally, because of the economic decline in the 1870s and 1880s after the Civil War, payment drastically decreased for male teachers. Age restrictions placed on teachers by the state superintendent in 1877 presented another factor that resulted in the decline of male teachers. The median age for women teachers was between twenty and twenty-two and

²⁹ Thomas Morain, "The Departure of Males from the Teaching Profession in Nineteenth-Century Iowa," *Civil War History* 26, no. 2 (June 1980): 162.

³⁰ Thomas Morain, "The Departure of Males from the Teaching Profession in Nineteenth-Century Iowa," *Civil War History* 26, no. 2 (June 1980): 164-169. Professional certificates were the highest form of education available in education and were equivalent to formal college training. The remaining teachers had second or third classification certificates which were usually only valid for one school term.

for men was between twenty-four and twenty-five. However, there were outliers such as Davis County who hired teachers as young as eighteen. Consequently, the state superintendent implemented a directive forbidding any male under the age of nineteen and female under the age of seventeen to teach in an effort to deter underprepared educators to teach.³¹

Teaching offered women some financial independence before marriage. Hiring women over men also offered some financial relief for the school district as women typically received less pay. When hiring a male teacher, communities often took into consideration the future responsibilities a man had in life, such as financially providing for a family. Women did not possess that obligation, and so female teachers were often viewed as a “budget friendly” option for the school district.³²

Beyond the financial and practical benefits of hiring female teachers over male teachers, the increase of women in the teaching profession was also facilitated by a social movement led by reformers like Horace Mann and Catharine Beecher who claimed women were the nation’s natural educators. Mann viewed women teachers as an option for school systems that had limited budgets. By hiring a female teacher, the school budget could invest more money in learning materials. Catharine Beecher argued that teaching was an extension of female domestic responsibilities. According to Beecher, women were more benevolent and were concerned with teaching a “mother’s curriculum,” which

³¹ Thomas Morain, “The Departure of Males from the Teaching Profession in Nineteenth-Century Iowa,” *Civil War History* 26, no. 2 (June 1980): 161-170.

³² Thomas Morain, “The Departure of Males from the Teaching Profession in Nineteenth-Century Iowa,” *Civil War History* 26, no. 2 (June 1980): 161-170.

included healthy habits, proper etiquette, and a good conscience. She believed that educating women would benefit all of society as she stated in her 1829 speech to the Hartford Female Seminary, “If all females were not only well educated themselves, but were prepared to communicate in an easy manner their stores of knowledge to others; if they not only knew how to regulate their own minds, tempers and habits, but how to effect improvement in those around them, the face of society would speedily be changed.”³³ Beecher also averred that men taught just for the money, whereas women taught for the opportunity to do good for the community. By the middle of the nineteenth century, a new image of school teacher appeared in America. What had been a temporary profession for young males looking to get by became a full-time discipline for women to encourage and inspire students.³⁴

James Cleland Gilchrist, the first president of the Iowa State Normal School (which later became the University of Northern Iowa), described the teaching profession as “...the basis of all professions....”³⁵ In a meeting with the Normal Department National Education Association in 1879, Gilchrist spoke about the significance of teaching degrees and how they would benefit both the teachers in communities and the

³³ Catharine Beecher, *Suggestions respecting Improvements in education, presented to the Trustees of the Hartford Female Seminary*, and published at their request, Principal of the Hartford Female Seminary. Printed by the *American Journal of Education* 1 No 1, Hartford: Packard and Butler, 1829.

³⁴ Thomas Morain, “The Departure of Males from the Teaching Profession in Nineteenth-Century Iowa,” *Civil War History* 26, no. 2 (June 1980): 165. See also, Nancy Hoffman, ed., *Woman’s “True” Profession: Voices from the History of Teaching*, Old Westbury, New York: The Feminist Press, 1981, 8-10.

³⁵ James Cleland Gilchrist, “Professional Degrees for Teachers” presented at the Meeting of the Normal Department National Educational Association on Tuesday, July 29, 1879, 02/01/01 James Cleland Gilchrist Papers, Box 1, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections and Archives, 4.

profession.³⁶ In his speech, he argued that “A system of professional degrees will make teachers prominent in society as a learned class.”³⁷ He suggested that professional degrees contain a prestige within the country because it signified that the person “...has certain attainments in scholarship and skill which are attested by some college or university upon the result of an examination conducted by its faculty.”³⁸

Professionalizing teaching benefited the discipline and women as more continued to fill the educator role.

This created an emerging career path for women. Unlike men, women did not have the option of choosing a career. Women had limited opportunities and so more females were willing to invest in normal training to receive their teaching certifications, something male teachers had begun to abandon. Teaching was not the sole form of income for women, but it became one of the most important. Many washed clothes for neighbors, taught younger children at either their own house or a neighbor’s house, or performed other similar typical domestic household chores. Contrary to these more informal occupations, teaching represented a noble and honorable position and career women could pursue. When asked about the criteria to be a teacher, Sarah Gillespie

³⁶ James Cleland Gilchrist, “Professional Degrees for Teachers” presented at the Meeting of the Normal Department National Educational Association on Tuesday, July 29, 1879, 02/01/01 James Cleland Gilchrist Papers, Box 1, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections and Archives, 3.

³⁷ James Cleland Gilchrist, “Professional Degrees for Teachers,” presented at the Meeting of the Normal Department National Educational Association on Tuesday, July 29, 1879, 02/01/01 James Cleland Gilchrist Papers, Box 1, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections and Archives, 3.

³⁸ James Cleland Gilchrist, “Professional Degrees for Teachers,” presented at the Meeting of the Normal Department National Educational Association on Tuesday, July 29, 1879, 02/01/01 James Cleland Gilchrist Papers, Box 1, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections and Archives, 1.

Huftalen responded with, “The first requisite and last criterion of a teacher is to be a true follower of the Great Teacher, not so much in professing as in living...It means a right attitude toward the profession, toward each subject taught, toward the home, the school, the community and the child. It means to possess knowledge and the ability to interpret it to right uses so that it becomes a power for good in the life of the child.”³⁹ Unlike some of the jobs, such as factory or domestic jobs, teaching required women to attend school to further their education. Much of the impetus for this training was a result of states seeking to standardize education and teacher training curriculum.

As the teaching profession standardized, and more formal training was required, women continued to attend higher level secondary schooling in order to obtain a teaching certificate. Normal training programs and institutions developed from some supplementary training in high schools, to two week and then four week summer programs funded and administered by counties, to programs with the normal departments at one of the three state schools in Iowa, to summer training courses at the state institution—the Iowa State Normal School—before becoming a formal four year degree. The push for formal education of teachers led to the development of the Iowa State Normal School (ISNS) in Cedar Falls, Iowa; and with the transition to women replacing men in the profession, more females began attending formal schooling where they advanced their education. Women entering the teaching profession increased drastically in a matter of decades in Iowa. Figure 1 shows the number of men and women teachers in

³⁹ Sarah Gillespie Huftalen, “Why a Teacher,” Personal No. 2, 104, Manchester Historical Society. Also printed in, Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 240.

Iowa from 1849 to 1895. In 1849, men held approximately fifty-eight percent of the teaching positions.⁴⁰

Although men in the 1850s initially outnumbered women in teaching positions in Iowa, less than a decade later, women exceeded men as schoolteachers. By the conclusion of the century, there was almost double the number of female teachers to schoolhouses. The reasons teachers exceeded the number of schoolhouses was because teachers usually lasted a term or two before retiring and becoming wives and mothers. Although there was a high turnover rate of teachers, the educational legislation implemented by the state required teachers to receive education to be certified to teach and ostensibly, better training meant better pay.

The argument regarding the pay discrepancy of men and women teachers surfaced early in Iowa's foundations. While individual counties dictated pay for women, state teacher organizations and associations usually supported equal pay. For example, in Clarke County, schoolteachers published the Osceola Resolutions discussing equal pay regardless of gender. A couple of counties north, in Calhoun, women were—on average—receiving equivalent wages to men, and towards the end of the nineteenth century the average pay for women was higher at times than men. Iowa also granted women coeducational equality at higher educational institutions upon each of the three

⁴⁰ Henry Sabin, *Twenty-seventh Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Iowa, November 1, 1895* (Des Moines: 1895), 14-15.

states schools’—University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and University of Northern Iowa—opening dates.⁴¹

The final element Iowa women teachers achieved was receiving partial school suffrage across the state. The discussion on suffrage began in 1859-1860 in Iowa and was published in the first volume of *The Iowa Instructor*. The 1897 Iowa School Law Codes—statues endorsed by the legislature and signed by the governor—stated that women were allowed to vote in school elections regarding financial issues, prohibited any restrictions or limitations on preventing women from voting, and required at least one woman to be a member of the board of educational examiners. In this way, the national professionalization and feminization of the teaching profession, with the emphasis on education, in Iowa benefitted women’s rights regarding coeducation, equal pay, and school suffrage.⁴²

⁴¹ “Resolutions of the Teachers’ Class of Osceola, Clark Co.,” *The Iowa Instructor* vol. 1, no. 6 May 1860, 225-256; Calhoun County, Superintendents’ Annual Reports, 1888-1907, University of Northern Iowa Museum, Rural School Records.

⁴² “Resolutions of the Teachers’ Class of Osceola, Clark Co.,” *The Iowa Instructor* vol. 1 no. 6 May 1860, 238-241; Calhoun County, Superintendents’ Annual Reports, 1888-1907, University of Northern Iowa Museum, Rural School Records; ED M. Rands, ed., *Iowa School Laws: Teachers’ and Officers’ Edition, with Official Notes, Decisions and Forms; Digest of Supreme Court Decisions and Attorney General’s Opinions, Section 1697*, (Chicago: Northwestern School Supply, 1884); B. Knoepfler, *School Laws of Iowa from the Code of 1873: As Amended by the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, Seventeenth, Eighteenth, Nineteenth, Twentieth, Twenty-first, Twenty-second, Twenty-third, and Twenty-fourth General Assemblies, with Notes and Forms, for the Use and Government of School Officers*, “Sections 1766-1769,” (Des Moines: Geo. H. Ragsdale, State Printer, 1892). *School Laws of Iowa from the Code of 1897 as Amended by the Twenty-Seventh, Twenty-Eighth, and Twenty-Ninth General Assemblies: With Notes, Forms and Decisions, for the Use and Government of School Officers and Directors*, “Section 2739,” (Des Moines: B. Murphy State Printer, 1902).

Teacher Certificates Issued versus Teachers Hired between 1874 and 1890				
Year	Certificates Issued		Teachers Hired	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1874	5,788	10,475	6,374	10,739
1875	5,869	10,583	6,500	11,645
1876	5,746	11,320	6,830	12,222
1877	6,421	10,815	7,348	12,518
1878	6,194	11,641	7,561	13,023
1879	6,970	11,952	7,573	13,579
1880	5,703	12,052	7,254	14,314
1881	5,693	12,831	6,546	15,230
1882	5,024	14,382	6,044	16,037
1883	5,084	15,635	5,695	16,521
1884	5,054	15,746	5,760	17,359
1885	5,268	17,328	5,809	17,906
1886	5,538	17,866	5,927	18,748
1887	5,777	19,008	6,007	18,205
1888	4,628	18,241	5,595	19,518
1889	5,113	19,979	5,432	20,361
1890	4,649	19,852	5,460	21,107

Table 1: Statistics of Teacher Certificates and Teachers Hired between 1874 and 1890. Chart from Thomas Morain, "The Departure of Males from the teaching Profession in Nineteenth Century Iowa." ⁴³

⁴³ Thomas Morain, "The Departure of Males from the Teaching Profession in Nineteenth-Century Iowa," *Civil War History* 26, no. 2 (June 1980): 164.

Number of Iowan Schoolhouses Compared with Male and Female Teachers, 1849-1895

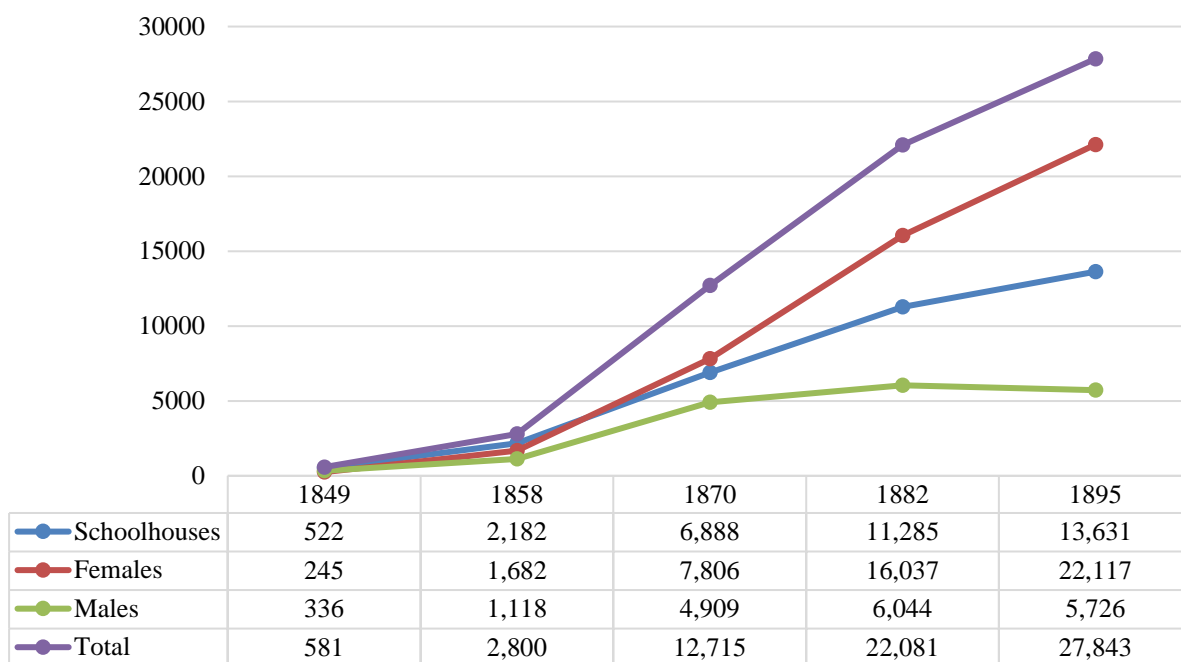


Figure 1: Number of Iowan schoolhouses compared with male and female teachers. Graph created from the Data collected in Henry Sabin's *Twenty-seventh Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Iowa, November 1, 1895*.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Henry Sabin, *Twenty-seventh Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Iowa, November 1, 1895* (Des Moines: 1895), 14-15.

CHAPTER II

“MY REALM OF PUBLIC SCHOOL WORK”:

Women’s Influence in Curriculum, School Suffrage,
and the Discussion of Pay Equity

Sarah Gillespie Huftalen had married Billie Huftalen, a man forty years older than her, in 1892 against her parents’ wishes. Sarah continued to teach due to the economic situation of her and her new husband. The years between 1892 and 1903 brought financial hardship for the couple as Billie, “failed in debt while keeping [a] second-hand goods store in Manchester. He insisted on my signing the note and not letting the public know our circumstances which was right enough, but at the time it was a very hard thing for me to do...In a way it was a good thing for it put me in my realm of public school work.”¹ Due to Billie’s age and the economic hardships of the couple, Sarah taught for her entire life. After her husband passed, she continued to teach and become more active in teacher organizations, such as the Rural Section of the Iowa State Teacher’s Association. Sarah published work regarding education and teaching and excelled as a teacher and eventually administrator of her local district. Sarah ultimately became an influential member and advocate of education reform and female teacher reform in Iowa.²

¹ Sarah Gillespie Huftalen, “Woman’s Sphere,” newspaper clipping, Manchester, Iowa, Wednesday, August 10, 1898, in “Personal No. 1, Sarah L. Gillespie Huftalen, “I Rember [sic] This & That,” 20, box 8, vol. 10 Manchester, Iowa. Also printed in, Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 219.

² Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 209-44.

As the Iowa landscape settled, teaching continued to feminize, and the education curriculum standardized, Iowa experienced a shift in responsibilities for teachers. Rural school educators had some liberty in how courses were taught in his or her schoolhouse. And while the state dictated what textbooks were used, the teachers ultimately had the final decision in how the courses were taught. As more women entered the teaching profession, females became responsible for school curriculum. For example, when Sarah began her teaching career in 1883 she:

...taught Reading, arith. gram. spel. writing, geog. and history. New subjects were added from year to year until we now had a curriculum of many subjects besides the fundamentals. Phonics, Music, Nature Study, General Lessons, Palmer Method of penmanship, agriculture, Domestic science, etc. Supervision of the play periods, was a must. Hygiene and the effects of narcotics. So many pages in so many months. Boys and girls club work, Forestry, corn, corn, corn.³

In addition to teaching in the classroom, Sarah also did hands-on teaching that benefited both her students and the community as she explained a day of teaching her students about trees in the early 1900s:

We thought that every farm should have a wood lot so we collected hundreds of specimens, learned much about trees and their care and uses. We committed [to memory] tree poems and made beautiful booklets 22 by 28 inches containing poems, drawings, and maps. We drew out homes and the school yard showing the trees and shrubs on each. The sentiment spread through the community, many planting trees and shrubs and beautifying their yards and lawns.⁴

³ Sarah Gillespie Huftalen, Manchester Historical Society, Personal No. 2. Also printed in, Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 221.

⁴ Sarah Gillespie Huftalen, Personal No. 2, Manchester Historical Society. Also printed in, Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 221.

Female teachers were not the only women to have some liberty in deciding certain aspects of the public rural school. Certain state legislation allowed communities' women to participate in specific elections regarding school funds and prohibited school districts from preventing women from voting, essentially granting women school suffrage. While all women were allowed to participate with school politics to a degree, teachers obviously had the most influence with certain political issues, especially regarding equal pay. The Osceola School District in the 1860s published materials regarding equal pay and Calhoun County paid men and women on relatively equal terms by the conclusion of the nineteenth century. However, these rights took time to develop.

During the early colonial era, wives and mothers held the responsibility for teaching their children the basic foundations of survival. For the girls, that included sewing, cooking, cleaning, and other chores directly associated with the household, while boys' education included farming, hunting, and "hard labor" responsibilities. This ideology rooted itself in English educational practices and beliefs that the family possessed the obligation to educate the youth. Upper class citizens frequently hired private tutors to tend to their children's educational needs. In other communities, ministers accepted the obligation of teaching—while still expecting compensation—by offering space in the local church during the week. For those who commuted, the minister offered boarding. At this time, the rural schoolhouse was nonexistent in the American

landscape, with the exception of a few communities willing to pay for the construction and upkeep of a separate school structure.⁵

In addition to ministers teaching courses, colonial Americans also fostered another informal method of education, the dame school. In this format, single women provided tutoring to local younger children in their homes. The lesson plans often included learning to write letters, including the students' names, and reading passages from the Bible. The teacher also taught girls household chores and boys farming practices.⁶ Depending on location, venues were not always publicly funded, meaning that schooling was not necessarily widely available nor was it consistent.

The concept of public education emerged in Massachusetts. In 1647, the colony passed the first statute in America to inaugurate a publicly funded school system. The central curriculum of the school was still grounded in religious elements as the idea of separate church and state venues had not yet emerged. Regardless of the initial religious elements, these early New England schools foreshadowed the common schools of the nineteenth century.⁷

With passage of the Northwest Ordinance, other land settlement laws, and the subsequent westward expansion, a new concept of the public education developed in the young nation. As part of the legally-established settlement pattern, territories wishing for statehood had to allocate portions of the land granted to states and settled to construct

⁵ Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr. and Wayne J. Urban, *American Education: A History* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁶ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 36.

⁷ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 36.

public educational institutions. The objective for free public education across the country remained into the nineteenth century, but educational development for each new township burdened community members financially. The state rarely offered funds to pay for the construction and maintenance of a new school, materials for the students, or a salary for a teacher. Instead, those obligations fell to the parents of the students themselves. This meant that culturally, the schoolhouse reflected the wealth of the community through maintaining a pristine and immaculate building, providing readers and supplies for the children, and sustaining a well-educated and competent teacher. An impecunious township often settled for less qualified teachers and in turn, those teachers mirrored the naïve philosophies of the community regarding the importance of education. Additionally, the early rural schools, which educated mostly boys, lacked any form of standardization, though communities closely monitored and dictated the curriculum. But by the nineteenth century, with the motivation of the New England and Midwest male and female educational reformers and the momentum of industrialization, the regular attendance of girls at public schools amplified.⁸

The nineteenth century housed a number of educational reformers from New England—including Horace Mann, Henry Bernard, Catharine Beecher, Emma Willard, Mary Lyon, John Pierce, Samuel Lewis. These reformers encountered two main issues at this time. The first dealt with taxation as many citizens fought against the concept of paying for the education of another person's child. This issue permeated each of the existing thirty-one states until Horace Mann suggested the Prussian System in which the

⁸ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 39.

states provided some of the funding for schools. Mann was fascinated with the Germans' educational system, and after traveling Europe, he wrote about the Prussia school system. He encouraged Massachusetts to adopt the system in 1852. The New York governor soon followed Massachusetts and established trials in a few schools. In addition to a taxation system, Mann believed in secular education. According to him, the Bible should not be part of the curriculum ⁹

The one-room schoolhouse also gained popularity at this time for the multiple facades it managed. Rural schools acted not only as an educational hub for the community's children, but as political offices, meeting locations for 4-H clubs, community centers for social gathers, and a variety of other functions for the local townspeople. Presenting the schoolhouse as a benefactor for all members of the community encouraged towns to maintain the buildings.¹⁰

Mann's philosophy and influence also launched the second aspect of this educational reform movement by encouraging women to join the teaching profession. The reformers often cited and utilized the concept of republican motherhood to open doors for female teachers by arguing that women's femininity was the most significant characteristic of their ability to teach. The reformers argued on behalf of women excelling in the schoolroom because of their so-called natural and nurturing qualifications. The public commonly associated women as being motherly and having

⁹ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 39.

¹⁰ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 40. For information on republican motherhood, refer to Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 1980.

higher moral standards; an ideal that was shared with the image of teachers. However, these positive attributes also had difficulties. Concerns regarding female teachers' abilities to discipline the unruly and older students surfaced, as male students often stayed in school longer because of the agrarian responsibilities on the family farm, which occasionally presented an age discrepancy among male students and female teachers. As females became more trusted to provide adequate punishment, communities accepted women in authoritative positions. Although more women occupied the teaching profession, the majority still lacked any formal education in teaching children.¹¹

The lack of standardization in the educational field remained well into the nineteenth century. The first phase of reformers advocated for the concept of free public education and communities responded by constructing and funding schoolhouses, but the reformation faltered because a uniform curriculum was not taught in the majority of metropolitan schools until after the Civil War, and many rural schools did not experience the reformation until the 1890s due to the smaller populations and local resistance to standardization.¹²

When ministers taught the basics of education during the colonial era, the expectations of children included reading, memorizing, and reciting passages from the Bible. The central concern of the early schools in 1647 was teaching children the foundations of the community's religion and giving them a basic understanding of laws

¹¹ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 51-53.

¹² Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 51-53.

and the legal system. A belief that parents and guardians had neglected to provide this teaching to their children consistently surfaced in that era, and consequently, Massachusetts developed the first school. Instructors taught reading, writing, and arithmetic as subsidiary elements to religious and Latin text. Upper class parents hired private teachers to instruct their sons in the classics. The fate of the educational development of children defaulted to the parent's belief of the significance of teaching reading and writing.¹³

The foundations of the curriculum of the early rural schools centered itself on the “four R's:” reading, writing, arithmetic, and recitation. A central component of early rural education included reading, grammar, and spelling, all of which frequently were compiled into one book know as a primer. The student began with a primer and ascended to readers after demonstrating proficiency. The primers' central focus provided the student with the alphabet and simple methods of reading. Upon graduation to the first reader, the student began interpreting more difficult passages until he or she mastered every reader, usually five or six in total. Reading and reciting proved students' competency and comprehension moved to the background.¹⁴

Grammar acted as the counterpart to reading and writing, however it proved difficult to teach. Testing grammar often meant providing and demonstrating an understanding of adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, and sentence structure. Explanations on proper grammar was significantly absent in readers and teachers usually overlooked

¹³ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 35-38.

¹⁴ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 51.

oral grammatical errors, such as reciting the word, “ain’t.” Edward Eggleston published a book titled *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* in 1871 that explained proper grammar, but the publication did not reach its popularity until the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.¹⁵

By the mid-nineteenth century, the *McGuffey Eclectic Reader* became the standard teaching aid in classrooms across the county for approximately the next fifty years. Memorization and recitation became the standard qualification for passing to the next grade. With this as a foundation, a second division of reformers emerged to unify the curriculum. As urban areas grew and families became distant from the regular chores common on farms, a concern surfaced and presented itself to progressives. Girls and boys lacked a basic education of daily domestic tasks and responsibilities. As a result, teachers discovered themselves teaching these chores to their students, including, “clipping, carding, spinning, and weaving the wool,” as well as, woodworking, machinery, harvesting, growing produce, slaughtering, and butchering. A rural curriculum remained intact in schoolhouses because some viewed this loss of connection to the farm as a “...grave loss to the education of the child.”¹⁶

Henry Sabin, Iowa’s State Superintendent of Public Instruction in the 1880s and 1890s, viewed education as foundational to civilization as he wrote in his article, “The American School.” Sabin said, “...we must remember that knowledge is the foundation upon which we build and that without knowledge life degenerates and civilization must

¹⁵ Andrew Gulliford, *America’s Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 52.

¹⁶ George Herbert Betts and Otis E. Hall, *Better Rural Schools*, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1914), 45-53.

perish.”¹⁷ He also firmly believed that while every citizen may have his or her belief, it cannot affect the structure of the school which served to educate all children. In the same article he stated:

The school, it is true, must not trespass upon the private views of the citizen, but the citizen in his turn may not demand that the system of schools in which are to be educated millions of American citizens shall be shaped and moulded [sic] to suit his individual notion. The freedom of the citizen is of infinitely less consequence than the safety of the republic.¹⁸

Sabin argued that the school must teach both from a humanitarian as well as an arts and sciences standpoint in order to preserve American civilization.¹⁹ He argued that teaching American citizenship was far more important and foundational in schools over Latin and mathematics because “The American school must stand for all that is best in American life.”²⁰ With the responsibility of educating future electors, Sabin believed that teachers should receive their education at normal institutions where standards could be monitored more easily over county normal programs. He also firmly believed that in order to further professionalize teaching, educators should be taught by professors who have mastered various aspects of the profession.²¹

¹⁷ Henry Sabin, “The American School,” 01/01/21 Henry Sabin Papers, Box 1, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections and Archives, 1.

¹⁸ Henry Sabin, “The American School,” 01/01/21 Henry Sabin Papers, Box 1, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections and Archives, 4.

¹⁹ Henry Sabin, “The American School,” 01/01/21 Henry Sabin Papers, Box 1, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections and Archives, 4.

²⁰ Henry Sabin, “The American School,” 01/01/21 Henry Sabin Papers, Box 1, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections and Archives, 6.

²¹ Henry Sabin, “Inaugural Address Delivered before the State Teachers’ Association of Iowa, at Marshalltown,” December 28, 1878, Box 1, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections and Archives, 01/01/21 Henry Sabin Papers, 6.

Between 1840 and 1900, the discrepancy between urban and rural schools increased and the curriculum shifted to address the issue. Government officials and intellectuals understood the significance of farming as the nation had always rooted itself in agrarian culture, but as society industrialized this concept dissipated. Consequently, reformers promoted a new form of curriculum tailored for boys and girls. Instead of simply memorizing and reciting material, curriculum shifted to focus on method, technique, and application. Educational reformers believed math and reading should be taught with practical implications. Instead of using readers and primers with obscure material, teachers should present students with relatable problems that potentially could emerge on the farm. Girls learned the art of domestic responsibility while boys learned the science of agriculture. Physiology, geography, and history evolved to fit the new methods of teaching the arts and sciences. Instead of simply focusing on anatomy, physiology evolved into health and development; history and geography took on a more localized focus instead of a generalized appearance. George Herbert Betts and Otis E. Hall collaboratively wrote a book, *Better Rural Schools*, in 1911 that reflects this ideology:

Under the reorganized curriculum the child will enter of the field of learning by a different pathway. Instead of centering all his energies on the symbols of reading and number as if they were the “chief end of man,” he will simply continue the lines of activity already begun in the farm home. He will continue to observe nature, but with this difference; his observation will now be under the guidance and direction of a teacher and will therefore be *nature study*. He will continue his interest in the crops and animals of the farm; but because he is now under skill instruction, he will be studying agriculture. He will continue to use his hands in the construction of objects or their pictures, but because he is now being taught how to make them, he is learning manual training or drawing. The girl will go on with her sewing, her cooking, and her housekeeping, but she will be taught such

methods and developed in such standards of doing these things that she will be studying domestic science.²²

The authors firmly believed the current curriculum did not benefit children and that the educational system should prepare the youth for modern manhood and womanhood. According to Betts and Hall, schools held the responsibility of preparing students for the realistic experiences rural children would most likely encounter on their future rural estates. Girls needed to understand the routine of the household, including the preparation of food and basic hygienic care. Between the fifth and eighth grades, girls were expected to have refined their methods enough to assist their mothers at home. While girls learned the art of home economics, boys learned the science of agricultural studies that focused on the chemistry of soil and the natural elements, botany, and livestock biology.²³ Although the curriculum was segregated by gender the information behind these studies became more scientific allowing both genders to understand foundational principles in various scientific topics, especially chemistry and biology.

This philosophy also appeared in federal educational reports in 1912. The Bureau of Education expressed concern about rural schools falling behind during the industrialization era. A realization emerged that up until the decade after the turn of the twentieth century, educational reform and training had been tailored to fit city schools and consequently, a national push ensued for teachers to have a strong understanding of fundamental courses as rural schooling terminated at eighth grade and only a small

²² George Herbert Betts and Otis E. Hall, *Better Rural Schools*, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1914), 66.

²³ George Herbert Betts and Otis E. Hall, *Better Rural Schools*, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1914), 44-72.

portion of students pursued higher education. Considering the fact that the Bureau of Education was part of the Department of the Interior, which also housed the General Land Office—the department that sold farmland to settlers moving West—this national movement signified that the federal government was ready to industrialize rural culture. Government officials understood the significance of educating rural communities as the farmers at that time still comprised foundational elements of United States politics and culture. However, these officials also understood the necessity of creating greater efficiency in rural areas to maintain the growth in the cities.²⁴

The Bureau of Education acknowledged the agricultural curriculum benefited young boys, stating “Any schoolboy can equal the record of any of the above boys if he has an equal opportunity.”²⁵ The agriculture-based curriculum focused on three main categories. The first included the best practices of growth, soil, plants, seed selection, preparing soil, studying the most common weeds and their respective seeds, livestock as a farm resource, and the orchard. The second emphasis included basic chemistry such as the general phases of air, water, carbon and its compound, illumination, and heat production. Girls also took a chemistry curriculum, which included the science of bread making and cleaning. The last category was aimed more towards girls’ studies, but both genders benefited from knowing and understanding sanitary science. This last subject

²⁴ Fred Mutchler and W.J. Craig, U.S. Bureau of Education, “A Course of Study for the Preparation of Rural School Teacher Nature Study, Elementary Agriculture, Sanitary Science and Applied Chemistry,” (District of Columbia: Washington Printing Press, 1912), 5-25.

²⁵ Fred Mutchler and W.J. Craig, U.S. Bureau of Education, “A Course of Study for the Preparation of Rural School Teacher Nature Study, Elementary Agriculture, Sanitary Science and Applied Chemistry,” (District of Columbia: Washington Printing Press, 1912), 5.

included studies in the health conditions of the community, preventable diseases and their causes, the study of germ life, sanitary versus insanitary conditions, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, diphtheria, scarlet fever, malaria, secure sanitary drinking water and dairy products, problems with ventilation, disposal and sewage practices, location and construction of houses and barns with reference to healthfulness, problem with food and dietetics, and fundamental principles of domestic and community hygiene. Sanitary practices held a subordinate position to agriculture in rural education, but remained at the forefront of the population's perspective. In addition to pursuing agricultural education, the Bureau of Education strongly influenced the motivation for schools to maintain records; for example, the bureau collected information on pupil records, superintendent records, and fiscal records, in order to develop a better understanding of the operations of the schoolhouse so that education could become more consistent across the country.²⁶

As schools became more abundant, a semi-uniform education developed. The subjects typically taught in schools expanded to include: Latin, Greek, English, other modern languages, mathematics, physics, astronomy, chemistry, natural history, history, civil government, political economy, and geography. Even though science became more prominent in classrooms, humanities still made a presence as citizens believed these studies humanized young students. The largest controversy was determining the best age to begin teaching each subject to the students. Beginning in the 1890s, a debate surfaced

²⁶ Fred Mutchler and W.J. Craig, U.S. Bureau of Education, "A Course of Study for the Preparation of Rural School Teacher Nature Study, Elementary Agriculture, Sanitary Science and Applied Chemistry," (District of Columbia: Washington Printing Press, 1912), 5-25. The section on creating uniformity by keeping records is found in, U.S. Bureau of Education, "Report of the Committee on Uniform Records and Reports," (District of Columbia: Washington Printing Press, 1912), 5-46.

on how much control teachers should possess in developing a curriculum and questions also arose as to the central purpose of the public school itself. According to a publication from *The School Review* in 1893, the primary focus of public education meant preparing boys for college. The reality, however, was that only ten percent of students went on to obtain a college degree. Ninety percent of the students who were schooled in most areas never passed a grammar or secondary school education. The educational community had to determine the purpose of public education and whether this included encouraging students to pursue higher college education.²⁷

During this reformation of curriculum in secondary schools, educational professionals did not focus “upon the conventional college entrance requirement, but, . . . upon the entire circle of modern culture . . . and . . . upon the capacities and needs of pupils under eighteen years of age.”²⁸ The curriculum reformation of secondary schools consequently affected rural one-room schoolhouses as students who wished to pursue a high school degree were required to pass the eighth-grade examination—a series of tests of various school subjects including mathematics, penmanship, literature, history, and geography. At the conclusion of the nineteenth century and despite the shift from arts to sciences, *The School Review*, stressed the importance of maintaining a humanities curriculum because “It is by these humanities we humanize them.”²⁹ This was no less true in agrarian Iowa.

²⁷ J.G., Schurman, “The Outlook for the Curriculum,” *The School Review* 1, no. 2 (February 1893): 68. *The School Review* is now known as the *Journal of American Education*.

²⁸ “The Capacities of Secondary School Students,” *The School Review* 5, no. 10 (December 1897): 642.

²⁹ J.G., Schurman, “The Outlook for the Curriculum,” *The School Review* 1, no. 2 (February 1893): 69.

Iowa was influenced by the New England educational system partially due to the steady immigration and westward expansion to Iowa begun during the early decades of the nineteenth century. President James Polk signed Iowa's enabling act on December 28, 1846. Within only a few decades, the population grew from 43,112 in 1840 to 674,913 by 1860, caused by a variety of factors including a steady migration of families from the Mid-Atlantic and New England states as well as from foreign countries, the majority of which were of German and Dutch origin. Iowa's immigration increased at a steady rate between 1860 and 1920. Figure 2 demonstrates the population of Iowa along with the percentage of the population that was foreign-born.³⁰

Iowa's high immigrant population usually originated from European countries with the majority being from Germany. It is significant to note the German population in Iowa, and although the number seems miniscule, the German influence on Iowa culture was significant.³¹ Germany's educational system had influenced Horace Mann and his education reformation. The number of Germans in Iowa, who would have brought this educational ethic with them, suggest that there was a culture with strong free and universal educational beliefs promoting children to attend school regularly as schooling was seen as significant for the betterment of a community. German philosophy of the era often resorted to "sound body, sound mind."³² In order to have a productive society, the

³⁰ Dorothy Schwieder, "Cultural Diversity: Immigrants and African Americans in the Hawkeye State, 1833-80," in *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 83-106, 185-209.

³¹ Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 48.

³² Dorothy Schwieder, "Cultural Diversity: Immigrants and African Americans in the Hawkeye State, 1833-80," in *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 84.

community needed to educate the youth. The American educational reformers often adopted similar educational philosophies of Germany. Catharine Beecher commended the Prussian educational system in *An Essay on the Education of Female Education*, when she stated:

Look, again at Prussia! with its liberal and patriotic monarch, with a system of education unequalled in the records of time, requiring by law that all the children in the nation be sent to school, from the first day they are seven years of age, till the last day they are fourteen, with a regular course of literary and scientific instruction, instituted for every school, and every teacher required to spend three years in preparing for such duties; while, on average, one teacher is furnished for every ten pupils through the nation.³³

In addition to the American educational reformers being influenced by the Prussian educational systems, Iowa contained a high population of German immigrants which resulted in a strong belief and background with a public educational system. Figure 3 and Table 2 demonstrate the number of immigrants from other countries in 1880, 1900, and 1920.³⁴

Iowa strongly identified with republican ideals and principles throughout the remaining nineteenth and into the early twentieth century. Iowans elected government officials such as, Samuel Merrill, who served as governor from 1868 to 1872 (two terms), William Larrabee, who served as governor for two terms from 1886 to 1890, Francis M.

³³ Catharine E. Beecher, "An Essay on the Education of Female Teachers," (New York: Van Nostrand and Dwight, 1835), in Barbara M. Cross, ed., *The Educated Women in America: Selected Writings of Catharine Beecher, Margaret Fuller, and M. Carey Thomas* (New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press, 1965), 72-73.

³⁴ Leland Sage, *A History of Iowa*, (Ames: Iowa State University, 1974), 93. Only countries with a consistent immigration population of four thousand and more were included in the graph. For additional immigrant information, consult Leland Sage's *A History of Iowa*. For information on population every year between 1838 and 1869, see: "Iowa: The Home for Immigrants, Being a Treatise on the Resources of Iowa and Giving Useful Information with Regard to the State, for the Benefit of Immigrants and Others," *The Iowa Board of Immigration* (1870) in Zachary Michael Jack, ed., *Iowa: The Definitive Collection, Classics and Contemporary Readings by Iowans, about Iowa*, (North Liberty, Iowa: Tall Corn Books, 2009), 54-59.

Drake, who served as governor from 1896 to 1898, and Albert Cummins, who served as governor for eighteen years from 1908 to 1926 (three consecutive terms), who were progressive in nature and strongly supported the progressive movement's principles especially those involving market—specifically railroad—regulations, tariff regulations, and educational reforms. Each of these governors supported public institutions such as public schooling. Governor Drake founded the private university—which is now named after him—and served on Drake University's board of trustees. Governor Larrabee's first campaign slogan included, "a schoolhouse on every hill and no saloons in the valley."³⁵

The progressive nature of Iowa regarding education and teacher preparation was obvious. Even though Iowa was influenced by foreign countries and the New England states, some sources indicate that Iowa dominated New England with teacher preparation courses offered and competed for teacher preparation excellence and success among the regions. For example, New England had a total of twenty-one teacher colleges from Maine (4), New Hampshire (1), Vermont (3), Massachusetts (9), Rhode Island (1), and Connecticut (3). The Iowa State Normal Monthly in 1879 reported:

Wonder how the record of our raw and uncultivated western state would read by the side of this. Of course we can't expect to compare with that center of "sweetness and light," the Old Bay State, nor with Connecticut, but—well, let's consult Supt. Abernethy's official report.

The Surprising Result:

All New England—Colleges, 21; Students, 4,179.

Iowa, *alone*—Colleges, 20; Students, 4,511.

Not bad for outside barbarians, is it?³⁶

³⁵ Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 109-132; 211-231.

³⁶ "New England and Iowa," *The Iowa Normal Monthly* 1, no 1 (1877), 10.

The state rapidly expanded from twenty-nine counties to ninety-nine partially due to the railroad expansion, but its identity remained cemented in the philosophies mentioned above. Iowa's population grew from 674,913 in 1860 to 1,194,020 only a decade later. Railroads created in the 1850s and 1860s resulted in Iowa developing into a central agricultural producer. The innovation allowed more settlers to move inward from the Mississippi River because the railroads allowed for further transportation. In addition to being an agricultural producer, Iowa incorporated educational legislation beginning in the early statehood.

The rapid population increase resulted in the development of thousands of one-room schoolhouses. By 1873, the Iowa School Law passed a code stating that any community with a population of two thousand inhabitants or more could establish a high school on the condition that the schools offered students better education or offered vocational practices such as teaching. The Iowa School Law also allowed communities to vote on languages taught in the school district, and German became the most prominent. The percentage of the demographic was approximately thirty-four percent in 1880, forty percent in 1900, and twenty-eight percent in 1920. Iowa's German population resulted in a few districts voting on the German language, and as a result, teachers taught German in schools, such as in Fairbank, instead of English.³⁷

³⁷ ED M. Rands, ed., *Iowa School Laws: Teachers' and Officers' Edition, with Official Notes, Decisions and Forms; Digest of Supreme Court Decisions and Attorney General's Opinions*, Section 1697, (Chicago: Northwestern School Supply) 1884, 50-51; Section 1763, 19-20. For population information see Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 48.

Beyond the textbooks utilized in the curriculum, schoolhouses reflected the religious nature of the township. For example, the Marshall Center School from Pocahontas County was built differently than other rural schoolhouses across Iowa. Typically, a schoolhouse in Iowa contained one entrance, but the Marshall Center School contained two, suggesting the building resembled the religious buildings of Marshall Township, which segregated the congregation based on gender. The two entrances implied girls entered the school on one side, while boys entered on the other. L.N Ellis and Sons constructed the house in 1893, around the time when Iowa began standardizing education through textbooks, yet some communities such as Marshall Township in Pocahontas County—located in northeast Iowa—and the one around Fairbank, Iowa, continued to teach religious scripture well into the 1900s.³⁸

The religious denomination sometimes influenced whether a community would hire a teacher. For example, the director of Department of Training in Teaching at the Iowa State Normal School, William Bender, wrote a recommendation letter to Superintendent A.C. Fuller in 1913 and said, “Miss [Amy] Beecher does very good work in the classroom with the children and is a most excellent young lady.” He continued with, “...but Miss Beecher is not a Protestant and I do not know whether your community would consider that an unfavorable circumstance.”³⁹

³⁸ UNI Museum, “Marshall Center School,” <https://museum.library.uni.edu/museum-archives/marshall-center-school-history>. For information on schoolhouses’ architectural structure refer to William L. Sherman, ed. *Iowa’s Country Schools: Landmarks of Learning*. Parkersburg, (Iowa: Iowa State Education Association, 1998), 11-13.

³⁹ Letter to Supt. A.C Fuller from William Bender, dated April 13, 1913. 13/00/02 Correspondence, Box 1, Book 2, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections and Archives, 647.

Iowa did not require teachers, directors, or superintendents of schools or counties to record the curriculum taught and the textbooks utilized until the 1890s. The majority of records prior to 1890 only contain pupils' daily attendance records and note the teachers of the school, township, or county. This record shift did not become universal across the state until the 1900s. But by the turn of the twentieth century, daily attendance records evolved into more extensive classification records containing students' attendance, the subjects taught, the grades at which students encountered each subject, the textbooks adopted, daily schedules of recitation and program, and teacher summary reports for the term. State law required records of textbooks used in the school, but the community—specifically the men—controlled the curriculum and what texts to utilize.⁴⁰ But as more women entered teaching, this situation changed quickly.

Women did not receive full rights in voting in the national arena until the passage of the nineteenth amendment in 1920. However, in 1894 the General Assembly passed legislation allowing women the right to vote at municipal and school elections that involved funding issues. Under section 2747 of School Laws of Iowa in 1897 school districts were charged with the following:

1. To direct a change of text-books regularly adopted;
2. To direct the sale of make other disposition of any schoolhouse or site of other property bellowing to the corporation, and the application to be made of proceeds of such sale;
3. To determine upon added branches that shall be taught, but instruction in all branches except foreign languages shall be in English;

⁴⁰ School Laws of Iowa from the Code of 1897 as Amended by the Twenty-Seventh, Twenty-Eighth, and Twenty-Ninth General Assemblies: With Notes, Forms and Decisions, for the Use and Government of School Officers and Directors, Section 2739, (Des Moines: B. Murphy State Printer, 1902), 16.

4. To instruct the board that school buildings may or may not be used for meetings of public interest;
5. To direct the transfer of any surplus in the schoolhouse fund to the teachers; or contingent fund;
6. To authorize the board to obtain, at the expense of the corporation, roads for proper access to its schoolhouses;
7. To vote a schoolhouse tax, not exceeding ten mills on the dollar in any one year, for the purchase of grounds, construction of schoolhouses, the payment of debts contracted for the erection schoolhouses, not including interest on bonds, procuring libraries for an opening of roads to schoolhouses.⁴¹

Communities maintained some control over the curriculum taught at the local school. For example, school districts could vote on an approved list of textbooks administered by the state. Although communities in Iowa voted on the textbooks used, school boards often restricted the voters' choice. By 1897, the state school board of educational examiners annually or biennially created a suitable textbook list for school districts and libraries. After approving the book list, the board sent copies to the president, secretary, and county superintendents. The president and superintendent of each school district then decided from the list of approved books. The approved book lists usually contained well-established texts, such as the McGuffey or Beacon Readers. In addition to the Iowa school board revising the textbook list minimally every two years,

⁴¹ School Laws of Iowa from the Code of 1897 as Amended by the Twenty-Seventh, Twenty-Eighth, and Twenty-Ninth General Assemblies: With Notes, Forms and Decisions, for the Use and Government of School Officers and Directors, Section 2749, (Des Moines: B. Murphy State Printer, 1902), 20-21. Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996). 225. See also, Ruth A. Gallaher, *Legal and Political Status of Women in Iowa* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1918), 202.

the law required the secretary of each district to record the complete book list purchased to keep track of their choices year to year.⁴²

The 1874 School Code Law also permitted industrial expositions—or domestic and agricultural training—in schools. The law allowed “...the board of directors of independent school districts, and the subdirector of each subdistrict, if they should deem in expedient, under the direction of the county superintendent, to introduce and maintain an industrial exposition in connection with each school under their control within this state.”⁴³ School districts had the opportunity to decide whether or not to incorporate industrial training in the school’s curriculum including: sewing, cooking, knitting, crocheting, drawing, iron welding, wood working, gardening, and farming. In addition to simply creating or designing an item, the student had to explain the methodology behind the application and how to utilize this knowledge with farming and gardening products. Even though the school’s curriculum remained gendered and fit with the gendered responsibilities of the times, children were expected to understand the science behind the tasks and focus more on the application of school subjects to the everyday responsibilities boys and girls would encounter as they grow older. This law suggested two concerns. First, the children no longer received the training originally taught in the home. Second,

⁴² Albert M. Deyoe, *School Laws of Iowa from the Code of 1897, the Supplement to the Code, 1913, and the Supplemental Supplement, 1915, Section 3*, (Des Moines: The State of Iowa 1919), 104. See also, “Supplementary List of Library Book for the School Districts of Iowa,” State Board of Educational Examiners, Department of Public Instruction, 1917.

⁴³ Albert M. Deyoe, *School Laws of Iowa from the Code of 1897, the Supplement to the Code, 1913, and the Supplemental Supplement, 1915, Chapter 54*, (Des Moines: The State of Iowa, 1919), 60.

instead of simply teaching the foundations of subjects, schools required children to apply and explain the methods they learned.⁴⁴

While women were not allowed to vote on all issues, it did not restrain women from being eligible and elected to the office of the school director. The *Iowa School Journal* reported that, “In March, 1871, Mrs. Lydia M. Van Hyming was elected one of the directors of the independent district of Polk City, Polk county, Iowa.”⁴⁵ The board attempted to eject Mrs. Van Hyming from her position and appoint Henry Summery. She brought the case to court “...to determine her right to hold the office.” In 1873, Judge Maxwell, of the District Court, ruled in favor of Mrs. Van Hyming and rendered a decision “...that a woman can hold the office of the school director in the State.”⁴⁶

As education continued to standardize for both primary and secondary schooling, examinations began to be enforced. Eighth grade examinations eluded the Iowa School Laws entirely in the nineteenth century. Before high school became mandatory, eighth grade was the final education level and a student completed his or her primary education by passing the eighth grade examination. Even though eighth grade examinations eluded county and state law, teacher exams appeared periodically beginning in the 1880s due to Iowa implementing teacher certification requirements. Initially, counties controlled teachers’ education with local two week normal training programs. By 1878, counties regularly tested teachers on their ability to teach reading, writing, arithmetic,

⁴⁴ Albert M. Deyoe, *School Laws of Iowa from the Code of 1897, the Supplement to the Code, 1913, and the Supplemental Supplement, 1915, Chapter 40*, (Des Moines: The State of Iowa, 1919), 40.

⁴⁵ “Women Eligible to the Office of School Director,” *The Iowa School Journal* 14, no. 8, April 1873, 306.

⁴⁶ “Women Eligible to the Office of School Director,” *The Iowa School Journal* 14, no. 8, April 1873, 306.

orthography, English grammar, physiology, and United States history. The School Law Code omitted students entirely out of the process and solely focused on the teacher's requirements.⁴⁷

Records of eighth grade examinations did not appear regularly until the first decade of the 1900s. Each county determined the examinations, under the supervision of the state superintendent, and the majority followed the same pattern for testing students. The examinations required six major subjects—arithmetic, grammar, history, geography, physiology, and civics—and five minor subjects—reading, spelling, writing, music, and agriculture. The examination continued over the course of two days. The morning of day one tested students on reading, grammar, and oral reading. The afternoon tested history, spelling, and physiology. Day two began with tests in arithmetic, civics, and penmanship and the afternoon tested geography, music, and agriculture. In order to pass the examination and proceed to high school, the pupil needed to score an average of seventy-five percent on all subjects, and could not score lower than seventy percent on any of the subjects.⁴⁸

The state influence in education can be seen in the rise of the number of school children enrolled in school between 1847 and 1895 as standardized practices facilitated education. In 1847, approximately eleven percent of children enrolled in school, and by

⁴⁷ J.B. Knoepfler, *School Laws of Iowa from the Code of 1873: As Amended by the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, Seventeenth, Eighteenth, Nineteenth, Twentieth, Twenty-first, Twenty-second, Twenty-third, and Twenty-fourth General Assemblies, with Notes and Forms, for the Use and Government of School Officers*, "Sections 1766-1769," (Des Moines: Geo. H. Ragsdale, State Printer, 1892), 60-63. Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 120.

⁴⁸ University of Northern Iowa Museum, Black Hawk County Examination Records, 1986.4.0306.

1895 that number had escalated to seventy-five percent. Figure 4 and the corresponding table provides a visual of the number of the number of school aged children enrolled in schools across the state, beginning roughly around when Iowa was founded and ending just before the turn of the century.⁴⁹ Most of these children were educated in one-room schoolhouses.

While establishing a curriculum, whether it meant reciting and memorization or method and techniques for future life on the farm, the school teacher encountered a predicament. The one-room schoolhouse contained up to twenty or more children of various ages. Prior to the 1860s, urban areas began defining ages with grade levels. Rural schools neglected this tactic, some until the turn of the century. One-room schoolhouses held students beginning at age three or four to seventeen and eighteen year olds. Ungraded schools presented a problem to the rural school teacher as he or she had to modify each lesson plan to every pupil's educational level. The concept of "graded schools" escaped rural life. Students sat next to those of the same educational level not age. Although the school officially had one teacher, older students acted as instructors to the younger students when teaching the basics of spelling, reading, and arithmetic. The older student's responsibilities did not cede at assisting in the instruction of younger children.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Mary Hurlbut Cordier, "Prairie School-women, Mid 1850s to 1920s, in Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska," *Great Plains Quarterly* (Spring 1988): 103.

⁵⁰ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 47-48.

The typical day for the rural school teacher began at dawn, well before the students arrived. His or her responsibilities included prepping the schoolhouse for the arrival of the schoolboy and girls. Originally the school year varied from a few weeks to a couple of months in the winter and summer. This meant that during the winter, the teacher arrived early to start a fire and have the school warm before the day began. The usual start time for schools began at either eight or nine, so this required the teacher to arrive by five or six. He or she then had to fetch water for the day and carry it back to the schoolhouse before finalizing the lesson plans for the day. The school day typically ended around four or five, and after teaching a full day, the instructor sat down and developed a lesson plan for the following school day. Sometimes this planning meant an excess of four or five hours before completed. The teacher concluded her day by grading an assignments and sweeping before walking an average of a mile or more back to the family's home, usually of a student, who sponsored her boarding.⁵¹

The school day varied among townships, but generally started with one age group of students reciting poems or passages from books, while the other group read before the two groups switched roles. Midmorning meant a brief recess for the students, before returning to their desks for arithmetic lessons. Penmanship followed with younger students practicing basic letters and names, while older students copied longer passages. By then, noon arrived and greeted the students with a lunch break. After mealtime, the students ran outside for a couple minutes of playtime. The teacher frequently participated in outside activities with the students as well. After the break, the teacher summoned the

⁵¹ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 48.

students back into the schoolhouse where he or she read a short story. The tale preceded grammar, history, and geography lessons. The instructor dismissed the pupils at the end of the day. Teachers worked long hours almost every day of the week, and some began to voice concern about unequal pay compensation and discrimination based on gender.⁵²

The Osceola School District was part of Clarke County in south central Iowa. Osceola contained progressive views on education and addressed the concerns and discrepancies of women and men teachers early in the town's establishment. In 1859-1860, Osceola addressed the following concern in the "Resolutions of the Teachers' Class of Osceola, Clarke Co, that was published in *The Iowa Instructor*. It stated, "...That females are as well capacitated to teach as males; and if so, they should receive equivalent wages" and "...That every teacher should demand wages equivalent to his services; but whenever he engages in a schools, he should teach it to the best of his abilities, immaterial what his wages may be. Immortal mind is not to be weighed against dollar and cents."⁵³ This statement in the resolutions suggests that men and women were equally capable of teaching and while teachers should be paid based on their experience, the discrepancy should not negatively influence the moral obligation of the teacher to educate the students.

Osceola was established in 1846, and by 1860 was acknowledging the pay discrepancy among men and women schoolteachers. Teachers there, a majority of which were females, were actively addressing the school board regarding the inequities and

⁵² Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984),48.

⁵³ "Resolutions of the Teachers' Class of Osceola, Clark Co.," *The Iowa Instructor* vol. 1 no 6. May 1860, 239.

participating in social and political activism prior to the Civil War. The fact that the issues in the resolutions were of concern so early in the county's establishment suggests that the town of Osceola was extremely progressive in women's equality regarding teaching and held high standards for the curriculum being taught to the school-aged children, as well as the education and desire of the teachers. And to the them, it was not the school board's responsibility to address these issues, but the teachers' responsibility.

In addition to addressing issues regarding pay discrepancies, the resolutions' overall concept of rural schools addressed the properties of being a good and moral person and citizen in order to have a proper government. Within this overarching concept, the resolutions expected teachers to understand three basic principles. First, that teaching was a well-respected profession that required high morals and dedication. Second, that it was the teacher's responsibility to encourage students and parents to attend school regularly and strongly advocate the importance of education. Sarah Gillespie Huftalen had acknowledged this fact, writing that "The parent, the pupil and the teacher form the trinity of the schoolroom—of education," and that it required all three to "...work together to raise the standard of excellence..."⁵⁴ Third, the teacher needed to understand his or her basic rights.

The first principles were acknowledged on several occasions in the Osceola resolutions. Teachers represented the morals of a community and as such they were

⁵⁴ Sarah Gillespie Huftalen, Manchester Historical Society, Arbor Vitae Summit School notes, 1906-1909, 11, box 10, vol.2. Also printed in, Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 223.

expected to use proper language, acceptable for young ears or to act appropriately to social regulations of a community. By representing the highest standards of a community, this was viewed as being “good” for positively influencing the children of the rural town and that teaching was the most well-respected profession of the community. For example, in resolution eight, it states “That no profession affords greater opportunities for doing *good*, than that of teaching; and we consider this as being the highest inducement to influence a person to engage in it.”⁵⁵ In addition to representing these moral principles, teachers held the obligation of demonstrating and teaching the importance of values to students and parents.⁵⁶

Teachers had to encourage students to attend class regularly in order to learn the moral regulations of society. According to the Osceola resolutions, “... a good education to all the youth is the surest means of preventing crime, increasing wealth, protecting property, elevating morals, and promoting general happiness.”⁵⁷ With the belief that education was the best way to improve the quality of a community, the resolutions addressed the most significant way to ensure this was by making school “...*free* and *universal*.”⁵⁸ The final principle of the 1860 resolution addressed the transition from

⁵⁵ “Resolutions of the Teachers’ Class of Osceola, Clark Co.,” *The Iowa Instructor* vol. 1 no 6 May 1860, 238.

⁵⁶ “Resolutions of the Teachers’ Class of Osceola, Clark Co.,” *The Iowa Instructor* vol. 1 no 6 May 1860, 238.

⁵⁷ “Resolutions of the Teachers’ Class of Osceola, Clark Co.,” *The Iowa Instructor* vol. 1 no 6 May 1860, 238.

⁵⁸ “Resolutions of the Teachers’ Class of Osceola, Clark Co.,” *The Iowa Instructor* vol. 1 no 6 May 1860, 238.

teaching moral principles and how that influenced politics and government for teachers and local, state, and federal communities.⁵⁹

The resolutions expected the teachers to understand the government of the school district as it stated, “That every teacher should have, if possible, a well digested system of school government, one that will meet the approbation of the better judgment of both scholars and parents.”⁶⁰ In addition to understanding the school district’s government, the teachers were expected to be competent and educated enough to teach the fundamentals of the local, state, and federal government so “That as teachers, we will endeavor to instill into the minds of our pupils, a general knowledge of the fundamental principles of our Government and of loyalty to the confederation that our blood bough institutions and priceless liberty may be preserved.”⁶¹ Teachers were also expected to teach the principles of common law as it stated in resolution twenty-eight, “That we will advocate the introduction of the fundamental principles of common law, as a branch of study in schools, that the people may become better acquainted with the law, and thereby peace and harmony may be promoted, and the great expense of law-suits mostly avoided.”⁶² Their publication in the *Iowa Instructor* suggested that the community believed schooling led to proper citizens and relates back to teaching American ideals to young children.

⁵⁹ “Resolutions of the Teachers’ Class of Osceola, Clark Co.,” *The Iowa Instructor* vol. 1 no 6 May 1860, 239.

⁶⁰ “Resolutions of the Teachers’ Class of Osceola, Clark Co.,” *The Iowa Instructor* vol. 1 no 6 May 1860, 239.

⁶¹ “Resolutions of the Teachers’ Class of Osceola, Clark Co.,” *The Iowa Instructor* vol. 1 no 6 May 1860, 238.

⁶² “Resolutions of the Teachers’ Class of Osceola, Clark Co.,” *The Iowa Instructor* vol. 1 May 1860, 240.

Female teachers' arguments regarding pay equity began to earn support as more women were receiving schooling, attending teacher preparation programs, and formal normal training became required. The morally good characteristics found in early girls' education was reflected in teaching training programs. For example, while early teacher educator Catherine Beecher and Emma Willard taught their female students a liberal curriculum, they also strongly and whole-heartedly encouraged a good moral ideology in their training.⁶³

This virtuous and good natured women's ideology resulted in an easier transition into the feminization of the profession and provided a well-defined argument for female teachers. As Willard averred, it was necessary and fundamental to educate women so that they were not only a democratic mother, but a democratic citizen who mothered future democratic citizens. This transition from democratic mother to citizen was a fairly simple one, as teaching was an extension of motherhood. Additionally, the investment in female educators was sensible since women remained committed to teaching, whereas men used teaching as a springboard and pursued other career options. This ideology was not only present in specialized preparation teaching courses that were established by reformers, but also in smaller institutions and high school programs where the curriculum mainly incorporated the methods of teaching.⁶⁴

⁶³ James W. Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*, (New York: Columbia University, 2007), 3, 14.

⁶⁴ James W. Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*, (New York: Columbia University, 2007), 29-37. For additional information of Catharine Beecher see, Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973).

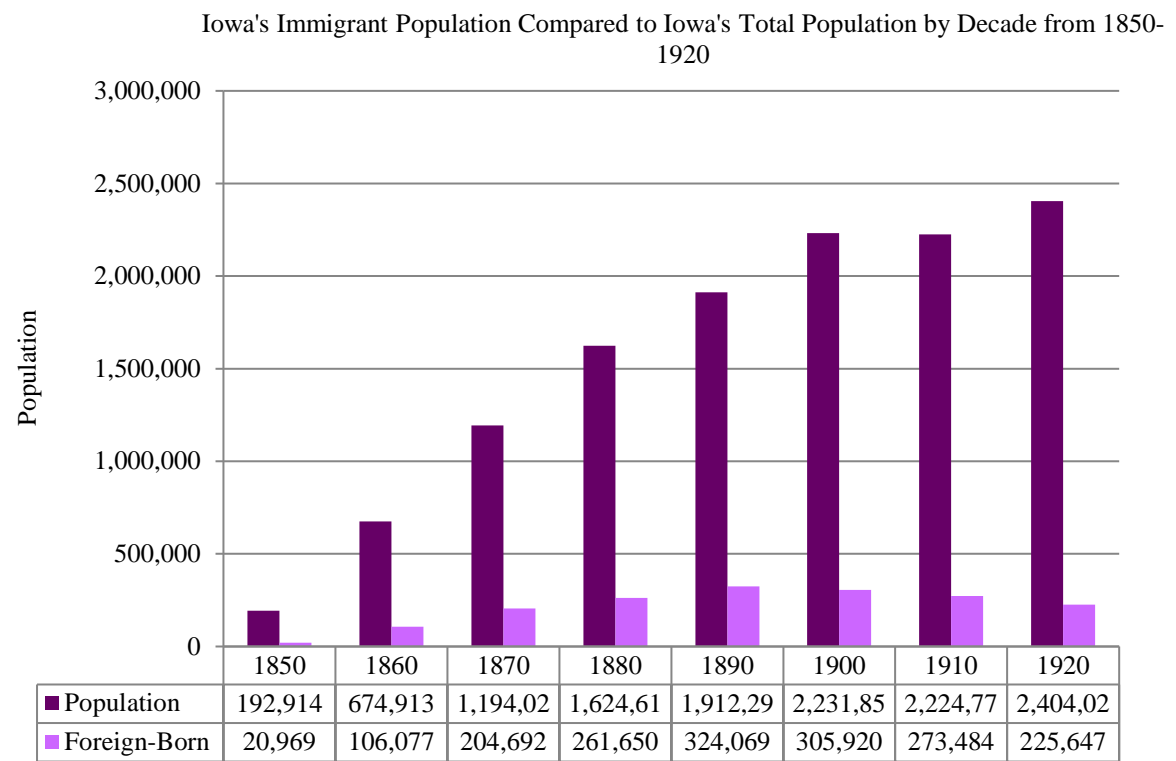


Figure 2: Iowa's immigrant population compared to Iowa's total population by decade from 1850 to 1920. ⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Mary Hurlbut Cordier, "Prairie School-women, Mid 1850s to 1920s, in Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska," *Great Plains Quarterly*, 1988, 103.

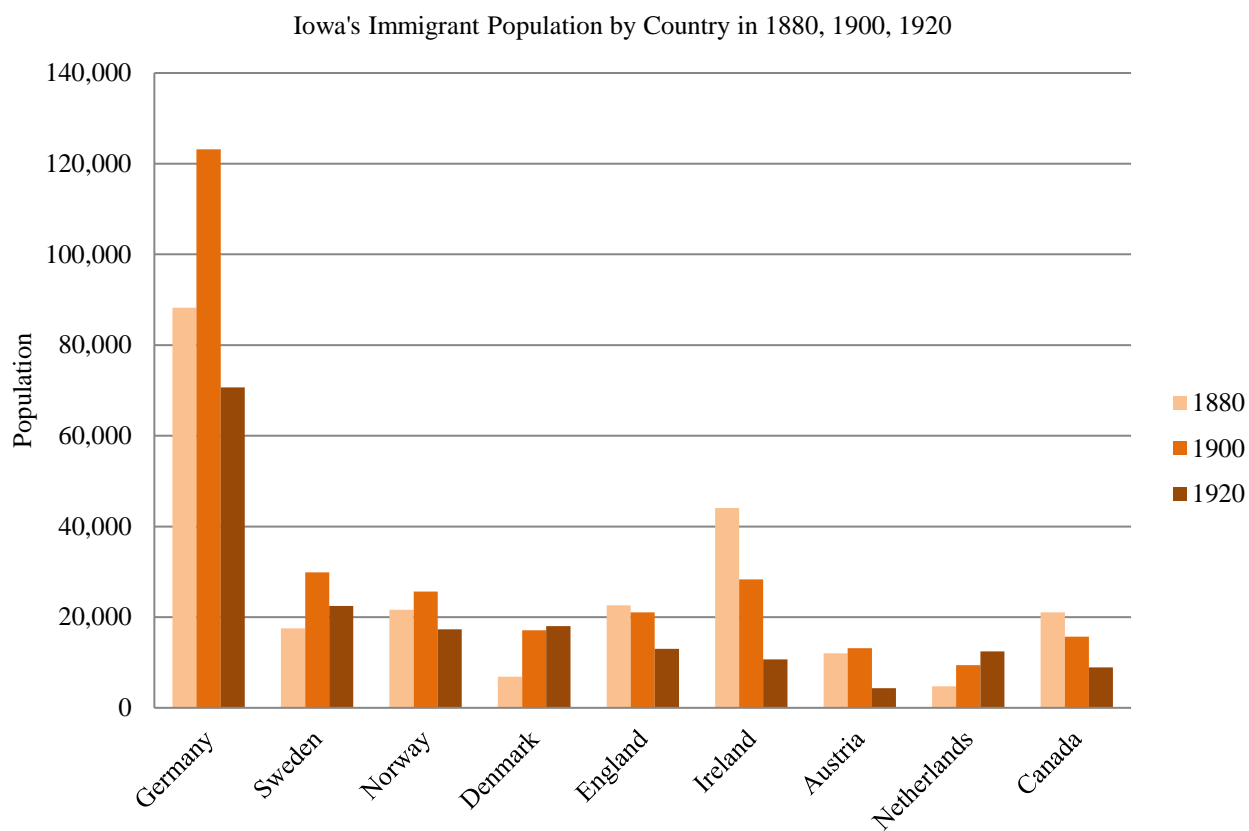


Figure 3: Iowa's immigrant population by country in 1880, 1900, and 1920. ⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Leland Sage, *A History of Iowa*, (Ames: Iowa State University, 1974), 93. Only countries with a consistent immigration population of four thousand and more were included in the graph. For additional immigrant information, consult Leland Sage's *A History of Iowa*.

Iowa's Immigrant Population by Country									
	Germany	Sweden	Norway	Denmark	England	Ireland	Austria	Netherlands	Canada
1880	88,268	17,559	21,586	6,901	22,610	44,061	12,027	4,743	21,062
1900	123,162	29,875	25,634	17,102	21,027	28,321	13,118	9,388	15,687
1920	70,642	22,493	17,344	18,020	13,036	10,685	4,334	12,471	8,929

Table 2: Iowa's immigrant population by country in 1880, 1900, and 1920. ⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Leland Sage, *A History of Iowa*, (Ames: Iowa State University, 1974), 93. Only countries with a consistent immigration population of four thousand and more were included in the graph. For additional immigrant information, consult Leland Sage's *A History of Iowa*.

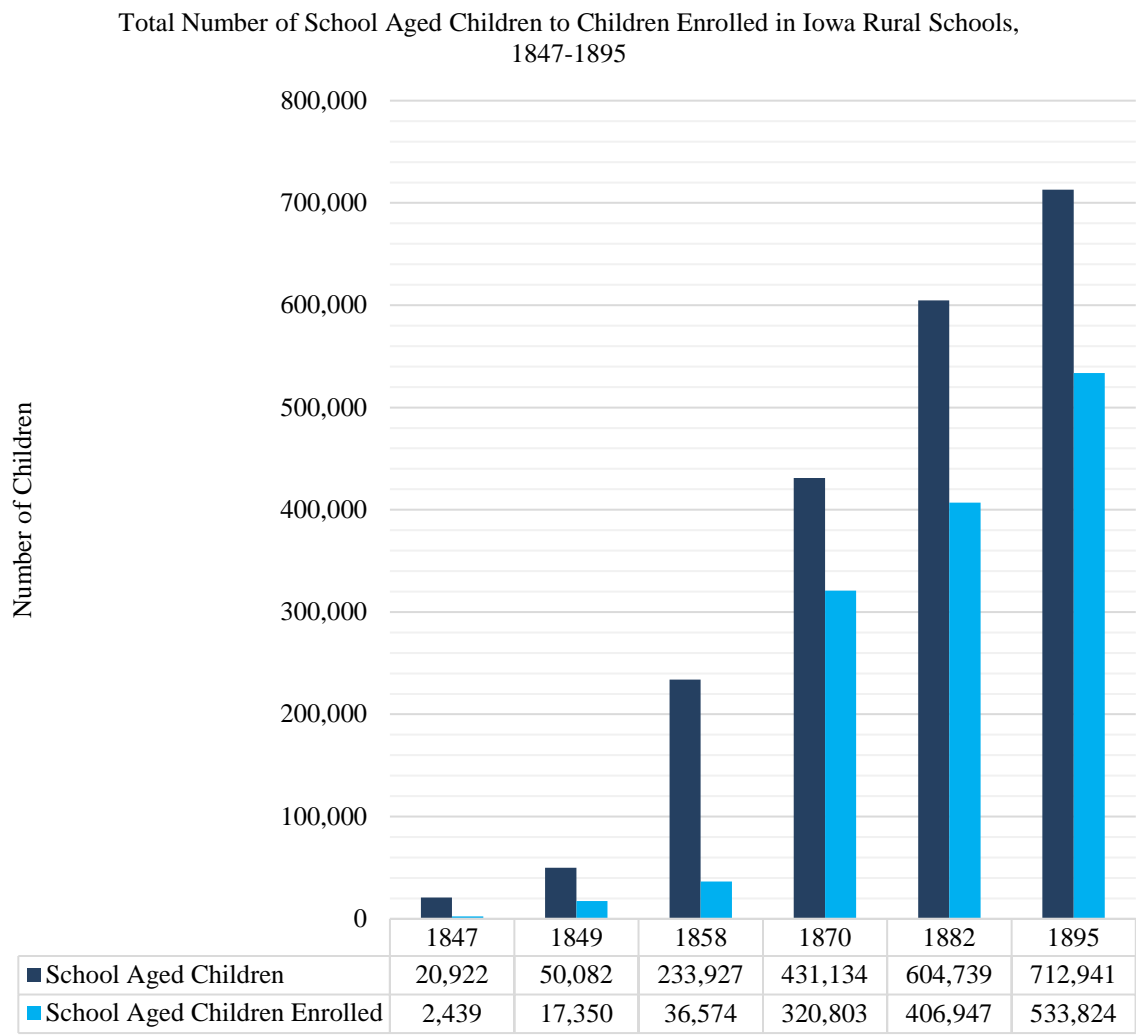


Figure 4: The total number of school aged children to children enrolled in Iowa rural schools, 1847-1895.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Mary Hurlbut Cordier, "Prairie School-women, Mid 1850s to 1920s, in Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska," *Great Plains Quarterly*, 1988, 103.

CHAPTER III

“BEING IN READINESS TO TEACH”:

The Evolution of Teacher Training Programs
and Practicing Pay Equity

Sarah Gillespie Huftalen began her teaching career by attending the “Academy” in Manchester, Iowa, at the age of fourteen in 1879. Prior to the state requiring a four year degree, a man or woman could be eligible to teach by attending a brief course in order to receive his or her teaching certificate. She did not receive her bachelor’s degree until she was fifty-two, and then her master’s degree at fifty-eight. After completing her rural school curriculum at the local schoolhouse in Delaware County, Sarah described her teaching education. She attended the Academy:

...for two years taking a double course and from which we would have received diplomas of graduation had it not been we were prevented from attendance that last semester by illness...[I] served in assisting in the teaching of a large class in Double Entry Book Keeping and I was also supply teacher in a class in Elocution numbering 54...There were Normal Training summer schools in Manchester each year of six to eight weeks and these I attended thus being in readiness to teach should opportunity come in the longing desire of my heart.¹

Sarah’s early education in teaching represented the informal years of teacher preparation programs before they became formal four-year degree programs at the Iowa State Normal School in Cedar Falls, Iowa. As the teaching profession standardized, higher formal education became required by the state. Initially, lower level teaching certificates were obtainable on a county level which was convenient for prospective

¹ Sarah Gillespie Huftalen, Personal No. 2, Manchester Historical Society. Also printed in, Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 214.

teachers to achieve. Men and women attended county normal training classes for an abbreviated time—usually between two and four weeks—before receiving a certificate and becoming eligible to work as a teacher. However, Iowa began to implement stricter teacher requirements throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century eventually officially professionalizing teaching and requiring a four year degree. A partial reason for women’s effortless transitioning to the educator role in Iowa was due to the enrollment philosophy of the state universities; all three state schools were coeducational from their respective foundations. Public colleges were not the only schools in Iowa that were coeducational. In the 1860 publication of the *Iowa Instructor*, the normal program in Henry county resolved “That no discrimination should be made between male and female labor in teaching.”² Even though all three schools—the University of Iowa, the University of Northern Iowa, and Iowa State University—were coeducational, not all enrolled men and women equally. The normal school attracted more females than the agricultural and medical schools, and consequently, the normal school had a greater influence on women’s educational achievements.

The development of teacher training programs, again can be traced back to the Common School Reformers. Horace Mann and his professionalization of teaching required standardization of teaching preparation programs. Iowa adopted the Common School Reformers’ philosophy and established the Iowa State Normal School (ISNS) in 1876 in Cedar Falls, Iowa. The second president of ISNS was Homer Seerley who was president for the majority of the school’s foundational years and even experienced the

² “Editor’s Table,” *The Iowa Instructor* vol. 1 no 3 February 1860, 154.

school's first name change. He collaborated with a fellow colleague on a regular basis—Henry Sabin—who worked with the standardization of school curriculum across the state. Together, the two prepared a college to educate future teachers on teacher best practices.³

Prior to the educational reform movements of the mid- to late-nineteenth century, teaching for men was a career to supplement income during college or immediately following graduation. A man rarely stayed in the profession for longer than five years, and if he did, the local community viewed him as a failure. Even those who taught after graduation suffered an occasional backlash because communities frequently viewed their baccalaureate degrees unfavorably and saw them as overqualified to be teachers. A minority of women taught in dame schools during the colonial era, but most of the students were no older than six or seven years old. The women in dame schools had to be literate enough—although not to the same standards as men—to teach the young children the basics in reading, writing, and arithmetic. In addition to teaching the three “r’s” these women also taught the fundamentals of household responsibilities. The families and communities that hired women for dame schools usually regarded these educators as having high moral standards, a prerequisite that districts often neglected when hiring men to teach in the public school system. As the nineteenth century progressed, two waves of reformers altered the educational system entirely.⁴

Whether intentional or not, both groups of reformers worked in tandem in their respective educational movements across the United States, which eventually resulted in

³ “Henry Sabin Papers,” <https://museum.library.uni.edu/museum-archives/henry-sabin-papers>.

⁴ James W. Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*, (New York: Columbia University, 2007), 10-23.

more women receiving higher education and subsequently created greater opportunities for them to elevate their economic and social status on their own. Catharine Beecher, Emma Willard, and Mary Lyon, encouraged women to participate in teaching, causing the profession to feminize quickly between the 1830s and 1900s. Horace Mann and Henry Bernard pushed to properly educate and train future teachers, allowing women the opportunity to gain a formal education extending past the eighth grade.⁵

The north, especially Massachusetts, experienced the educational reformation prior to the Civil War, but the reformers' ideologies only gradually progressed west to the nascent states across the Mississippi River. In 1823, with the assistance of Mary Lyon, Catharine Beecher established the Hartford Female Seminary, located in Hartford, Connecticut. This institution represented one of the first major educational institutions explicitly for women. By 1826, the seminary enrolled approximately one hundred students. Seminaries equivalent to Beecher's became more popular on the East Coast during the early and mid-nineteenth century. These were the first educational programs that systematically taught women the best practices of teaching. After the Civil War, Beecher required her graduates to sign a two-year contract to teach on the western frontier, a program called the Board of National Popular Education that she co-founded with William Slade. Beecher also traveled to the Midwest in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s where she assisted in developing schools for women. Some of the institutions she helped

⁵ James W. Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*, (New York: Columbia University, 2007), 26. See also, Christine Ogren, *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good*, (New York: Pgrave MacMillan, 2005), 9-52.

develop included those in Quincy, Illinois, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Burlington, Iowa. Beecher's seminary and educational institutions usually provided women with a fairly simplistic curriculum to master before their graduation from the program. This included practices in arithmetic, theology, and good moral philosophy. Beecher was also an advocate for exercise and health so she also implemented physical education courses at her schools. While Beecher's program encouraged and trained young women to pursue teaching careers, her curriculum required refinement, which Horace Mann supplied.⁶

Horace Mann has been credited as the father of the Common School Era and was considered a resilient advocate in standardizing the educational system and curriculum for students. Mann understood that in order to create a better educational system for students, he had to begin with developing and standardizing formal teacher preparation and education. Mann, in collaboration with the Massachusetts governor, Edward Everett, discussed an ideal curriculum for teacher colleges. This curriculum included teachers understanding a higher level of content knowledge, the art of teaching, the functions of school government, and engaging in student-teaching. The curriculum offered females a more in depth educational background in liberal and scientific courses, as well as methodological and critical thinking classes. Normal schools also offered instruction in school and local government, and federal government and politics, which prompted more

⁶ James W. Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*, (New York: Columbia University, 2007), 37-40 and Christine Ogren, *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good*, (New York: Pgrave MacMillan, 2005), 9-29.

women to take action in political movements. As normal education became more popular among young students, a crisis occurred for rural communities.⁷

After graduating from normal schools, many students from rural communities were not returning to teach. Instead, these newly certified teachers searched for opportunities in the cities and urbanized areas because teachers' pay was often better than in smaller rural communities. Attending normal schools presented them an opportunity to leave family life on the farm. Thus, normal schools became the "people's colleges" as they expanded education to those who could not necessarily afford—whether because of time or finances—additional schooling. Normal schools tended to be more open to a variety of diverse students, than traditional white male colleges across the United States, including those of other races and genders. These institutions brought more people to a more colorful intellectual environment, providing a sharp contrast to isolated rural life. Whether that intention was conscious or not, rural communities suffered from the educational reform movements. Regardless of the rural crisis with graduates not returning or wanting to teach in the rural areas, normal schools continued to proliferate across the nation. By 1920, normal schools became the standard four-year institution and provided the only acceptable form of receiving proper training to become a teacher. High school programs, smaller institutions, county training programs, and two year programs were no longer accepted by the mid-twentieth century. It was no longer appropriate to only obtain

⁷ James W. Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*, (New York: Columbia University, 2007), 43-55 and Christine Ogren, *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good*, (New York: Pgrave MacMillan, 2005), 29-44.

a two-year degree to teach; instead it became necessary and required to receive a four-year degree at an accredited college or university.⁸

Yet the earlier, more varied teacher training programs outside of normal schools were necessary precursors to their establishment. Preceding the development of normal schools and initiation of the requirement of receiving degrees from these institutions, there were three other categories of teacher training programs offered. The first category included specialized preparation schools like the Hartford Female Seminary established by Catharine Beecher in Connecticut, or the Troy Female Seminary in New York established by Emma Willard in 1821. The second were smaller short-term institutions that mirrored a normal school's curriculum, but at an accelerated rate, such as a county training program. The urban high school programs represented the final category and mainly taught women pedagogy. In fact, the majority of these first early schools all contained similar characteristics regarding the curriculum that remained within the gender stereotypes of women in that era. Boys' education, from primary to secondary schooling, usually consisted of a strong scientific and liberal arts foundation. Girls' education contained more of a piety, moral, and virtuous focus. The morally good characteristics found in girls' education was reflected in the early teaching training programs. For example, while Beecher and Willard taught their female students a liberal

⁸ James W. Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*, 58-60; 125-133 and Christine Ogren, *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good*, (New York: Pgrave MacMillan, 2005), 16-24.

arts curriculum, they also strongly and whole-heartily encouraged a good moral ideology in their training.⁹

Iowa held one of the highest literary rate in the nation partially due to the white migration from New England and Mid-Atlantic state in the early years of Iowa's statehood.¹⁰ The state prided itself on its high educational standards which ultimately led to teaching qualifications and further education in order to teach. Although the state developed during the industrial revolution, it remained relatively rural which allowed for a significant number of one-room country schoolhouses, a number between twelve to fourteen thousand in the state, and postponed school consolidation until the 1950s and 1960s. Although women dominated the teaching profession, they lacked in graduate level education and higher administrative positions. Men, such as Homer Seerley—president of the Iowa State Normal School from 1886 to 1928—and Henry Sabin—State Superintendent of Schools and President of the Iowa State Normal School Board of Directors during the last few years of the nineteenth century—held these administrative positions.¹¹ It was not until 1922 with May E. Francis that Iowa saw its first female superintendent of schools.

Iowa was granted statehood in 1846, and the University of Iowa in Iowa City was founded less than a year later. After completion of construction, the school opened in

⁹ James W. Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*, (New York: Columbia University, 2007), 3, 14 and Christine Ogren, *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good*, (New York: Pagrave MacMillan, 2005), 16-24.

¹⁰ Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1902, 2 Vols. (Washington: 1903).

¹¹ Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 121.

1855 and became the first public university to admit both men and women on an equal basis. Iowa State University in Ames, established in 1858, and the Iowa State Normal School (ISNS), now the University of Northern Iowa, established in 1876, were also both coeducational from the beginning. The University of Northern Iowa was designated the normal of the state, however prior to its opening, the University of Iowa was actually the first college to develop an educational department, which was briefly active between 1871 and 1873.¹²

Even though the University of Iowa developed an educational department twenty-five years after statehood and the Iowa State Normal School opened thirty years after statehood, many women and men aspiring to be teachers still only attended high school or county programs a generation later. This trend remained in effect until the early twentieth century. The county and high school programs' curriculum remained consistent with the courses taught at other similar programs across the country regarding the concept of how to teach. However, these programs only offered second and third classification teaching certificates. ISNS contained a more extensive curriculum that combined a liberal arts and science education as well as practical teaching methods and school politics.¹³

By attending ISNS, a graduate usually received a higher classification teaching certificate that was normally valid for a year. Another advantage of receiving a degree from ISNS was the opportunity of receiving a higher paying job at a more financially

¹² Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 139.

¹³ Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 120.

stable school district. Even though the ISNS program offered a greater incentive to attend, the tuition and travel obligations were not always possible for future teachers. As a result, counties maintained and regulated their normal training schools during the late nineteenth century. In 1879, seventy-one counties offered at least a three-week abbreviated teaching program, by 1885 seventy-nine counties had programs, but this eventually led to a discrepancy among Iowa communities.¹⁴ With fewer graduates returning to rural communities to teach, urbanized areas earned the benefits of well-educated teachers while rural locales faltered. This encouraged the Iowa reformers, Homer Seerley and Henry Sabin, to standardize the educational requirements for teaching.

By dedicating and maintaining one institution to teaching and with more women entering the profession, more women attended a state college to obtain a secondary education. Additionally, by requiring the normal institution to maintain the same credentials as other accredited colleges and universities of liberal arts and sciences, women received a more extensive and completed education. Holding the normal school to the same credentials and standards as the other two schools meant regularly updating and maintaining a curriculum that paralleled the educational advancements of the other universities. Iowa's dedication to the educational profession, and continuous reorganization of the curriculum requirements, meant that students enrolled in the teaching program—a high proportion of which were female by 1900—maintained the

¹⁴ "List of Normal Institutes Appointed," *The Iowa Normal Monthly* Volume 1, no 1 (1877) 21-22 and "Iowa Normal Institutes," *The Iowa Normal Monthly* Volume 9, no 1 (1885), 33-35.

same educational advancements and opportunities as the other students in science and liberal arts higher training programs. The Iowa State Normal School's curriculum requirements for future teachers further demonstrated the significance of higher secondary educational achievements for teachers and subsequently women earned a higher degree of education. A common course offered in a majority of secondary educational institutions were civics courses. Keokuk, Osage, Marengo, Marshalltown, and Ottumwa required a civics course for all students. Beginning in the 1860s, the State University of Iowa also required a civics class as well as additional courses in history, political science, and economy. This curriculum also applied to the normal department of the college. ISNS also required classes in history, political science, and civics as outlined in the 1878-1879 Bulletin. Those classes included Civil Liberty, History of United States and England as well as classes tailored to teaching including School Economy and School Laws of Iowa.¹⁵

ISNS did not exclude specific groups of teachers; instead it contained a curriculum that was all inclusive and provided varied coursework that benefited teachers for both city and rural classrooms. By the later nineteenth and early twentieth century, Iowa rapidly expanded to incorporate industrial and urban elements of America. Large

¹⁵ "The Teaching of Government in the Academics and Public School," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 17, no. 2 (State Historical Society of Iowa, 1919), 195-200 and "Third Annual Catalogue of Iowa State Normal School," (Cedar Falls, Iowa: Gazette Steam Job Department), 1879, 35. For additional catalogs and bulletins regarding classes and the University of Northern Iowa, consult the following, "Bulletin of the State Normal School," (Cedar Falls, Iowa: State College of Iowa), 1901; "Bulletin of the State Normal School," (Cedar Falls, Iowa: State College of Iowa), 1904; "Bulletin of the Iowa State Teachers College," (Cedar Falls, Iowa: State College of Iowa), 1911; and "Bulletin of the Iowa State Teachers College," (Cedar Falls, Iowa: State College of Iowa), 1920.

cities began to consolidate school districts and one-room rural schools began to slowly disappear from the Iowa scenery. While one-room schoolhouses remained operating until the mid-1950s and early 1960s, focus began shifting to city schools. Homer Seerley and Henry Sabin refocused the state's attention to the development of the rural towns, as many still represented Iowa's cultural foundations and economic stability. Agriculture remained the state's central form of financial gain, and if the rural school curriculum disappeared, Iowa was threatened with economic despair. Consequently, Seerley and Sabin collaborated together to develop a diverse curriculum for teachers whether urban cities or rural towns hired them. As a result, teachers learned an array of information including arithmetic, agricultural science, home economics, and various methods for teaching in graded city schools or ungraded single-teacher schoolhouses. The educational development of teachers did not cease upon graduation. ISNS, counties, and the state were dedicated to developing and requiring teachers to participate in in-service training programs to re-validate their teaching certificates.¹⁶

The development and requirements of teacher in-services greatly impacted the educational advancements of teachers. Instead of displacing teachers after their initial graduation, the state required continued education and recertification for teachers who wanted to continue teaching. Educators continued learning about the advancements occurring in other disciplines, which provided an opportunity, especially for women, to continue their educational developments. These also allowed for continued intellectual

¹⁶ Irving Harlow Hart, *The First 75 Years*, Cedar Falls, Iowa: The Iowa State Teachers College, 1951, i x-xi.

development in higher level analytical thinking and comprehension, such as with teaching methodologies. The in-services also required higher analytical skills in that these teachers would have to take this new information from the programs and modify them to fit the curriculum in the schoolhouses. This required extra critical analysis from rural one-room school teachers as they had to adapt the curriculum to several grade and educational levels. The in-services also kept teachers, especially women, connected within a network that they developed in their college careers.¹⁷

In addition to academic requirements at ISNS, students participated in extra-curricular activities, such as being part of the student staff of *The College Eye*, the campus newspaper. By encouraging students to participate in other organizations, they constructed an idea of self-development and self-government. The encouragement of students participating in self-governing organizations allowed for an introduction of participation in a democratic organization.¹⁸ This last idea contributed to the larger concept of women being politically involved on a national scale.

By dedicating and maintaining one institution to teaching and with the cultural shift to females being the right gender to teach, more women attended a state college in large female-dominated cohorts to obtain a secondary education. Additionally, by requiring the normal institution to maintain the same credentials as other accredited colleges and universities of liberal arts and sciences, women received a more extensive

¹⁷ Irving Harlow Hart, *The First 75 Years*, Cedar Falls, Iowa: The Iowa State Teachers College, 1951, i x-xi.

¹⁸ Irving Harlow Hart, *The First 75 Years*, Cedar Falls, Iowa: The Iowa State Teachers College, 1951, i x-xi.

and completed education. By requiring the state to continue the growth and development of teaching education, this guaranteed that the state's schools would not fall behind in the state-wide university curricula and so women maintained the same educational advancements as those attending either Iowa State University or the University of Iowa.

The state teaching school was at the forefront of educational progress and was responsible to uphold the obligation of training a generation of teachers to educate schoolchildren. James Gilchrist, the ISNS first principal, noted the significance of the teaching community in 1885 when he said:

Whoever first proposed to bring the teachers of a county together for the purpose of instruction, study, and the extension of their acquaintance with each other, simply made a new application of an old principle: "As iron sharpeneth iron so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." The wonderful educational progress that we have witnessed during the past third of a century dates its origin at the rise of the Teachers' Institute. It is perfectly adapted to the work for which it is designed. The great number of persons in the teachers' ranks precludes even their partial preparation by the regular school. These young teachers can be reached in the mass only by the awakening of the emotional nature, and this quickening must be sustained from year to year. An era of educational revival appeared from 1840 to 1850. Better school laws were then enacted, and at the front of the educational movements of the times was the Teachers' Institute.¹⁹

Henry Sabin and Homer Seerley collaborated together regularly to continue Gilchrist's philosophy for ISNS and to improve common school education and normal training. Seerley served as the second president of the Iowa State Normal School from 1886 to 1928. Initially, Seerley attended school in pursuit of an engineering degree, but a lack of funds dampened his ability to complete the program. He eventually found a position as a teacher which led to his career in education. A well-educated man, Seerley

¹⁹ *The Iowa Normal Monthly* Volume 9, no 7 (1886), 280. James Gilchrist is considered the University of Northern Iowa's first president, but his proper title was "principal."

eventually obtained three degrees, a Bachelor of Philosophy in 1873, a Bachelor of Didactics in 1875, and a Master of Arts in 1876. He began his educational sojourn as a rural school teacher in 1867 before becoming an Assistant Principal, Principal, and Superintendent of Schools. While president of the Iowa State Normal School—eventually renamed Iowa State Teachers College (ISTC) during his tenure as president—Seerley closely worked with Henry Sabin.²⁰

Between 1888 and 1892, and then again from 1894 to 1898, Sabin served as President of the Iowa State Normal School Board of Directors. In addition, Sabin chaired the National Education Association Committee of Twelve on Rural Schools. He believed rural education to be the most important part of the nation's educational system. Sabin understood the dilemma and disadvantages that faced country schools. At the time of Sabin's election to President of the Board of Directors in 1888, rural schools lacked the educational sophistication of city, or graded schools. Rural, or ungraded schools, usually only convened during the winter months and consisted of children of various educational intelligences between the ages of five and twenty-one. Sabin fought to establish better curriculum and structure in the rural schools in order to benefit the students in the same manner as in the city schools. He found it unfair that city schools received more and better attention during the Common School Era and feared an entire class of Iowans would fall behind and prevent rural citizens from obtaining the same opportunities and success as urban citizens. The lack of consistency experienced in Iowa rural schools led

²⁰ UNI Archives Special Collections, "Homer Horatio Seerley,"
<https://www.library.uni.edu/collections/special-collections/biographical-sketches/homer-horatio-seerley>

Sabin to develop a semi-uniform program across the state. He promoted a better system of regulating educational achievements by creating a consistent curriculum in the state. Individuals continued to have control over the textbooks utilized in the school district, but this became limited as a standard curriculum developed in Iowa.²¹ A method in achieving this ambition was through informing the public. As Seerley stated in a letter to Sabin, “I think you [Sabin] should get out a circular and give it quite general distinction so that the public might be well informed.”²² Seerley attempted to encourage Sabin to promote the significance of children attending school and creating a uniform curriculum across the state.

Another factor the two men addressed was the development of different levels of teaching certificates awarded based on the program. In Seerley’s opinion, he thought the state certificates should be of a higher classification than county certificates.²³ This classification would further lead to standardization by encouraging more students to attend ISTC and receive a more advanced certificate and uniform training. A higher classification also resulted in the potential for better payment for women teachers.

Even rural school teachers recognized these discrepancies and began to address their concerns for fear of being eliminated by city schools and question why rural school teachers were not represented by the Iowa State Teacher’s Association. In 1910, Sarah

²¹ “Henry Sabin Papers,” <https://museum.library.uni.edu/museum-archives/henry-sabin-papers>.

²² Letter to Henry Sabin from Homer Seerley, Box 1, undated, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections and Archives.

²³ Letter to Henry Sabin from Homer Seerley, Box 1, undated, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections and Archives.

Gillespie Huftalen confronted the state superintendent and asked why there was not a committee for rural teachers. The superintendent said he never thought about why there was no subsection for rural-school teachers and suggested she gather ten teachers for the rural school teachers to participate in a round table discussion at the next state meeting. Instead of merely ten, Sarah contacted ten thousand rural school teachers.²⁴

Sarah wrote letters to her fellow schoolteachers urging her colleagues to attend by making statements about improving rural schools for the benefit of the children and for the teaching community writing, “Let us be boosters and progressives ourselves. Let us marshal our forces for the improvement of Rural Schools, that they may better meet present day conditions and demands,” and “We have the right to go without loss of salary. We will never regret it. The story of a trip to the capital city will inspire the dumbest kind of pupil to loyalty, and a desire to see and know.”²⁵ A year later, Sarah was elected president of the rural section of the Iowa State Teacher’s Association.

Sabin’s influence in public grammar school education in Iowa affected Seerley’s influence in higher education and normal school training. During Sabin’s terms as President of Board of Directors and Chair of the National Education Association Committee of Twelve Rural Schools, a county’s responsibility of normal training decreased. Instead of attending a two-week program at a county’s normal institution, for example the Teacher’s Normal Institute of Calhoun County located in Rochester, Iowa,

²⁴ Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 226.

²⁵ Sarah Gillespie Huftalen, Personal No. 2, 89, Manchester Historical Society. Also printed in, Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 227-28.

requirements for those pursuing teaching as a career became more extensive. As a result, the state normal school located in Cedar Falls burgeoned during Seerley's presidency and the curriculum at the normal school shifted to better incorporate the curriculum taught at rural schools.²⁶

Even though ISTC became the designated teachers college in Cedar Falls, other counties upheld their own normal school programs. Calhoun County, located in the northwest corner of Iowa, maintained an extensive and well detailed history of their school system. Because of its western location, the area was settled later than the eastern half of Iowa. The settlement of Calhoun County began in the 1850s, but slowed due to the Civil War. After 1865, western Iowa rapidly expanded and Calhoun developed exponentially. The distance from Calhoun County to normal school in Black Hawk County was too far for most to travel and attend school at the university. As a result, Calhoun established its own normal institution—a common practice when transportation was limited—and meticulously recorded information on the teaching certificates of the county and the students and graduates of the normal school.²⁷ Table 3 represents the number of teachers employed divided by gender and Table 4 shows the number of certificates, education, and gender of teachers in the county between 1888 and 1907.

The Calhoun Normal School developed an accelerated training program for their teachers. From 1888 to 1898, the program lasted two to four weeks at the end of summer

²⁶ Clarence Ray Aurner, *History of Education in Iowa*, Vol. 1, (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa) 1914, 118-153; and University of Northern Iowa Museum, "Henry Sabin Papers," <https://museum.library.uni.edu/museum-archives/henry-sabin-papers>.

²⁷ Calhoun County, Superintendents' Annual Reports, 1888-1907, University of Northern Iowa Museum, Rural School Records.

when students graduated and became certified teachers. In addition to recording the gender of the teachers employed in Calhoun, the county also kept records of the grade of teachers' certificates, their teaching experiences, and average age of the teachers by their gender. Calhoun County's statistics at this time were consistent with the state's average data across the three categories. Men had a greater ratio of higher level certificates over women. On average, men were also at least three years, sometimes closer to six years, older than the average woman receiving her teaching certificate. Calhoun also had a high level of teachers with zero to one year of experience.²⁸ Table 5 demonstrates the discrepancies among men and women.

During the nineteenth century, Calhoun contained anywhere between twenty-one to twenty-seven districts including independent schools. After combining the number of ungraded schools in the sub-districts, Calhoun County contained between 127 to 132 schools in the nearly twenty-year time span, meaning the county employed approximately 130 teachers per year. Due to the county's establishment later than most other counties in eastern Iowa, Calhoun employed an extensive number of women compared to men. However, by examining the data closely and comparing by proportion, men still maintained a higher educational achievement compared to women. For example, in 1888 Calhoun recorded a total of forty-two certificates awarded to men. Thirty of the certificates—or approximately seventy-one percent—were first class certificates, a higher grade than third grade certificates. Women in 1888 possessed a total of 207 certificates,

²⁸ Calhoun County, Superintendents' Annual Reports, 1888-1907, University of Northern Iowa Museum, Rural School Records. The year 1891 is missing from the collection and so is omitted from the data set.

but only fifty-seven—or approximately twenty-eight percent—were first class certificates. This percentage fluctuated during the last half of the nineteenth century, but the results stayed consistent. On average, men obtained higher degrees in education than women.²⁹ Although women held a greater number of teaching positions, men primarily held or worked in administrative positions, such as the county superintendent, which required a higher degree. The first woman elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction was May E. Francis, which did not occur until 1922.³⁰

These statistics can be thought of in terms of the type of position male and female educators sought. Men invested in a higher education to receive a higher level administrative position, whereas women who only taught for a year or two, received a lesser degree.³¹ This theory also explains the age discrepancy among the two genders. The average age of a woman employed in Calhoun County between 1889 and 1907 was less than the average age of a man. The age difference declined throughout the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, but women were usually younger than their male counterparts by a minimum of two years.

A third element that demonstrated the inequities among females was compensation from the school districts. Payment inconsistencies varied prominently among the township and independent school districts. There were two township methods

²⁹ Calhoun County, Superintendents' Annual Reports, 1888-1907. University of Northern Iowa Museum Rural School Records. The year 1891 is missing from the collection and so is omitted from the data set.

³⁰ UNI Archives, Special Collections, "May E. Francis Collection," <https://www.library.uni.edu/collections/special-collections/manuscript-list/may-e-francis-collection>.

³¹ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country School*, (District of Columbia: The Preservation Press, 1984), 35-51.

in Iowa. The first consisted of a three-member board elected by the community who served for a one year term. The second township method consisted of one director from a single school who was elected for a year-long term and managed all matters related to the school. With this system, the township could vote to organize the districts into independent rural school districts. Independent schools elected three trustees to manage the school.³² Each individual school maintained its own schoolboard and legislation. As a result, the county had virtually no control and little influence on individual schoolhouse politics. The community decided on teachers' payment. The county superintendent had more control over township school districts to regulate teachers' salaries.³³ For example, in 1888 the average pay for male teachers in township schools was approximately three dollars more than females. In independent schools, the average male salary was about seventy-five percent greater than a female teacher's salary.³⁴ This information suggests that the independent school districts in Calhoun were more financially stable compared to the township schools.

The pay differences based on gender in township schools lasted only briefly. By 1890, schools began to match females' and males' salaries. By 1892, some townships paid women more than men, suggesting these townships paid a fair salary based on experience and/or educational background rather than gender alone. The salary pattern in

³² United State Bureau of Education, *Bulletin, Issues 1-19*, Washington DC: US GPO, 1889. 62-63.

³³ Calhoun County, Superintendents' Annual Reports, 1888-1907, University of Northern Iowa Museum Rural School Records.

³⁴ Calhoun County, Superintendents' Annual Reports, 1888-1907, University of Northern Iowa Museum Rural School Records. The year 1891 is missing from the collection and so is omitted from the data set.

Calhoun among both township and independent school districts remained consistent throughout the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Table 6 provides the statistics of male and female average monthly salaries for Calhoun school districts.³⁵ Overall, male teachers' average monthly compensation in township schools exceeded females' compensation, but the average pay inequity was within a few cents of each other. In several of the years, such as in 1894 and 1895, the average female teachers' salary surpassed males' salaries by a few cents.

The professionalization and education required for teachers benefited women as more entered the profession. As James Gilchrist said, a profession raised the prominence of a member of a society because it indicated that the person successfully mastered a discipline at a college or university.³⁶ Seerley and Sabin continued to argue the significance of the standardization of education throughout their careers. The obligation of the schoolteacher to educate children on American citizenship were too important to not have properly and well educated scholars in the classroom. With these three men pushing for a standard normal education at the state level, teachers received a more in depth knowledge of teaching and received a professional degree which in turn positively affected teachers' position in the community. With further education and various gradation of certification, women began discussing pay based on experience and

³⁵ Calhoun County, Superintendents' Annual Reports, 1888-1907, University of Northern Iowa Museum Rural School Records. The year 1891 is missing from the collection and so is omitted from the data set.

³⁶ James Cleland Gilchrist, "Professional Degrees for Teachers" presented at the Meeting of the Normal Department National Educational Association on Tuesday, July 29, 1879, University of Northern Iowa Special Collections and Archives, 02/01/01 James Cleland Gilchrist Papers, Box 1,1- 4.

education over gender. Not only were school districts discussing pay equity, but some communities were practicing equal pay.

**Comparison of Teachers Employed in Calhoun County versus
Teachers Enrolled in the Calhoun Normal School between 1888
and 1907**

	Number of Teachers Employed in Calhoun County		Number of Teachers Enrolled at the Calhoun Normal School	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1888	33	120	18	137
1889	22	128	23	145
1890	21	137	32	131
1892	27	137	18	112
1893	50	246	21	122
1894	58	230	41	157
1895	63	232	26	114
1896	63	249	17	150
1897	52	241	26	130
1898	61	250	19	136
1899	54	254	12	134
1900	42	277	18	135
1901	44	292	21	147
1902	37	286	14	155
1903	36	304	10	145
1904	32	295	9	166
1905	27	297	17	169
1906	37	284	13	174
1907	24	284	14	186

Table 3: Comparison of Teachers Employed in Calhoun County versus Teachers Enrolled in the Calhoun Normal School. A side by side comparison of the number of teachers employed in Calhoun versus the number of teachers enrolled in the County Normal School. ³⁷

³⁷ Calhoun County, Superintendents' Annual Reports, 1888-1907, University of Northern Iowa Museum Rural School Records. The year 1891 is missing from the collection and so is omitted from the data set.

Comparison of Grades of Teacher Certificates for Calhoun County between 1888 and 1907								
	Males				Females			
	State	First	Second	Third	State	First	Second	Third
1888	0%	71%	21%	7%	1%	28%	53%	19%
1889	0	63	30	8	0.4	31	49	20
1890	1	29	70	0	0.5	31	69	0
1892	2	33	65	0	0.6	37	62	0
1893	4	42	54	0	0	40	60	0
1894	4	53	42	0	1	50	49	0
1895	11	45	44	0	2	63	34	1
1896	11	50	25	14	2	29	42	27
1897	19	31	23	27	6	24	40	31
1898	7	30	26	37	4	14	46	37
1899	5	28	30	38	4	18	45	33
1900	6	24	55	15	5	19	46	31
1901	8	14	46	32	5	17	47	31
1902	19	25	31	25	4	19	45	32
1903	28	10	48	14	5	17	46	32
1904	25	25	33	17	4	17	55	24
1905	26	22	39	13	4	15	58	23
1906	33	13	38	16	9	13	60	18
1907	33	29	29	10	5	27	53	15

Table 4: Calhoun Teacher Certificates awarded. Demonstrates the number and level of certificates men and women received between 1888 and 1907. Numbers converted to percentages and rounded to whole number. ³⁸

³⁸ Calhoun County, Superintendents' Annual Reports, 1888-1907, University of Northern Iowa Museum Rural School Records. The year 1891 is missing from the collection and so is omitted from the data set.

Comparison of Teaching Experience and Age in Calhoun County between 1888 and 1907						
	Males			Females		
	Average Age	No Experience	Less than One Year Experience	Average Age	No Experience	Less than One Year Experience
1888	28	6	2	20	37	36
1889	26	5	8	19	27	26
1890	24	9	6	19	42	29
1892	22	2	2	19	37	28
1893	21	1	3	19	7	21
1894	22	7	4	19	25	22
1895	24	10	9	20	24	15
1896	27	8	7	22	21	26
1897	25	4	4	21	16	13
1898	26	7	7	20	21	29
1899	25	10	12	19	35	30
1900	25	2	15	22	40	86
1901	24	6	15	21	38	91
1902	25	6	8	22	36	65
1903	25	3	6	21	41	78
1904	26	2	4	23	38	60
1905	25	5	7	22	35	79
1906	28	1	4	24	12	22
1907	25	2	2	23	35	33

Table 5: Experience of Teachers in Calhoun County divided by Gender. Provides the average age and experience for both males and females employed in Calhoun between 1888 and 1907. ³⁹

³⁹ Calhoun County, Superintendents' Annual Reports, 1888-1907, University of Northern Iowa Museum Rural School Records. The year 1891 is missing from the collection and so is omitted from the data set.

Average Payment in Calhoun County Township Schoolhouses between 1888 and 1907		
	Males	Females
1888	29.69	26.98
1889	30.42	28.51
1890	31.03	29.5
1892	30.93	30.14
1893	30.41	30.13
1894	28.55	29.73
1895	30.14	30.38
1896	30.91	30.10
1897	29.37	28.94
1898	29.65	29.30
1899	30.43	28.75
1900	30.21	29.53
1901	30.18	29.41
1902	30.15	30.03
1903	31.56	29.31
1904	33.25	32.08
1905	34.62	32.92
1906	33.86	32.96
1907	34.99	33.84

Table 6: The average pay and number of teachers employed in Calhoun County between 1888 and 1907. ⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Calhoun County, Superintendents' Annual Reports, 1888-1907, University of Northern Iowa Museum Rural School Records. The year 1891 is missing from the collection and so is omitted from the data set.

CONCLUSION

The situation of female teachers significantly influenced women's rights in Iowa. Sarah Gillespie Huftalen noted the prominence of the women's movement in 1898, when she stated:

Surely, a wonderful advancement has been made during these fifty years which the younger people scarce can realize—an advanced condition that has placed woman in a new world of thought and action, and she accepts it with all its privileges and blessings and gives thanks to those pioneers who opened the way. Every advantage gained, every privilege granted to woman is the result of her own efforts.¹

The teaching profession and the educational discipline in Iowa created an atmosphere that assisted with women's rights issues across the state particularly pay equity, school suffrage, and coeducation at secondary level institutions. Some of the reasons for Iowa's progressive educational stance during its early years were from the immigration and migration of German cultures and citizens of Mid-Atlantic and New England states, both of which had progressive ideals on educational reformations. Additionally, historical events such as the Civil War as well as industrialization and urbanization further facilitated women entering the schoolhouse. With men volunteering for the Civil War, women had to staff the schools, and during industrialization, Iowans feared children would succumb to the evils of capitalism in cities. In order to combat this,

¹Sarah Gillespie Huftalen, "Woman's Sphere," newspaper clipping, Manchester, Iowa, Wednesday, August 10, 1898, in "Personal No. 1, "I Remember [sic] This & That," 20, box 8, vol. 10, Manchester Historical Society. Also printed in, Mary Hulburt Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Plains and Prairies: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860-1920*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 219.

the caring and nurturing characteristics of women were brought to the schoolhouse through the encouragement female teachers.

As Iowa continued to develop its educational philosophies and laws throughout the nineteenth century, the state also had to address various social issues. Beginning in 1859 and 1860, issues regarding pay inequity were being published in sources such as the *Iowa Instructor* and the *Iowa Normal Monthly*. Not only were counties discussing the pay inequities between men and women teachers, but some counties like Calhoun, appeared to be paying teachers on experience rather than gender.

The first volume of the *Iowa Instructor* also addressed issues regarding school suffrage. Although, the majority of school suffrage discussions were tabled in the early years, women eventually were granted the right to participate in school elections shortly after as addressed in the *Iowa School Law Codes*. Both of these sources also discuss coeducation for teachers at normal institutes which resulted in county normal training programs being coeducational as well as the three state schools—Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, and the Iowa State Normal School, later the Iowa State Teachers College and the University of Northern Iowa.

The state along with Homer Seerley and Henry Sabin, who worked at the Iowa State Normal School, advocated for stricter policies on teacher preparation and rural education. As a result, this required teachers to have more training in order to receiving certificates. These benefited women teachers, because by this time, the feminization of teaching was dominating the profession and more women than ever before were receiving higher education.

With the combination of Iowa's progressive background, the acceptance of the state of the Common Reformation during the early nineteenth century, and the professionalization of teaching, women were able to participate in some school elections, attend coeducational secondary institutions, and argue for pay equity based on experience.

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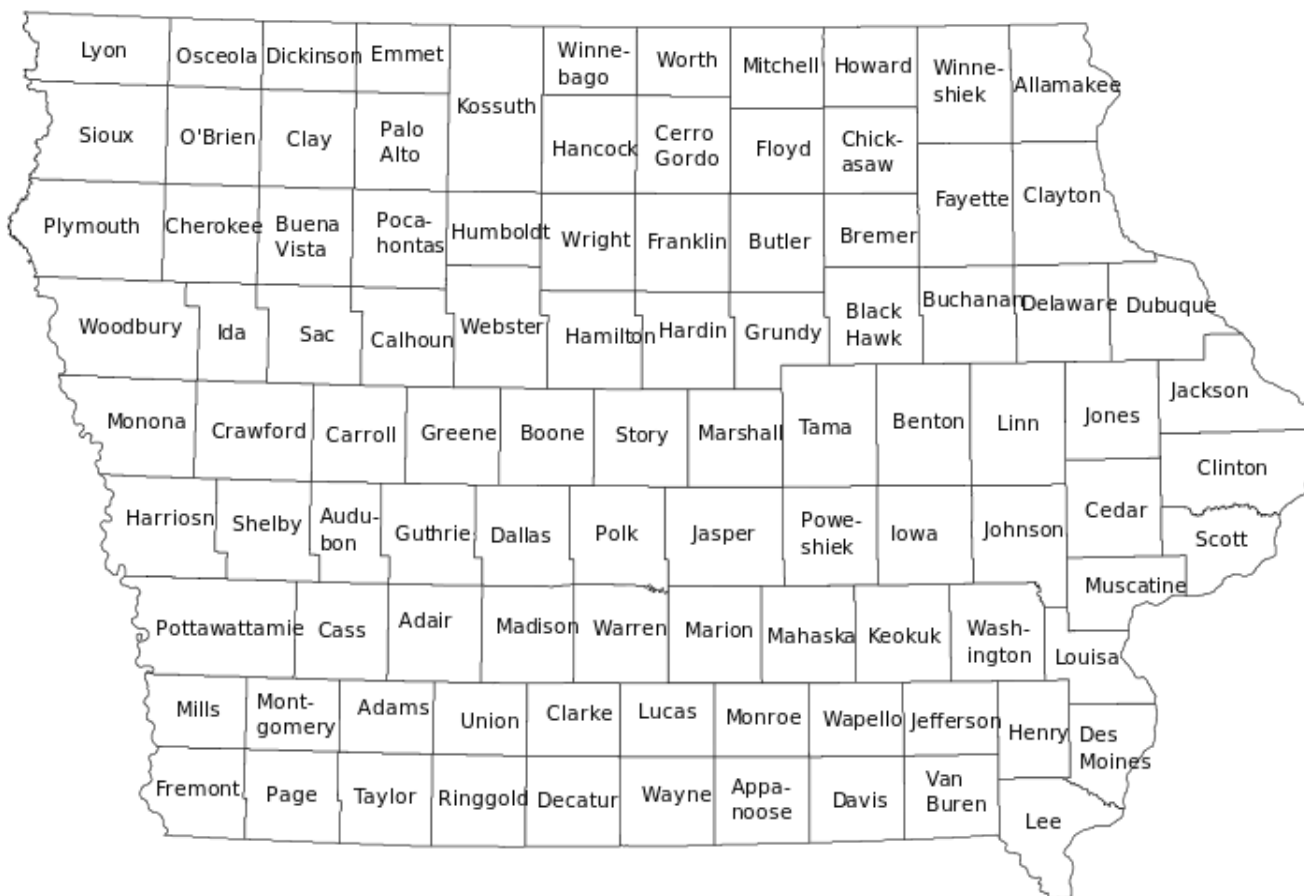
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APPENDIX
 COUNTY MAP OF IOWA¹



¹ "Blank Iowa County Map with County Names," *Wikimedia Commons*,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Blank_Iowa_county_map_with_county_names.svg