The Architecture of Education: Public Schools in Akron, 1890-1920

by

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Abstract

In the period between 1890 and 1920, developments in curriculum, educational philosophies, and culture dramatically affected the size, scope, and interior spaces of public schools in Akron. Through the examination of original blueprints, Board of Education meeting minutes, and a collection of other primary sources, the author traces the history of schools in Akron from the passage of the Akron Law, which established a publicly funded school system, to 1920. The first chapter explores the history of Akron, including its founding and development. It also includes a study of the industries in the area, and their affect on population and culture. Chapter two discusses the period from 1890 to 1908, and ends with an analysis of the Collinwood school fire and its immediate impact on schools in Akron and throughout the nation. In the third chapter, the author examines the changes in curriculum and educational philosophies and their affect on schools built from 1909 to 1920.

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Introduction

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, people came from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and other areas of established settlement, to an area approximately thirty miles south of Lake Erie and Moses Cleaveland's settlement. In their efforts to build a successful, notable city, the settlers laid out their plans for municipal buildings as well as that of the city itself. One of the many things the group decided upon was the way in which they would educate their children. Initially, as in many other places, the school was in the home of a community member, and no official school existed until later, when the community had the means to construct one. Even then, such schools were small and plain, with few resources. After Akron was incorporated as a village in 1836, however, the educational system underwent significant changes. There were developments in educational curriculum, which clearly illustrated the types of subjects the community considered important for children to learn. There were also changes in the way in which the city funded education, which dictated the size and use of school buildings. Population was a concern, as growth within the city resulted in large numbers of students in schools that were too small. The development of Akron's rubber industry after the Civil War also affected the schools, as scores of people travelled to Akron to find work. In 1908, the Collinwood School in Cleveland caught fire, killing one hundred seventy-five people, mostly school children. With overcrowded classrooms and narrow stairways and exit doors to blame, the tragedy glaringly demonstrated a need for bigger, safer schools. These developments in curriculum, population, and cultural ideas like Progressivism and

its concern with widespread reform caused marked changes in the size, scope, and use of school buildings in Akron.

From the establishment of Akron's public school system in 1847 to 1920, the schools' curriculum changed dramatically. For instance, though the course of study included traditional subjects such as reading and writing, The Board of Education added Manual Training classes for boys and Domestic Science for girls. It also incorporated bookkeeping and mechanical drawing in the course of study. These new classes prepared students for professional careers or trained them for household duties. The inclusion of courses which offered practical instruction exemplified the cultural ideas of each period. For example, Domestic Science classes taught young girls how to be wives and mothers. The effect of these courses on school buildings is evident in the way in which floor plans for individual schools changed to accommodate them.

While changes in curriculum affected the schools in their interior spaces, population growth within Akron influenced the size and number of schools. As more people travelled to Akron from all over the country and abroad in search of work, the Board of Education continually strived to accommodate the rising number of children enrolling in school. It struggled with the challenges of educating immigrant children, which, in many cases, meant teaching the children, and their families, English and sharing American culture. The effort to Americanize the immigrant population was due in part to Progressivism and its determination to improve American society through education.

In describing the ways in which educational architecture was an illustration of cultural and educational changes, the work is divided into three chapters. As an introduction to the topic of educational architecture, the first chapter contains a brief history of institutional architecture and the ways in which architects utilized structures to illustrate a particular ideal. It then outlines the history of Akron and its early schools. This discussion includes the efforts Akron citizens undertook to establish a free public school system, a proposal which became known as the "Akron Plan", and which helped shape Ohio's public education system. This section also explores the pertinent details of the city's culture, including the construction of the canals, and economic and social conditions, including the city's transition from a canal town to one dependent upon the rubber industry. It is also important to discuss the influx of immigrants into Akron, the reasons behind their emigration, and the ways in which these new settlers affected the larger society.

The second chapter studies a small sample of the schools constructed in Akron, including their architectural styles, floor plans, and room usage, while concentrating specifically on the period from 1890 until 1908. In 1908, the Collinwood School in Cleveland burned to the ground, killing 172 children and three adults. This great tragedy had a distinct and immediate effect on the schools in Akron, as the Board attempted to prevent such a disaster from happening in Akron. Throughout the chapter, it is necessary to analyze the elementary schools built over the almost twenty year period, and how these schools changed in size and floor plan. It is possible to trace these changes according to population, curriculum changes, and social ideals. These schools include Henry, Howe, Allen, Leggett, Grace, Bryan, Miller, Fraunfelter, Findley, and Portage Path.

Chapter 3 discusses schools built from 1909 to 1920, including Lincoln, Bowen, and McEbright. Through studying these schools, it is easy to discern the changes the Board of Education made to their design to ensure the students' safety in the event of fire. Changes due to social conditions, such as the threat of illnesses like tuberculosis, are also evident. The Board and school architects also made changes based upon Progressive ideas from men like John Dewey and William Wirt, the creator of the Gary Plan.

With photographs, sketches, and original blueprints, it is possible to examine the floor plan of each of these schools, and ascertain the original uses of certain rooms, note the inclusion of rooms for particular purposes, and ways in which these plans differed from those of earlier schools. By analyzing these items, one is able to trace the changes in construction and architecture by correlating those changes to cultural or educational developments.

In order to fully grasp the scope of educational changes, it is important to consult records from the Akron Board of Education regarding the construction and use of the schools, and various texts which discuss the philosophy of education nationally and locally, such as John Dewey's *School and Society* and *The Child and the Curriculum*. Equally important is the study of treatises, such as Edmund March Wheelwright's *School Architecture*, from which the Board acquired many of their philosophies on school design after the turn of the century. Wheelwright's work, published in 1901, offered examples of architecture and floor plans useful in many different types of school. Wheelwright also outlined the most advantageous features of a school, encompassing everything from site orientation to blackboards and picture molding. The Board's purchase of this book

illustrates its interest in standardizing school architecture, both in style and floor plan. To explain specific architectural styles and features, it also necessary to utilize architecture texts and dictionaries which aid in the recognition of any distinguishing characteristics and any discussion of their significance.

Few sources dealing specifically with the architecture of school buildings exist. One extant work, Virginia McCormick's *Educational Architecture in Ohio: from One-Room Schools and Carnegie Libraries to Community Education Villages*, offered excellent insight into the ways in which changes in culture and educational philosophies affect the architecture of schools. McCormick insisted that school buildings are spectacular illustrations of social conditions, as well as the views of educators of the time. She also discussed different school systems throughout Ohio, and the methods these systems utilized to educate students. Another helpful aspect of McCormick's work was her focus on the popularity of certain architectural styles and types, and the ways in which educators employed them to inspire an emotive response in the students. This work, from 2001, exemplifies a trend toward studying not only the educational systems themselves, as in Ronald Cohen's *Children of the Mill: Schooling and Society in Gary, Indiana, 1906-1960*, but the way the views and aspirations of the school systems are represented in the buildings themselves.

In *Children of the Mill*, Cohen studied the development of a progressive school system in Gary, Indiana, which lasted almost sixty years, until the death of its creator, and its eventual decline. The Gary, Indiana school system was the project of educator William Wirt, and served as the standard for many other systems. Cohen explained the

origins of this system as part of a larger, capitalistic venture. He also proved that, even though the system ultimately collapsed, it served as an excellent model of education in a multi-ethnic community. Cohen explored the diverse nature of the population, and how the combined cultural influences affected the education of the children. He explained how Wirt advocated the Platoon Plan of education, which allowed for a larger number of students in every school. Though few school systems adopted this plan, many incorporated the new design for classrooms, which changed to accommodate the higher student population.

This examination of the different types of school systems, as well as the way culture affects that system, is worthwhile to any study of schools. What is also important, however, is the consideration of how the schools may affect the culture. In fact, Howard Chudacoff and Judith Smith discussed how, as in the case of Philadelphia in the early nineteenth century, social leaders reformed school systems as a way to address poverty and crime in the city. In their work, *The Evolution of American Urban Society*, the authors investigated the different changes any community or city will enact to deal with social issues, which supports further study of the overlapping spheres of influence between education and society.

This intersection between society and education, and the way in which society and culture almost inadvertently affect schools is also evident in William Wilson's *The City Beautiful Movement*. Wilson contended that, while concerned with its obvious mission of improved the aesthetic appearance of cities, the movement was largely a political and moral campaign; by improving workers' surroundings, it was easy to boost

productivity and patriotism. This movement to better civic and private ventures influenced the construction and design of schools, which were the first places in which these new ideals were shared. It is through the study of this movement that one may better understand one of the major cultural changes in the early twentieth century and the way in which it affected educational philosophies and architecture.

While these are specific examples of research pertaining to the study of schools and society, it is glaringly obvious to any scholar that these efforts to do not make up any semblance of exhaustive scholarship on the topic of educational architecture. There are many studies which deal specifically with school systems and education, and a number which discuss architecture at great length. Few studies bring these two topics together in order to examine the effects one has on the other, and vice versa. This lack of information on an area of inarguable importance signifies the necessity for more research. Indeed, the very scarcity of sources dealing with this subject requires the attention of scholars from either field to fill the void. However, these works do offer the researcher valuable insight into the changes in schools as a result of cultural, curricular, and population changes. The study of changes and their influence on the design of Akron's schools illustrates how clearly these authors understood the inherent link between society and education, including its architecture.

Chapter 1. *Akron: Its Infancy and Growth*

To understand fully the ways in which schools and education developed in Akron, one must first delve into the history of Akron itself. While founded in 1825, Akron and its people were the products of a larger, historically significant story. In 1786, Connecticut ceded to the Federal government control of all of its lands crossing the continent, with the exception of an area "extending 120 miles west from the Pennsylvania border between the 41 degrees and 42 degrees, 2 minutes, north latitude." [1] The area came to be known as the Connecticut Western Reserve, or simply, the Western Reserve. By October of the same year, the first settlers travelled to the Western Reserve. Connecticut required that, while lands in the Reserve were available for purchase to anyone, five hundred acres of each township was to be for the "support of the Gospel," and the same amount for schools.[2] This suggests that, even then, education was equally as important as religion to the people from Connecticut.

Despite all its best efforts, the Connecticut legislature was not able to sell the land quickly. Many potential settlers were concerned about confrontations with Indians, including disputed claims to their land. The threat of attack diminished in 1795, when General Anthony Wayne signed the Treaty of Greenville with Ohio's Native American

[1] Richard N. Campen. *Architecture of the Western Reserve, 1800-1900*. (Cleveland, Ohio: Case Western University Press, 1971), 3.

[2] Joseph G. Butler. *History of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley Ohio*. (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1921), 31.

tribes.[3] Leaders from tribes such as the Miami, Delaware, and Wyandot[4], agreed to relinquish their claims to all land in Ohio, with the exception of a ribbon of land along Lake Erie.[5]

In May of the same year, the Connecticut General Assembly passed an Act declaring that all the income it received from the sale of the Western Reserve lands would subsidize an account from which all of Connecticut would withdraw the funds necessary to support the public school system.[6] This obvious endorsement of education bears witness to the importance these settlers placed on the instruction of their children. Parents worried about the educational and moral wellbeing of their children, and sought out any opportunities for their children to learn, especially if that education included instruction in a moral code. Children could find these cultural rules in their schools, due to the availability of books such as the New England Primer and, later, the McGuffey Readers.[7] These books utilized a mix of secular and religious ideals as a way to teach a deep sense of morality as well as the basic subjects of reading, writing, spelling, and others. In fact, the cultural dependence on religious teachings was so ingrained that, for lack of these or any other proper school books, many schools used the Bible as a reading

[3]Harlan Hatcher. *The Western Reserve: The Story of New Connecticut in Ohio*. (Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing Company, 1966), 14.

[4] William Collins. *Ohio, the Buckeye State*. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1956), 82.

[5] Irwin Unger. *These United States: The Questions of Our Past*. (New Jersey: Pearson Hall, 2003), 170.

[6] Carl F. Kaestle. *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860.* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 11.

[7] Martha Pallante. "And What Shall I Learn: Children's Literature in the Connecticut Western Reserve." (Youngstown State University: 2007), 4.

book.[8] This illustrates the interwoven nature of education and religion in the culture of the settlers in the Western Reserve.

In 1796, a group of investors called the Connecticut Land Company purchased the whole of the Western Reserve for $1,200,000.[9] The group agreed to divide the land amongst themselves in proportion to the amount of their individual investments. It was at this time that Moses Cleaveland and his surveying party travelled through the Western Reserve to the area which was eventually named Cleveland. The surveying party separated these areas into ranges, townships, and then lots. Despite the original dictates of the Land Ordinance of 1785 for the land to be divided into townships thirty six miles square, Cleaveland and the other surveyors partitioned them into areas twenty five miles square.[10] Upon settlement, the people of these townships quickly began planning for the placement of all important community structures, including churches, town halls, and schools. In their plans, the settlers applied their experiences and cultural traditions, including architecture, from Connecticut and other areas of New England.

Architectural Influences

Though the settlers of the Western Reserve and Akron were generations removed from their Puritan ancestors, they shared many of the same cultural, religious, and architectural traditions. However, while it is true that many different architectural styles were popular in the east, the first people in the Western Reserve built structures that did

[8] Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic*, 17.

[9] Hatcher, *The Western Reserve*, 15.

[10] Campen, *Architecture of the Western Reserve*, 4.

not follow a particular style, but instead served a specific purpose, like houses and public buildings. It was not necessary for a house to demonstrate a particular architectural style, it only needed to possess enough room for the family and keep them warm and dry. Essentially, the settlers used the same building types and local construction materials as the colonial settlers; log cabins were common. Once the settlers developed the area more fully, and established profitable industries, they looked to popular architectural styles to illustrate their success. Though the majority of these popular styles were reminiscent of earlier styles, there were some variations. In order to understand the development of architectural styles and their features, it is important to study a portion of the history of architectural styles used in the United States, and the ways in which culture dictated the architecture and use of public buildings.

While architecture-- the design of a building-- existed before recorded history, architecture in the Western Reserve and throughout most of the eastern United States was the product of Greek and Roman architectural styles and their evolution in the hands of later designers. Perhaps one of the most important features of Greek architecture is the way in which it exemplified the cultural ideals of the society. For instance, the Greeks expressed their principles of individuality and democracy by designing their temples much like their houses, including the interior floor plan. They believed that gods possessed human attributes, and temples were meant to be community gathering places,

not intimidating structures looming over the populace from on high.[11] These beliefs had a profound lasting effect on Western architecture.

The Romans utilized many of the Greek cultural ideals and the architectural features which illustrated them. Moreover, by employing various methods of engineering and mathematics, they changed these features slightly and added many of their own. For example, the Romans took the Greek designs for columns, Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian, and added the Composite, a combination of the Ionic and Corinthian designs. They also developed a feature which changed architecture forever: the arch. By using arches, the Romans found it possible to place multiple openings for windows and doors in load-bearing walls. This ability to transfer massive amounts of weight allowed the construction of domes and vaults of staggering heights.[12]

Through cultural hegemony, Roman architecture made its way throughout Western Europe and the near east and, even after the fall of the Roman Empire, continued to influence the architectural styles of the time and region. Architects in the Middle Ages used many of the basic tenets of Roman architecture, such as arches and the system of load-bearing structural elements, but altered these designs to work with their own religious beliefs and practical requirements. They transferred the weight of the building to the walls and, rather than constructing a short, temple-like structure as a symbol of equality, they designed a Gothic building with towers and spires pointing towards heaven, representing heavenly aspirations. When they wanted to add more windows and

[11] Mark Gelernter. *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context*. (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999), 11-13.

[12] Ibid, 13-14.

vaulting, the architects constructed buttresses on the exterior, which assumed much of the weight of the building, and allowed the walls to become thinner and more decorative.[13] Though these buttresses made it possible for architects to add more windows and decoration to the interior, the arch enabled architects to build higher.

Architects took full advantage of the Roman arch, and altered its design by bringing it to a point. This change facilitated the extreme height of churches' interior vaulting, by transferring more of the weight to different points in the arch, and allowed architects to open up the floor plans of their Gothic churches. Their use of pointed arches, vaulting, and buttresses distributed the load of a building more widely, which made it possible to not only make these churches taller, but in a rectangular plan instead of square.[14] The marked differences between the Gothic architectural style and that of the Greeks and Romans demonstrated the inherent dissimilarities in the cultural and religious ideals. Civilizations continued to base their architecture on their cultural or religious attitude and, in fact, "[t]hose who valued the individual and rational looked back with admiration to the Classical world…while those who preferred social unity and a more emotional or spiritual response to things preferred the medieval."[15] This tendency to correlate a particular architectural style with a system of beliefs or social ideals is apparent in the way in which educational architecture demonstrated those beliefs. For

[13] R. Furneaux Jordan. *A Concise History of Western Architecture*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 129.

[14] Ibid., 131-135.

[15] Gelernter, *American Architecture*, 19.

example, many public buildings of the time possessed elements of Greek or Roman architecture, which conveyed a sense of permanence, strength and reason.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, coinciding with the rise in classical archaeology, architects found many reasons to study the architecture of antiquity. With the changes he commissioned for Versailles, Louis XIV encouraged the tendency to look back on these civilizations and emulate the order, logic, and power inherent in their architecture.[16] In America, the constant efforts of architects and citizens to look to these ideals and apply them to their public buildings resulted in the emergence of several different styles, including Romanesque Revival and Neoclassical.

Romanesque Revival enjoyed widespread popularity in the design of public buildings from 1840-1880, most notably the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.[17] It success was due in large part to the comparative ease with which builders of the time could construct a building of this style, with its "simpler forms and decorative system."[18] Protestant congregations were also concerned with distancing themselves and their buildings from any comparison to Catholicism, including the Gothic style, which most people associated with the Catholic Church.[19] The Romanesque style possessed such features as towers with arched openings, rounded-arch windows, and an emphasis on vertical height. The Italianate style, popular from approximately 1840 to 1890,

[16] Jordan, *Western Architecture*, 259.

[17] Cyril M. Harris. *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 276.

[18] Gelernter, *American Architecture*, 152.

[19] Ibid.

incorporated many features of Italian architecture, including the nearly flat, usually hipped roof, which extended over the frieze on paired decorative brackets. Much like Romanesque and Gothic Revival, this style was asymmetrical, and concentrated on vertical height to draw the eye upward.[20]

Though a great deal of the people in the Western Reserve and Akron came from areas in which these architectural styles were prevalent, there were major obstacles to constructing public or private buildings in these styles. Perhaps the most important complication was the cost of transporting the necessary materials for such buildings. The canal system, a new industry of boundless potential, enabled architects and builder to ship previously unavailable building materials to nearly any location. This development in transportation made materials cheaper and lowered the cost of construction, allowing people in newly settled areas to closely adhere to the newest and most popular styles in their homes and public buildings.

Late in the nineteenth century, revivals of earlier styles abounded, and many new types of architecture enjoyed widespread popularity. Balloon framing, a new construction technology first used in the 1830s, allowed builders to construct larger buildings in a fraction of the time, at a fraction of the cost. It also offered the possibility of more ornate and asymmetrical designs.[21] Queen Anne, Shingle, and Richardsonian Romanesque, Henry Hobson Richardson's interpretation of Romanesque, became popular after the Civil War mainly due to the ease with which builders could construct them using the new

[20] Rifkind, *Field Guide to American Architecture*, 51-52.

[21] Gelernter, *American Architecture*, 156.

techniques. Much like other towns before them, the people of Akron studied the most popular styles, including the revived styles of the early to mid-nineteenth century. These were the styles in which they chose to build their schools and educate their children in the ideals of their own society.

Akron to 1889

Though the land which was to be Akron was originally the property of John McClellan, one of the investors in the Connecticut Land Company, it changed hands several times with subsequent sales. After the last owner, Daniel Stewart forfeited the property by failing to pay the requisite taxes, General Simon Perkins, a resident of Warren and an agent for the Connecticut Land Company, purchased the one thousand acres in 1807. Originally sold for approximately thirty-five cents an acre, Perkins was able to acquire the land for the price of approximately $4.00, the amount of the delinquent taxes.[22] He then began building what, within twenty years, became Akron.

Much of the early history of Akron focused on its economy, and the way in which it could distribute and receive goods and supplies. In 1818, Ohio Governor Ethan Allen Brown campaigned for the construction of a canal system in Ohio. He appealed to the Ohio Legislature for surveys of land from Lake Erie to the Ohio River to ascertain the best location for a canal. Brown insisted that this system would drive Ohio's economy and encourage settlement of the region. Finally, in 1825, the legislature approved plans

[22] James A. Braden, ed. *A Centennial History of Akron*. (Summit County Historical Society: Akron, Ohio, 1925), 13.

for two canals in Ohio: the Ohio and Erie Canal in the north, and the Miami Canal in the southern part of the state.[23]

Originally, this canal was to run through Middlebury, a small town two miles to the east of what became downtown Akron. Founded in 1807, the town thrived and, as the projected site of the new canal in 1825, had the potential to become an extremely successful, prosperous town. Fully aware of the way in which this new method of transportation could benefit him, General Perkins petitioned that the site of the proposed Ohio and Erie canal be moved from Middlebury, to what became downtown Akron. Perkins planned to use this venture, which had the potential to be highly profitable, as a way to establish a new village which, "with the advantages of water power and water transportation," would rival nearby Middlebury.[24]

To accomplish his goal, Perkins convinced one of the original settlers of the region, Paul Williams, who came to the area in 1811, to merge their properties and form the new one hundred seventy-two acre town. They gave their new town, at 400 feet above Lake Erie, the name Akron, for the Greek word meaning "high place," and laid out the town plat "with a canal running through the center of the village."[25] This bold, clever strategy, together with the decision to deed to the state one third of the town lots,

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[23] Ronald Shaw. *Canals for a Nation: The Canal Era in the United States, 1790-1860*. (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 127.

[24] Braden, *Centennial History*. 29.

[25] Jack Gieck. *Early Akron's Industrial Valley: A History of the Cascade Locks*. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2008), 3.

convinced the state to relocate the proposed canal to Akron. The newly formed town was already on its way to becoming successful and prosperous.

Two years after workers began the canal, it opened amidst great fanfare. Though it was complete, the canal system offered the possibility of work building canal boats, an industry in which Akron excelled, manufacturing more boats than any other city in the state. The canal was beneficial to other businesses as well. Flour mill owners used the canal for water power by tapping into its overflow channels, and running the water over a waterwheel, which then operated the millstones. The ability to markedly increase production by tapping into the canal encouraged several new milling companies to open along the canal.[26]

In 1840, a new canal, the Pennsylvania & Ohio, opened in Akron, and linked Akron with Pittsburgh. This new canal offered work during its construction phase, and paid a decent wage, to its mostly Irish workers, of fifty cents per day, more than any canal worker in the area had ever received. Running directly down the middle of Main Street, the canal raised property values and drew new businesses to the area, which in turn increased Akron's population.[27]

A major question the founders and leaders of Akron addressed soon after General Perkins established Akron was the way in they would educate the children of the region, and the type of facilities they would use. As many of the early settlers of Akron and the Western Reserve were from Connecticut and Massachusetts, they came from a long

[26] Ibid., 16.

[27] Ibid., 17.

tradition of education in pursuit of morality, and the necessity of knowledge in order to be a responsible citizen of the new republic. Their dedication to the education of their children accompanied them to the wilderness of the Western Reserve and to Akron, and evident in the efforts they put forth to establish a reliable, effective school which communicated their beliefs and ideals.[28]

For many years, the village could not afford to construct permanent schoolhouses, and teachers, usually members of the community, gave lessons in any manner of building, including private residences and stores. In approximately 1834, Akron built the first permanent school building on the corner of Broadway and Buchtel Avenue. It was entirely of wood, and consisted of one room. It was replaced by another one-room building, this one of stone, in 1840, called the "Stone School." It measured nearly 32 feet by 38 feet, allowing for approximately 65 students. With a total of three schools in a town of 1,665 people, this was sufficient.[29]

From 1825 until the 1840s, the people of Akron debated the best way to financially provide for the education of all children in the area. While some families of better means could easily afford to pay a teacher, purchase books, and help maintain the school buildings, many families survived only at the subsistence level. This meant that the poorer families could not afford to send their child to school. It is also important to note that children of all ages and skills attended the same school and studied under the same teacher. Most of these teachers did not possess an education much higher than the

[28] Braden, *Centennial History*, 19-20.

[29] C.R. Quine. *Old Akron's One-Room Schoolhouses*. (Akron, Ohio: Summit County Historical Society, 1959) 4.

oldest child in their care. Their only qualification was a modicum of good sense, and the fortitude to oversee the instruction of a number of students in different subjects, and at varying levels, while maintaining a degree of discipline and order. This was undoubtedly a daunting task. Coupled with the teachers' reliance on the community for lodging, and the scarcity of funds for a teacher's salary, these obstacles made it difficult to acquire reliable, qualified teachers for any length of time.

Several members of the community endeavored to change this system which fostered inequality and provided an unreliable education. By the middle of the decade, there were almost seven hundred school-age children in the town, of whom only half attended school, private or public.[30] In 1846, in an attempt to address the issues leading to this discrepancy in school attendance, Reverend Isaac Jennings, the pastor from the Second Congregational Church, led a committee whose charge it was to devise a system by which the town could educate the children in the most equal, logical, and economical manner. The members of this committee drafted a proposal called the "Akron Plan."

This plan called for the establishment of one school district for the entire town and a standardized curriculum. It also set up a structure of grades, dividing pupils and schools into "primary and grammar grades," and called for the organization and election of a school board, which would make all decisions regarding curriculum, new construction, and the hiring of teachers.[31] The plan outlined the need for six primary schools throughout the village, to accommodate children from different areas, and one

[30] Virginia McCormick. *Educational Architecture in Ohio: From One-Room Schools and Carnegie Libraries to Community Education Villages*. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2001), 47.

[31] Braden, *Centennial History*, 75-76.

centrally located grammar school, at which students would learn more advanced subjects necessary for a "respectable English education." This reference alluded to the type and quality of education children in the east received. The plan required that every student pass yearly examinations, and decreed that no student would be able to attend the grammar school, the equivalent of a present day middle school or junior high school, without passing the previous grade's examination at the primary school.[32] These conditions ensured every student the same education, including the requirements for passing from one grade to the next. All teachers taught the same lessons, and followed the same standards for examinations.

One of the most important items in this new plan, however, was the system of funding for the schools, a system which did not exist elsewhere. Henceforth, children were able to attend the schools at no cost, liberating individual families from the burden of either providing the teacher with room and board, or paying for books and supplies. Instead, the schools received most of their financial support "by general taxation", and the rest from state funds already designated for education. The committee sent this proposal to the Ohio Legislature for approval, and the Legislature adopted it within a few months, calling it "An act for the support and better regulation of common schools in the Town of Akron."[33] This plan, originally intended to be a way for the citizens of Akron to ensure the adequate education of their children, quickly became the standard framework for school systems throughout the state.

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[32] Edward A Miller. "The History of Educational Legislation in Ohio," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly*, vol. XXVII (1919): 68.

[33] Braden, *Centennial History*, 76.

In the years following this groundbreaking legislation, the system of public education in Akron changed dramatically. The newly elected Board of Education formed several committees to address the varying needs of the schools. The Committee for New Buildings was responsible for acquiring land for schoolhouses, employing an architect to design each new building, and supervised construction. The Committee for Janitors, Heating, Light, and Ventilation acted as liaison for the janitor of each building, and ensured that each school had the necessary mechanical system, such as heat and ventilation. They also approved and supervised any necessary repairs in the schools. The Committee on Teachers hired, represented, and terminated teachers. The Committee on the Course of Study continually evaluated the courses offered at all of the schools, and considered changes to the curriculum.

To deal with the surge of students into the free school system, the Board devised a plan for eight sub-districts, each with one primary school, and a central grammar school. To accomplish this, they embarked upon a massive construction project with the sole purpose of providing quality buildings in which children could take advantage of their free education. They immediately built two new buildings, each costing $370, and, established the first grammar school in town by altering a small, wood frame building on East Mill near South Summit and South Prospect. In 1851, on the site of the smaller building, they began construction on the Jennings School. To allow for the number of students who came from the eight primary schools, the new brick building measured seventy feet long by fifty feet wide, and was two stories tall. After the addition of annexes in 1867, 1883, and 1885, this school provided seating for five hundred ninety

students and required thirteen teachers, and was comparable to other schools of the time.[34]

In the construction of these early schools, Akron depended upon treatises on school architecture, such as Henry Barnard's *Practical Illustrations of the Principles of School Architecture*, published in 1854. Barnard insisted that school systems had a responsibility to ensure that their schoolhouses met the basic requirements for safety, health and usefulness. He urged administrators to adhere to certain criteria in the construction of future buildings, and detailed those criteria. Barnard also offered examples of schools in Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, and explained the proper methods for ventilation of a classroom, appropriate sizes for classroom furniture, and the most favorable location for a play area. In essence, he gave school systems everything they needed to design a safe, well-lit, properly ventilated school with suitable accommodations for all ages of children.[35]

Though books such as Barnard's offered the guidelines for school and classroom design, the Akron Board of Education relied upon local architects to draft the plans for each new school. The Board chose an architect for each school, and many of the architects were responsible for several schools. For example, Charles Henry designed the Henry and Howe Elementary Schools, which were remarkably similar, and the Akron High School. Several other architects designed multiple schools, including the firm of Harpster and Bliss, which drafted the plans for Portage Path, Lincoln, and Bowen

[34] *Illustrated Summit County, Ohio*. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Map and Atlas Company, 1891), 34.

[35] Henry Barnard. *Practical Illustrations of the Principles of School Architecture*. (1854)

Schools, and Frank Weary, who designed the Miller School in 1900 and the Fraunfelter School in 1904.[36]

The curriculum for these early schools was similar to that of many schools in New England. Children took courses in "Orthography [spelling], Reading, Writing, Arithmetic (mental and written), Geography, History, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Surveying, Physiology [biology], Natural Philosophy, Mental Philosophy, Chemistry, Book-Keeping, Astronomy and Phonography [shorthand]."[37] By 1848, Greek and Latin became part of the course of instruction as well. One challenge of having such a varied course of study was, of course, the hiring and retention of qualified teachers. In fact, in 1857, the Board of Education addressed this concern by asserting that only teachers with "ample experience…a fine education," and a host of other qualities, found employment within Akron's public schools.[38] It is possible the Board found it necessary to terminate a teacher lacking those qualities.

Though the purpose of the new Jennings School was to allow for the rise in student population, it quickly became crowded. Though both canals were complete and the construction work they promised was gone, many of those workers found other employment and settled in Akron permanently. Several industries offered employment, and people travelled from places such as. Ferdinand Schumacher, a German immigrant

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[36] Akron Public Schools. *What's in a Name and More*. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education, 2004), 1-6.

[37] *Illustrated Summit County*, 34.

[38] Sally Compher Klippert. *Lengthened Shadows: The Story of the Akron Public Schools*. (Akron,Ohio: Akron Public Schools, 1955), 28.

who settled in Akron in the early 1850s, quickly established himself as a miller, especially of oats. He marketed a cereal made of oats, and enjoyed great success after supplying it to soldiers during the Civil War. The success of his mill prompted Schumacher to expand and produce other products as well. Constructing several water-powered mills over the next few years, he began produced large quantities of oats, barley, and flour.[39]

To work these mills, Schumacher employed a total of one hundred men and women, and paid them extremely well: an "ordinary laborer" received $1.50 a day, while a "skilled mechanic" earned $2.00 a day.[40] The possibility of employment, either with Schumacher or any of the other businesses in the area which relied on water power, drew many people to the Akron area, causing a marked increase in the population. In fact, while, in 1850, there were approximately 3,200 people in Akron[41], by 1870, this number more than doubled to 10,000.[42] As more children entered the educational system, this placed more pressure on the schools, and necessitated more buildings.

Akron, which received its "city" status in 1865, continued to expand and, in 1872, annexed its neighbor Middlebury. At the same time, progress threatened Akron's canals. The Ohio and Erie Canal still helped support the city economic interests, though the shorter Pennsylvania & Ohio Canal, which ran directly through downtown in the

[39] Gieck, *Early Akron's Industrial Valley*, 33-34.

[40] Ibid, 37-38.

[41] *United States Census*, 1850.

[42] *United States Census*, 1870.

middle of Main Street, was not so fortunate. Due to its ability to transport large quantities of iron ore to Youngstown, the P&O was in direct competition with the Cleveland and Mahoning Railroad. The C&M succeeded in acquiring a majority stake in the canal and, through continuous rate increases, drove it out of business.[43]

When the P&O canal closed, it presented a major problem. Without the constant motion of boats travelling the canal, which ran directly down the middle of Main Street, the water quickly stagnated, resulting in a severe mosquito infestation. With the constant threat of disease, the people closest to the canal insisted it be filled in, but met with considerable resistance from business owners who still relied on the canal for water power. Finally, in December, 1873, a group of men gathered in the middle of the night and filled the canal with sand, thereby ending the problem permanently.[44]

The railroad was not the only business that challenged the canal as Akron's premier industry. In 1870, Benjamin Franklin Goodrich, the owner of a struggling rubber company, the Hudson Rubber Company, brought his factory to Akron. The new company, Goodrich, Tew and Company, struggled for the first few years, and required several infusions of capital. Goodrich's need for financial assistance forced him to appeal to the initial investors, including Colonel George Perkins for more help. In 1880, Goodrich, Tew and Company became B.F. Goodrich and Company and, by 1888, more than quadrupled the initial investment and was hugely successful. The rubber industry had officially found a place in Akron.

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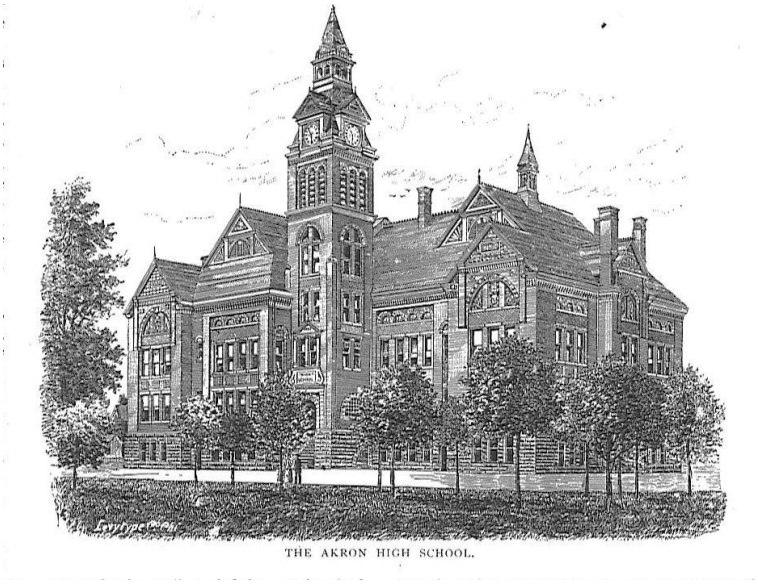
[43] Gieck, *Early Akron's Industrial Valley*, 43-44.

[44] Ibid., 44.

The existence of a new industry in Akron resulted in a dramatic rise in population as people came in search of jobs in Goodrich's factory. This increase necessitated the construction of more schools, specifically primary schools. Between 1870 and 1885, the Board erected eight primary schools, including Allen, Howe, and Henry. These buildings all followed a remarkably similar plan. They all had eight rooms, a central tower atop a projecting pavilion, and a hipped, cross gabled roof. The Allen school had many Italianate features, with brackets under the eaves, and heavy lentils over the windows and doors. The Henry school however, exhibited many characteristics of Georgian Revival, including an overstated pedimented doorway with sidelights, belt courses, and parapeted gables with double chimneys.

While some of the new schools replaced smaller buildings, the majority were in newly settled areas. However, with the addition of more primary schools, it soon became apparent the Jennings School would not accommodate the greater number of students. It was imperative the Board of Education construct a larger school. However, instead of simply building another grammar school, the Board considered building a high school for students who completed both the primary and grammar courses of study. To accommodate all of the students who came from all over the city, and some overflow from the grammar schools, the Board employed an architect to design the largest school in the city.

By 1885, the construction was completed on the new Akron High School, the largest and most state-of-the-art building in the school system. It boasted a basement, with playrooms for boys and girls, two stories of instruction space, including 12 classrooms, each accommodating forty-five students, a large, 650-seat auditorium, and an upper floor devoted to a museum and literary society. Charles Henry, a local architect whose other projects included Akron's first church, the First Congregational Church, and the Summit County Infirmary, designed this building in the Eclectic Picturesque architectural style. It boasted solid oak wood work, "trimmed with bronze", on the first two floors, and pine on the third floor and in the basement. The structure featured a sandstone foundation, brick walls, sandstone arches, and terra cotta trim. The school also had marble drinking fountains, and a "system of speaking tubes" from each floor to the Superintendent's office, the principal, and the janitor. Keeping in mind the new building's size and the risk of fire, Henry included in his design a one hundred foot fire hose for every floor, connected to a roof-top standpipe, which supplied rainwater in the case of a fire.[45] When the



THE AKRON HIGH SCHOOL.

[45] *Illustrated Summit County*, 34.

new school opened, the course of study was for three years, and the curriculum remained the same but for a minor change: German was offered as an elective language, possibly due to the number of German immigrants in the city.

By 1889, Akron had a population of over twenty-seven thousand people, and ten school buildings in which to educate its children. In just sixty-four years, Akron accomplished numerous things. It succeeded in building two canals, the Ohio & Erie, which connected the city to Cleveland, and the Pennsylvania & Ohio, which linked Akron with Pittsburgh. The city adopted a new industry with the founding of the B.F. Goodrich Company, and quickly established itself as the capital of rubber manufacturing. Perhaps most importantly, the city organized an innovative educational system of free public schooling for all the children in the city, a system which quickly became the standard for school systems throughout the state and nation. While all of these achievements put Akron on the national stage, the city busied itself with preparations for the next decade, and The Board of Education continued to plan for new schools in order to better accommodate a growing population.

In the next decade, people travelled from all over the United States and Europe to find work in the rubber factories, and their children enrolled in the Akron school system. For many foreign children, language presented a problem. Schools implemented special classes to teach these children English. While the city attempted to Americanize immigrants, the rubber companies offered them only the dirtiest, lowest paid, most dangerous jobs in the factory. The Board of Education began night classes, in which adults learned the English language and American culture. Akron accomplished much in

its first sixty-five years, but encountered more challenges in the new decade. However, with a successful school system and a blossoming city, Akron and the Board were ready for 1890.

Chapter 2. *1890-1908*

By the beginning of 1890, the United States enjoyed industrial supremacy over Britain, France, and Germany.[1] With the steady development of the railroad, it was easier to ship supplies or products, and market those items to a wider client base.[2] During the Civil War, iron was in great demand, and once Henry Bessemer, William Kelley, and Robert Mushet almost simultaneously discovered ways to mass-produce steel, its popularity increased dramatically. Following the Civil War, the nation became more industrialized with the growth in population in urban areas, and more connected with the development of the railroad; it was easier to ship supplies or products.[3] Struggling iron-producing businesses quickly became profitable, due to the ease with which they could manufacture steel at a fraction of its former cost.[4] Investors throughout the nation frequently established new companies and enjoyed stellar success. For example, John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company of Ohio "controlled between 90 and 95 percent of country's refining capacity and 92 percent of the crude oil supply of the Appalachian

[1] Sean Dennis Cashman. *America in the Gilded Age: From the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*. (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 12.

[2] Melvin I. Urofsky. *Big Steel and the Wilson Administration.* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1969), viii.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Herbert N. Casson. *The Romance of Steel: The Story of a Thousand Millionaires.* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1907), 3-4.

area."[5] The success of the oil and steel industries drew many people to the region with hopes of finding work or establishing their own successful enterprises.

Akron experienced the same sense of economic wellbeing. The Ohio and Erie Canal still played a role in the area's industrial interests, and, at the same time, a new industry emerged and quickly became the base of Akron's economy. Though rubber was not a new material, the B.F. Goodrich Company devised a way in which they could market rubber to a wide audience for a multitude of uses. Initially used for rubber fire hoses, in 1889 B.F. Goodrich began manufacturing pneumatic tires for bicycles. Instead of bouncing uncomfortably along the stone or brick streets of the city on tires of solid rubber, bicycle riders were able to ride in relative luxury on air-filled, or pneumatic, tires. Due to the widespread popularity of the bicycle, this infinitely preferable product quickly thrust Akron into the forefront of rubber manufacturing across the nation.[6] The success and growth of the rubber industry in Akron attracted people from all over the world to travel to the area in search of work, which led to a marked population increase.

Though developments in rubber led Akron to become the home of several tire and rubber manufacturing companies, many other smaller industries began for the sole purpose of improving the quality of life for the city's residents. For example, the establishment of the Akron Water Works Company ensured that pumped water was readily available in many parts of the city. When, in 1890, the population reached over twenty-seven thousand people, the Akron Street Railway Company capitalized upon the

[5] Irwin Unger. *These United States: The Questions of Our Past*. (New Jersey: Pearson Hall, 2003)420.

[6] Jack Geick. *Early Akron's Industrial Valley*: *A History of the Cascade Locks*. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2008), 49.

expanding population's need for transportation and, using electricity, began carrying people up Howard Street hill and down Main Street in streetcars.[7]

The marked increase in Akron's population, from 16,512 in 1880 to 27,601 in 1890 affected the number of school age children as well. In fact, in 1883, there were 5,858 children between the ages of six to twenty-one.[8] By 1890 that number rose to 8,655.[9] In 1886, faced with this dramatic rise in the number of school children in the district and the increasingly crowded conditions in the primary, or elementary schools, the members of the Board searched for sites upon which they could build two new schools. The board instructed the Committee for New Buildings to "secure propositions from land owners having suitable property for sale" in two areas of increasing numbers, one near Sumner and Allyn streets, the other at the intersection of Maple and Exchange streets. The area at the intersection of Maple and Exchange was just inside the city limits, and children were obliged to travel to the Perkins School, a six-room building approximately half a mile away and already bursting at the seams with over 300 students.[10]

In 1889, after buying a lot on the corner of Sumner and Thornton streets, the Committee for New Buildings proposed the Board employ an architect to design a school

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[7] James A. Braden. *Centennial Historyof Akron*. (Summit County Historical Society: Akron, Ohio, 1925), 100.

[8] Samuel A. Lane. *Fifty Years and Over of Akron and Summit County*. (Akron, Ohio: Beacon Job Department, 1892), 127.

[9] *Illustrated Summit County*. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Map and Atlas Company, 1891), 126.

[10] *June 22, 1886. Meeting Minutes,* (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

"similar in type to [the] Henry, Howe, and Kent" school buildings.[11] Jacob Snyder, a local architect best known for his design of several churches in the area, including Trinity Lutheran and St. Paul's Episcopal, as well as the home of wealthy industrialist John Henry Hower, received the commission for the new school. In honor of Mortimer D. Leggett, who served as the superintendent of the Akron Public Schools from 1847-1849 and was instrumental in the development of the newly organized school system, the Board named this school the Leggett School.[12] Completed in 1890, the Leggett Elementary School had eight rooms, much like the schools already in use in the city, and resembled many of the other schools in basic form, with a central tower on the façade, a hipped roof, and a gable on the side with a semi-circular window. Though this school possessed many features similar to other schools, the central tower followed the Eclectic Picturesque style of architecture. [13] It accommodated four hundred fifty-six students, and required eight teachers.

Strikingly similar to the Leggett School, and also a product of Jacob Snyder, was the Grace Elementary School, which opened in 1891 at the corner of Maple and Exchange streets. It also featured a central tower, hipped roof, and side gable. However, while a spire topped the tower at Leggett, the tower on the Grace School terminated in a flat roof and included many Romanesque features, including open arches, which surrounded the school bell. Aside from this minor difference, the two schools were almost identical in form and style, including the corbelled brickwork in the cornice and

[11] *May 22, 1889, Meeting Minutes*. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

[12] *September 10, 1889, Meeting Minutes*. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

[13] "Leggett School", in *Illustrated Summit County*, 33.

the semi-circular window in the side gable. Grace School was also able to hold four hundred fifty-six students in its eight rooms. This meant that each classroom measured approximately twenty-five feet by thirty feet and held up to fifty-seven pupils, which was common in schools of the time.[14]

While the Board of Education concerned itself with the construction of adequate facilities for a growing population of children, an event took place that revealed a significant cultural change. In 1890, the Akron branch of the King's Daughters, a religiously motivated philanthropic organization dedicated to "Christian Service,"[15] founded a day nursery for "children of tender age whose mothers were obliged to work away from their homes."[16] In 1891, Colonel George Perkins, the son of General Simon Perkins, one of the founders of Akron, donated a house for the organization's use. In their gratitude, the King's Daughter christened this new location the Mary Day Nursery, in honor of Col. Perkins's first grandchild, Mary.[17]

The existence of this nursery exemplified a larger international trend of the establishment of day nurseries. As early as 1816, British humanitarian and reformer Robert Owen advocated nursery schools, and insisted that these nurseries benefited both the mother, who was then able to "earn a better maintenance or support for [her]

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[14] Fred E. H. Schroeder, *Schoolhouses*, in *Built in the U.S.A.: American Buildings from Airports to Zoos*, ed. Diane Maddex (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1985), 150.

[15] International Order of the King's Daughters and Sons, *Who We Are*, http://www.iokds.org/index2.html. (accessed July, 2009).

[16] Oscar Eugene Olin. *Akron and Environs: Historical: Biographical: Genealogical*. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1917), 199.

[17] Ibid.

children," and the child, whom the nurseries "prevented from acquiring and bad habits, and gradually prepared to learn the best."[18] In 1825, Owen went on to include a nursery school in his effort to create a utopian society at New Harmony, Indiana. Three years later, the Boston Infant School opened, with the purpose of "relieving mothers of a part of their domestic cares," and allowed poor women to obtain outside work. [19]

While offering women childcare while they worked was undoubtedly a noble purpose, founders of day nurseries had other motives as well. Without childcare, many women, with no relatives or older children to lend a hand, had no choice but to leave their children at home alone or playing in the streets during the workday. The proponents of day nurseries, such as Hannah Biddle, a member of an important Philadelphia family, asserted that nurseries protected children from all the dangers inherent in those conditions, such as starvation.[20] Countless nurseries stated their mission was to protect these children from the "perils of fire and accident."[21] By 1892, there were no less than ninety day nurseries in the United States. The rapid increase in the number of these nurseries was due to conditions resulting from industrialization and immigration. As people came to industrialized areas for work, they left behind any established support systems, in the way of family and friends. This growing concern for children's safety and

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[18] Margaret O'Brien Steinfels. *Who's Minding the Children?: The History and Politics of Day Care in America*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), 35.

[19] Ibid., 36.

[20] Sonya Michel. *Children's Interests/Mother's Rights: The Shaping of America's Childcare Policy*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 13.

[21] Elizabeth Rose. *A Mother's Job: The History of Day Care, 1890-1960*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 29.

development had a substantial, albeit gradual, impact on the educational system and the schools themselves.

At the same time the new Leggett and Grace schools opened, the Board of Education considered the curriculum and its effectiveness in educating the children in subjects relevant to the time and culture. They deemed instruction in music and drawing acceptable as "elective studies" at the high school level, and employed teachers with experience in these subjects.[22] In 1892, the course in "English for the primary and grammar departments" changed to be mainly "language lessons with a minimum of technical English grammar." Instead, the Board added English grammar to the high school course of study, where teachers taught it concurrently with the "Reading of Literature."[23]

These traditional courses, however, were not the only way in which the educational system changed during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Faced with outbreaks of diseases like diphtheria and scarlet fever, school officials became more concerned with more than just the education of children. They studied ways in which the physical health of a pupil affected the mental health, or ability to learn, and attempted to protect the health of the students as much as possible. For example, in 1892, when scarlet fever broke out in the Children's Home, the Board placed a teacher in the home for the duration of the illness in order to prevent its transmission to students outside the Home.[24]

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[22] *August 11, 1890*. Meeting Minutes. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

[23] *August 16, 1892*. Meeting Minutes. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

[24] *December 6, 1892*. Meeting Minutes (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

The Board also researched methods to prevent illnesses and encourage good health, for it knew that "the health of the children [was] a public trust; and as such provision for its care [was] properly the function of the public school."[25] As early as 1889, the Board proposed the implementation of instruction, throughout the school system, as to the "nature of alcoholic drinks and narcotics and the effect of their use on the different organs of the body." As part of this instruction, children in the lower grades also learned about "anatomy, physiology, and hygiene" in the process.[26] This proposal illustrated the need for children to understand the importance and benefits of cleanliness to their health, especially in warding off different types of illnesses. In fact, in 1892, a course on Physical Culture, similar to present day Health education, became part of the curriculum for all grades. [27]

The Board's interest in adding a course in Physical Culture to the curriculum is indicative of the national interest in health and the benefits of exercise on the body. As early as the 1830s, the study and practice of medicine underwent drastic philosophical changes. While Samuel Thomson, a physician who insisted that illness was a product of a "clogging of the system" and required purging, enjoyed widespread influence, new highly effective medical therapies abounded, sparking a debate over the merits of specific treatments.[28] In an effort to explain various maladies, the *Journal of Health* blamed

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[25] Leonard Porter Ayres. *School Buildings and Equipment*. (Cleveland, Ohio: Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation, 1916), 16.

[26] *January 29, 1889.* Meeting Minutes. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

[27] *August 16, 1892*. Meeting Minutes. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

[28] Harvey Green. *Fit For America: Health, Fitness, Sport, and American Society*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 3-6.

certain elements of society, such as alcohol, upper class women's lifestyle of leisure, and certain working class occupations. After the Civil War, the necessity and the benefits of sanitation and ventilation were apparent. Proponents of physical exercise and its benefits for overall health insisted that, with a complete policy of proper ventilation, sanitation, and regular exercise, a person could avoid afflictions such as tuberculosis and ensure long life and vitality.[29]

The Board was not the only entity interested in the health and physical wellbeing of the students, however. A group of teachers at the High School petitioned the Board for baseball facilities, and insisted that the use of these facilities was necessary "at least two days in the week" and that "physical training [was] fast becoming an auxillary [sic] to mental education." [30] This group believed that satisfying the students' need to be physically active and explore organized sports or athletic instruction was equally as important as educating them in other, more traditional subjects. For these students, regular physical activity was another method by which the Board could ensure their health and vitality.

While the Board considered incorporating physical activity and instruction into the curriculum, the people and businesses of Akron encountered financial difficulties. The economic Panic of 1893 thrust the United States and Akron into a depression, and several successful businesses closed their doors. Within six months, over eight thousand

[29] Ibid., 88-89.

[30] *May 9, 1893*. Meeting Minutes. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

businesses succumbed, and five hundred seventy-three banks closed.[31] The difficulties lasted for over three years, and "was the worst experienced in America to that time."[32] The depression was a result of the failure of several enterprises, most notably the National Cordage Company, which manufactured twine. When this major conglomerate collapsed, so did the stock market. To protect their assets, many banks revoked all outstanding loans, including those upon which many railroad companies depended. Without the necessary funds to complete projects and continue operations, numerous railroads went out of business.[33] The breakdown of the banks and the railroad checked Akron's industrial security and growth, and put many people out of work.

Throughout these hardships, the Board of Education continued to oversee the education of children in Akron. This responsibility included constructing new buildings when existing schools became too crowded or Akron expanded its borders. This was the case for the Bryan School, also called the "North Hill School" for some time, as it was the first elementary school Akron built on North Hill. The Bryan School opened in 1896, and followed the same basic design as the Leggett and Grace schools, with a central tower on the façade and side gables. However, there were marked differences in the architectural features of the school, specifically in the tower, which boasted a spire, as well as decidedly Romanesque arches. The windows in the side gables were also very different. Contrary to both Leggett and Grace, these windows were not semi-circular but

[31] E.G. Campbell. *The Reorganization of the American Railroad System, 1893-1900*. (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 24-25.

[32] Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age*, 242.

[33] Nell Irvin Painter. *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 116-117.

Palladian in style, with an arched window in the center and flanking smaller windows.[34] The use of classical features in the architecture of the Bryan School suggests the Board of Education placed a great deal of importance upon the classical ideals of democracy and social equality, and strived to illustrate those ideals in the architecture of the city's schools.

With a rising population, the number of school children in Akron was not the Board's only concern, though it certainly was a factor. Indeed, while the number of school children increased, the number of teachers remained constant or decreased. The majority of teachers in the school system were women. In the way of most school boards across the country, the Board of Education required that, upon marriage, these women resign their positions to assume their duties in the home. If any of the women failed to do so immediately, the Board terminated their employment. Though a woman was able to appeal the decision, it was her responsibility to prove her husband was unable to support her. The case of a New York City teacher clearly illustrated that this requirement was not exclusive to Akron. The teacher, who resigned her position upon her marriage, found it necessary to apply for reinstatement after her husband contracted tuberculosis and was

[34] "Bryan School", in *Atlas and Industrial Geography of Summit County, Ohio*. (Akron, Ohio: The Rectigraph Abstract & Title Company, 1910), 148.

unable to work. The school board required her to provide proof of her husband's disability.[35]

This rule, which required a teacher to resign upon her marriage, resulted in a regular fluctuation in the number of qualified teachers available. To address the problem of teachers' qualifications, in 1896 the Board discussed the possibility of establishing a "Normal" school, a school with the sole purpose of educating prospective teachers in the theories, methods, and practice of the teaching profession. These schools were popular in the Northeastern United States in the middle of the nineteenth century, and were the product of a deliberate effort on the part of leading educators, such as Horace Mann, to "professionalize teaching."[36]

The Board decided that this school was the simplest way to ensure that all teachers in the Akron schools possessed the same skills and training. They deemed the Perkins School a suitable building for this new training program, and quickly established guidelines for the new joint school. Children continued to attend the Perkins School, but the building also housed a program by which trainees would become teachers. These prospective teachers followed a two-year program of instruction and practical experience in the methods of teaching. One of the teachers from the Perkins Elementary School became the principal of both their school as well as the Perkins Normal School, and was responsible for the instruction of both the students of the elementary school and the

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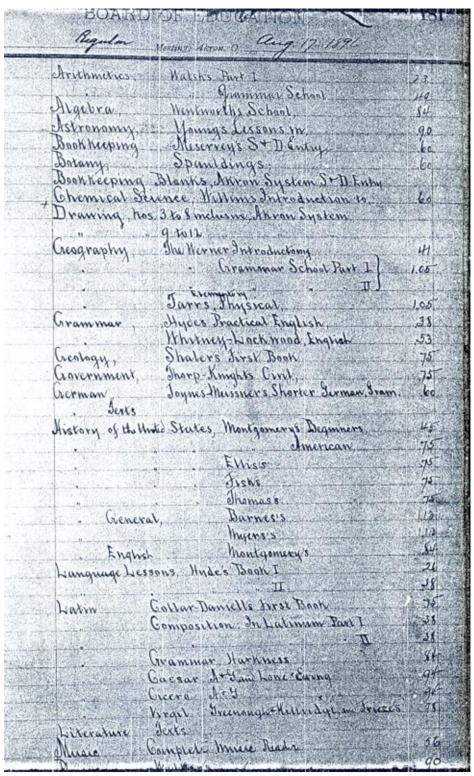
[35] Grace C. Strachan, *Equal Pay For Equal Work, 1910*, in *The School in the United States: A Documentary History*, James W. Fraser (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001), 196.

[36] David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot. *Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980*. (Basic Books, 1982), 31.

trainees at the Normal School. This responsibility included managing the instructors at both schools.[37]

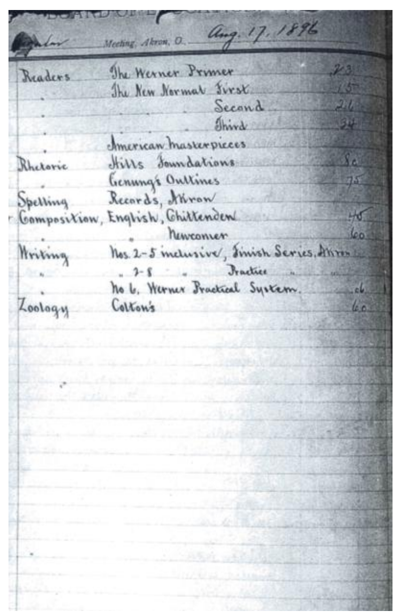
In the same year, the Board outlined the schools' curriculums, and the texts with which the faculty taught those subjects. Below is a copy of the meeting minutes in which they listed all of the courses of study and related texts and included the cost of each text individually. These minutes outlined every subject the school system offered, illustrating the importance the Board placed on the instruction of certain topics, such as bookkeeping.[38] It was imperative that students receive training in bookkeeping in order to prepare them for future careers or the keeping of a household.



BOARD OF EDUCATION 151

Regular Meeting, Akron, O. Aug. 17, 1896

Arithmetics,	Walsh's Part I	.23
"	" Grammar School	.49
Algebra,	Wentworth's School,	.84
Astronomy,	Young's Lessons in,	.90
Bookkeeping	Meservey's S+D Entry,	.60
Botany,	Spaulding's,	.60
Bookkeeping	Blanks, Akron System S+D Entry	
Chemical Science,	Williams Introduction to,	.60
Drawing,	Nos. 3 to 8 inclusive, Akron System	
"	" 9 to 12	
Geography,	The Werner Introductory	.41
"	" Grammar School Part I / II	1.05
"	Tarr's Physical, (Elementary)	1.05
Grammar,	Hyde's Practical English,	.38
"	Whitney-Lockwood, English	.53
Geology,	Shaler's First Book	.75
Government,	Thorp-Knight's Civil,	.75
German,	Joynes-Meissner's Shorter German Gram.	.60
" Texts		
History of the United States,	Montgomery's Beginners,	.45
"	" American,	.75
"	Ellis's	.75
"	Fisk's	.75
"	Thomas's	.75
" General,	Barnes's	1.13
"	Myers's	1.13
" English	Montgomery's	.84
Language Lessons,	Hyde's Book I	.26
"	" II	.38
Latin	Collar-Daniell's First Book	.75
"	Composition; In Latinum Part I	.38
"	" II	.38
"	Grammar, Harkness	.84
"	Caesar A+G and Lowe+Ewing	.94
"	Cicero A+G	.94
"	Virgil Greenough+Kittredge, and Frieze's	.75
Literature	Texts	
Music	Complete Music Reader	.56



Regular Meeting, Akron, O. Aug. 17, 1896

Readers	The Werner Primer	.23
"	The New Normal First	.15
"	" Second	.26
"	" Third	.34
"	American Masterpieces	
Rhetoric	Hill's Foundations	.80
"	Genung's Outlines	.75
Spelling	Records, Akron	
Composition,	English, Chittenden	.45
"	" Newcomer	.60
Writing	Nos. 2-5 inclusive, Finish Series, Akron	
"	" 2-8 " Practice " "	
"	No 6, Werner Practical System.	.06
Zoology	Colton's	.60

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[37] *June 9, 1896*. Meeting Minutes. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

[38] *August 17, 1896*. Meeting Minutes. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

In the last years of the century, following the construction of the Bryan School, the Board built no new schools in the district, but began a program of continual improvement of the existing schools. It is possible that, though the population in Akron reached 40,000 in 1897,[39] the Board decided upon the more economical alternative. They authorized repairs to sidewalks, heating and ventilation systems, and directed the janitor of each school to conduct a thorough examination of his building, and notify the Board of any and all necessary repairs or changes. The Board then reviewed these recommendations and instructed the janitors accordingly. For example, when the janitor at Leggett reported a broken transom, and the janitor at the Kent School reported a broken door stop, the Board authorized both men to make the necessary repairs.[40]

This policy of improvement did not apply to only the buildings themselves, however. In 1897, the Board resolved to establish a night school program in schools throughout the city, though the program itself did not begin until two years later. In 1898, the State of Ohio changed the law regarding education, and required every child "without regular employment" to go to school until they were at least fifteen.[41] Prior to this law, children only attended school for an average of five years[42] and, even after the law,

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[39] Burch Directory Company. *Akron City Directory, 1897*. (Akron, Ohio: The Commercial Printing Company, 1897)

[40] *Meeting Minutes, April 11, 1893*. Akron Board of Education.

[41] Sally Compher Klippert. *Lengthened Shadows*: *The Story of the Akron Public Schools*. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Public Schools, 1955), 76.

[42] Sarah Mondale and Sarah B. Patton, eds. *School: The Story of American Public Education*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 74-75.

children only had to reach the minimum age of twelve before they left to find work.[43] The Board recognized a need for these night schools, when "young men and women who, from the necessity of doing something to help themselves and their parents, [were] compelled to leave school as soon as they are able to secure employment."[44] It is possible the students' decision to leave school and obtain employment was due to the economic difficulties the city's entire population experienced following the Panic of 1893. Whatever the reason these students found it necessary to seek work, the Board of Education was determined to allow them the opportunity to continue their education for as long as possible, while still earning an income. The night schools held sessions from seven o'clock in the evening until nine, and taught the same courses of study as the "day schools."[45]

Though the night school program was instrumental in ensuring the education of older students who worked during the day, the Board also instituted programs for younger children. In 1897, the same year in which the Board first considered the night school program, they also contemplated adding a kindergarten program to the school system. In 1898, the Board placed an experimental kindergarten in the Allen School and, when its success was obvious, extended the program to the other elementary schools.[46] The kindergarten concept began in Germany early in the nineteenth century, when Fredrich Froebel, a rural schoolteacher, endeavored to create an educational experience

[43] Cashman, *America in the Glided Age*, 172.

[44] *March 2, 1897*. Meeting Minutes. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

[45] Ibid.

[46] Klippert, *Lengthened Shadows*, 75.

which allowed young children to learn through play and natural inquisitiveness. Froebel's ideas enjoyed widespread popularity in the United States, and social and education reformers advocated these "child gardens" as beneficial for all children.[47] While Froebel intended for this program to liberate "children from the restrictions of middle-class family life," social reformers transformed it into a social welfare program, in which poor children learned about cleanliness and discipline, and received baths, clothing, and training for primary school.[48]

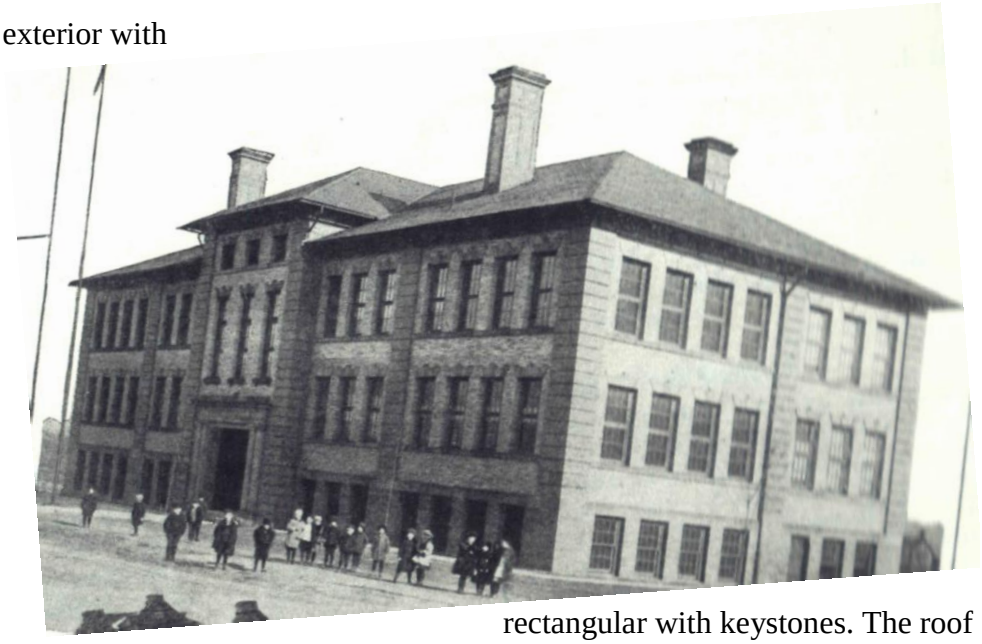
At the turn of the century, when the population in Akron reached 42,728, it was necessary for the Board to construct another school building. To address the marked increase of German immigrants to the area south of downtown near the rubber factories, the Board secured the services of local architect Frank Weary to design a new school. Weary, best known for his design of Peters Hall at Oberlin College and the

[47] Rose, *A Mother's Job*, 101-2.

[48] Ibid.

Carroll County Courthouse, designed the Miller School. Much larger than its predecessors, the three-story Miller School was an excellent example of the Second Renaissance Revival architectural style, with its arched windows on the top floor, square portico with recessed entry doors, and hipped roof with dentil cornice. Another interesting change from the previous schools in the city was in the materials the architect used for the exterior of the building. Though most of the other schools featured red brick exteriors with stone accents, the Miller School boasted a yellow brick exterior with corner quoins.[49]

The design for the Miller School was markedly similar to another school which opened in 1904, the Fraunfelter School, on the corner of Arlington Street and Buchtel Avenue. Much like Miller, Fraunfelter was the work of Frank Weary, and also had a yellow brick exterior with corner quoins. The windows on this building, however, were not arched, but rectangular with keystones. The roof line was similar to that of Miller, with the exception of the slightly projecting center

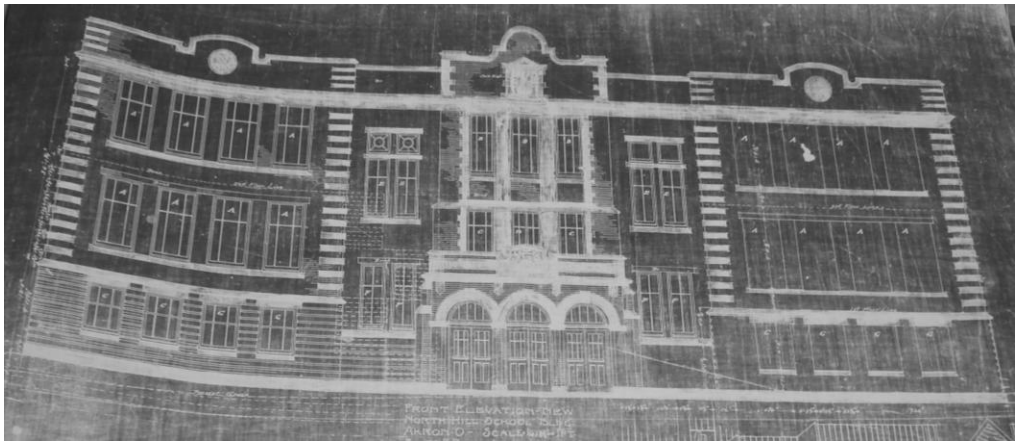


[49] "Miller School", in *Atlas and Industrial Geography*, 149

pavilion and its hipped roof, which gave the building a total of three and one half stories.[50] The Board instructed Weary to design this building with twelve rooms, four of which he was to leave unfinished, in order to spare the Board the expense.[51]

In 1903, while the Fraunfelter School was under construction, the Board considered ways in which it could ensure the effectiveness of new schools. In an effort to study the best designs for buildings and classroom, the Board purchased Edmund March Wheelwright's *School Architecture*. Wheelwright summarized the designs most popular in different parts of the United States and around the world, and outlined the varied uses for interior spaces. The Board's purchase of this book illustrates its willingness to explore options for improving the designs and uses of its schools.[52]

In 1905, just one year after Fraunfelter opened, the Findley School opened on North Hill. The design for the new school was the work of local architects Bunts & Bliss. Bliss, a student of Frank Weary, later co-established the firm of Harpster & Bliss, known for its design of many of the schools



[50] "Fraunfelter School", in *Atlas and Industrial Geography*, 149.

[51] *April 14, 1903*. Meeting Minutes. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

[52] *March 17, 1903*. Meeting Minutes. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

in Akron, the Y.M.C.A., countless residences, and the Firestone Rubber Company's factory. Located on the corner of E. Cuyahoga Falls and Tallmadge avenues, the Findley School, much like its contemporaries, had twelve classrooms, six on each floor, a principal's office on the first floor, and an assembly hall, "teachers' room" with private bathroom, and a library on the second floor. Aside from the teachers' bathroom on the second floor, the only bathroom facilities were in the basement. To allow for extra light on the interior of the school, the architects added a skylight to the center of roof over the second floor. This skylight lit not only the second floor, with its open balcony looking over the first floor, but also the assembly hall below. The architects designed the structure using tile, wood, stone, brick, and concrete for the construction materials and decoration.[53] This school also followed the Second Renaissance Revival style of architecture, with its corner quoins, arched entryway, projecting side pavilions on the façade, and parapeted roof.

Akron quickly expanded through the annexation of neighboring communities and, by 1907, the area called West Hill was part of the city. The Board quickly set about designing a school for the West Hill area, and called it Portage Path, for its location on the historic path which Native Americans used to travel between the Cuyahoga and Tuscarawas Rivers.[54] This building, while similar to other schools in the city in its Second Renaissance Revival architectural style, was remarkable in its floor plan and footprint.

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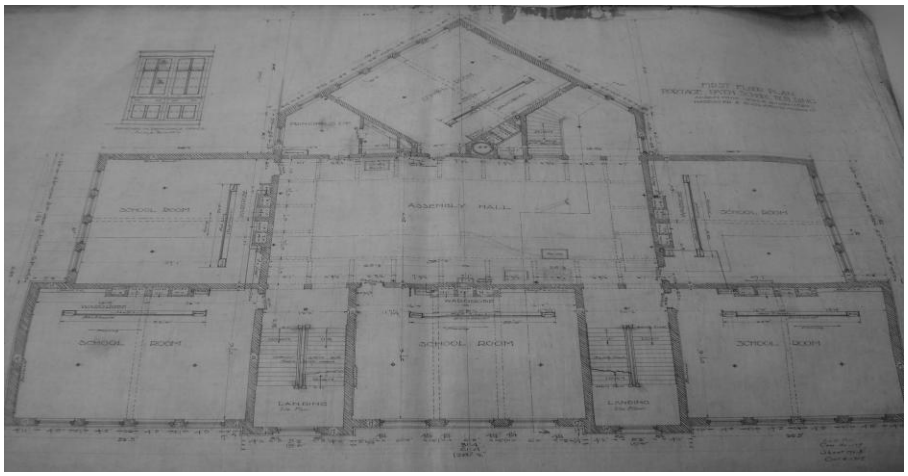
[53] Bunts & Bliss, Architects. *Findley School*, 1905. Akron, Ohio. Courtesy of the Akron Board of Education.

[54] Geick, *Early Akron's Industrial Valley*, 1.

Rather than following the popular rectangular form of most other multi-storied schools, the architects for the Portage Path School, Harpster & Bliss, added a pentagonal projection to the back of a rectangular plan. On the ground floor, this projection housed the coal room, while on the first floor, it was classroom space and the principal's office, and, on the second floor, another classroom and the teachers' room. This school was similar to other schools in its balcony on the second floor, which allowed the light from the skylight to reach the first floor assembly hall.[55]



[55] Harpster & Bliss, Architects. *Portage Path School*, 1907. Akron, Ohio. Courtesy of the Akron Board of Education.

Before construction on the school began, a significant tragedy took place. On March 4, 1908, in Collinwood, a town near Cleveland, the elementary school burned to the ground after a fire started in a closet in the basement. Many blamed the janitor, insisting that a pile of "rubbish" must have ignited from the heat of the furnace. In the fire, two teachers, a would-be rescuer, and 172 school children lost their lives. Faced with the unspeakable horror of losing their children, parents and officials immediately demanded to know the cause of the fire, and why so many children were unable to escape.[56]

Many factors contributed to the appalling number of deaths in the fire. Research showed that the school was too small for the number of children enrolled. Many of the children were in makeshift classrooms in the third floor auditorium, the only space available in a crowded school. While the exit doors opened outward, which, in theory, allowed occupants to leave the building efficiently, there were wooden partitions separating the stairwell from the foyer leading to the outside doors, making the opening much narrower than the exit doors. When the children attempted to pass through this opening to reach the exit doors, their numbers and their panic created a bottleneck. One of the exit doors was also not open, the bolt securing it to the upper frame locked in place, making it impossible for the children, who could not reach the bolt, to escape.[57]

Though the school practiced regular fire drills, the teachers never included the fire escape in these drills. Therefore, the children, when fleeing the building, attempted to

[56] Marshall Everett. *Complete Story of the Collinwood School Disaster and How Such Horrors Can Be Prevented.* (Cleveland, Ohio: N.G. Hamilton Publishing Company, 1908), 28-29.

[57] Ibid., xii.

leave by the most familiar means: the front or rear exit doors on the first floor. When the fire completely engulfed the area around the front door, this left only the rear door, which was not wide enough to accommodate that large a number of panicked students. The students on the third floor automatically went to the fire escape, and the majority of them made it safely to the ground. [58]

While the staff's failure to practice fire drills using the fire escapes was undoubtedly a factor in the number of deaths from this fire, so was the lack of an adequate number of fire escapes. Though part of the original plan for the school included "covered fire escapes" on all sides of the building, the school opened without them in place. The availability of only one fire escape for a building three stories tall, and serving between 310 and 325 students, meant that, in the event of a fire, most children would have no access to an exit that did not require going toward the fire itself.[59]

An additional factor in the intensity of the fire was the woeful lack of proper equipment on the part of the fire department. Though the building was three stories tall, the fire department had only a small wagon with two lines of hose and ladders, none of which were long enough to reach the upper floors. Even if the hoses were adequate, the water pressure was not sufficient to put out the flames. The fire department also did not have an axe readily available to break down the partitions in the doorway. This lack

[58] Ibid., 95.

[59] Ibid., 85.

prevented many children from exiting the building, and many rescuers from pulling the fallen children free.[60]

This tragedy not only shook the entire community of Collinwood to the core, it affected nearby cities, and indeed, states as well.[61] Within a week, the Akron Board of Education revised the rules concerning the janitors' duties. They ordered that all janitors make a complete inspection of all heating systems, including the areas around those systems, and ensure that the system was working properly and any "woodwork …amply protected with sheet iron or asbestos."[62] The Board also required that the janitors check all fire hoses and extinguishers and maintain and service them both at regular intervals. Most importantly, the Board instructed the janitors to keep all exit doors "unlocked and unbolted during school hours."[63]

Following this mandate, the Committee on Janitors, Heating, Light and Ventilation and the Committee on New Buildings prepared an in-depth study of all of the buildings in the system to ascertain the changes necessary to make these schools "more safe from fire." They recommended several changes, and presented them individually, according to each school's needs. These improvements included, for example, the addition of fifty feet of fire hose for each floor of the Bryan School, and the extension of the water main from nearby Glenwood Avenue into the school to provide adequate water

[60] Ibid., 90.

[61] Virginia McCormick. *Educational Architecture in Ohio: From One-Room Schools and Carnegie Libraries to Community Education Villages*. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2001), 73-74.

[62] *March 10, 1908*. Meeting Minutes. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

[63] Ibid.

service. The Board also ordered that the "first floor over the furnace in basement hall…be changed to fireproof construction."[64]

It is easy to see that this tragedy changed the way in which Akron viewed its schools. While the schools' main purpose was to educate the children, their most important duty was to protect the children from disasters like the fire at the Collinwood School. In their determination to prevent such a massacre from occurring in Akron, the Board commenced a massive, city-wide project to improve the construction and overall safety of the schools. The Board also changed the plans for the Portage Path School, still in the planning stages, to include fireproof flooring and stairs. It also insisted that the new school automatically include all of the items they added to other schools, including fire extinguishers, sufficient lengths of fire hose, and several fire axes.[65]

In the eighteen year period from 1890 to 1908, Akron and its educational system underwent significant changes. The Board opened two new schools in the first two years of 1890 and, in spite of a paralyzing depression beginning in 1893 and lasting for approximately three years, opened five new schools between 1896 and 1908. In recognition of national trends advocating health awareness and reform, as well as the benefits of fresh air and physical activity, the Akron Board of Education adopted many new programs, including organized athletics at the high school, open air classes for victims of tuberculosis, and Physical Culture lessons for all students in the district.

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[64] *March 24, 1908*. Meeting Minutes. (Akron, Ohio: Akron Board of Education.)

[65] Ibid.

In an effort to improve the lives of the younger children in the area, the Board integrated kindergarten programs into many of its buildings, and offered playrooms for kindergarten and primary students. When faced with the tragedy at the Collinwood School, the Akron Board of Education rallied around its schools and made them safer for the city's children. It ensured that all buildings were of fireproof construction, and possessed the items necessary to guarantee the students' safety, including fire hoses, axes, and an adequate supply of water.

The Board established a Normal School for the standardized training of teachers, and offered night schools for children who found it necessary to work during the day. With all of these achievements in only eighteen years, the Board of Education ushered the city's schools into the new century, and prepared them for success.

Chapter 3. 1909-1920

At the beginning of 1909, the achievements and development of Akron and its schools were apparent. In the preceding years, the Board of Education succeeded in establishing a cohesive, standardized curriculum, and offered new programs with the sole purpose of improving education for area children. After the Portage Path School opened, and the Board completed the necessary repairs on the other schools in order to make them safer and more fireproof, public schools in Akron were some of the safest in the nation. Though the Board's quick action in initiating the repairs undoubtedly prevented such a tragedy like Collinwood from happening in Akron, the citizens of Akron were not satisfied with merely guaranteeing the physical well-being of the students while at school, but continually searched for way to improve the entire lives of all children.

Over the next few years, the Board worried constantly about the condition and population of the schools. They attempted to cope with the rising population, which, by 1913, reached approximately 100,000, by adding rooms to existing schools and renting rooms from area businesses. While this rise in Akron's population was a cause for concern for the Board, it was a cause for celebration for the city as a whole. The rubber industry enjoyed immense success, and people from all over the United States came to share in that success, whether by securing a job in one of the many rubber factories in the city or by opening another business which benefitted from the industry. With the influx of people from other areas such as West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, Akron's

culture changed. Groups of these Southerners formed social organizations and churches, and lived in tight-knit communities, where they shared common experiences and values.[1]

The work the rubber factories offered also appealed to immigrants from countries all over Europe and South America, such as Germany, Ireland, France, and Mexico. In their quest for a better life for themselves and their families, these people travelled to Akron, and found work in the factories. Most of these immigrants came in search of higher wages than they received at home, though the factories usually paid them less than their American counterparts. With a high number of immigrants looking for work at any given time, factory managers regarded them as "interchangeable," and paid them accordingly.[2]

Public opinion of immigrants was very poor, and stemmed from their living conditions. Due to their low wages, the majority of immigrants had no choice but to live in extremely crowded quarters, sometimes with several other families. This environment facilitated the spread of illnesses like diphtheria, scarlet fever, and tuberculosis. Instead of studying the effects of overcrowding and its social implications, detractors considered immigrants to be inherently lazy housekeepers, filthy, and disease-ridden.[3]

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[1] Steve Love and David Giffels. *Wheels of Fortune: The Story of Rubber in Akron*. (Akron, Ohio: University of Akron Press, 1999), 30.

[2] Nell Irvin Painter. *Standing at Armageddon*: *The United States, 1877-1919.* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), xxxv-xxxvi.

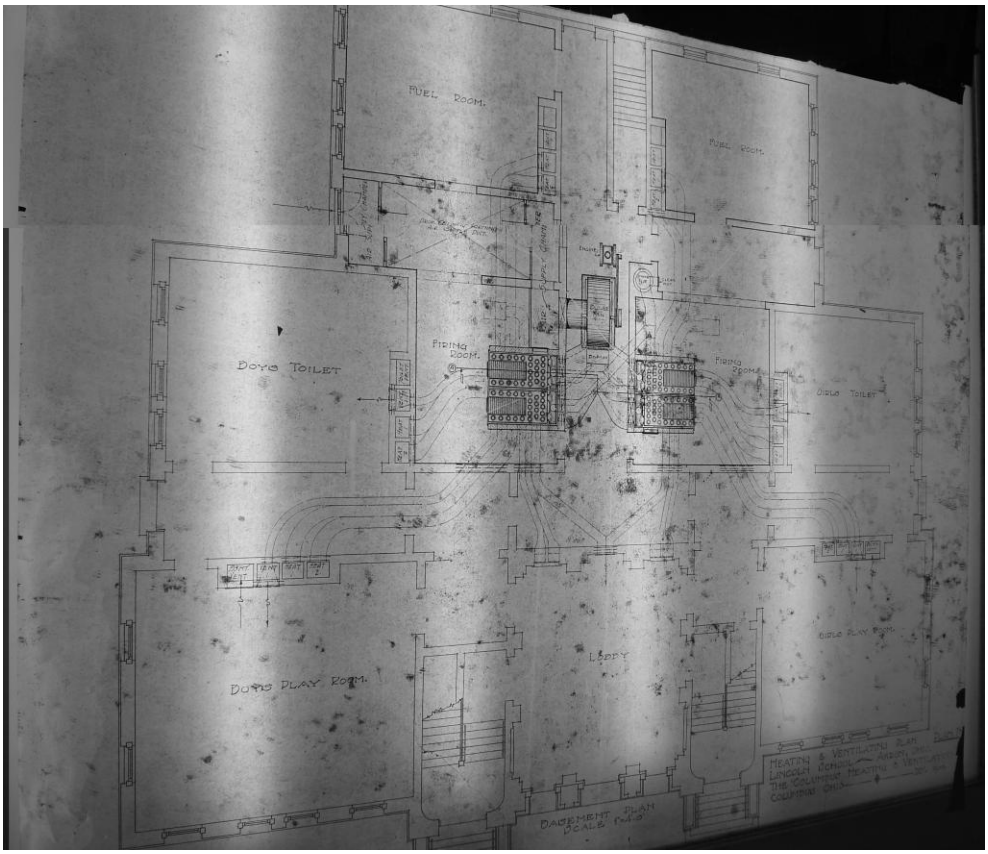
[3] Irwin Unger. *These United States: The Questions of Our Past.* (New Jersey: Pearson Hall, 2003), 283.

Though immigration inarguably affected the city and, according to some proponents of "Americanization," threatened Akron's political and social foundation[4], it did not threaten the city's existence. On March 24, 1913, Akron received a devastating amount of rain. The canal running directly through town overflowed its locks and inundated surrounding areas. Flood waters tore houses off their foundations in the Portage Lakes and East Akron areas and carried them away. When makeshift levees had no effect, the flood waters threatened downtown, and the rubber factories. When they saw no other alternative, Henry Vance, an engineer at B.F. Goodrich, begged the state for permission to act. Once the state granted his request, Vance lodged dynamite under one of the main locks which ran through downtown and destroyed it. Vance's demolition of the lock allowed the water to run freely down the canal, and saved the surrounding areas from further damage, but brought an end to canal in Akron.[5]

[4] David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot. *Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980.* (Basic Books, 1982), 112.

[5] Ibid., 53-55.

Throughout all of these social and cultural challenges and changes, the Board of Education continued to consider the issues of curriculum, health, and safety in its schools. In 1910, in order to contend with the rising population in the city, the Board of Education opened the Lincoln Elementary School. With 17,402 school age children in the city, the Board was unable to accommodate all of them in the existing schools. With twelve classrooms, Lincoln was the Board's attempt to remedy some of this overcrowding in the schools. As another project of Harpster & Bliss, the school had an assembly hall on the first floor, near the principal's office and teachers' rest room, and a recitation room on the second floor. The school's larger floor plan allowed for the number of classrooms in the building. Unlike many other schools of time with traditional rectangular plan, Lincoln had three sections, each one progressively smaller than the last. For instance, Lincoln's



front entrance was on the largest rectangular segment, which contained the principal's office, teachers' room, and two classrooms on the first floor, as well as the recitation room and two more classrooms on the second floor. Behind this large segment was another rectangular section, which included the assembly hall in the center, and a classroom on either side. At the back of this section was the smallest of the three. This square portion of the larger building held two more classrooms and the rear stairway.[6]

Though this building's sheer size allowed for a higher number of pupils, the Board still harbored concern over the students' physical well-being. In an obvious effort to apply the idea of incorporating periods of play into the normal school day, the school also included basement play rooms, where the boys and girls played in separate rooms. Adjoining these play rooms were the rest rooms for the entire school. The heating apparatus and the "fuel" rooms were also in the basement.

Though Lincoln was somewhat different from other schools in floor plan and size, there were many similarities. For example, similar to schools such as Findley and Portage Path, the skylight in the roof provided light for the second floor balcony and the first

[6] *Lincoln School, 1909*. Akron, Ohio. Courtesy of the Akron Board of Education.

floor assembly hall. The exterior architectural style of the new building also resembled other schools which opened around the same time. Lincoln displayed features of the Second Renaissance Revival architectural style, with triangular pediments over the two projecting entry doors, pilasters across the entire façade, keystone arches, and corner quoins. It was constructed of red brick, with white quoins and pilasters, a striking contrast. The frieze over the projecting entry pavilion, which featured decorative medallions, and the brickwork over the central arches also lent a classical quality to the façade.[7]

During the same period in which Lincoln School opened, the community and the Board began implementing the idea that physical education and play were a necessity for the mental and physical well-being of school children. As an illustration of the population's interest in a program to incorporate physical education in the schools' curriculum, a group of people offered a "physical-culture demonstration" at a park in East Akron. Concurrently, the Board hired a coach for an athletic program at the High School, which included baseball and basketball. In 1910, in an effort to further protect the health and welfare of all students, the Board instituted a policy of medical inspections in all the schools. Two years later, every school had a nurse monitoring the health of students and addressing any illnesses.[8]

This interest in the relationship between physical exercise and health began in the late nineteenth century, and was apparent in the foundation of the Playground

[7] Photograph, *Lincoln School*. Courtesy of Akron Board of Education.

[8] Sally Compher Klippert, *Lengthened Shadows*: *The Story of the Akron Public Schools.* (Akron, Ohio: Akron Public Schools, 1955), 91.

Association of America in 1906. The Association's sole mission was to "promote normal, wholesome play and public recreation."[9] Margaret C. Barnhart, whose husband was the clerk for the Akron Board of Education, believed playgrounds could improve the lives and health of children in Akron. Barnhart insisted that, by constructing public playgrounds around the city, citizens offered children a healthy and safe activity. Though the Playground Association of America constructed playgrounds in many large cities across the nation using public funds, all of the playgrounds in Akron received only private funds. The first of these playgrounds opened in 1910, on Perkins Square, and featured "swings, toboggan, baby swings, teeter boards, sand pile" and offered "three trained workers" to ensure the children's safety while playing. The playground at Perkins Square accommodated as many as 500 children in one day.[10]

This playground and others around the city, such as Elizabeth Park in the valley between downtown and North Hill, benefitted the children in more than just physical health. Some of the parks, such as Pleasant Park, offered story time and "library hour", and up to 900 children attended the park every day. The availability of places for children to play also deterred them from delinquent activities. In fact, the juvenile court held drastically lower numbers of children from the areas in which there was a playground.[11] This suggests that the children in these areas were able to expend their energy in productive ways, which, in turn, improved the overall safety of the city itself.

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[9] Oscar Eugene Olin. *Akron and Environs*: *Historical: Biographical: Geneaological.* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1917), 336.

[10] Ibid.,336-337.

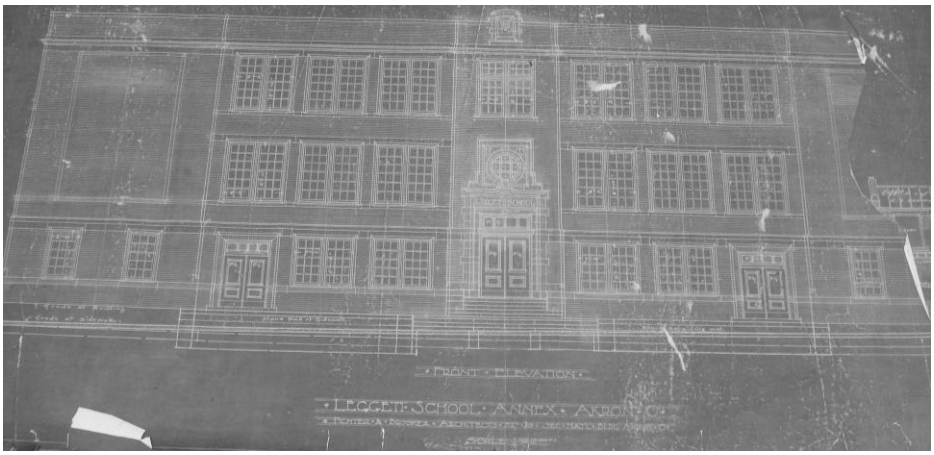
[11] Ibid.

Students' physical health was not the only concern many residents of Akron and members of the Board of Education raised in regard to the curriculum. The schools offered academic preparation for adulthood, yet parents wanted practical training as well. Educational philosophers such as John Dewey asserted that manual and domestic training programs in schools provided "ideal occasions for both…training and discipline," because they allowed the student to learn while working toward a tangible goal.[12] To this end, males at the high school began a manual training program, including "mechanical drawing and woodworking," while the females participated in a "domestic science" program, which taught sewing, cooking, and other skills necessary for the maintenance of a household. By 1910, these programs existed in the elementary schools as well.[13]

Though the Board secured extra classrooms wherever they could, by 1914 it was clear that it was not enough to accommodate the growing population. The Board retained the architectural firm of Fichter and Brooker to design an annex to the Leggett School. To the eight rooms at Leggett, the Board added a large building comparable in size to the Lincoln School. They placed this new addition at the front of the existing structure, moving the entrance for the school closer to Sherman Street, and gave it a decidedly Second Renaissance Revival style. The projecting central pavilion highlighted the heavily ornamented entry, including the round window atop the hooded doorway. This center pavilion asserted its status with a large medallion at its very apex. In compliance with the Board's requirements for fire safety in all the schools, the architects integrated fire doors

[12] John Dewey. *The School and Society*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 134.

[13] *Atlas and Industrial Geography of Summit County, Ohio*. (Akron, Ohio: The Rectigraph Abstract & Title Company, 1910), 139.



into their design of the Leggett Annex. These doors were on every floor of the rear section of the new annex, connecting the new with the old, and guaranteed the safety of students on each floor.[14]

The Board's determination to protect the students, the community's interest in physical education and exercise, and the addition of such courses of study as Manual Training for males and Domestic Science for females, were all indicative of the Progressive philosophy of education. Educational philosophers like John Dewey lectured on society's responsibility for their children's education. Dewey insisted that "[o]nly by being true to the full growth of the individuals who make it up, can society by any chance be true to itself."[15] Dewey firmly believed that, by educating their children, any society could ensure the continuation of its values, ideals and its form of government, thereby guaranteeing its own success and prosperity.

Education was not simply a portion of life each child completed and forgot upon entering adult society. Education was the child's preparation for adult society and,

[14] Fichter & Brooker, Architects. *Leggett Annex*, 1913. Akron, Ohio. Courtesy of the Akron Board of Education.

[15] Dewey, *The School and Society*, 7.

indeed, the training necessary to that society's improvement and very survival.[16] To impart these ideals, however, parents, citizens, and the Board of Education needed to work together in order to improve education, by enhancing curriculum and school buildings. Only by supervising the curriculum and the facilities of education could the school system create responsible, mature, well-rounded, socially minded individuals. This philosophy insisted that the responsibility of education belonged to the Board of Education and to the community, and signified a change from the traditional system in which parents placed their young children in the care of the school system and relinquished all further responsibility for that child's intellectual needs.[17]

The Progressive movement was not only concerned with improving education, however. Though education was extremely important, it was only a method by which social reformers were able to correct injustice and inequality. Many new attempts for reform surfaced in the last years of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, including the Women's Christian Temperance Union, National American Woman Suffrage Association, the anti-trust crusade, massive environmental conservation initiatives, and laws limiting or outlawing child labor. While their aims were diverse, these organizations and legislative actions had in common their determination for social and political change. Though many of the social problems of the late nineteenth and early

[16] David Tyack and Larry Cuban. *Tinkering Toward to Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 16.

[17] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 3.

twentieth century were well established, reformers believed that larger society could eradicate many of those problems over time by educating children in Progressive ideals.[18]

This new movement to teach the principles of Progressive extended to adults as well, especially immigrants. Factory owners, concerned with the prospect of labor uprisings, supported a policy of "Americanization," which included the establishment of night schools in which immigrants "studied English and American government."[19] These night schools were a blatant effort to assimilate foreigners into the American culture, and ensure their loyalty to their adopted country and its policies. In fact, proponents of this policy maintained that, without these classes, immigrants were a "danger" to the public.[20]

Many of these Progressive ideals affected Akron's schools, though, at first, in less obvious ways. With the advent of Progressivism, the Board became convinced that the schools were responsible for more than just the intellectual needs of their students. In order to ensure the students' physical health and wellbeing, the Board enacted changes in the floor plan and interior spaces of the city's schools. An excellent example of these is the Board's incorporation of open air sleeping rooms into many of the school buildings.

In the late nineteenth century, the Akron Public Schools approached the problem of contagious diseases like diphtheria and scarlet fever. In the new century, a persistent illness affected many children in the area, and required the Board to explore many different approaches to treatment. Tuberculosis was a constant threat to school children,

[18] Unger, *These United States*, 547.

[19] Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, 148.

[20] Ibid.

as they were often in close quarters with infected children. The common theory at the time was that fresh air helped eradicate the disease or eased many of its symptoms. Educators also understood that children with tuberculosis often needed more rest than healthy children. To ensure the health of infected children, a number of schools in Akron dedicated rooms to children with tuberculosis. These "open air" rooms featured cots, on which sick children slept, and extra windows, which remained open, even in winter, to allow for maximum ventilation. Schools without these rooms added them, "in order that the open air pupils wouldn't have to rest in the upper corridors."[21]

The rapid increase in Akron's population, and resulting housing shortage, exacerbated the existing health problems. In some instances, families rented rooms in shifts, according to work schedules in the factories. When one family was either in school or working, another family would take their place. At times, two or three entire families shared one or two rooms. The obvious problem with this arrangement was in the inherently unsanitary conditions. These conditions led to the rampant spread of disease and infection. Combined with malnutrition, these circumstances led to more and more children falling ill. Schools addressed these predicaments as best they could. Usually the best solution was to place the malnourished, underweight children in the open air classrooms, in an attempt to improve their immune system and basic health.[22]

In the face of the rising population and the resulting increase in students, the Board of Education sought ways to overcome increasingly crowded conditions in the

[21] Klippert, *Lengthened Shadows*, 93.

[22] Ibid., 94.

schools. They considered the type of system in use in Gary, Indiana. In 1906, U.S Steel established a steel mill in Indiana, and quickly erected a company town around it. They named this town after Elbert Gary, the chairman of the board at U.S. Steel. The company hired William Wirt, a former student of John Dewey, to develop the new school system. Wirt, a proponent of the work-study-play approach to education, established the Gary School Plan, also called the "Platoon Plan."[23] Wirt firmly believed that this system ensured "the highest possible efficiency from buildings, grounds, and equipment, and the time and energy of teachers and pupils" and offered the student, "not a shop, not a playground, but a life."[24]

Many administrators and teachers advocated this "Platoon Plan" of education.[25] The plan allowed for a group of students to use a particular classroom for a portion of the day, while a second group was in the library, on the playground, or in another part of the school. After a time, these two groups switched, and the second group took part in regular lessons, while the first group made use of other areas of the school. This plan allowed for a higher population in schools which, in the traditional plan, were bursting at the seams. The platoon system, by allowing two groups of students to use a room, at opposite times, offered an alternative to building larger schools. It also promised better efficiency in the schools; by ensuring that students used every room, including the library, auditorium, and rooms for specialized lessons, to their highest potential, no room ever stood empty.

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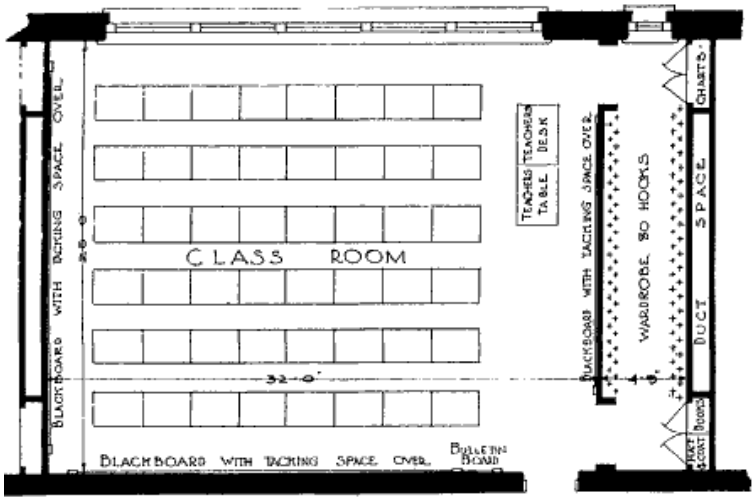
[23] Mondale and Patton, *School*, 67-68.

[24] Ronald D. Cohen. *Children of the Mill: Schooling and Society in Gary, Indiana, 1906-1960*. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), 29.

[25] Klippert, *Lengthened Shadows*, 95.

Though many parents, and the Superintendent, Dr. Henry Hotchkiss, did not believe it was best for Akron's schools, this new plan affected the schools just the same. Instead of changing the use of the classrooms, it changed how the rooms looked. To work with the Platoon Plan, the Cleveland School architect designed a new type of classroom, in which a storage space behind the blackboard made it easier for children to stow their coats, hats, and other belongings out of the way. It also included extra cupboards for teachers' supplies.[26] Though the Akron school system did not adopt the platoon plan, they did incorporate this new classroom design into many of their new schools. It is possible to see this new design in the classrooms at the Findley, Portage Path, and Lincoln schools, and at the new Bowen school.

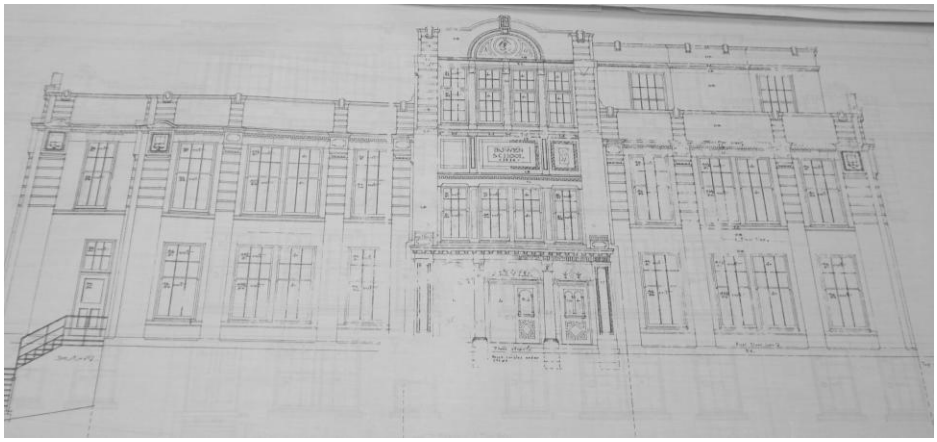


Late in 1914, Harpster & Bliss, the same architects responsible for the design of the Portage Path and Lincoln Schools, completed plans for a structure to replace the Bowen School, which opened in 1873 and was simply too small, even with additions, to accommodate the number of students in the area. This new building, which retained the name of the school it replaced, was the compilation of all of the social ideas and reforms of the last twenty years. The new Bowen School included thirteen large classrooms, an

[26] Leonard Porter Ayres. *School Buildings and Equipment.* (Cleveland, Ohio: Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation, 1916), 47.

expansive suite, complete with kitchen, dining room, living room, and chamber for Domestic Art and Domestic Science instruction, and a Carpentry Shop, for Manual Training. The new building, though specifically for elementary pupils, was large enough to accommodate many children of high school age.[27] This reduced some of the crowding in the high schools. The building also featured both a gymnasium on the first floor, and an auditorium with a stage on the second.

Interestingly, the plan for this building included a space the architects reserved for a lunch room. Their inclusion of a lunch room into this plan was the first of any school



plan up to that time, and suggests that a larger number of student remained at school to eat, rather than going home for lunch. It is possible students brought their own lunches to school, for there was no cafeteria on the plan. On the third floor of the building, adjacent to a rooftop playground, the architects included two open air sleeping rooms, for those

[27] Ibid., 93.

students suffering from tuberculosis. These open air rooms had a multitude of windows to allow as much ventilation as possible.[28]

The school building itself was a three-story structure with a basement, and faced toward the downtown area. It resembled many of the other buildings of the time in its Neoclassical features, including a slightly projecting central pavilion, but with asymmetrical wings. The pilasters and quoins of yellow brick contrasted with the building's red brick exterior. Reliefs on the corner pilasters depicted an open book over a lamp.[29]

Just three years after the new Bowen school opened, the Unites States officially entered World War I. During the war, Akron threw itself into supporting the war effort. The Board of Education offered Central High School to the "medical examining board" for area draftees' physical examinations. They also made all of the school auditoriums available to the Summit County War Work Council, for their Liberty Bond work. The war also affected the schools in a more indirect way. Soon after the war began, the demand for rubber goods, especially tires, increased dramatically. The companies' increase in production required more workers, and people travelled to Akron in droves, to search for work. This remarkable increase in population naturally swelled the school populations, which caused overcrowding.[30]

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[28] Harpster & Bliss, Architects. *New Bowen School*, 1914. Akron, Ohio. Courtesy of the Akron Board of Education

[29] Ibid.

[30] Klippert, *Lengthened Shadows*, 92.

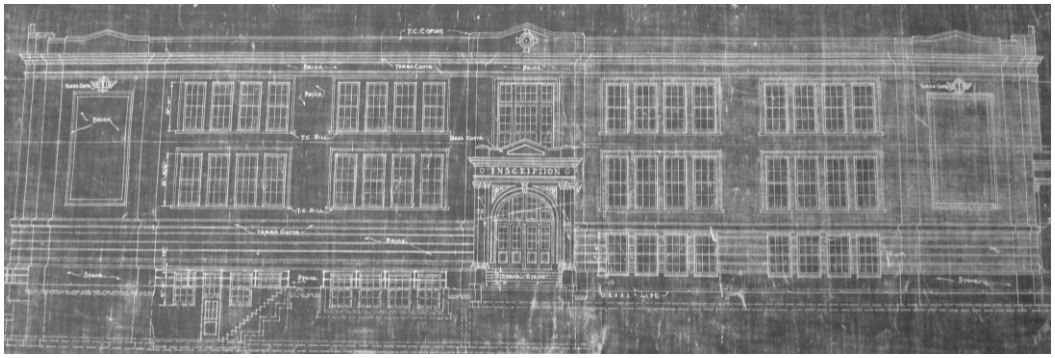
The availability of war work and the possibility of a decent wage drew many women out of the home and to the factories. Women were already teachers in the Akron Public Schools, and the trend toward more women in the workforce, whether in factories or other jobs, met with mixed feelings. Previously, the Board of Education had a policy which required a female teacher to resign her position upon marriage. In 1919, however, the Board agreed to review "individually" any female teacher's request to remain after her marriage, though they insisted that a "married woman's place was in the home if her husband was living."[31] This suggests that many female teachers contested the Board's rule, and demanded the Board allow them to stay on.

The Board's willingness to allow female teachers to remain may have been due the continually increasing number of students in the schools, and the necessity of more schools in which to house them. In 1920, the Board opened another elementary school in the Firestone Park area. Harvey Firestone, the founder of Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, began the Firestone Park community in 1916 as a company-funded neighborhood which offered people, suffering from the distinct housing shortages in the city, a decent place to live. Contrary to many other company towns around the nation, Firestone Park was open to those who were not employees of the company. Firestone designed the community to be pleasing to the eye, with plenty of park-like spaces.[32] The immediate success of this new neighborhood meant that all the Board of Education needed to do was provide the school. Though the Board built the Firestone Park

[31] Klippert, *Lengthened Shadows*, 94.

[32] Love and Giffels, *Wheels of Fortune*, 52-53.

Elementary School in 1917, it was soon full, and when the area continued to grow, the Board began to plan for a new school.



McEbright School opened in 1920, and featured some of the most up-to-date amenities available, including a swimming pool. The school also offered thirteen classrooms, an auditorium, two sleeping rooms on the second floor, and a kindergarten room. Much like Bowen, the architect, Ralph Ridley, incorporated rooms for Manual Training and Domestic Science, which included a Dining Room, into the design. Keeping with the new policy of stationing a nurse at every school, the design for the new school also included a dispensary on the first floor. The building's exterior architectural style markedly resembled that of Leggett Annex, though McEbright was much bigger. The façade featured a slightly projecting central pavilion and Second Renaissance Revival ornamentation, including an overstated hood over the main entry door. The door itself was recessed under an arch complete with an ornamental keystone.[33]

In ten years, Akron's population more than doubled, from 69,067 in 1910 to over 200,000 in 1920. To accommodate the continually rising population of school age children, which reached 23,000 in 1920, the city had a total of thirty-three public schools.

[33] Ralph Ridley, Architect *McEbright School*, 1920. Akron, Ohio. Courtesy of the Akron Board of Education.

In these schools, the students studied traditional subjects, such as English, arithmetic, spelling, and reading. They also learned skills such as bookkeeping, woodworking, Domestic Science, and drawing. Nearly all school age children attended school, including immigrants. Playgrounds became a fixture of every elementary school in the city, and administrators continued to consider new ways to better the schools and the curriculum. Its dedication to students was evident in the Board's efforts to increase safety and health in each of Akron's schools, with open air classrooms and nurses in every school. Progressive ideals influenced the city and the school system, resulting in the establishment of night schools for immigrants and supervised playgrounds around the city. By 1920, Akron was one of the fastest growing cities in the nation, and its success was apparent in its public school system.

Conclusion

When General Simon Perkins purchased the property on which he built Akron, he envisioned a prosperous, successful city, with established industry and comfortable communities. Perkins went to great lengths to make that vision a reality. He persuaded Paul Williams to combine their lands and form the new one hundred seventy-two acre town. He also convinced the State of Ohio to construct the Ohio & Erie Canal directly through Akron, by deeding a portion of the town's land to the state. The water power this canal's overflow channels made possible ensured the success of countless businesses situated along it, including Schumacher's mills. When the mills flourished, people from all over the United States and Europe travelled to Akron to take part in the economic windfall and the employment it offered.

Town leaders established schools for the community's children, and attempted to instill in these schools their New England values and traditions. However, the town continually debated the best way to financially provide for the education of all children in the area. While some families were able to afford the cost of boarding and paying a teacher and purchasing books and supplies, most families could not. Moreover, most of these teachers in the area did not possess an education much higher than the oldest child in their care. Their only qualification was a modicum of good sense, and the fortitude to oversee the instruction of a number of students in different subjects, and at varying levels, while maintaining a degree of discipline and order.

Several members of the community endeavored to change this system which fostered inequality and provided an unreliable education. In 1847, Akron led the nation with its passage of the Akron School Law, which outlined the establishment of a free public school system open to any child regardless of economic status. This legislation asserted that every person in a community was responsible for funding the educational system, and every child was equally deserving of an education. The newly established Board of Education took on the task of developing a curriculum for the schools, and ensuring the adequacy of school buildings.

Construction methods and materials changed dramatically in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Balloon framing, a new construction technology first used in the 1830s, allowed builders to construct larger buildings in a fraction of the time, at a fraction of the cost. The existence of the canal made it easier, and much cheaper, to transport supplies and materials necessary to construct buildings in the popular architectural styles, such as Romanesque and Neoclassical.

The city's popularity, and population, grew exponentially when B.F. Goodrich opened his rubber factory in the 1870s. With his production of pneumatic tires, which offered a much more comfortable ride for bicyclists, Goodrich placed Akron on the map. Immigrants flocked to his factory, and those Firestone and Seiberling opened early in the twentieth century, with the expectation that they would be able to find work. With the success of the rubber industry, the Board of Education found it necessary on numerous occasions to build additional, bigger, schools to accommodate the growing population of school children. The large scale immigration of people from all over Europe, such as

Ireland, Germany, and France, concerned native Akronites, and the Board aided in Americanization, with the introduction of night schools, in which immigrants learned English and American government. Akron became a city made of many different groups from all over the world.

An extremely important change in school buildings' construction and use came after the Collinwood School fire on March 4, 1908, in which 175 people lost their lives. In order to prevent such a tragedy from happening in Akron, The Board of Education ordered that the janitor at every building complete a survey of their school, and notify the Board of any necessary repairs. They furnished each school with more firefighting equipment, including hoses, axes, and rooftop water pipes, and ensured that all fire escapes were in good condition.

The founding of the Mary Day Nursery illustrated the philanthropic efforts of Progressive groups concerned with the health and safety of children whose mothers worked outside the home. Concerned with the possibility that mothers left their children home alone, they provided childcare while the mothers worked. They fed, bathed, and clothed the children, and offered training classes for mothers. These nurseries exemplified the tenets of Progressivism.

Progressive ideals dictated the improvement of health conditions, and advocated physical activity and education. It also insisted that, by improving schools and curriculum, it was possible to improve society. Akron's schools addressed health concerns by adding open air classrooms, for children suffering from tuberculosis or malnourishment, to many of the buildings. Playgrounds opened all over the city, and

offered story times and library hours as well as supervised play. Akron's schools kept expanding, and offered programs designed to improve students' lives, including Domestic Science and Carpentry.

With these changes in curriculum, the school buildings changed. New structures included open-air classrooms, lunchrooms, and, after the Board assigned a nurse to every school in the district, dispensaries. Many schools included gymnasiums and swimming pools. The addition of these rooms, designed for physical activity and instruction, illustrated the city's interest in the students' health.

Progressivism also affected the layout of the classroom itself. Architects designed a classroom with a wardrobe for coats, hats, and books. This wardrobe made it easier for schools to practice the work-study-play system, also called the platoon plan of education. In the platoon plan, which William Wirt used in his Gary, Indiana school system, students used the classroom only part of the day, and then visited the library, the playground, and other rooms in the school, while another group used the classroom. This ensured that students used every room in a school throughout the day, and allowed the school to accommodate twice as many students. Though the Board of Education did not subscribe to this plan, they used this wardrobe design for the classrooms in many of their buildings.

When the United States entered World War I, Akron's rubber factories became the place for people from all over the nation to find work. Through emigration and the addition of new neighborhoods like Firestone Park, the marked increase in the city's population necessitated the construction of more schools. When McEbright School

opened in 1920, it was one of the largest buildings in the district, and featured thirteen classrooms. It was an excellent example of the Board's dedication to providing exceptional accommodations for Akron's schoolchildren.

Through the study of all of the schools the Akron Board of Education built between 1890 and 1920, it is evident that schools not only became larger, they served a different, more complex function. For example, the Leggett School, which opened in 1890, had classrooms meant for the sole purpose of educating students in traditional subjects. Many of the schools from the period served the same purpose, and followed the same general style and design.

While population growth undoubtedly contributed to the need for more schools, several other factors influenced the interior spaces of those schools. For instance, the increasingly crowded living conditions in the city promoted the spread of illnesses like tuberculosis. As a direct response to this and other illnesses, many new school buildings featured open-air sleeping rooms. It is also easy to see the direct correlation between the widespread interest in physical activity and health and the incorporation of swimming pools and gymnasiums in schools such as Bowen and McEbright.

By 1920, the majority of the schools had a dispensary, from which a nurse supervised the health of the students. The existence of this new room clearly illustrates the change from the theory that the purpose of the schools was to provide an education to the belief that the school was responsible for not only the education of the students, but their health as well. This attitude is also obvious in the Board's quick action after the

Collinwood fire, at which time it made sweeping repairs and changes to every school in the system.

Before the Akron High School opened in 1886, the community assumed children attended school until they finished the grammar grades, usually eighth grade, after which they secured outside employment. If a child wished to pursue further instruction, they continued studying advanced academic subjects at the grammar school. Once the high school opened, it was possible for students to pursue those advanced subjects in the company of other scholars of comparable age. Initially, these subjects were traditional in nature, and prepared the clearly advanced student for entrance into college.

After the turn of the century, this perception of high school changed. Instead of the high school education being only for the most superior students who wished to continue to college, it became a stepping stone for everyday life and a career. For instance, with the implementation of manual training and bookkeeping classes, the high school curriculum promoted practical instruction in preparation for many popular occupations. These new classes soon extended to many of the grammar schools and elementary schools as well, with the hope that children professed interest in a certain career and, by beginning their training early, were eventually better prepared for that career.

This study of Akron's schools from 1890 to 1920 does not assume to replace any of the extant work on cultural history or educational theory. It does, however, offer insight into how the two work together to change the design and use of schools. Many works focus on only one or the other, such as McCormick's *Educational Architecture in*

Ohio, in which the author addressed the architecture of the schools themselves, but did not mention the effects of curriculum on those schools. Other efforts only dealt with educational theory. For instance, Cohen's *Children of the Mill* discussed the Gary, Indiana school system, while neglecting altogether the ramifications of that system in the design of schools and classrooms. Separately, these works explore interesting facets of culture or education, but not both. By studying them together and correlating changes in educational theory and curriculum to modifications in school design and use, these works offer wonderful proof of the inherent influences of culture and educational theory on the schoolhouse itself. This comprehensive study of Akron's schools presents the opportunity to study all of these things together, and offers a clear impression of the influence of educational theory, culture, and curriculum on the size, scope, and use of schools and classrooms in Akron from 1890 to 1920.

Within one hundred years of General Perkins's establishment of Akron, the city had thirty-three public schools, a thriving rubber industry, and a population of over 200,000. In 1825, Perkins envisioned a thriving town. After studying Akron's history, development, and success, it is easy to see that, In 1920, his dream was realized, many times over, and Akron had indeed become, in both education and industry, a "high place."

Appendix I: Selection of Akron's Public Schools, 1890-1920

School	Date	Architect
Akron High School	1886	Charles Henry
Leggett	1890	Jacob Snyder
Grace	1891	Jacob Snyder
Bryan	1896	M. Konarski
Miller	1900	Frank Weary
Fraunfelter	1904	Frank Weary
Findley	1905	Bunts & Bliss
Portage Path	1908	Harpster & Bliss
Lincoln	1910	Harpster & Bliss
Leggett Annex	1913	Fichter and Brooker
Bowen	1914	Harpster & Bliss
McEbright	1920	Ralph Ridley

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