

**EDUCATIONAL LEGISLATION  
AND ADMINISTRATION IN THE  
STATE  
OF NEW YORK FROM 1777 TO  
1850: A DISSERTATION, PP. 1-266**

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Educational Legislation and Administration in the State of New York from 1777 to 1850: A  
Dissertation, pp. 1-266 by Elsie Garland Hobson

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**ELSIE GARLAND HOBSON**

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The University of Chicago

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STATE OF NEW YORK  
1777 - 1850

A DISSERTATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND LITERATURE  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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BY  
ELSIE GARLAND HOBSON

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## PREFACE

A complete study of any important piece of legislation necessarily involves a thorough-going presentation of the great formative influences behind it as well as of the political forces that were arrayed for and against it. Therefore it seems wise to remind the reader that the following pages claim to be little more than a chronicle of legislation and an exposition of results. To trace to their sources all the educational ideals embodied in the laws of New York, to evaluate the influence of men like Hamilton, L'Hommedieu and DeWitt Clinton, or to elaborate the political discussions which attended some of the more important legislation, does not fall within the scope of this book. Neither has the writer essayed to detail the history of individual institutions, the work of distinguished educators, or to discuss educational methods. These things belong to another phase of the history of education. The desire of the writer has been to set forth as completely as possible the provisions that were made for education, to indicate the changes that took place from time to time, to show what sort of an educational system was evolved during this formative period, and to point out what was attained that was of permanent value.

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## INTRODUCTION

The American Public School System is an ideal rather than a fact. What we really possess is forty-eight independent public school systems, though it is true that we have running through these systems a degree of uniformity which tends more and more to make them approach a standard type. But there still exist important variations which can be traced back to early periods in our history, due to differences in the educational ideals held by those living in the separate colonies and states. Those ideals depended, and now depend, on a variety of factors; on the one hand the inherited characteristics and institutions of the settlers, and on the other the environment in which they were placed. The reaction of these two factors was of great importance in determining the attitude of each state towards public education during its early history. Besides these general factors, there were many of a specific character that influenced the relation of the state to education. Among them may be mentioned first, the amount, the distribution and the racial elements of the population; second, the political, religious, economic, and social conditions of the people from time to time; and third, the character of the educational leaders and the sources of their ideals.

The constitution of the United States left to the individual states the control of education, thus continuing the power previously exercised. There has been but one attempt to bring together the important educational legislation of the colonies or states; namely, *Educational Legislation and Administration of the Colonial Governments*, by Elsie W. Clews (1899). This work, though incomplete, is exceedingly useful for tracing the relation of the state to education during the period in question. When one passes the date 1776, however, our knowledge of the total educational legislation of many of the individual states, especially those established before 1850, is very incomplete. This is due principally to the fact that the session laws of such states were issued in small editions; that few libraries have complete sets of the laws of even one state and probably no library has a complete set for all the states. Again, the codes of laws that have been issued from time to time by individual states, usually give information only with respect to the laws in force at a particular date. There is need of a series of volumes, which will give the complete text, or approximately the complete text, of the educational legislation of each state, especially for the period from 1776 to 1850 or thereabouts. While desirable, it is not so necessary for the