

**NORMAL SCHOOLS, AND OTHER
INSTITUTIONS, AGENCIES, AND
MEANS DESIGNED FOR THE
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION OF
TEACHERS**

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Normal schools, and other institutions, agencies, and means designed for the professional education of teachers by Henry Barnard

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HENRY BARNARD

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BY HENRY BARNARD,

SUPERINTENDENT OF COMMON SCHOOLS OF CONNECTICUT.

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CIRCULAR

The following pages constitute the second of the series of Essays which the undersigned was authorized by the Legislature in 1850 to prepare for general circulation in Connecticut, on topics connected with the condition and improvement of our Common Schools. The necessity and importance of specific preparation for the business of teaching are recognized by the State in its recent legislation for the establishment of an institution to be devoted exclusively to this object. The gradual development of this idea from its first formal presentation by Rev. Thomas H. Gallaudet, in 1825, to its partial realization in the State Normal School at New Britain, in 1850, is traced in the documents which are here embodied.

While Connecticut was discussing the subject, or slumbering over it, "with the half patriarchial, half poetical dream," which is apt to come over us when we think of our "venerable common school system," Massachusetts was acting not only in this but in other departments of educational improvement, with a vigor and liberality which has placed her public schools over at least one half of her territory, at least a half century in advance of our own in towns of the same wealth and population. New-York, too, whose school system as originally drafted by a native of Connecticut, was copied in its essential features from our own, under the lead of De Witt Clinton in 1826, commenced a series of improvements which resulted in Teachers Departments, District Libraries, Union Schools, County Inspection Teachers' Institutes, and a Normal School, which have done more, and are doing more now to develop the resources of the State than her gigantic system of railroads and canals.

The city of Philadelphia, whose system of public schools, made free by taxation on property, went into operation only two years before Connecticut passed a law exempting the people from the *obligation* of raising a tax on property for a portion of the expense of supporting common schools—*(the most disastrous law ever placed on her statute book)*—has now a system of public instruction from the Primary School for children four years of age, to the Normal School

in which the female teachers of all her schools can be trained, maintained with a liberality, and embracing opportunities of an extended English, classical, and business education, which is free to all and practically enjoyed by the children of the rich and poor—of which we have no approach in any city of our State.

The State of Michigan, which has been admitted to the Union since the idea of a Normal School was first presented in Connecticut, has set apart, not the bonus of a bank as a temporary experiment, but a permanent fund for the endowment of an institution devoted exclusively to the professional education of teachers.

The province of Upper Canada, stimulated by the example of the neighboring State of New-York, has within ten years organized a system of common schools more complete in its plan, more efficient in its administration, and embracing more of the agencies of educational progress, than the system of any one of the United States. At the head of these agencies of progress stands the Provincial Normal School, for which, besides a standing appropriation of \$10,000 a year for the current expenses, the sum of \$55,000 has just been almost unanimously voted by the Legislature, to provide a suitable building and apparatus for the accommodation of the school.

Some notice of these institutions will be given in the following pages, together with the republication of a number of documents and addresses setting forth the origin, nature, and advantages of Normal Schools, and her institutions, agencies, and means, for the professional education and improvement of teachers, in the United States.

This Essay will be followed by a volume on the same great topic, in which an account will be given of the organization and course of instruction of several of the best Normal Seminaries in Europe, together with an outline of the system of Public Schools in the countries where these Seminaries have been longest in operation. Although not prepared exclusively or originally for this series of publications, copies will be furnished to all orders from any part of the State, on the same terms with the Principles of School Architecture, viz: at half the cost of publication.

HENRY BARNARD,
SUPERINTENDENT OF COMMON SCHOOLS.

HARTFORD, January 6th, 1851.

NORMAL SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.		PAGE.
INTRODUCTION,	7	Objections,	140
Table, Number, location and date of erection of Normal Schools,	9	Notes, Chinese Education,	143
CONNECTICUT.		Prussian Schools prior to 1819,	144
Legislative History of Normal Schools,	11	School Counsellor Dinter,	145
Law Establishing State Normal School,	27	Teachers' Conferences in Prussia,	146
First Annual Report of Board of Trustees,	31	Educational Convention in Plymouth County,	151
Report of Superintendent for 1850,	35	Rev. Charles Brooks,	151
Topics for Lectures, Discussion, and Composition on the Theory and Practice of Education,	43	Ichabod Morton,	152
Remarks on Teachers' Seminaries, by Rev. T. H. Gallaudet, in 1825,	47	Robert Bantoul,	153
Circular—Terms of Admission, Course of Instruction, &c.	57	Rev. Dr. Putnam,	153
Hints respecting Applicants for Admission,	61	John Quincy Adams,	154
MASSACHUSETTS.		Daniel Webster,	154
History of Normal Schools,	73	Rev. Dr. Robbins,	157
Resolves establishing Normal Schools,	74	Special Preparation, a Pre-requisite to Teaching, a Lecture by Horace Mann, in 1838,	159
Regulations respecting Admission, Studies, &c.	67	Address at the opening of the Normal School at Barre, by Edward Everett,	179
Normal School at West Newton,	71	Remarks by Horace Mann and others on the opening of the new Normal School house in Bridgewater,	195
Letter from Cyrus Peirce,	73	Dedicatory Address at Bridgewater, by William G. Dates, 1846,	201
Normal School at Bridgewater,	78	Dedicatory Address at Westfield, by Rev. Heman Humphrey,	215
Letter from Nathan Tillinghast,	79	Teachers' Associations and Agencies,	227
Condition of State Normal Schools in 1850,	81	Teachers' Institutes,	227
Report of Board of Education,	81	County Teachers' Association,	223
Visitors of West Newton School,	84	Massachusetts Teachers' Association,	228
Report of Visitors of Westfield School,	86	American Institute of Instruction,	229
Report of Visitors of Bridgewater School,	80	List of Lectures delivered before,	230
Report of Secretary of the Board,	89	Agents of Board of Education,	232
<i>Addresses and other Documents connected with the History of Normal Schools in Massachusetts.</i>		Educational Periodicals,	232
Outline of an Institution for Teachers, by James G. Carter, 1835,	91	NEW YORK.	
Memorial of American Institute of Instruction,	103	History of Normal Schools,	235
Teachers' Seminary at Andover,	113	Plan of Teachers' Departments in Academies,	237
Remarks of Dr. Channing on Education, Teachers, and Normal Schools,	115	Report of Prof. Potter,	238
Normal Schools and Teachers' Seminaries, by Calvin E. Stowe,	123	State Normal School at Albany,	241
Necessity of in each State,	124	Address of Samuel S. Randall,	242
Preparation for Admission,	127	PENNSYLVANIA.	
Model School and School of Practice,	128	Normal School in City of Philadelphia,	251
Course of Instruction,	128	RHODE ISLAND.	
Advantages,	138	Modes of Professional Improvement adopted from 1843 to 1848,	261
		Professorship of Didactics in Brown University,	265
		MICHIGAN.	
		State Normal School at Ypsilanti,	266
		BRITISH PROVINCES.	
		Upper Canada,	267
		Nova Scotia,	267

INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 1825, there appeared, almost simultaneously,* but without any knowledge of each other's views, and even without any personal knowledge of each other, in the Connecticut Observer, printed in Hartford, over the signature of a "Father," and in the Patriot, printed in Boston, over the signature of "Franklin," a series of articles in which the claims of Education as a science, and Teaching as an art, were ably discussed, and an Institution was proposed in each series, having the same general features, for the special training of teachers for their profession. These articles were collected and published by their respective authors, in pamphlet form, the first with the title of "*Plan of a Seminary for the Education of Instructors of Youth, by Rev. Thomas H. Gallaudet. Boston, 1825,*"—and the last with the title "*Essays on Popular Education, containing a particular examination of the Schools of Massachusetts, and an Outline of an Institution for the Education of Teachers, by James G. Carter. Boston, 1826.*"

In the same year, 1825, Walter R. Johnson, then residing in Germantown, Penn., without any knowledge of the views of Mr. Carter or Mr. Gallaudet, in a pamphlet, entitled "*Observations on the Improvement of Seminaries of Learning,*" set forth the necessity and advantages of schools for the special training of teachers.

In the same year, in which appeared the earliest publication on the subject in Connecticut, Governor Clinton commended to the consideration of the Legislature of New York, "the education of competent teachers;" and in 1826, "the establishment of a seminary" for this purpose. From this time, the importance of the professional education of teachers, and of institutions specially devoted to this object, began to attract the attention of statesmen and educators, until, at the close of a quarter of a century, the idea is prac-

*The article by Mr. Gallaudet, containing the statement of his plan of a Seminary, was published on the 4th of January, 1825, and those of Mr. Carter, devoted to his Outline of an Institution, appeared the 10th and 15th of February, 1825.

tically realized in each of the four states in which the enterprise was first proposed. The history of the efforts made by the friends of educational improvement to establish Normal Schools in these states is full of instruction and encouragement to those who are laboring in the same field, and for the same object, in other states.

The Normal Schools already established in this country are, it is believed, doing much good, and realizing the promises of those who have been active in getting them up; but as compared with European Institutions of the same kind, and the demands for professional training in all our schools, they labor under many disadvantages.

1. Pupils are admitted without adequate preparatory attainments, and without sufficient test of their "aptness to teach."

2. A majority of the pupils do not remain a sufficient length of time, to acquire that knowledge of subjects and methods, and especially that intellectual power and enlightenment, which are essential to the highest success in the profession.

3. There are no endowments to reduce the expense of a prolonged residence to a class of poor but promising pupils.

4. They are not provided with a sufficient number of teachers for the number of pupils admitted.

5. From the want of a well-defined and limited purpose in each institution, they are aiming to accomplish too much—more for every class of pupils,—those with, and those without previous experience,—the young, and the more advanced,—those intended for country and unclassified schools, and those intended for the highest grade of city and town schools,—than can be well done for either class of pupils.

Further experience will make these deficiencies more apparent, not to those who have the immediate charge of these institutions, for they are already painfully conscious of them, but to the people, legislatures, and liberally-disposed men, who must apply the remedies by increased appropriations to existing, and the establishment of additional schools.

The following is a list of the Normal Schools already established, with the location and date of the establishment of each school.