

**THE EDUCATIONAL
VIEWS AND INFLUENCE
OF DE WITT CLINTON**

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The Educational Views and Influence of De Witt Clinton by Edward A. Fitzpatrick

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EDWARD A. FITZPATRICK, M. A.

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, IN THE FACULTY OF
PHILOSOPHY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

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Teachers College, Columbia University
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PREFACE

The history of education in the United States has yet to be written—and the first big step in the process is the completion of a series of the educational history of the individual states. The present study is a contribution to the history of education in the State of New York, during the period of foundations, or rather, during the period of the transformation of the English colonial character—and consequently education—to a distinctly American one. This study centers about the rich personality of one of New York's greatest sons—De Witt Clinton. His educational significance has received very slight recognition from his biographers. Though he is not mentioned in either of the histories of education in the United States, and though mentioned, is not adequately treated, in any of the histories of education in New York State this study establishes, we believe, the claim that Clinton should be ranked with Mann and Barnard in a trinity of educational leadership in the United States. Preceding the study of De Witt Clinton, there is, by way of introduction, a statement of the physical, social and educational conditions in the State of New York from 1783 to 1805.

The student of the educational history of Massachusetts is, in general, oppressed by the wealth of material. It would seem that whenever any one did anything educationally, there was a fellow-townsmen nearby to record his work, or else he himself took the time later to record it. Consequently, the educational history of Massachusetts is, at present, the most complete. The student of the educational history of New York has just the opposite

experience. He is oppressed by the scantiness of material. Governor Fenner, when he invited Henry Barnard to become State Superintendent of Education in Rhode Island, gave expression to what, unfortunately, may be called the New York view: that it was better to make history than write it.

The writer has quoted freely from the sources, especially in Chapter III. The reasons for this are: (1) the conclusions are so novel to the general reader or teacher that they would probably be dismissed merely as other illustrations of reading into things conclusions, which the things themselves would not warrant being read out of them; (2) the reader has the opportunity of forming his own conclusions; (3) the material quoted from is either bulky or generally inaccessible; and finally (4) there may be those like George Eliot, who prefer to "learn from the man himself what he thought, than hear from others what he ought to have thought."

The author wishes to acknowledge his obligations to the librarian of the Columbia University Library, the Bryson Library, Teachers College, the New York State Library, the New York City Library, the Library of the New York Historical Society, the Lenox and the Astor Foundations, and the branch libraries (especially the Hamilton Fish Branch) of the New York Public Library, and to the authorities of the New York State Education Department, for many kindnesses, courtesies, and privileges. He is under deep obligations to Dr. Paul Monroe, of Teachers College, Columbia University, for patient, kindly, and valuable criticism extending over several years' study. His greatest obligation is to his mother, who, through long years of sacrifice, made it possible for him to secure an education.

E. A. F.

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