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The Great Awakening

A Chapter in the Educational History of Indiana¹

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The first state constitution of Indiana included a passage in which it was affirmed that "knowledge and learning generally diffused, through a community," are "essential to the preservation of a free government." A more definite provision declared:

It shall be the duty of the General Assembly as soon as circumstances shall permit, to provide, by law, for a general system of education, ascending in a regular gradation, from township schools to a state university, wherein tuition shall be gratis, and equally open to all.

Any intelligent young Hoosier of today who is in the process of being educated in the vast and complex school system of his state would naturally suppose, when examining the constitution of 1816 for the first time, that public schools were established very soon after the admission of Indiana to the Union. In this very natural assumption, he would be sadly mistaken. For long years, the fine phrases relative to education in the old constitution of 1816 were only noticed by political leaders, legislators, and men of property when delivering public speeches. Worse than this, perhaps, was the inertia of the majority of the people in regard to the serious educational conditions and the lack of effective legislation to remedy them.

The unconcern in regard to providing public schools through taxation continued for more than a generation, while Indiana grew in population, in wealth and in political importance among the states of the nation. After the taking of the census of 1850, Indiana found herself to be seventh

¹ This paper was read before the annual dinner meeting of the Tippecanoe County Historical Association on the evening of November 15, 1944.

among the states in population. In the number of representatives in the national house and in the number of presidential electors, the state was tied with Massachusetts and surpassed by only four states—New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Virginia.² By 1850, therefore, Indiana had become an important state politically, certainly not to be ignored by the national party leaders. With her accumulated and increasing wealth, the Hoosier state was well able to levy and collect sufficient taxes to inaugurate a system of free, public schools. That public education was not provided before the middle of the century was due to the lack of effective leadership, to the general lassitude and to the determined opposition of powerful elements—not to the absence of means.

It is a sad fact that, in spite of the clauses in favor of public education embodied in the constitution of 1816, a view was widely held or accepted in Indiana that education was not for the masses. This was accompanied by the belief that good men were more to be desired than educated men and the further notion that schooling would unfit people for manual labor. Whether the people were really converted to these ideas or not, there is no doubt that there existed an intense and bitter opposition among various elements of Indiana to the early efforts to establish public schools. It was reported by a prominent educational leader in 1876, that a "member of the Legislature, in 1837, closed his . . . speech in these words: 'When I die, I want my epitaph written, "Here lies an enemy to free schools."'"³ In the year 1848, one of the counties of central Indiana, voting on the question of whether to establish free schools or not, in a total vote for the county of 2,955, cast fewer than seven hundred affirmative votes.⁴ Colonel Richard W. Thompson of Terre Haute in an educational address made on January 5, 1870, in that city, declared that, before 1850, no candidate for a seat in the legislature of Indiana could be elected if

² The population of Tennessee by the census of 1850 was larger than that of Indiana, but, owing to the number of slaves of whom three-fifths were counted, Tennessee was allotted ten members of the lower house of Congress to eleven for Indiana. Massachusetts exceeded Indiana slightly in population in 1850, but the excess was not sufficient to entitle her to a twelfth representative.

³ John M. Olcott, "History of Public Schools in Indiana," *Indiana School Journal* (45 vols., Indianapolis, 1856-1900), XXI (1876), 298.

⁴ See Richard G. Boone, *A History of Education in Indiana* (New York, 1892), 106, for table showing the votes by counties in the free schools referendum of 1848.

he was known to favor the levying of taxes to support public schools.⁵

During the years from 1846 to 1852, Professor Caleb Mills of Wabash College wrote a series of six "Messages" designed to produce an active effort to raise the deplorable educational level that prevailed in Indiana. He kept his name a secret, adding to each "Message" the signature "One of the People." These "Messages" were prepared and delivered to legislators at the opening of each of five sessions and to the members of the constitutional convention of 1850-1851. The "Messages" exerted quite an influence on senators, representatives, constitution makers, and educational leaders and teachers who were special advocates of a public school system. The agitation stimulated by the "Messages" was to become more effective and contagious as the years passed. Professor Mills not only gave practical plans for organizing a school system but he argued for his plans and presented facts to shame the state to action.⁶ The legislature provided for a referendum on the question of free schools in 1848. In a total vote of 140,410, there was a majority of 16,636 in favor of free schools. The citizens were not voting for or against elementary education, but on the question whether elementary education should be provided through public taxation or whether the people should be content with what was being furnished by denominational or private schools.⁷

Another outcome of the agitation was the school law of 1849, which was submitted to a popular referendum despite the fact that the people had just voted in favor of free schools. The law of 1849 seems crude enough now, but there was provision for a minimum school term of three months, and, for the first time, restricted taxation by local units was authorized for the support of schools. The total vote in the popular referendum of 1849 was slightly larger than that cast in the free schools referendum of the preceding year, and the majority in favor of the law slightly less than the ma-

⁵ *Indianapolis Journal*, January 6, 1870.

⁶ For reprints of the "Messages" of Professor Mills, see Charles W. Moores (ed.), *Caleb Mills and the Indiana Public School System*, Indiana Historical Society Publications (Indianapolis, 1897-), III (1905), 363-638.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 528-531; Boone, *A History of Education in Indiana*, 106-107.

jority in favor of free schools.⁸ A provision of the law of 1849 excused counties voting negatively from adhering to its requirements. Any such county could vote again in any later year during the continuance of the law. Several counties never approved it and therefore were subject only to previously enacted school laws until later legislation superseded them.

The new constitution which was framed in 1850-1851 and ratified in August of 1851, included provisions relative to education that were very similar to those of the first constitution. The greater part of Article VIII, which deals with "Education," is made up of sections devoted to the Common School Fund, but the first section states that it shall be the duty of the General Assembly "to provide by law for a general and uniform system of common schools, wherein tuition shall be without charge, and equally open to all." The last or eighth section of the article on education relates to the establishment by law of the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction. In 1852 the General Assembly passed breath-taking school legislation. The laws passed provided for taxation by local units to pay for the erection of buildings, for equipping them, and for supplementing the funds distributed by the state for tuition purposes. In accordance with the mandatory provision of the new constitution, the legislature set up the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and also created the first State Board of Education which was not required by the constitution. The new school legislation became effective in 1853. The first State Superintendent, Professor William C. Larabee of Indiana Asbury (DePauw) University, was elected in 1852 and took office in the same year. The State Board was at first made up entirely of state officials, all *ex officio* members.⁹

Beginning in 1853, new taxes were levied, new school-houses were erected and more teachers employed. In 1852 cities and incorporated towns were separated from the new civil townships in which they were located, thus becoming

⁸ Moores (ed.), *Caleb Mills and the Indiana Public School System*, Indiana Historical Society Publications, III, 539-541; Boone, *A History of Education in Indiana*, 124-126.

⁹ It consisted of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Governor, the Secretary of State, State Treasurer, and State Auditor. The Attorney General was added in 1855. Clearly this Board was not swamped with educators. Its functions were relatively unimportant until after reorganization under a law of 1865.

independent units. These, like the townships, took on new life in 1852. In 1854, however, the state Supreme Court held that section of the law of 1852 which permitted township authorities to levy taxes for the purpose of "continuing their schools" after state funds should be expended to be unconstitutional. This decision left the townships, in regard to the expense of tuition, with only the funds apportioned by the state which were very inadequate. Cities and incorporated towns escaped the demoralizing effects of this decision. Not satisfied with their good fortune, these units asked for and obtained a law in 1855 granting more generous taxing powers. This law met the same fate at the hands of the Supreme Court in 1857 as had the section of the law of 1852 pertaining to taxation by townships.¹⁰ As a result of the court decisions of 1854 and 1857, the promising movement in the direction of the creation of a public school system was all but paralyzed for a decade.

As late as 1850, while served by a number of denominational and numerous private schools, Indiana was classified as twenty-third among the states in illiteracy.¹¹ There were then thirty-one states in the Union. It did not go lower. As one educator said in 1876, when looking back to 1850: "But *then*, as a state, we had touched bottom. Indiana has been rising ever since."¹² It is easy to understand the dis-

¹⁰ *Greencastle Township v. Black*, 5 *Indiana* (1854), 563-565, 571-573; *The City of Lafayette and Martin, County Treasurer v. Jenners*, 10 *Indiana* (1857), 76.

¹¹ In the last of his six "Messages," Caleb Mills wrote in 1852 concerning the rank of Indiana: "Her literary zero, or general average of adult ignorance in 1840, was *one-seventh*, which placed her sixteenth in the scale of the twenty-six states, but 1850 witnessed a deplorable retrocession to the rank of *twenty-third*, lower than all the slave States in that list [thirty-one states in 1850] but *three*. As an old inhabitant of the *eighth* State in this Union in point of population, I am ashamed of the picture and blush to think it true, or rather only an approximation to the reality, for it is very evident that there are thousands so near the confines of twilight that it would hardly be true to say that they had ever seen the sun of science. Most gladly would I draw the veil over its frightful features, but the truth should be known and the remedy, speedy and efficient, should be devised and receive the sanction of a law before you [members of the legislature] return to a constituency, whose educational necessities draw so largely on our sympathies, as patriots, philanthropists and christians." Moores (ed.), *Caleb Mills and the Indiana Public School System*, Indiana Historical Society Publications, III, 583-584.

¹² Olcott, "History of Public Schools in Indiana," *Indiana School Journal*, XXI, 300. Olcott reported the reaction of a Quaker of Richmond, Indiana, by the name of Hinkle, one of the many city teachers of the state sadly affected by the decision of 1857. The judges based their opinion on the language of the new state con-

couragement that followed the court decisions of 1854 and 1857. The main effect of the years of gloom that followed 1857 were, nevertheless, to deepen the demand for education and to strengthen the determination of the friends of a free, public school system.¹³ The forward movements in Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois aroused deep unrest in the breasts of Hoosiers. Many communities refused to give up. In the face of handicaps they kept up the struggle and made some progress.

In the year 1867, the legislature became bold enough to restore to townships, incorporated towns and cities the power to levy and collect taxes for the payment of wages to public schoolteachers. During the years of enforced delay, school sentiment had increased and educational leaders were able to persuade members of the General Assembly to make a new effort. Arguments were vigorously put forward that a new law would probably not be contested, and, even should it be challenged, the Supreme Court would not likely declare it void. It was in fact nearly a score of years before a case was devised to test the validity of the act of 1867, and then the Supreme Court declared it to be constitutional. The constitution had not been changed and the same point was at issue, but the judges did not come to the same conclusions. This favorable court decision was rendered in 1885, eighteen years after the passage of the contested law and thirty-one years after the adverse decision of 1854. The case before the Supreme Court in 1885 was that of Robinson, Treasurer, *v. Schenck*. It was brought up from the circuit court of Switzerland County, where an injunction was sought and granted in favor of the property owner who was the complainant. The Supreme Court overruled the finding of the lower court which was based on the contention laid down by the Supreme Court judges in 1854 and 1857 that taxes for tuition could be levied only by the legislature. In 1885 the judges of the Supreme Court held that the section of the state constitution commanding the legislature to "provide

stitution, so Friend Hinkle searched the fundamental law for some clause that would permit teachers to find relief. He reported this from Article I, Section 36: "Emigration from the State shall not be prohibited." Hinkle left Indiana. *Ibid.*, 312-313.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 316. In a statement made on this page, Mr. Olcott reveals that Hoosiers were stimulated to great exertions because they had permitted themselves to be "left in the rear by more active sister states." This was in 1876 when Indiana was so rapidly catching up. Shortly after Barnabas C. Hobbs had retired from the office of State Superintendent on March 15, he wrote: "We must work while we

by law for a general and uniform system of common schools" does not mean that all taxes must be directly levied by the state. In the earlier decisions the judges had taken the stand that local units could levy and collect taxes to build school-houses and buy equipment but not for tuition purposes. In 1885 the judges declared that it was "not possible to make any distinction between the right to employ persons to impart instruction to the pupils and the right to provide places where the instruction shall be imparted."¹⁴ It should be remembered that this decision was hailed with delight because it meant a work already largely performed would not be halted or destroyed.

The great awakening had followed the passage of the law of 1867. In much of the state, the task of creating free, public schools for all started at once. New school buildings were erected, teachers hired, and more schools opened while the process of levying and collecting the taxes was going on. By 1875 the number of schoolteachers in Indiana had trebled, school attendance had increased by a quarter of a million, and teachers' wages from public funds by two and a half million dollars. From 1875 to 1890, the movement for longer terms, more schools and better schools continued. Struggling against very discouraging conditions from 1857 to 1867, the crusade that was so well under way by 1870 gained such momentum that nothing could stop the people and their leaders. In a score of years, the free, public school system of Indiana was created—a veritable miracle accomplished.

Prior to the awakening, secondary education was provided by academies, seminaries, and the preparatory departments of higher institutions. Colleges frequently had more preparatory students than students of college standing, and there were comparatively few of either rank. The vast majority of the young persons of Indiana had no opportunity to obtain either secondary or college instruction before 1870. They were fortunate indeed if they had access to elementary schools.

Only about twenty-five Indiana high schools were started before 1870, all but five of them after 1860. Among the

wait. Indiana is getting sadly behind her sister States. Illinois is far in advance of us in her legislation, and in the efficiency of her school system. Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and even Kansas are leaving us in the rear." Barnabas C. Hobbs, "Superintendent's Valedictory," *Indiana School Journal*, XVI (1871), 151.

¹⁴ Robinson, *Treasurer, v. Schenck*, 102 *Indiana* (1885), 307-322.

twenty-five cities to organize high schools early were old centers such as Madison, New Albany, Vevay, and Jeffersonville, along with growing interior cities like Indianapolis, Richmond, Terre Haute, Lafayette, Logansport, Muncie, Marion, South Bend, and Fort Wayne.¹⁵ From 1869 to 1890 about a hundred additional high schools were established.¹⁶ By the last-mentioned year, high school education was accessible to the youth of cities and various incorporated towns, but hosts of children living in rural areas were not yet included in the charmed circle. This was true not only of Indiana as pretty much the same situation prevailed over large portions of the country. By 1890 many colleges had done away with their preparatory schools or were in the process of liquidating them. Since there were still numerous students without high school training, many private "normal colleges" grew up and flourished, with low charges for board, room, and tuition. These made little or no distinction between students who were of college status and those who were not. Many teachers with few or no credits beyond the eighth grade flocked to these institutions, of which Indiana had more than a few. Indeed, the speed limit was exceeded in regard to the setting up of normal schools of this category in the state.

It was at the beginning of the great awakening that the Indiana State Normal School of Terre Haute and Purdue University of Lafayette were founded. These two state institutions opened their doors just when there were, for the first time in the history of Indiana, considerable numbers of young persons on hand for whom college was possible. Not until this time, did conditions prevail that permitted more than a small contingent of ambitious young people to go away from home to obtain an education. It was not only the State Normal School and Purdue University that grew in the era of the awakening, but older institutions of the state that had struggled along for decades with few students, limited means, and small faculties likewise began to grow. Indiana University, summoned to exist by a law of 1820 as the "Indiana Seminary," elevated to the rank of "Indiana

¹⁵ Boone, *A History of Education in Indiana*, 303.

¹⁶ Harvey M. La Follette, *Thirty-eighth Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, . . . For the years ending July 31, 1889, and July 31, 1890* (Indianapolis, 1890), 56-58. As of October 31, 1890, there were listed 107 commissioned high schools. There were other high schools that offered courses that did not meet the requirements for a commission from the State Board of Education.

College" in 1828, and given the title of "Indiana University" in 1838, was a very small institution as late as 1870.¹⁷ Its period of real expansion began in the midst of the rapid development of the free, public school system, that is, during the great awakening that marked the score of years ending in 1890. Purdue University was not opened to students until 1874, but it became an institution of importance by 1890. The interesting truth is, therefore, that Indiana University experienced its first noticeable growth simultaneously with the State Normal School and Purdue University. The fourth of Indiana's state supported educational institutions, Ball State Teachers College, founded in 1918, became a large school so quickly that the annals of its youthful struggles are brief enough to be almost negligible.

With great obstacles to be surmounted, several Hoosier cities had laid the educational foundations on which to build before 1870. Among these cities were Richmond, Evansville, Terre Haute, Indianapolis, Lafayette, Muncie, and Fort Wayne. Other cities had caught the spirit and were advancing or ready to take off. The superintendents of these school systems had not obtained the extensive training required of city superintendents today, but they were up with the best. Many of them were men who were able to take advantage of the opportunities that came to them and no other class of the times outdistanced them in the doing of work of high quality. They were prone to accompany their performance of administrative duties with extensive reading and intensive thinking, especially in the field of philosophy. In addition, they were tremendously interested in the problem of improving the teaching done in their schools. The numbers of schools, teachers, and pupils multiplied so rapidly that the supply of experienced teachers, who also possessed ability, was relatively small. The consequence was that almost every city superintendent was of necessity a strong advocate of teacher training, knowing well that most of his teachers needed both more knowledge and better methods. It is not strange that the period of the awakening produced a crop of outstanding superintendents. For superintendents as well as for teachers, there were more openings than there were

¹⁷ Students at Indiana University at the end of the year 1869-1870: Law department, Seniors, 25; Juniors, 26; undergraduates, 216; normal department, 22; modern languages, 52—total 341 minus 62 (counted twice) = 279. Of these 279 students, 28 were preparatory. The total enrollment was 40 higher than that of the preceding year.

persons prepared to fill them. It was certainly an inspiring time for superintendents and teachers because of promotions and new worthwhile work that needed to be done.

The first State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Indiana took office in October, 1852. Anyone who is chosen to the office must become a candidate on a party ticket and submit to a popular election. The term is one of two years, and to continue longer requires an additional nomination and election for each term served. Nevertheless, quite a few able men have sought and obtained the position. The second educator to fill the office was no other than Caleb Mills who was elected in 1854 and served but one term. Ten years later George W. Hoss was elected. Beginning with his term, the office was filled for a period of eighteen consecutive years by a series of unusual men, Professor Hoss being followed in succession by Barnabas C. Hobbs, Milton B. Hopkins, James H. Smart, and John M. Bloss.

Professor Hoss was re-elected but resigned before the end of his second term to become professor of English literature at Indiana University. During the remainder of his career he vibrated between Indiana and Kansas. He went to Emporia in 1871, where, as its first president, he organized the Kansas State Normal School. After a little more than two years, he returned to Indiana University as professor of English literature. In 1880 he again went to Kansas to establish an educational journal at Topeka, but soon accepted a position as professor of literature and oratory at Baker University of Baldwin City. Some years later, he established a school of oratory of his own at Wichita, but when the Friends established a college in that city, he became a member of the faculty. While vigorously carrying on his work as State Superintendent in Indiana Professor Hoss was a valuable member of the board of trustees of the State Normal School which was not opened to students until after he became a professor at Indiana University.¹⁸

¹⁸ The *Indiana School Journal*, XXIX (1884), carried a series of biographical sketches of all the men who filled the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1852 to 1884. These sketches were prepared by Hubert M. Skinner, who was well qualified to write them and who had access to much *valuable* information. These sketches have been used in the brief treatments of the state superintendents who served from 1864 to 1883, included in the present paper. The author is indebted to the files of the *Indiana School Journal* for many scattered news items relating to these men, and to biennial reports which they themselves issued while in office. George W. Hoss was born in Brown County, Ohio, on November 6, 1824. He died in 1906.

Barnabas C. Hobbs left Earlham College of which he was the first president to become State Superintendent in October, 1868. In this office, he performed with rare intelligence. He did his preparatory work in the Washington County Seminary which was conducted by John I. Morrison. He received his college training at Cincinnati College, though he did not receive a degree because he omitted some required subjects. After a varied experience as a teacher, he became principal of the Bloomingdale Academy in Parke County where he remained until he went to Earlham. While at Bloomingdale, he was a member of the board of trustees of the nascent State Normal School, and, except for very brief intervals, he was a trustee for the remainder of his life. The Normal School and Bloomingdale Academy were institutions in whose welfare he was deeply interested. He was an able educator who was but fifty-six years of age when he retired from the State Superintendent's office. It was unfortunate that he was not called to some post that would have required the use of his high talents at that time. In regard to his services as State Superintendent, he said after quitting the office:

I have toiled by day and by night, traveled by mud wagon, rail car, and steam boat, and sometimes *on foot*, to keep time with my programme. The State lays out a grand field of labor for its superintendents, and expects no *covetous* man to perform the work. I have done but little. I wish I could have done more. May God bless the work in other hands.¹⁹

Milton B. Hopkins came next into the office. Where or how this noble man obtained his education, no one seemed to know, but he was a broad-minded educator with vision, courage, and ability. He crusaded with great zeal for the new school system that was in process of becoming. Having somehow acquired the tools needed by a learner, he used them persistently. His connection was with the Christian Church. He became a preacher, but school work attracted

Hubert M. Skinner, "Our Superintendents of Public Instruction, George Washington Hoss, LL.D.," *Indiana School Journal*, XXIX, 295-300. For other matter pertaining to Professor Hoss, see James A. Woodburn, *History of Indiana University, 1820-1902* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1940), 295-296.

¹⁹ Hobbs, "Superintendent's Valedictory," *Indiana School Journal*, XVI, 152; Skinner, "Our Superintendents of Public Instruction, Barnabas Coffin Hobbs, LL.D.," *Indiana School Journal*, XXIX, 349-357. Barnabas C. Hobbs was born in 1815 and died in 1892.

him more strongly. After teaching for a number of years in Clinton and Boone counties, he started an academy at Ladoga in Montgomery County which he conducted for six years. In the summer of 1870, he moved to Kokomo where he labored to establish a college. It was in this year that he was elected State Superintendent, assuming his duties on March 15, 1871. He was elected a second time in 1872. After he had taken charge of his office and surveyed the field, he felt that he had undertaken a big task but he did not falter. His salutatory message from which the following passage is taken was inspiring:

But the unction of the oath is upon me. I must and will, by your [friends of free, public schools] aid, perform my duty to the best of my ability. I can do no more. I have been long identified with you in the work of education. The cause of free schools has grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength. It blessed me in my youth, and in my poverty. It is blessing my children more literally now. I owe it both gratitude and labor, and I pledge myself to you that I will leave no stone unturned to promote its growth.²⁰

He kept his promise, aroused school officials and county officers and urged each one in the state to do his part, saying, "I cannot tread the wine press alone." He especially sought the cooperation of teachers. He worked in season and out and died prematurely at the age of fifty-three because he felt that he could not stop when he was temporarily too ill to perform an arduous duty. With such a man leading a cause that was aided by many favoring conditions, progress was bound to be made during the early seventies. He labored successfully to have the county examiners made county superintendents and used them effectively to further his plans.²¹

James H. Smart was elected State Superintendent in 1874, and was twice re-elected, serving from March, 1875, to March, 1881. He was born in New Hampshire in 1841, and came to Toledo at the age of twenty-one, a graduate of Dartmouth College. With a brief teaching experience in New Hampshire, he worked for two years in the Toledo

²⁰ Milton B. Hopkins, "Salutatory," *Indiana School Journal*, XVI, 192.

²¹ Skinner, "Our Superintendents of Public Instruction, Milton Bledsoe Hopkins," *Indiana School Journal*, XXIX, 405-408. Milton B. Hopkins was born in Nicholas County, Kentucky, April 4, 1821, and died on August 16, 1874, at Kokomo. A son, Alexander Campbell Hopkins, succeeded him by appointment and served as State Superintendent until March 15, 1875.

schools, and then accepted the superintendency of the schools of the growing city of Fort Wayne, Indiana. He was a restless, determined man who gave lectures far and wide in the cause of education while devoting ten years of his life to the upbuilding of the Fort Wayne schools. Only two cities in the state could boast more children of school age, and this situation made Superintendent Smart a member of the State Board of Education. When he became State Superintendent in 1875, at thirty-four years of age, he was a well-known, active educational leader with much influence.

So many things were already under way in the building of Indiana's free, public school system that the conditions prevailing from 1875 to 1881 greatly favored the work of James H. Smart. By just swimming with the current, he would have been sure to receive much credit for the progress that was being made. He was not a man to be satisfied with such a course and found new work to perform. His efforts in connection with the state's educational exhibit prepared for the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876 did much to elevate lowly Indiana to a higher place in the estimation of thoughtful people everywhere. As to what had been accomplished, he was by no means satisfied. In 1880 he boldly pointed out defects in the new educational system and the legislation under which it was operating. He stressed the serious defects, called attention to some that were less serious and recommended a few important modifications. A few of the changes that were urgently needed could be made by the legislature and others by changes in the administrative machinery. Only one, that relative to lengthening the term of the State Superintendent, required a constitutional amendment. Sadly enough, two defects that he emphasized, the choice of the State Superintendent every two years in a party contest and the selection of county superintendents by township trustees have not yet been remedied.

Before the close of his third term, Mr. Smart was made president of the National Educational Association, which gave him a chance to win further renown. He then became, for a brief period, a representative of a company that published textbooks, a fate that awaited every successful educator without a job. It was not long until the greatest opportunity of his life came to him when he was made president of Purdue University in 1883. As head of this institu-

tion, for seventeen years, he was to perform a great work which alone was sufficient to make him one of the important educational leaders of the Middle West in his day.²²

John M. Bloss became State Superintendent on March 15, 1881, and served one term. He was a wholesome, honest, forceful man, who commanded general respect and received excellent support. Born in 1839 in Washington County, Indiana, he was graduated from Hanover College in 1860, and began to teach at Livonia in the same year. He served as a soldier in the Civil War, rising to the rank of captain. He left the service after the fall of Atlanta because of ill health. He returned to college for a while and then began to teach again in his home community. His success caused him to be chosen as principal of the Orleans Academy, where he served from 1866 to 1870. He then became principal of the Female Academy of New Albany, where he remained until he was called to Evansville in 1875 to succeed Alexander M. Gow as the superintendent of city schools. Here he remained until he became State Superintendent. Two years was but a short time in which to accomplish big things, but there was no recession in the high standards set by his predecessors while John M. Bloss was in charge. As president of the State Board of Education, member of the board of trustees of the State Normal School, and director of the new and vastly enlarged public school system of the state, he labored incessantly and efficiently. Soon after he retired from the office of State Superintendent, he became superintendent of the Muncie schools. Next he served as superintendent of the schools of Topeka, Kansas. From 1891 to 1896, he was president of the State Agricultural College of Oregon. While at Muncie, he had purchased a four hundred acre farm not far from the city, to which he now returned. A number of years later, he served as a member of the enlarged State Board of Education from 1902 to 1905.²³

The Indiana State Board of Education was set up under the legislation of 1852. Until 1865 it was composed of state

²² Skinner, "Our Superintendents of Public Instruction, James Henry Smart, LL.D.," *Indiana School Journal*, XXIX, 525-531. The sketch was written after President Smart had been at Purdue for a little more than a year. See *Who's Who in America, 1899-1900*, and *Dictionary of American Biography* for further material. James H. Smart died in 1900 when not yet fifty-nine.

²³ Skinner, "Our Superintendents of Public Instruction, John McKnight Bloss," *Indiana School Journal*, XXIX, 587-594.

officials and its duties were unimportant. When reorganized, the State Superintendent was continued as its president and the Governor remained a member, but their associates were now to be the president of Indiana University, the president of the State Normal School and the superintendents of the cities of the state ranking first, second, and third in regard to the number of school children enumerated. In 1875 the president of Purdue University was added to the membership, and no further changes were made in the composition of the Board until 1899. As constituted after the reorganization of 1865, the Board always included able educators and exerted a real influence.

By a law of 1873, the office of county superintendent was created. For many years before this, the state had been experimenting with county examiners, for a time three in each county and then one. The new legislation added some duties to those exercised by the county examiner and changed the title. The choice of county superintendent was placed in the hands of the township trustees of each county, a method of selection that still prevails. Because of the great and increasing number of public schools in the seventies, the office of county superintendent at once became important. The able state superintendents of the period when the public school system was being created had much to do with the placing of great potential influence in the hands of county superintendents. This was because these local school officials were the natural agents through whom state policies might be carried out. A great deal depends on the man who fills the office today, as well as in all the years since free, public schools became universal in Indiana, as to how valuable or influential the office of county superintendent may be.

The State Teachers' Association organized in 1854, became very powerful as a stimulating and guiding influence in the years of the great awakening. The Association grew slowly as larger numbers of the rank and file took on the habit of attending its annual meetings. Through its officers and committees, the organization promoted worthy projects such as teacher training, a reading circle for teachers, a reading circle for young people, and township, county, and

regional institutes.²⁴ The annual meetings of the Association held in December in Indianapolis, or some other selected city, kept the active leaders in education in touch with each other and placed them before a wider public. Papers dealing with current school problems were prepared and read before the different sessions. These were often discussed and many of them were published in the *Indiana School Journal* or in similar educational organs. In 1890 the membership of the Association was reported as 381, which was small for an organization started in 1854 with 172 members. Reports indicate that the attendance was generally about twice the membership from 1870 to 1890, from which it may be inferred that the payment of annual dues was voluntary.²⁵

Institutes became such a prominent and universal feature of the business of teaching in the period following the Civil War that they deserve more than passing mention. They developed as a quick way to reach and help teachers who were in dire need. Year after year multitudes of teachers were added to the ranks most of whom possessed a very inadequate knowledge of the subjects to be taught, and knew less if possible about how to teach or how to organize and discipline a school. Conscientious educational leaders were so deeply stirred by the sad situation that they resorted to short cuts from necessity. In addition to private normal schools, normal colleges, and normal universities, county institutes, state, or regional institutes, county normals, or normal institutes and township institutes were developed some of which remained a conspicuous part of the picture for many years. A state institute, promoted by the State Teachers' Association, was conducted at Knightstown, Indiana, in the summer of 1865. This famous institute was written up fully in the *Indiana School Journal* under the title, "Indiana State Normal School." It was directed by John M. Olcott, the chairman of a committee of the State Association. It

²⁴ The Indiana Teachers' Reading Circle became a prominent professional and cultural influence which affected every Hoosier teacher who taught in the common schools during the late decades of the nineteenth century. The Young People's Reading Circle of Indiana was not organized until 1889, but it was affecting the lives of ten thousand children by the end of its first year.

²⁵ Presidents of Indiana University, the State Normal School and other colleges were quite sure to be honored by being elected to the presidency of the Association, each for one year. Prominent city superintendents were apt to be so honored as was a college professor occasionally.

ran for four weeks, with more than a hundred teachers in attendance, eleven regular instructors and several lecturers from outside the state who performed once or twice to give tone and variety to the mighty effort at improvement. It is hard to see how more uplift could have been crowded into four weeks.²⁶ Another state institute, referred to as a "normal institute" and never as a summer session, was held in the new State Normal building and conducted mainly by the president and faculty of the new institution during the summer of 1870. The attendance ran to one hundred and fifty and was marked by the absence of regular students of the Normal School. The program was similar to that put on at Knightstown five years earlier, though there were very few lectures by outsiders.²⁷ In the same period, there were in other years, some regional institutes with similar programs, held in three or four centers scattered over the state. In all, there were few institutes of this description.

In the eighties and nineties there were many county normals, or review terms. These usually ran for six or eight weeks, and were conducted by local teachers, who had been away at school for longer or shorter periods and who felt an urge to aid young teachers to get started and old ones to keep going, while obtaining for themselves some summer income. Usually there were two instructors who could generally count on the friendship and support of the county superintendent. The desire for a first license or the need to obtain a new one to replace one that had expired, or was about to expire, inspired many of those who enrolled. No credits were sought or given and examinations were rare. The work done in such summer normals did stimulate many of the younger attendants to go to the State Normal School, to some college, or to Indiana University.²⁸

The county institute lasted for one week as a general rule. In time every county held one during August or early

²⁶ "Indiana State Normal School," *Indiana School Journal*, X (1865), 307-312.

²⁷ William A. Jones, "Special Term of the Normal School," *Indiana School Journal*, XV (1870), 323-324; [Barnabas C. Hobbs], *Eighteenth Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction . . . for the years ending August 31, 1869, and August 31, 1870* (Indianapolis, 1870), 89.

²⁸ The writer never attended a summer normal, but he taught in three (summers of 1894, 1895, 1896). These three were well attended, but they came near the close of the era of county normals which had its beginning before 1870.

September. In most cases, there were two instructors, with some added work in music. At least one instructor lectured in the field of pedagogy, the other in some other field. If the other line of work was in history, literature, or some other academic subject, the lecturer might present either methods of teaching the subject or deal with content. From the early period of county institutes in Indiana, lecturers were anxious to come from other states and many institute instructors from the outside came to be well known to Indiana teachers. Among the institute instructors, whether from within the state or from afar, there were inspiring lecturers, scholars who aroused great interest in their subjects, and superficial entertainers.²⁹ Township institutes were conducted cooperatively by the teachers of townships in which they were held. They could be good, poor, or indifferent according to circumstances. Outlines were prepared for the entire state and distributed to the teachers of each township through the county superintendents. After some years, each teacher drew an extra day's wage each month for attending his township institute. In the final stage of the township institutes, extension courses were taken for credit, the instructors being furnished by the extension divisions of institutions maintaining extension work.

The system of licensing teachers through examinations, the lists of questions being prepared by, or on the responsibility of, the State Board of Education and distributed to county superintendents from the office of the State Superintendent, reached its highest perfection between 1870 and 1890. This check on the qualifications of teachers, so fully relied on in the period of the establishment of the free, public school system continued with little change until gradually abolished by the teacher training laws passed from 1907 to 1921. Anyone now living who became a teacher in Indiana without a State Normal diploma before 1907 will remember the examinations that had to be passed.³⁰

²⁹ The writer attended a number of county institutes in the period from 1890 to 1907, and served as an instructor in several from 1913 to 1927. It would be possible to list a considerable number of very able instructors who lectured in county institutes in Indiana, many of them from outside the state.

³⁰ The writer, when too young to teach and before he had any purpose to enter the ranks, wrote on a teachers' examination along with forty or fifty older seekers after licenses of one grade or another. A few weeks later the county superintendent wrote: "Your grade in

Very few indeed of the youth of Indiana went to college before 1870. More but not many received a high school education or the equivalent before that year. Those who did, for the most part, attended seminaries or academies. Fortunate were those who were too poor to go away from the home community for secondary education, if they lived near an academy or seminary. For the ambitious young men who attended such schools as the Bloomingdale Academy or the Seminary at Salem, for example, before the coming of the new day, it meant something like going to college in later times. Many a man was able to educate himself by virtue of what he learned in an academy in the way of basic knowledge and habits of study formed. If he developed there a thirst for learning and a tendency to add constantly to his store, he could go far and a large proportion of such young men did do just that. The sad part was that so few could avail themselves of such opportunities. At the same time, vast numbers of younger children received little or no schooling. That the situation was desperate in Indiana for more than a generation after statehood cannot be denied. Neither can it be denied that the reason was that free public schools could only be provided by taxes levied on property. The truth is that it took a long time to convince the owners of property that they must through the payment of taxes levied on their property furnish most of the funds necessary to establish and maintain a system of public schools for all. This fact explains why the court decisions of 1854 and 1857 were regarded as such appalling calamities by those who had felt that victory was at last in their hands. It is because local school taxes were absolutely necessary that the law of 1867 stands out as a shining landmark in the history of education in Indiana.

Having finally removed the great barrier to educational progress in 1867, the work of establishing the vast, free public school system was performed with incredible rapidity. An intelligent and deeply concerned educational leader who lived through the period of waiting and achievement, John M.

arithmetic is too low for a license. Hope you will do better next time." In later years, the writer obtained a twelve months' license in 1890, a twelve months' license in 1891, a twenty-four months' license in 1892, and a thirty-six months' license in 1893. This meant, passing successfully four teachers' examinations. Then came exemption, followed by a life license in 1898 as a result of receiving a diploma from the State Normal School.

Olcott, writing in 1876 when tax funds for schools had been available for a very few years, said:

The age is one of marked educational enterprise. Never before has so much attention been given to schools. All things are being moved to bring up educational matters to the highest pitch of efficiency. There is a general agitation of the public mind, to-day, upon the various topics and questions pertaining to educational interests. There is a determination, on all hands, to achieve the very best thing that can be done in this way. We are in the midst of a generous *rivalry*, such as the world has never seen in education before. And though the Hoosier State may have been slow in getting underway in this role, and has unquestionably been left in the rear by more active sister states, she is not going to *stay very far behind*. . . .³¹

This general statement of what had happened by 1876 is correct. But the creative work went on and one can truly affirm that whereas only a bare start had been made in 1870, the structure was complete by 1890 with a school-house in every community of the state and a teacher in charge of each. Elementary education was open to all. It is true that opportunities to go to high school were not yet open to boys and girls of rural areas, but extended high school facilities, consolidated schools, transportation of grade and high school pupils and various other things that are now common were but features to be added. The basic system stood as a *fait accompli* in 1890.

A study of enrollments brings out the fact that increasing multitudes entered the elementary schools at once. These were located right in the communities where the pupils lived. Next came the high schools of the cities and incorporated towns, though some years had to elapse before many families fell into the habit of sending their children to high school even when it was much easier for them to attend than it was for country children to walk to and from the district schools morning and evening. College enrollments went up from 1870 to 1880 and increased more rapidly from 1880 to 1890, but much greater expansion came after 1890.³² To

³¹ Olcott, "History of Public Schools in Indiana," *Indiana School Journal*, XXI, 316.

³² Back in 1871, when the big boys of various communities first began to go to the common schools in town and county, or to remain longer when already attendants, the phenomenon attracted attention. Josh Billings (Henry Wheeler Shaw) took note of the new tendency, and, pretending that it might be as dangerous as many citizens believed it to be, offered this bit of advice to all young men: "Git schoolin' and cloas both, if you kin; but if you can't git both, git cloas."

go to college, most students had to meet the transportation expense and payments for board and room. These were often deterrent factors—more often prohibitive. Furthermore, the acceptance of the idea that young men and women should go to college was naturally harder for most people than it was to get used to high school attendance. In the course of a few years, however, with the rapid growth of elementary schools and high schools, it was bound to become natural for more and more high school graduates to go to college. In other words, until the age of free, common schools and high schools, colleges could not grow greatly in respect to the numbers of students.³³

In regard to teachers, the phenomenal development of the public schools from 1870 to 1890 quickly affected their attendance at higher institutions. Though not required by law for many years, to prepare themselves for their work, many teachers felt the urge to extend their education. Old and young, they were apt to go to school, if only for a short time, in the period of the great awakening. They went to the Indiana State Normal School, to the many private normal schools, to city teacher training departments, to colleges, to Indiana University and to Purdue University. The idea behind the establishment of the State Normal School was that teachers should be taught not only the content of subjects but given training in psychology and methods with the chance to observe and practice in model schools. There was no legislation, however, to determine where teachers should be educated, and they distributed themselves to all of the higher institutions and were received. City superintendents urged teachers to acquire further training and so did most county superintendents. The natural desire to obtain a better education was also a force, and the fact that promotions were more apt to come to those who prepared for them was another.

The attendance at college while much higher by 1890 than earlier, does not, as already intimated, seem large when compared with that of the years between World War I and World War II. Enrollments for the year ending in June, 1890, in the three state institutions will illustrate this point: Indiana University, 438; Purdue University, 349; Indiana

³³ As economic conditions improved, it was easier for families to send their children to college, but until the notion that college education was desirable was accepted, numerous families with means did not consider sending their sons or daughters to college.

State Normal School, 671. These figures include preparatory students, whose numbers were great enough to prove that high school education was not yet very popular. The total for Indiana University includes 99 preparatory students and for Purdue University 111. Because the Normal School was still obliged to train mainly teachers for the common schools, the number of high school graduates among the student body, though increasing year by year, was but 129 for the year 1889-1890. Since the spring quarter attendance at the Normal School was much greater than that for other quarters, while the attendance was more steady through the year at the two universities, it should be stated that the average for the year at the Normal School was 463, including students who were not high school graduates.³⁴ Of the state supported schools, the Normal School at Terre Haute had the best chance to grow between 1870 and 1890, because it was a teachers' school which was started just at the beginning of the mighty movement creating the public school system of the state. In fact, it simply could not avoid expansion under the conditions that accompanied its first twenty years. It was caught in the current of the time and favored by it much as were city and state superintendents.

The characteristics of the superintendents of that day have been described and the leading facts pertaining to the careers of several of them have been presented. The first president of the State Normal School was William A. Jones who left a great impress on the institution and on the schools of Indiana. He was a student of philosophy, an advocate of thorough work, and a powerful advocate of teacher training. He was followed by George P. Brown who was well known for his work as superintendent of the Indianapolis schools. He guided the institution through a few years of steady growth from 1879 to 1885 when William W. Parsons, a member of the graduating class of 1872, the first class in the history of the school, succeeded him. This alumnus, a disciple of William A. Jones and a forceful leader and able administra-

³⁴ Indiana University abolished the preparatory department at the end of the year 1889-1890. The total enrollment at DePauw University at the end of 1890 was 1,038. This number included 338 preparatory students and many students in the School of Music, School of Art, School of Military Tactics, and the Normal Department. Students in the School of Law, the School of Geology, and the College of Liberal Arts, plus eleven graduate students, totaled 418.

tor in his own right, was to remain president of the Normal School until 1921 serving through a long, changing period.

The first president of Purdue University, if Professor Richard Owen of Indiana University who never became active is not counted, was Abraham C. Shortridge. Having distinguished himself as superintendent of the Indianapolis schools, he served the new university through its most difficult years from 1874 to 1878. He was succeeded by Emerson E. White, who remained until 1883. President White had been State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Ohio before coming to Indiana, and he became superintendent of the Cincinnati schools for a few years a short time after returning to Ohio. The next president of Purdue was James H. Smart whose third term as State Superintendent had closed in March, 1881. He remained president for seventeen years, a period of tremendous importance in the history of the young and developing institution. Because of the unusual forward movement in public education, in which President Smart had taken a leading part, he was able to so direct the affairs of Purdue University that the great progress possible under the many favoring conditions could be achieved.

The man of the hour at Indiana University was David Starr Jordan. He was not found among the able city superintendents of the time, nor had he gained prominence as a State Superintendent or fame as a minister of the gospel before he turned educator. A graduate student in biology, he came to Indianapolis to teach in the high school during 1874-1875, a colleague being William W. Parsons. The next year, he became a professor at Northwestern Christian University (Butler University), where he remained for four years. He kept up his research during summers and while teaching, but found time to try for positions in several universities without success. In 1879 he became a professor at Indiana University, succeeding Richard Owen. He not only carried his classes but kept himself extremely busy doing research and field work. He believed in himself and fully expected to accomplish big things as a student whose ability and promise had been recognized by Louis Agassiz and Andrew D. White. After six years at Indiana, he was to his complete surprise chosen to succeed the Reverend Lemmel Moss, D.D., as president. He served from 1885 to 1891, six years of great significance in his life and that of the University. He

was not only a scholar in an academic field instead of a philosopher-administrator or theologian-educator, but he was a man devoted to science and scientific methods. The spirit of science was to pervade higher institutions of learning in America and exert great influence in education generally. It was a great day for Indiana when Jordan became president of Indiana University. By liberalizing the course of study, bringing to the faculty young men of promise and linking up the fortunes of the institution with those of the people of the state, he opened doors that were waiting and ready to swing wide. He did not remain long but he left a great deal of his spirit behind when he went to California in 1891 at the age of forty.³⁵

Truly a great chapter in the educational history of Indiana was written between 1870 and 1890. It was not a revival, as some have classed it, but a great awakening. It produced strong leaders, but in turn it furnished the conditions that made for their success. It was a movement well supported by the masses and they profited by it. Surely any Hoosier who lived through that period and who became interested in education must have experienced a profound satisfaction in looking backward over that score of years, and likewise have felt a thrill of anticipation when he cast his eyes towards the future. Should it be too much to hope, that having once responded so fully to her deep responsibility and splendid opportunity, Indiana may again, relying less completely on the virtue of conservatism, experience a new awakening and move more swiftly towards a better day.

³⁵ David Starr Jordan, *The Days of a Man* (2 vols., Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York, 1922), I, 129-362; Woodburn, *History of Indiana University, 1820-1902*, pp. 360-400.