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LESSONS IN LOYALTY: AMERICAN PATRIOTISM AND EDUCATION IN THE
PROGRESSIVE ERA

By

CODY DODGE EWERT

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Thesis

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Approved by:

Sandy Ross, Associate Dean of The Graduate School
Graduate School

Kyle Volk, Chair
Department of History

Anya Jabour
Department of History

Jeff Wiltse
Department of History

Tracy Steffes
Department of History, Brown University

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Introduction: “Manufacturing Jingoism”

As many Americans learned in the late-nineteenth century, the American Revolution and the War of 1812 were glorious moments in the nation’s brief history. For foreign observers such as London resident Robert Fields Howard, however, Americans overstated the relevance of these conflicts. Howard claimed, in a letter from 1897 appearing in the Chicago-based periodical *The Chap-Book*, that “even a well-read Englishman” could be excused for not knowing the latter conflict even existed. “To us it is the merest incident in our long and bloody history,” Howard boasted, but “to America, judged by the attention it receives from the writers of school histories, it is of more importance than the whole of the colonial period.” Targeting schools’ emphasis on celebratory history, Howard disparaged the quality of the nation’s textbooks, which he deemed “absurdly unreliable as history, though doubtless stimulating enough to national vanity.” Indeed, Howard continued, “after studying the school systems of several States between New York and Minnesota, I have concluded that the object of the United States Government is not to teach history but patriotism.” Howard expressed dismay at American schools’ tendency to only “manufacture Jingoism” and warned that in addition to teaching questionable history, “[the school] has forged a yet more stirring weapon in the form of school songs, which I understand are sung to the waving of one-cent flags.” Aside from his alleged exhaustive analysis of textbooks, Howard also purported to have first-hand evidence of how patriotic instruction affected American children. Recounting a nationalistic tune recited to him by a six-year old New Yorker, Howard expressed horror at the young patriot’s threat that “[England] had better not interfere with us . . . She’ll get what she got from General Washington.”¹

¹ Robert Fields Howard, “Correspondence: Patriotism and History Books,” *The Chap-Book* 8, no. 5 (January 15, 1898), 202; *The Chap-Book* began in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1894 and moved to Chicago three months later. The magazine featured fiction pieces written often by well-known authors like H.G. Wells, and focused on artistic

Howard was not alone in noticing American schoolchildren's patriotic fervor. Another concerned Englishman, Sydney Brooks, responded to Howard's letter in *The Chap-Book* and offered further evidence that "the patriotism of the ordinary citizen of the United States is notoriously aggressive." Brooks cited New York State's law requiring students to recite the "Pledge of Allegiance" and salute the flag each morning as a key factor in nurturing Americans' virulent patriotic spirit and hostility toward outsiders. "Why," Brooks asked rhetorically, "are [Americans] so anxious to force [their nation's] manifold virtues down the throat of a foreigner?" As he later explained, popular education appeared to be the primary culprit. Brooks puzzled over Americans' desire to declare themselves "free-born" at all opportunities and claimed that even children's wardrobe choices reflected this zeal: "The Londoner, who sees, as I have seen, an American girl walking down Regent Street with the Stars and Stripes decorating the front of her blouse, stands blankly amazed." Tellingly, both Howard and Brooks maintained these instances regularly occurred in American cities, and as Brooks concluded, "unless I am greatly mistaken, the assiduous patriotism inculcated by the public schools must be held largely responsible for it."²

Young Americans' vehement expressions of patriotism clearly irked and perplexed these indignant Englishmen, but a generation of reformers, politicians, and intellectuals likely would have celebrated these accounts. Beginning in the late-nineteenth century this assortment of actors, alongside school administrators and teachers, pressed for the inclusion of national symbols, myths, and rituals in American schools. Amid a flurry of educational reform in the half-century following the Civil War, this patriotic education movement recast schools' relationship

developments happening in Europe as well as occasional accounts of current events. In 1898 it merged with the larger periodical *The Dial*. See Herbert E. Fleming, "The Literary Interests of Chicago V," *American Journal of Sociology* 11, No. 6 (May 1906), 797-801.

² Sydney Brooks, "Correspondence: Patriotism and American Schools," *The Chap-Book* 8, no. 6, (February 1, 1898), 239.

with the nation's past in an attempt to shape its future.³ This mobilization began at the local and state levels, but through aggressive promotion patriotic education was a nationwide force by 1920, with several states adopting legal standards requiring outward expressions of patriotism in schools. Promoters of patriotic education sought to entrench a political culture of national reverence in the nation's public schools as way of shaping generations of citizens' ideologies. By the time Americans entered World War I — a period characterized by government persecution of dissenters, state enforcement of loyalty oaths for teachers, and demands for one hundred percent Americanism — the ideals promulgated by patriotic reformers in the preceding decades appeared ascendant. The outburst of nationalist excitement that the World War I era witnessed should be understood not merely as a reaction to the wartime state's immediate demands, but also a manifestation of the patriotic curriculum many Americans had received for decades. The patriotic ideals articulated in the late-nineteenth century took root in school textbooks, lesson plans, and rituals, creating a standardized form of national expression and entrenching it the public schools. Though the late-nineteenth century proponents of patriotic education had no way of anticipating America's entrance into World War I, their efforts nonetheless laid the groundwork for citizens' vocal assertions of patriotism during wartime.⁴

This thesis examines the development, popularization, and legacy of the patriotic education movement from the years following the Civil War through the end of American involvement in World War I. In uncovering the cultural, political, and social aims and

³ I use the terms patriotic education and patriotic education movement to describe the efforts of individuals to make patriotism — whether this means flags, nationalist histories, or any other assertions of national loyalty — standard in the nation's schools. These actors often referred to themselves as belonging to a distinct movement, particularly those in the so called “schoolhouse flag movement.” Others have used the term “patriotic education” in describing the efforts of these reformers, most notably, Cecelia Elizabeth O’Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 150-194.

⁴ An interpretation of the WWI-era that downplays schools' importance as a coercive institution in the preceding years and posits voluntary organizations as the main enforcers of loyalty can be found in Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

implications of this largely unexplored facet of American patriotic culture, this thesis traces how the immediate aftermath of the Civil War influenced the ideologies of late-nineteenth century reformers. Patriotic education developed parallel to an unprecedented surge in state-sponsored educational reform and shifting popular opinions of war, expansionism, and citizenship. While the categories of education and patriotism have received historians' attention separately, this study emphasizes their dynamic and complex relationship. Rather than being a process concocted by state and federal governments with the intention of brainwashing young Americans, patriotic education grew from a variety of grassroots movements and received support from a diverse array of individuals. From private organizations of Civil War veterans and middle-class women to educators, politicians, and intellectuals, these actors turned to the schools to create a loyal and unified citizenry by venerating cultural symbols both new and old. National symbols like the American flag and performances of the "Pledge of Allegiance" became vital aspects of a patriotic culture that similarly venerated democracy, capitalism, and militarism. In the minds of reformers seeking to mold the rising generation of schoolchildren, sentimental nationalism became enmeshed with political and social concerns, a combination that created a patriotism equally emphasizing revered images and icons and the American government itself.⁵

The patriotic education movement was a Progressive endeavor. The terms Progressivism and Progressive are used in this project to refer to a broad coalition of mostly middle- and upper-class reformers in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries seeking policy changes under

⁵ T.J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *American Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (June 1985), 570. As Lears notes in his assessment of Gramsci, the schools were one arm of the state that blended political and civic society, creating an ideal site for a group to create a hegemonic culture.

the auspices of social progress.⁶ In the Progressive Era, shifts in civic life, state power, and politics had dramatic effects on school administration and curriculum. These changes similarly shaped the patriotic education movement. In the post-Civil War era, states passed mandatory school attendance laws, bringing more children than ever into the public schools. The growth of patriotic education occurred under growing state scrutiny and increasing notions of the necessity of social governance and administrative reforms shaped the development of American schools and their curricula in this period.⁷ Advocates of patriotic education hoped to ameliorate perceived problems of social organization and create a more loyal citizenry through their efforts, and in doing so this array of reformers pressed for increased state involvement and direct legal action. Patriotic education functioned, to its supporters, as a vital aspect of a nationwide project of regeneration. In working toward this goal these advocates inundated school curricula and popular patriotic practice with their own assumptions about gender, race and ethnicity, religion, and America's superior place among other nations.⁸

Patriotic education was also a nationalist project. Supporters of this movement hoped to instill patriotism — which they defined as a love for one's country and obedience to its laws and institutions — among the nation's children as a way of stimulating American nationalism. Proponents of patriotic education aimed to unite the nation under a common set of ideals, symbols, rituals, and a shared past. Similarly, they lauded America as a naturally superior nation in terms of its institutions, racial and ethnic makeup, and history. Promoting patriotism, as result,

⁶ For more in-depth definitions of Progressives and Progressivism, see Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), xiv-xv; James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 299-301.

⁷ Social governance in the Progressive Era has received significant attention in relation to Chicago's court system as described in Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice in Progressive Era Chicago* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁸ Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 1-11.

held the promise of creating a unified national culture. Despite the broad aims of these actors, their efforts started at the local level. The project of national unity required manufacturing a generation of loyal and eager citizens. Public education, which touched millions of children in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, provided an ideal site for disseminating these standards.⁹ American patriotic culture became an increasingly prominent and powerful political force largely due to the bottom-up efforts of local and state reformers rather than top-down decrees issued on a national level. Nationalist fervor in America did not stem solely from state repression in the face of World War I, but rather, from a long, multifaceted process where reformers attempted to reshape the nation's public schools into a breeding ground for the militant patriots of the future.

* * * * *

The patriotic education movement coincided with a litany of Progressive educational reform efforts. Historical interpretations of this formative period in American public education emphasize reformers' push to standardize schools' curriculum. Middle- and upper-class reformers increasingly devoted themselves to addressing social problems in the late-nineteenth century. Schools became a popular target of Progressives, who considered public education a powerful influence that needed to be properly applied. Early Progressive-era reformers sought to bolster the notion that popular education could solve organizational problems at various levels of public life and hasten national progress by creating a generation of schoolchildren with a uniform understanding of social responsibility.¹⁰ Accordingly, scholars have discussed how, by recasting

⁹ O'Leary, *To Die For*, 3-9.

¹⁰ For examples of belief in popular education solving problems of social organization and thereby hastening progress, see Rush Welter, *Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 215. For an example of the school as a site where grassroots organizations targeted in order to address what they viewed as broad social ills, see Jonathan Zimmerman, *Distilling Democracy: Alcohol Education in America's Public Schools, 1880-1925* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 1-12. For how educational reforms affected teachers and administrators, see Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars*, New York

education as a way of shaping individual behaviors and beliefs, public schools functioned as vital sites of social control in this era.¹¹ Patriotic education arose in an era when officials imposed methods of scientific management in schools to increase their efficiency. As a result, patriotism also became translated into a standard set of principles that reformers and interest groups sought to make ubiquitous in the nation's schools.¹² Historians of education, however, have largely ignored the presence of patriotism in American schools during this era.¹³

Similarly, historians have assessed the ideological factors leading to this surge in patriotic zeal but have underemphasized the role of schools. Following the end of Reconstruction, American patriotism underwent a series of profound changes, largely in the years leading to the War of 1898. Historians have noted how changing public interpretations of the Civil War led to a popular reinterpretation of shared national values.¹⁴ This trend coincided with the growth of a glorified assessment of the nation's military past, and both helped determine the content of patriotic education.¹⁵ Scholars have also crafted many thorough examinations of how patriotism

City, 1805-1973: A History of Public Schools as a Battlefield for Social Change (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 103-113, 234; James W. Frazier, "Agents of Democracy: Urban Elementary-School Teachers and the Conditions of Teaching," in Donald Warren, ed., *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989). A solid examination of the lasting legacy of educational reforms is Zimmerman, *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

¹¹ Tracy L. Steffes, "A New Education for a Modern Age: National Reform, State-Building, and the Transformation of American Schooling, 1890-1933," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2008), 3-11.

¹² Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony," 589.

¹³ For examples of key books on Progressive education that miss this trend, see: Raymond E. Callahan, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency: A Study of the Social Forces that have Shaped the Administration of the Public Schools* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962). Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962). Sol Cohen, *Progressives and Urban School Reform: The Public Education Association of New York City, 1895-1904* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1964).

¹⁴ This subject is most thoroughly covered in David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War and American Memory* (Cambridge: University of Harvard Press, 2001). See also Edward Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 327-340; Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009); Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

¹⁵ An examination of how the militaristic ideals became inseparable from American patriotism, see Gary Gerstle's *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 14-80. For the cultural themes driving this renewed martial spirit, see T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace:*

became a standard aspect of political discourse in this period, influencing foreign policy, shaping public opinion, and realigning citizens' relationship with the federal government.¹⁶ Similarly, studies of the American homefront in the years surrounding the nation's entrance into World War I have offered invaluable insights into the complex relationship between loyalty, coercion, and dissent in patriotic thought.¹⁷ The mythic past evoked in patriotic symbols and rituals focused largely on past military heroes, helping establish white masculinity as a crucial facet of the American character. Although white middle- and working-class women made up a majority of the nation's teaching force, texts crafted by elite reformers required they teach a version of patriotic education that reiterated Anglo-Saxon manhood's cultural dominance.¹⁸

This thesis develops themes historians of education and patriotism alike have underemphasized by positioning public schools as unique areas of social influence. Schools were more than just one of many sites where Americans looked to instill patriotism, and similarly patriotism was not merely a minor concern of educational reformers. Rather, public schools in localities across the nation were highly coercive public institutions that played a vital role in the nationwide recasting of American loyalty in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Reformers turned to these sites of social governance to ensure these ideals reached a broad

Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 98-139.

¹⁶ Historical studies that have offered useful interpretations of patriotism in the late-nineteenth century, particularly in the context of the Spanish-American war include Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); and O'Leary, *To Die For*.

¹⁷ John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Merle Curti, *The Roots of American Loyalty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946); Kathleen Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion During World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1999); H.C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, *Opponents of War: 1917-1918* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1957).

¹⁸ For able considerations of the growing social emphasis of Anglo-Saxon masculinity at the turn of the twentieth century, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 171-186, 213-218; Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 14-80.

audience. Patriotic culture and public schools became closely linked as a result, and this development facilitated the rise of the same notions of loyalty and state obligation that became nearly ubiquitous on the World War I homefront.¹⁹

This study begins in the decades following the Civil War and concludes after World War I. The Civil War looms large throughout the story of patriotic education's development, and indeed, almost all of American civic life in the years leading up to World War I. Patriotic education attempted to unite the nation's citizenry under a standard national identity, and as a result the ideals of Civil War reunionists meshed with those advocating patriotic education. World War I, meanwhile, witnessed what some have deemed both the culmination and the death knell of Progressive reform. For patriotic education, the war pushed the movement to new extremes. New federal and state laws during the war that limited dissent within schools and the patriotic fervor that erupted throughout the nation, however, bore distinct similarities to the ideals articulated by reformers decades earlier. This development owes much to the precedent a generation of concerned policymakers, private organizations, and self-proclaimed patriots established in American schools.²⁰

Several states embraced patriotic education in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and accordingly, this thesis employs examples from across the nation. National organizations played a vital role in disseminating patriotic ideals in schools, and whether they were women's groups, veterans, or educators, their expansive efforts warrant a similarly broad scope. In looking at this nationwide shift, this study examines a variety of sources ranging from

¹⁹ This study uses patriotic education as a site of social governance and power much as Michael Willrich describes Chicago's courts in *City of Courts*. Similarly, it challenges the assertions of Christopher Capozzola in *Uncle Sam Wants You* that schools acted as but one voluntary institutions that helped recast American loyalty during the buildup to World War I. Rather, it argues that schools were a unique site of social, cultural, and political power and influence.

²⁰ For a depiction of WWI as the end of Progressivism, see Maureen Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s – 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 285. For the extent of repression on the WWI homefront, see Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 5-20.

popular and educational periodicals, public speeches, newspaper accounts, state laws, textbooks, prescriptive literature for teachers, and the writings of organizations, teachers, and students.

Chapter one examines the role that private organizations, public ideologues, and popular publications played in determining the contents and aiding the ascent of patriotic education. This chapter details how the memory of the Civil War, growing calls for national unity, and shifting educational standards led many to embrace patriotic education's potential. This chapter also argues that patriotic education's rise owed just as much to contingent events like the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago and the War of 1898 as it did to the work of its ardent champions. Chapter two looks at the development of state laws mandating displays of patriotism in schools. This chapter does so through a case study of New York and its superintendent of public instruction, Charles R. Skinner. Responding to the passage of similar laws in other states, Skinner mounted a strident effort to adopt an inventive patriotic education law that led to the publication of a state-issued tome titled the *Manual of Patriotism*. The development of New York's law exemplifies how states in the late-nineteenth century seized on the earlier efforts of educators and private organizations and attempted to make patriotic instruction a legal imperative. The third chapter considers how popular publications, textbooks, and intellectuals coaxed the nation's mostly female teaching force to embrace patriotic education. This chapter argues that a militaristic and largely masculine version of patriotism became standard in textbooks and prescriptive literature for teachers, and that publishing companies and other supporters helped push this vision by focusing on patriotic education's potential benefits for teachers. This chapter ends with a glimpse into how students experienced this shift by looking at the writings of students from Butte, Montana, a city that experienced the same forces of immigration, labor strife, and shifting educational standards as much of the nation did in the late-

nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. These yearbook and newsletter writings show that students learned to embrace, or at least regurgitate, many of the key themes that this movement's supporters hoped to make standard in the nation's schools.

This thesis is not meant to be a comprehensive study of how patriotic education affected each region of the United States and how it functioned in all of its schools. Rather, this study aims to provide an overview of patriotism in American schools by examining its origins, codification, and content. While a thorough assessment of this movement would necessitate a more far-reaching study, this thesis covers many key themes, actors, and developments. Indeed, this study adds to several scholarly literatures by casting patriotic education as an important cultural and political development in American history. The adoption of patriotic symbols and rituals in public schools deserves to be considered a transformative shift that ultimately influenced millions of Americans and provided a new context for their assertions of loyalty and dissent.

Chapter One

“A National Patriotic Cult”: Patriotism and Education in the Late-Nineteenth Century

On Columbus Day of 1892, every public school in Chicago put on a grandiose display of patriotism. Honoring the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus’s arrival in America, the city’s schools performed a standard program of exercises prepared by the National Association of Superintendents while also adding their own unique patriotic flourishes. The city’s superintendent visited nearly every school to ensure their compliance, and the following day’s *Chicago Daily Tribune* supplied a sprawling list of each school’s program. At Ryerson School, 250 primary students marched onto a stage decorated with patriotic paraphernalia while singing “Three Cheers for the Red, White, and Blue.” At Jefferson High School, pupils presented essays, declamations, orations, and sang patriotic airs while flanked by a large national flag. South Chicago High drew so many supportive onlookers that it lacked sufficient standing or sitting room for its exercises. Despite these cramped conditions, the school’s halls and classrooms teemed with banners and flags and the entire school joined in singing the appropriately titled song “Columbus Day.” At the Froebel School, meanwhile, three hundred children lined up in front of the main building while carrying American flags. Then, students in all of Chicago’s schools, “While their little hands were raised to their foreheads,” repeated: “I pledge allegiance to my flag and the republic for which it stands; one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”¹ More than 2,000 teachers and 150,000 students took part in these activities. The *Tribune* marveled at this “educational army,” and added, “It may be safely stated that no other feature of this great celebration will be more enthusiastic than was Children’s day.”²

¹ “Exercises in School,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 20, 1892, 9.

² “The Free School Celebration.” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 22, 1892, 20.

The Columbian School Celebration, organized in part by the popular periodical *The Youth's Companion*, took place in Chicago in October of 1892 to both suggest the crucial role schools played in American society and advertise the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago to be held the following summer. Francis Bellamy, a member of the magazine's promotional staff, led the way in garnering support for the event, even gaining endorsements from both President Benjamin Harrison and his opponent in an impending election, Grover Cleveland. In addition to his organizational duties, Bellamy composed a pithy oath in honor of the occasion: the "Pledge of Allegiance."³ Bellamy had publicized this forthcoming celebration in an 1892 edition of the *Journal of Education*, claiming that, "the approaching celebration of Columbus Day by the millions of Public School pupils of America will furnish a prodigious impulse to the cultivation of intelligent patriotism." Bellamy lauded the "rising tide of American sentiment" and alleged, "there was enough need of real American spirit after the long period of indifference and self-deprecation which followed the ardors of war." Indeed, following a prolonged period of post-Civil War malaise, American patriotism appeared resurgent, and to reformers like Bellamy, this momentum required further institutional support. The nation's public schools provided an ideal site for cultivating this patriotic fervor. The impending exercises in Chicago, Bellamy noted, would prove schools' importance in fostering American patriotism while pointing to the nation's glorious future. As Bellamy argued, "The state fosters the school; it is the school's business to make for the state a substantial bottom of citizenship . . . All the centuries have been praising the patriotic soldier, the patriotic statesman; the twentieth century must be above all the age of the patriotic school-master."⁴

³ Cecelia Elizabeth O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 157-171.

⁴ Francis Bellamy, "Americanism in the Public Schools," *Journal of Education* 36, no. 6 (August 18, 1892), 107.

Ushering in “the age of the patriotic school-master,” however, required more than just the enthusiastic support of Bellamy and *The Youth’s Companion*. In the late-nineteenth century, many intellectuals, reformers, politicians, and private organizations looked to the nation’s schools in their quest to unify the nation and create an upstanding citizenry. Through the zeal of self-proclaimed patriots, the dissemination of print materials, and several key events, cultivating patriotism became a vital aspect of American public education in the late-nineteenth century.⁵ Following the Civil War, groups like the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a national veteran’s organization, and its auxiliary organization the Woman’s Relief Corps (WRC) delivered countless flags to schools while seeking to influence public policy. Another high-profile private organization, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), also promoted patriotism in schools, equating temperance with proper citizenship while opening a public dialogue about schools’ social influence. A growing group of educators seeking to modernize and standardize the nation’s schools joined in these efforts, producing myriad print materials and promoting celebrations of Columbus Day and other national holidays. These groups created, and subsequently disseminated, a standardized ideal of American citizenship propagated through the schools.⁶

This chapter explores the efforts of the coalition of reformers, professionals, and concerned citizens that supported patriotic education, considering both their broad goals and

⁵ For the lingering influence of the Civil War on Progressive reform, see Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009). For modernization and citizenship education in schools, see Steffes, “A New Education for a Modern Age,” Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 2008. For Progressive education see Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962).

⁶ An in-depth look at the GAR, as well as some their educational exploits can be found in Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992). Jonathan Zimmerman’s *Distilling Democracy: Alcohol Education in American Public Schools, 1880-1925*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1999), meanwhile, offers the most thorough assessment of the WCTU’s efforts promoting scientific temperance instruction in schools. Cecelia O’Leary’s *To Die For* also offers some information of the GAR and WRC’s respective roles promoting nationalism following the Civil War.

reasons for turning to the schools in an era where these important state institutions were themselves undergoing major changes. These groups seized on the power of print culture and an emergent American emphasis on social reform. This combination of eager advocacy and advantageous rallying points helped make patriotism a primary concern among educational reformers. By the 1890s, schools became not merely where students gained a basic knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also where they learned to revere their nation's past and publicly declare their future obligation to their communities and the state.

* * * * *

The roots of patriotic education emerged following the Civil War, as North and South began a slow and contested process of reunion. Although the North had officially crushed the South's attempt to preserve a distinct slavery-based culture, Americans now faced the difficult task of establishing a sense of collective identity. During the war, nationalists imagined a reunited America in a variety of ways. While many stressed the egalitarian and democratic models of nationalism elucidated by Abraham Lincoln and prominent abolitionists, others emphasized the nation's supposedly sacred past and shared Christian values. Following the war, the terms that would structure American loyalty remained uncertain, and nation-builders faced the challenge of integrating the South into an abstract ideal of nationalist consensus. While far from preaching reconciliation, the Grand Army of the Republic's postwar efforts established many of reunification's eventual terms.⁷

Formed in 1866, the GAR looked to sanctify the efforts of Union soldiers during the Civil War. The GAR mixed practical political concerns like veterans' pension reform with ornate displays of symbolic nationalism. The group's military parades, active promotion of national

⁷ Melinda Lawson, *Patriot Fires: Forging a New American Nationalism in the Civil War North* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2002), 1-11; Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 16-17.

holidays, and ceremonial speeches made them recognizable public figures. Furthermore, their all-white constituency and valorization of military achievements evinced their attachment to a backward looking form of American nationalism. Indeed, the group defined themselves as much in terms of their race, religion, and ethnicity as through their military service. The group drew members from a variety of socioeconomic levels but its most powerful members were affluent Americans seeking to reassert their social dominance. Additionally, the group's private meetings and ceremonies combined military imagery and quasi-religious posturing, an affectation that effectively elevated their martial values to a sacred level. Accordingly, promoting a consensus-oriented vision of American history driven by the white militants of the past became one of the group's chief goals. At their first national encampment, held in Indianapolis in 1866, the GAR formed committees and adopted a series of resolutions setting the tone of their future work. Tellingly, the first resolution adopted at this gathering proclaimed the group's foremost duties "to maintain in civil life those great principles for which it stood in arms under the national flag," and to "crush out active treason."⁸

Despite this high-minded rhetoric, the GAR began as a way of furthering the political ambitions of Illinois Republicans John A. Logan and Richard Oglesby. Logan, who ran as the Republican vice presidential candidate in 1884, played a pivotal role in the group's early years especially by helping link the group to prominent politicians and expanding their reach throughout the nation. The GAR's connection to high-ranking Republicans has not gone unnoticed, and in fact historians have often characterized them as a partisan political lobby group.⁹ Political origins aside, the GAR's public emphasis on symbolism and romantic

⁸ Robert Burns Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic*, (New York: Willis McDonald and Co., 1888), 70. For more on the group's membership and ceremonies, see McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 58-93.

⁹ Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the GAR* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962).

nationalism held mass appeal. The group's expansive roster aided their goals of promoting patriotic celebrations nationwide. By 1890, the GAR had over 350,000 members, and by the end of the nineteenth century nearly 7,000 posts nationwide.¹⁰ The group had great success in publicizing public displays of patriotic expression. In 1868, Logan issued a proclamation declaring the observance of Memorial Day. Officially recognizing and campaigning for this day sanctifying the efforts of fallen soldiers offered an opening wedge for the group's foray into the schools. Promoting public observances of this remembrance of veterans' sacrifices helped bring the GAR publicity, and leaders like Logan worked to make the day sacred among the nation's children. This often resulted in scenes like the *New York Evangelist* reported in 1879 where a reported 3,500 children descended on Gettysburg and "decorated the thousands of graves."¹¹

The GAR's work bringing their message to schools benefitted immensely from their relationship with the Woman's Relief Corps. The WRC grew out of women's voluntary associations' work during the Civil War. Sanitary Commissions, popular in large northern cities, organized fetes to raise funds for Union soldiers and provided many middle and upper-class women an opportunity to stimulate community involvement in the name of a broader goal. The experience of the war politicized future WRC members, who organized in support of the war cause in response to their exclusion from all-male groups. While similar coalitions existed throughout the country following the war, a group of women in Massachusetts formed the first official branch of the WRC in 1879. The GAR, noticing this group's work, officially recognized them as an allied organization in 1883 and asked them to form a national branch. Under its first president, Florence Barker, the WRC quickly became a national force that promoted its sacred duty to ensure children revered the accomplishments of veterans. Although it became

¹⁰ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 54.

¹¹ "Current Events," *New York Evangelist* 50, no. 23 (June 5, 1879), 8. For more on the GAR's promotion of Memorial Day see McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 16-17, 24-30; O'Leary, *To Die For*, 104-105.

inextricably linked to the GAR in the public imagination due to its auxiliary status, the WRC established itself as one of the nation's most recognizable patriotic organizations, with over 90,000 members nationwide by 1890. The GAR's decision to recognize the WRC occurred shortly after they began delivering flags to schools in the early 1880s. Soon the GAR allocated this responsibility to the WRC, and by the early 1890s the group appeared almost singularly devoted to promoting patriotism in schools.¹²

Despite the WRC's separate origins, it shared common ideologies and goals with the GAR. The group championed the GAR's backward-looking construction of patriotism, emphasizing the veneration of past military heroes, especially Civil War veterans. Immigrants, industrial workers, women, and blacks were either non-existent within or perceived as potential threats to the GAR. Immigrant members of GAR were largely English and Irish; African American membership was virtually non-existent and segregated; and the organization insisted the role of "loyal women" be simply to inculcate patriotism among American children. While the WRC worked to deliver flags to schools and teach children basic patriotic principles, the GAR campaigned in favor of military drill in schools. The WRC played a vital role in the GAR's efforts, reporting on whether or not schools owned flags, distributing literature, and ensuring the observance of national holidays. Although the men of the GAR remained visible public figures, the WRC's direct efforts in schools became increasingly prominent throughout the late-nineteenth century.¹³

¹² O'Leary, *To Die For*, 75-83.

¹³ For the prevailing ideologies guiding the GAR, see McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 209-220. For how the WRC contrasted with GAR efforts see O'Leary, *To Die For*, 62-63, 186. The WRC and GAR both had an allegedly open membership policy, despite their increasingly skewed racial makeup in the nineteenth century. As Kate Brownlee Sherwood claimed in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, "The Woman's Relief Corps embraces women of all creeds, colors, and nationalities." Kate Brownlee Sherwood, "Work Done by Women's Auxiliary," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 28, 1895, 3.

The nationwide expansion of patriotic organizations enabled them to promote their broad goals of national unity and regeneration by stimulating a sense of political obligation among the nation's youngest citizens. For the WRC, this first required that schools owned an American flag. Displaying their emphasis on post-Civil War reunion, the group even attempted to get southern schools to erect the stars and stripes. In 1898, a WRC post in Oberlin, Ohio sent a flag to a school in North Carolina and encouraged northern chapters to perform similar deeds. An article describing the school's reception of the flag noted, "The pupils first entertained their friends with appropriate songs and declamations and then adjournment was made to the campus, where the flag was raised by ex-Confederates." Teachers and students then saluted the flag and sang the "Star Spangled Banner" and two former Confederate soldiers made patriotic speeches. The article describing these events, published in the Boston magazine *Congregationalist*, concluded by asking, "Are there not any other posts of loyal veterans of the North who are ready to contribute to the association ten dollars each and thus send Old Glory down to flutter in the Southern wind and to be cheered with honest, patriotic fervor by ex-Confederates as well as ex-Unionists?"¹⁴ Promoting sectional reunion became a chief goal of groups like the WRC. In the North, advocates of patriotic instruction endorsed close cooperation with the South and deemphasized divisive aspects of the Civil War. These efforts showed that northern patriots valued national unity above all else. Militarism provided an important connection between North and South. Northern patriotic groups, by emphasizing the shared past between the regions and ignoring reassertions of racial discrimination and violence in the South, also established

¹⁴ "Old Glory in the Highlands," *Congregationalist* 83, No. 50 (Dec., 15, 1898) 895.

whiteness as essential to American identity. Promoting a sense of national unity despite these social costs constituted a key aspect of the movement to teach children patriotism.¹⁵

The WRC, much like the GAR, gradually expanded throughout the country and brought their task of instilling patriotism among the nation's children with them. By 1898, "Patriotic Instructor" was a high-level elected position in all WRC branches. As the WRC Corps Services manual of 1904 described this position: "upon you devolves one of the grandest duties of any officer of this Corps, that is, to represent for the Corps everywhere patriotic education. It is your sacred duty to promote the general observance of all National Anniversaries and Flag Day."¹⁶ By the end of the nineteenth century, as the *Maine Farmer* noted in 1899, "much interest [was] manifested in the Women's Relief Corps . . . in teaching patriotism in the public schools."¹⁷ The article also included a poem by "one of the youngest pupils in the primary grade in that city" that read: "Do you know who made our flag? If you do not, I will tell you. It was Mrs. Betsy Ross. Red stands for bravery. White stands for purity. Blue stands for truth. There are thirteen stripes in the flag. George Washington planned the flag. I think he did well, don't you think he did?"¹⁸ This young student's strong knowledge of the flag perfectly displayed the WRC's chief goal in entering the schools. The WRC strove to give even the youngest students a basic patriotic education in the hopes that they too could learn to revere their nation's symbols and history and express their patriotism in similar terms.

¹⁵ David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War and American Memory* (Cambridge: University of Harvard Press, 2001), 352-353. For the growth of sentimentalism toward Confederate history, see Edward Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 327-340; Some examples of southern groups promoting this kind of patriotism can be found in "Proceedings and Celebrations," *The American Historical Register and Monthly Gazette*, December 1894, 389; Frederick Starr, "The Tennessee Centennial," *Outlook* 56, No. 4 (May 22, 1897), 205.

¹⁶ *Corps Services Manual* (National Woman's Relief Corps, 1904), 25. Folder 6, Women's Relief Corps (U.S.) Fred Winthrop Relief Corps, No. 7 (Missoula, Mont.) Records, K Ross Toole Archives and Special Collections at the Mike and Mansfield Library, The University of Montana-Missoula; For an example of this position's purpose from 1898, see profile of Mary Gray Deane in *A History of the Town of Freetown, Massachusetts* (Fall River, Mass.: Press of J.H. Franklin & Company, 1902), 96.

¹⁷ "Our Flag," *Maine Farmer*, Feb. 2, 1899, 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The WRC stimulated children's sense of loyalty and tracked teachers' willingness to adopt their plans. WRC members compiled data on participation in patriotic exercises and implemented lesson plans designed to increase students' reverence for national symbols. The WRC also produced classroom teaching aids and leaflets explaining flag salutes and patriotic drills. The GAR supplied the movement's rhetorical punch, but the efforts of the WRC ensured that children received the message. As WRC president Flo Jameson Miller put it in 1890, "Mothers train the masses- statesmen lead the few."¹⁹ As this statement demonstrates, the WRC considered promoting the patriotic education movement a substantive opportunity. By valuing their achievements over those of "statesmen," these women in the patriotic education movement claimed for themselves a significant position in American political culture.²⁰

While the WRC did not express the GAR's same zeal for military training in schools, they did endorse the use of patriotic rituals with military structure. The WRC's outline for proper performance of the "Pledge of Allegiance," displays this emphasis. A WRC leaflet explaining how to accurately "pledge allegiance," noted that this "military salute" must be delivered with "the right hand uplifted, palm downward to a line with the forehead." The WRC's preferred performance of the pledge also required: "At the word, 'To the Flag,' each [student] extends the right hand gracefully, palm upward, toward the Flag, until the end of the pledge of affirmation. Then all hands drop to side. The pupils, still standing, all sing together in union the song 'America' – My Country 'Tis of Thee." This, tellingly, mirrored how the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported students performed the "Pledge of Allegiance" on Columbus Day of 1892. The WRC's

¹⁹ Quoted in O'Leary, *To Die For*, 98.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 184-185.

emphasis on patriotic drills with military standards reflected the privileged position military organization held in the minds of many school reformers.²¹

The efforts of the GAR and the WRC brought flags and national symbols into schools across the nation by the end of the nineteenth century. The impetus for patriotic education's rise as a national concern also stemmed from another group's work. Agitating for temperance, the WCTU's efforts in schools reshaped public conceptions of education's role in creating morally upstanding citizens. Education became a vital aspect of the group's approach only in the late 1870s. Previously, the group took a "Gospel Temperance" approach, launching a series of protests against saloons alongside other public displays lauding sobriety's paramount virtues. In order to garner widespread support for temperance, however, WCTU leaders like Mary Hunt and Frances Willard began targeting the nation's youth. Schools provided the group with a captive audience receptive to their pseudoscientific lectures on the dangers of alcohol consumption. It helped that many WCTU members were former teachers; Frances Willard, for instance, transitioned into public life following a teaching career in the 1860s and 1870s. The group's educational backgrounds helped them gain access to schools and disseminate their message effectively, and using the language of patriotism further allowed them to reach a broad audience.²² The WCTU and its supporters framed the organization's work as, in the words of the *Methodist Review*, "beneficent, gracious, and patriotic . . . the patriotism, religion, and philanthropy of the nation must sustain and cooperate with them." As this notice conveyed, the

²¹ "National Salute to the Flag" (National Woman's Relief Corps, undated), Folder 6, Women's Relief Corps (U.S.) Fred Winthrop Relief Corps, No. 7 (Missoula, Mont.) Records, K Ross Toole Archives and Special Collections at the Mike and Mansfield Library, The University of Montana-Missoula.

²² Zimmerman, *Distilling Democracy*, 18-22. 33.

WCTU framed their efforts as essential to promoting social progress, and emphasizing their patriotism helped ensure the public's cooperation.²³

The WCTU framed their larger task of teaching children about the dangers of alcohol in patriotic terms. This functioned as both a promotional tool and a guiding ideology. A local WCTU in East Peacham, Vermont attempted to garner support by inviting teachers “to bring their pupils to the town hall on July 4, [where they] gave an entertainment of temperance and patriotic songs and speeches, and in return a bountiful lunch with strawberries and ice cream was provided.”²⁴ These tactics gave the WCTU's work popular appeal. The organization's emphasis on teaching children to revere their country connected their work to a higher cause while linking temperance to proper patriotism. WCTU president Francis Willard, in an address at the organization's annual conference in 1894, depicted the group's work in terms of religious duty. Willard noted the importance of teaching children what she deemed “Christian citizenship.” explaining that this ideal could be achieved by filling schools “with pictures of some of our forefathers and foremothers, also of contemporary patriots, notable national buildings, [and] facsimiles of great documents.” Willard, articulating the importance of Protestant values to patriotic education viewed the ultimate goal of this instruction as the “highest lesson of all . . . [that] no person can be a true patriot who is not a true Christian, and no person can be a true Christian who is not a true patriot.”²⁵ To Willard and likeminded reformers, patriotism and Christianity were inseparable and deserved equal attention in American schools.

²³ Quote from “Progress of Civilization,” *The Methodist Review* 5 (Jan 1889), 138. For the increased activity of women during the Progressive Era, see Maureen A. Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s – 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 42-46.

²⁴ National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, “Temperance Literature,” in *Minutes of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, at the Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting, Held in Buffalo New York, Oct. 29 – Nov. 3, 1897* (Chicago: Woman's Temperance Publication Association, 1894), 323.

²⁵ Frances Elizabeth Caroline Willard, “President's Address,” in National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, *Minutes of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, at the Twenty-First Annual Meeting, Held in Cleveland Ohio, 16-21 November, 1894* (Chicago: Woman's Temperance Publication Association, 1894), 111.

Despite their marked differences, groups like the WCTU, GAR, and WRC all recognized schools as effective sites for promoting their interests. The WCTU, for instance, broadened public dialogue about education's purpose, and as historian Jonathan Zimmerman has observed, "used legal suasion by adults to institutionalize moral suasion of the young."²⁶ Persuading the nation's youth to adhere to a certain set of ideals constituted a primary aim of the WCTU and other Progressive reformers as well. As compulsory social institutions that sought to inculcate students with a standard set of knowledge, schools offered reformers a receptive and rapidly expanding audience. Turning to schools allowed reformers a unique opportunity to promote their respective ideologies among the rising generation of American citizens. Similarly, reformers like the WCTU used their initial forays into the schools as a springboard for making their causes standard aspects of schools' curriculum. Accordingly, the patriotic ideals articulated by these organizations became increasingly popular among educators and reformers as the twentieth century approached. Educational publications and the media became major advocates of patriotic education in the late-nineteenth century. While the work of these organizations played a key role in this development, reformers' goals also dovetailed nicely with those of ardent nationalists.²⁷

This array of groups raising questions about patriotism's role in education benefitted immensely from the concurrent rise of standardization and professionalization in the nation's public schools. Progressive educators in the late-nineteenth century targeted urban schools as ideal sites for the implementation of "modern" professional practices. A rise in university programs offering training in school administration and educational science hastened this trend, and a new generation of professionals across the country set out to unify schools' respective

²⁶ Jonathan Zimmerman, "The Queen of the Lobby: Mary Hunt, Scientific Temperance, and the Dilemma of Democratic Education in America, 1876-1906," *History of Education Quarterly* 32, No. 1 (Spring, 1992), 6.

²⁷ Flanagan, *America Reformed*, 66-67. For the WCTU's work to make their program of Scientific Temperance Instruction standard in schools, see Zimmerman, *Distilling Democracy*.

curricula. One vital mid-century development — the division of students into separate grades, each with a distinct curriculum — aided urban school reformers’ efforts at standardization, and also allowed them to craft new lesson plans and programs of study. The late-nineteenth century also saw a dramatic rise in the number of teachers joining professional organizations and attending teachers’ institutes. Late-nineteenth century teachers’ institutes exposed educators to new pedagogical methods in a setting historian James Fraser has compared to a religious revival. By 1890, almost half of the United States’ over 350,000 teachers attended one of the 2,003 institutes nationwide. While institutes, professional organizations, and educational journals had existed since before the Civil War, the renewed emphasis on standardization increased their respective attendance and distribution.²⁸ Mandatory attendance laws, another nationwide shift, also evinced the extent of efforts to transform American education. By the late-1880s, dozens of states had enacted such laws. Local resistance to these legislative reforms and Progressive methods, especially in rural areas, challenged many educators championing the “cult of efficiency,” but this trend nonetheless reshaped much of American education by the twentieth century.²⁹

Progressive educators sought to reshape schools to meet the challenges an increasingly industrial America created. Urbanization and an influx of immigration had transformed the nation’s demographics, and many reformers viewed education as a valuable way to address the problems these shifts caused. Many champions of modern pedagogical tactics insisted that training students required more than simply lessons in math and English, however. Schools, as widespread and influential tools of social governance, helped weave an expanding and

²⁸ James W. Fraser, *Preparing America’s Teachers: A History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2007), 67-70.

²⁹ Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 2-6. See also Sol Cohen, *Progressives and Urban School Reform: The Public Education Association of New York, 1895-1954* (New York: Teacher’s College, Columbia University, 1964); Raymond E. Callahan, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

increasingly diverse population into American society through their coercive power. By championing a standard curriculum that stressed the duties of citizenship, the rising generation of professional educators sought to mold an efficient citizenry for a complex society. Citizenship, then, became a vital goal of many educators. This renewed emphasis on creating capable and intelligent citizens coincided with private organizations' emphasis on bringing national symbols and rituals into schools. Indeed, patriotism appealed to educators as a way of instilling a uniform set of beliefs that all Americans ought to share. This, alongside widespread reform efforts, offered the promise of rectifying perceived social problems and creating an invigorated and unified generation of future workers and leaders. By the 1890s, educators across the country took to promoting this message in educational journals, a shift that put the nascent patriotic education movement into writing and allowed it to spread nationwide.³⁰

Professional educators writing in journals looked to make teaching civics and history both patriotically profitable and educational. These tactics became common in the early-1890s, often coinciding with the forthcoming four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's arrival to the United States. Prominent educational journals featured a litany of articles with titles like "Talks on Civics," "Education for Citizenship," and "Patriotism" in the 1890s. In 1891, for example, Nebraska superintendent Melville Beverage Cox True offered suggestions for suitable library materials in the journal *Education*. Casting his selections as ideally suited for the "modern" school, True contended: "The literature supplied to American children should be American." To True, this aided in promoting "the chief object of state schools in America . . . the training for

³⁰ Steffes, "A New Education for a Modern Age," 29-40, 222; Cremin, *The Transformation of the School*, viii. For the key role print capitalism plays in spreading nationalist sentiment, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 2006 [1983]), 37-65.

good citizenship.”³¹ Making good citizens, furthermore, required that students read thoroughly American textbooks. True warned against stocking libraries with books that called anything about the nation’s ideals and institutions into question: “An American child should no more be allowed to read an adverse criticism of American institutions, and of American social conditions, than he should be allowed to read an adverse criticism of his family. His historian should be en rapport with the American people, and with their efforts to push their civilization to higher planes.” True felt historians could not be “true citizens of the nation” without presenting a favorable assessment of American history. True did, however, acknowledge his bias in favor of zealous patriotism. “In my calmest moments I assent to the wild, spread-eagle statements of the Fourth of July orator,” he claimed, “and I would have the books placed in the hands of young students infused with the same spirit, toned down, of course, to more discreet rhetoric.” While True claimed to be a fanatic, other educators expressed similar opinions on patriotism’s potential power.³²

Both in the pages of educational journals and before professional organizations, educators suggested programs for patriotic study. Many stressed a symbolic vision of patriotism. As Principal H.K. White noted before the Maine Teachers’ Association: “the flag is one of the most powerful means of appealing to pupils.” White argued that, “Every teacher should talk flag to the school.” White asserted that strong teachers would stress patriotism and the flag’s importance above all other subjects. “Some teachers can get more news from the rule of three than out of the ‘Star Spangled Banner,’” White noted. Apparently disregarding the value of basic math skills, he

³¹ M.B.C. True, “School Libraries,” *Education* 12, no. 4 (December 1891), 216; For some of True’s work as state superintendent, see M.B.C. True, *A Manual of the History and Civil Government of the State of Nebraska* (Omaha, Nebraska: Gibson, Miller, and Richardson: 1885).

³² *Ibid.*, 218. Nationalism as a standard aspect of the historical profession in this era is elaborated on in chapter three of this thesis, and also Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Questions” and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

added, “the school ought to have very little use for such teachers. Almost everything can be made to teach patriotism.”³³ Albert Edward Winship echoed these sentiments about the flag’s importance in a September edition of the *Journal of Education*. Winship claimed there should be flags present for “every noteworthy occasion,” and that these needed “to be pointed to, looked at, and waved at the appropriate times.” Winship offered a sprawling list of ways educators could present flags, including for ceremonial purposes, as permanent fixtures in classrooms, and even in children’s buttonholes. Aside from having a schoolhouse teeming with flags, Winship also urged educators to tell exciting patriotic stories meant to double as basic history lessons.³⁴ As one educator claimed in *Education*, “An American has no excuse for ignorance of American history . . . No history can be more interesting, for it abounds in deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice and reads like the most fascinating romance.” The historical record, to these educators, was just as thrilling as any piece of fiction.³⁵

Flags and thrilling tales of past heroes offered a simple way of rousing patriotism, but some educators also stressed developing students’ character. New York State Superintendent Andrew S. Draper, before the 1891 meeting of the Wisconsin Teachers’ Association, claimed schools existed solely to create well-prepared men for society. To Draper, this ideal citizen must “feel like removing his hat in the presence of the flag of the republic wherever it may appear, and be ready to fight for what the flag means whenever it may be necessary.”³⁶ Here, Draper noted two standard aspects of patriotic thought in this era: reverence for national symbols and a willingness to participate in the military. Then, invoking Progressive ideals of standardized educational systems, Draper noted the importance of “perfecting a public educational system,

³³ H.K. White, “Patriotism,” *Journal of Education* 35, no.6 (January 21, 1892), 37.

³⁴ “Talks on Civics,” *Journal of Education* 36, no. 10 (September 15, 1892), 168.

³⁵ Walter S. Harley, “Education for Citizenship,” *Education* 13, no. 1 (September 1892), 17.

³⁶ Andrew S. Draper, “American Schools for American Citizenship,” *Journal of Education* 35, no. 1 (January 7, 1892), 4.

complete and symmetrical from the kindergarten to the university” that could inculcate these ideals.³⁷ While children could not be taught religious principles in school, Draper claimed, patriotism offered a noble alternative. Instilling these ideals, however, required that schools hire patriotic instructors. As Draper noted, “If her soul is not attuned to the music of the Union, there would be little patriotic ardor, even in the presence of all the bullet-riddled and blood-stained battle-flags which your soldiers carried so grandly from Shiloh to Atlanta and from ‘Atlanta to the Sea.’”³⁸ Draper tellingly referred to the teacher as an exclusively female figure, a comment that reflected the shifting gender disparity among schoolteachers. Draper’s language, as an important public figure in the nation’s most populous state, is significant. This speech, delivered to a large professional association and subsequently published in a leading educational journal, offers an example of how individual voices played a vital role in spreading the gospel of patriotic education.³⁹

Articles in educational journals equated modern schools with patriotic schools. As Boston school supervisor George H. Martin argued in *Education*, “Looking toward citizenship are history, civics, and various special exercises to develop patriotism: the flag over the schoolhouse is a most significant emblem of the new purpose working itself out beneath.” The flag, rousing history lessons, and nationalist celebrations served important functions, but so too could current events.⁴⁰ Author Otis F. Presbrey of the Washington D.C. periodical *Public Opinion*, meanwhile, argued for the America’s global supremacy. “What our nation needs in this, the four-hundredth anniversary of its discovery,” Presbrey argued, “is that its citizens should be fully educated and

³⁷ Ibid., 5.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Draper’s views on immigration and assimilation evoke the relatively open process Jeffery Mirel describes in *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 5-6. For the shifting gender disparity among teachers, see chapter 3 of this thesis.

⁴⁰ George H. Martin, “The Modern School,” *Education* 13, no. 9 (May 1893), 521.

equipped to meet the great problems that are constantly arising . . . so that our country shall occupy the highest position among the nations of the earth.”⁴¹ John Eaton, a doctor of law from Washington D.C., similarly argued that “ignorance is the precursor of evil,” and urged educators to make use of both historical and current government documents. Teaching current events, as these advocates noted, could save children from descending into degeneracy or outright evil. Understanding current political debates and procedures, educators learned, offered a useful way of imbuing students with a deep love for the nation’s government.⁴²

Articles endorsing patriotic lessons in educational journals addressed both the subject’s symbolic and practical value. Not coincidentally, the nation’s coming Columbian anniversary offered teachers an opportunity to apply these methods. Additionally, many advertisements plugged volumes brimming with appropriate patriotic materials. The *Journal of Education*, for instance, contained an advertisement for a volume titled *Songs of History: Poems and Ballads upon Important Events in American History*, compiled by Hezekiah Butterworth of the *Youth’s Companion*. This notice stressed the volume’s utility for “Exposition Day,” explaining its inclusion of poems about Columbus, Queen Isabella of Spain, and even “The Bird that Sang to Columbus.” A capsule review from the *Christian Register* in Boston deemed this compendium full of “the strength of heroism, the tenderness; of human love, or the sublimity of faith in God.”⁴³ Hezekiah Butterworth not only compiled patriotic tomes but also dabbled in composing nationalist ditties. An article excerpted from a book compiled by Henry B. Carrington, or “General Carrington,” offered a hearty endorsement of Butterworth’s song “Cheer, Cheer, the

⁴¹ Otis F. Presbrey, “Current Events in Schools” *Journal of Education* 36, no. 6 (August 18, 1892), 105. This edition featured a piece by E. O. Vaile of Chicago under the same title that similarly lauded developing citizenship through the teaching of current events.

⁴² John Eaton, “Teaching Patriotism and Current Events,” *Journal of Education* 35, no. 7 (February 18, 1892), 101.

⁴³ Advertisement: “For Exposition Day,” *Journal of Education* 35, no.1 (Jan 7, 1892), 16.

Flag.”⁴⁴ The *Journal of Education*’s decision to excerpt from Carrington’s lengthy volume *Columbian Selections, American Patriotism* exemplifies these manuals’ burgeoning popularity. The material inside *Columbian Selections*, meanwhile, offers insight into the character of patriotism promoted in American schools.⁴⁵

Columbian Selections, first issued in 1892, illustrates this landmark anniversary’s role in promoting patriotic education. Marketed for home and school, Carrington claimed in the book’s preface that it was particularly suited to classrooms, libraries, and the casual reader as well. Columbus mattered, Carrington explained, because “Christopher, the ‘Christ-Bearer,’ planted Christianity upon the American shores, and the fitness of his name so well accords with the grandeur of his best gift to the new World, that all minor criticisms fade away.”⁴⁶ Regardless of whether these “minor criticisms” meant the destruction of countless natives in the Caribbean or merely Columbus’s Italian and Catholic background, his success in spreading Christianity nonetheless deserved all Americans’ praise. *Columbian Selections* appropriately began with odes to Columbus by current patriotic boosters like Carrington, Francis Bellamy, Hezekiah Butterworth, and even more high-profile Americans like Benjamin Harrison, Washington Irving, and Noah Webster, before proceeding to cover the rest of the nation’s history. Sections devoted to the nation’s founders, battle for independence, important memorials, special holidays and celebrations, and patriotic songs followed, as did a section titled “America Survives the Ordeal of Conflicting Systems.” While its title provided an attractive euphemism for the Civil War,

⁴⁴ “School Flag Honors,” *Journal of Education* 36, no. 7 (August 25, 1892), 123.

⁴⁵ Examples of ground level preparations in schools for Columbus Day can be found in “Columbus Day in the Schools,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 30, 1892, 3; “Its Tribute Paid,” and “Army of Children,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (October 11, 1892), 1; “It is Columbus Day,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 19, 1892, 2.

⁴⁶ Henry B. Carrington, *Columbian Selections* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1896), vii.

these selections stressed the nobility of both North and South and urged reconciliation, a standard theme in the era's patriotic literature.⁴⁷

The final two sections of *Columbian Selections*, however, offer the most telling examples of patriotic education's purpose in the early 1890s. The chapter "Patriotism to be Fostered in the Schools," featured a number of essays arguing in favor of patriotic education, and in the chapter's introduction Carrington claimed: "At no previous time in American history has there been a more pressing demand for the inculcation of patriotic sentiment through the schools, than during these closing years of the nineteenth century." In assessing the reasons for this, Carrington pointed to immigration, noting that "the increasing influx of an illiterate, unsympathetic, foreign element deepens that sentiment." Indeed, the rising numbers of immigrants in the nation and fears of the deviant political ideologies they may bring with them loomed large in the minds of concerned commentators, but so too did what New York State Superintendent of Public Instruction Andrew Draper noted in a 1887 speech Carrington cited. Draper claimed the lack of a patriotic environment contributed to American malaise: "we have little in our every-day life to arouse patriotic ardor. We have no frequent or great exhibitions of power; no army to stand in awe of; no royalty to worship; no emblems or ribbons to dazzle the eye; and but few national airs." Americans, it seemed, lacked the romantic qualities popularly associated with national pride. In lieu of erecting a massive army, composing new patriotic songs, and anointing a king, however, Americans could use its rapidly expanding public school system to cultivate devout nationalism. Carrington then praised the efforts of state superintendents from Texas to New Hampshire for emphasizing similar themes. Due to this

⁴⁷ For the growth of reunionist sentiment, see David Blight, *Race and Reunion*; Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

momentum, Carrington claimed, “[patriotism] will soon be, if it is not already, a specialty, of universal and cardinal importance.”⁴⁸

This section of Carrington’s study contained eleven articles lauding patriotic education. These titles varied from “The Problem of To-Day. —Patriotism the Great School Lesson,” to “Our Education must be American.” Francis Bellamy’s ode to “The Coming School-Master” also reappeared. Tellingly, the section also featured an article titled, “Temperance Education the Patriot’s Ally. — Through our Youth the Nation lives,” by Mary Hunt of the WCTU.⁴⁹ This selection originally appeared as part of a speech Hunt gave to the United States Senate Committee on Education and Labor in 1886, and served as a reminder of the important link between women’s groups, temperance, and school patriotism. Hunt used patriotic and religious language to push for temperance education, claiming, “Wherever our flag shall be unfurled over this and other lands throughout all Christendom, will be felt the blessed example, if this Congress of the United States shall thus provide for the Temperance Education of the children under its jurisdiction.”⁵⁰ Patriotism and temperance, to the WCTU and other supporters, both deserved a prominent place in schools.

Carrington’s assortment of patriotic odes to America on the verge of the Columbian Exposition ended with a section looking toward the nation’s future. Alongside patriotic passages from William Tecumseh Sherman and Daniel Webster, and patriotic songs and programs for national holidays, the book also included a selection by prominent nationalist author Josiah Strong titled “The Anglo-Saxon and the World’s Future.” This racialized view of American progress cast patriotic education as a way of ensuring the Anglo-Saxon’s continued dominance. “Emigration from Europe, which is certain to increase,” Strong claimed, “exerts a modifying

⁴⁸ Carrington, *Columbian Selections*, 350-351.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 351-376. For a description of Hunt’s work with the WCTU, see Zimmerman, *Distilling Democracy*.

⁵⁰ Carrington, *Columbian Selections*, 373.

influence on the Anglo-Saxon stock; but their descendants are sure to be Anglo-Saxonized.”

Strong’s ode to racial destiny through patriotism concluded with a forceful plea, asking that God expose “the possibilities within the Christian patriot’s grasp.” To Strong, this required that the nation’s youth become patriotic and brimming with “pure Christianity and universal civil liberty!”⁵¹

Strong’s influence as well as his forceful, evangelical take on American nationalism reached an audience outside of Carrington’s volume of Columbian odes. An ardent advocate of this renewed Americanism, Strong’s 1885 book *Our Country* offered an early interpretation of the form that this patriotic fervor would assume.⁵² In this book, Strong praised the nation’s Christianity and warned against immigrants’ apparent proclivity for socialism.⁵³ As Strong noted, “Most of the Internationals, the anarchic socialists, in this country are Germans, whose numbers are constantly being recruited by immigration.”⁵⁴ Strong’s solution: “Christianize the Immigrant . . . and he will be easily Americanized.”⁵⁵ His 1898 book *The Twentieth Century City* echoed these sentiments, along with advocating the banishment of obscene literature — French novels were singled out as especially unworthy— and a renewed commitment to social justice.⁵⁶ A zealous advocate of both nationalism and Christianity, as secretary general of the Evangelical Alliance of the United States, Strong launched an aggressive program to disseminate patriotic

⁵¹ Ibid., 385-386.

⁵² “For Good Citizenship,” *New York Times*, Dec. 13, 1897, 2.

⁵³ Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Present Crisis* (New York: The American Home Missionary Society, 1885), 42.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 92.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 210.

⁵⁶ Josiah Strong, *The Twentieth Century City* (New York: The Baker and Taylor Co., 1898), 109, 114.

literature to the masses, and especially schoolchildren. To reformers like Strong, the schools offered an ideal site to disseminate patriotic propaganda.⁵⁷

Thinkers like Strong continued spreading a nationalist message throughout the 1890s, but the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 held in Chicago marked a key point in reformers' efforts to establish patriotism's presence in the schools. Much of this stemmed from the efforts of the *Youth's Companion*. This magazine's editors, upon hearing of the plans for Chicago's exposition, proposed to put schools at the center of the celebration. Lobbying for this event months in advance, the *Companion* played a large role in the passage of a joint resolution by both houses in June of 1892 making a Columbus Day a national public school holiday. Following President Benjamin Harrison's signing of this law, the first official celebration of Columbus Day by schoolchildren took on heightened importance across the nation.⁵⁸ Students celebrated at the Columbian School Celebration in Chicago as well as in many other states. As the *Youth's Companion* claimed, over 100,00 schools held patriotic fetes, and "The ode and song for Columbus day were rendered and the address was declaimed from ocean to ocean, and from the Lakes to the Gulf."⁵⁹ *The New York Times* seemingly confirmed these claims the day after Columbus Day with the headline "Everywhere Observed: Parades and Patriotic Exercises All Over the Country."⁶⁰

Columbus Day of 1892 gave schoolchildren across the nation an opportunity to express their patriotism, and at the World's Columbian Exposition the following spring several commentators offered their support of this movement. At the Exposition's International Congress

⁵⁷ "For Good Citizenship," *New York Times*, Dec 13, 1897, 2. The Evangelical Alliance promoted a series of patriotic pamphlets titled "Truths for the Times," featuring contributions from Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt, among others.

⁵⁸ O'Leary, *To Die For*, 157-167.

⁵⁹ "Columbus Day," *The Youth's Companion* 65, no. 46 (November 17, 1892), 608.

⁶⁰ "Everywhere Observed," *New York Times*, October 22, 1892, 2.

of Education, Salem, Massachusetts superintendent William A. Mowry used his forum to champion teaching patriotism. Mowry's presentation asked, "What Special Work should be Undertaken in the Elementary Schools to Prepare the Pupils for the Duties of Citizenship?" Mowry argued for an emphasis on nationalist history among the nation's youngest schoolchildren. "The knowledge of facts of one's country must be known before one can have love of country," Mowry claimed. History lessons, then, needed to be imparted "very early in the life of the pupil to teach him the essential facts of the history of this nation."⁶¹ Mowry praised the virtues of singing patriotic songs and observing national holidays in schools. Indeed, to Mowry America had a special history that deserved to be celebrated. Commenting on the instructiveness of historical actors' experiences, Mowry claimed a study of the nation's earliest settlers and Revolutionary figures would bolster students' knowledge of "our peculiar political institutions and advantages." Several supporters of patriotic education deemed this exceptionalist and glorified vision of American history precisely what students needed to learn in order to become productive citizens.⁶²

Women's groups and female educators also addressed the issue of patriotism at the Columbian Exposition. The Women's Building at the Exposition hosted an event called the Congress of Women. Here, several speakers urged women to take an active role teaching patriotism. Teaching, in the early-1890s, was becoming an increasingly feminized profession. Accordingly, these speakers urged attendees to embrace this changing role.⁶³ One address at the Women's Building lauded the nation's diversity while promoting a rigid interpretation of gender

⁶¹ William A. Mowry, "What Special Work should be Undertaken in the Elementary Schools to Prepare the Pupils for the Duties of Citizenship?" in *Addresses and Proceedings of the International Congress of Education [of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, July 25-28, 1893]* (New York: National Educational Association of the United States, 1895), 275.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 276.

⁶³ For more on the changing gender dynamics within the teaching profession, see chapter three of this thesis.

roles. Cora Michael McDonald, a former high school teacher and principal, deemed the influx of immigrants into the United States a desirable trend in her speech “Literature for Young People.” Then, asserting the desirability of racial mixing, McDonald claimed, “The nations of the earth are coming to our shores and mingling with our people. Into the blood of coming generations will be infused the best elements of every race, giving rise to a new nation superior in intellectual vigor to any that has existed.”⁶⁴ McDonald’s version of Americanization welcomed racial diversity but also emphasized traditional values. McDonald noted that children’s literature should “inculcate virtue, patriotism, love of God, of father, of mother, kindness to dumb animals, and . . . give correct rules of action.”⁶⁵ McDonald asserted that women possessed inherent superiority in managing the home and extended her interpretation of women’s proper role to the teaching profession. In a telling passage, McDonald concluded:

God is revealing to the nations woman's place and work in the world. She will lead the children aright, she will influence them through those institutions which are the glory and the hope of America--the home and the public school. She will direct the physical, the intellectual, the spiritual energy of her life toward the rising generation. In the home, in the Sunday-school, and in the day school, she will feed the mind upon pure and noble thoughts, thus giving it a habit, a tendency, which shall determine character and destiny.⁶⁶

Unlike the WCTU and other school reformers, McDonald did not promote an expansion of women’s influence in the political realm or as advocates for other social causes. McDonald did, however, declare that women had a vital role in a nascent patriotic education movement’s push to reshape American society.

Another presenter offered a different take on patriotic education while introducing the audience to a new organization: the Patriotic League. Harriet Earhart Monroe, a professional

⁶⁴ Cora Martin McDonald, “Literature for Young People,” in *The Congress of Women Held in the Women's Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, U.S.A. 1893* (Chicago, IL: W.B. Conkey Company, 1894), 267.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 265.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

lecturer and writer on educational subjects from Pennsylvania, emphasized the threats that foreign influence posed in the nation's public schools. Monroe explained teachers' responsibility to "Americanize every young foreigner in this country by seeing that he learns to read and write in the English language, and that he understands common morality, and comprehends the sacred and far-reaching influences of the ballot."⁶⁷ This tactic, Monroe claimed, was one of the Patriotic League's key tenets. Monroe alleged this organization would unite students and teachers under a common patriotic purpose. Their ultimate goal, Monroe explained, was "to secure a higher order of citizenship by more carefully looking after the moral and civil training of the young men in school."⁶⁸ Like many advocates of patriotic education, Monroe used the language of promoting citizenship as a justification for these efforts.

According to Monroe, the Patriotic League promoted strict standards for students and teachers alike. Teachers adopted a pledge promising both God and the nation that "the object of my school is to make good men and women for society and the state." The pledge also compelled teachers to lead a "noble life," help Americanize foreigners, and ensure impoverished children receive an education.⁶⁹ As Monroe described, the Patriotic League emphasized Christianity, temperance, and social service, but simultaneously warned of the threat that immigrants posed. This organization received significant attention in the years following the Columbian Exposition. Francis Willard, in her 1894 annual address, celebrated the Patriotic League's plan "to instill American ideas into the minds and hearts of both native and adopted Americans of both sexes, and of all ages, parties, and sects." Willard urged WCTU juvenile workers to contact the League and adopt their plans.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Harriet Earhart Monroe, "Synopsis of the Making of Citizens," *Congress of Women*, 312.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 311.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 313.

⁷⁰ Quote from Willard, "President's Address," in National WCTU, *Minutes, November 1894*, 176.

The Patriotic League, based in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, formed in the early 1890s and pressed for the inclusion of patriotism in schools throughout the northeast. As Monroe explained in an 1892 article, the Patriotic League hoped to create good citizens as a way of giving taxpayers their money's worth. "The State pays for the public schools," Monroe claimed, "with the expectation that they will make good citizens for the commonwealth and the Republic." The organization's goal, she added, was ensuring that teachers reiterated principles of patriotism in schools, "until each pupil is fully imbued with the dignity of the idea that he is to be a helper in fitting himself for intelligent citizenship, and also that he is to look after all other children who ought to be in school." While urging students to reform their wayward peers, the Patriotic League also placed an emphasis on those not enrolled in school, raising funds allowing children with negligent parents to be rehabilitated and sent to public schools.⁷¹

The Patriotic League became another key advocate of patriotic education in the 1890s, and their presence made it clear this movement would not simply fade following the World's Columbian Exposition. One article in *The Chautauquan*, a periodical focused on education and religion, lauded the organization's aims, noting that they reflected the popular public opinion that "the children of this country shall be Americans, and shall know what American means." Referencing two other important patriotic organizations, the GAR and WRC, this notice offered similar praise while pointing toward the potential of Columbus-related celebrations to stimulate this patriotic fervor. The author added one caveat, however, by claiming, "Were we not admitting un-American residents faster than we are rearing up Americans, what ideal citizens we would develop!"⁷² The immigration issue, while a crucial catalyst for patriotic education, garnered mixed responses from its supporters. Another publication, the Christian magazine

⁷¹ Harriet Earhart Monroe, "School and College: A New Movement in Public Schools," *The Independent* (September 8, 1892), 8.

⁷² "Editor's Note-Book," *The Chautauquan* 16, no. 2 (November 1892), 224.

Outlook, announced a new chapter of the Patriotic League and revealed another reason for the group's impressive influence: its advisory board included prominent Americans like Josiah Strong and then-Ohio governor William McKinley.⁷³

The Patriotic League gradually became a significant educational lobby group. In 1897, longstanding president Wilson L. Gill even garnered support for his "Gill School City," an experiment in student-led democracy within selected New York City schools.⁷⁴ Other members of the group, like Vice President Henry H. Adams, brought with them considerable wealth and connections from their myriad business interests and organizational ties. While this group's sources of funding are unclear, the support of major figures like Strong and McKinley and wealthy members like Adams suggests that they were not lacking in assets. Amid a long list of his business and organizational affiliations, the periodical *The Successful American* tellingly claimed of Adams in 1900, "from boyhood his patriotism has always been aggressive, and the placing of the Stars and Stripes on the schoolhouses in many States is due to the movement advanced by him."⁷⁵ Articles addressing the organization's work also reflected the perceived necessity of patriotic education groups' efforts. A notice promoting patriotic activities for the Fourth of July in the *Congregationalist* included a postscript lauding the Patriotic League. The author, Clara Smith Colton of Patchogue, New York, first invoked the WCTU motto, "For God and home and native land." Colton then elaborated that, "Our hope for the future is our children, so should we not take out a life insurance policy for our country by beginning to teach the boys and girls real reasons for loving their native land?" Citing the perceived issues of political

⁷³ Eliza S. Pell, "The Evening Star Chapter of the Patriotic League," *Outlook* 51, no. 26 (June 29, 1895), 1134.

⁷⁴ "The Gill School City," *New York Evangelist* 67, no. 38 (September 23, 1897), 27; "Teaching Self-Government in Imaginary City," *New York Times*, January 19, 1902, 10. The Gill School City represented an attempt to get students to experience American civic life first hand to better prepare themselves for intelligent citizenship.

⁷⁵ "Col. Henry H. Adams," *The Successful American* 2, no. 4 (October 1904), 22. This publication lists Adams as president and controlling owner of the Colonial Iron Company, and president of the Algonquin Copper Company, and the Adams Gold and Silver Mining Company. Adams also was a past commander of a New York GAR post, and a member of several other patriotic organizations.

corruption and boss politics that other ardent patriots of the era referenced alongside fears of immigrants, Colton's invocation of patriotic education as "an insurance policy" reflects the sentiments of many supporters: building patriotism will ensure loyal and efficient citizenry by steering children away from deviant political ideologies and social behaviors.⁷⁶

Like many groups of the era concerned with using the schools to foster citizenship, the Patriotic League harnessed the power of print media and published a primer for students. Author Charles Fletcher Dole, a prolific writer on patriotic, religious, and economic subjects compiled *Citizen's Catechism*. Initially released in 1896, the Patriotic League primarily sought to market *Citizen's Catechism* to schools, but as Dole wrote in its preface, this manual was "intended for men, women and children, even those in kindergarten." Dole's book explained important facts about and the principles of the United States government. *Citizen's Catechism*, Dole claimed, contained everything one needed to know about governance and citizenship and could be of use at all stages of a reader's life.⁷⁷ The book included a variety of "Rights and Duties," as well as a list of "The Principles of the Patriotic League." Among these, the League emphasized the Declaration of Independence's importance, proclaimed citizens' "duty to consecrate ourselves to the service of the Government," and demanded: "That the public, in assuming the education of children, becomes responsible to them not only for physical, industrial, mental and moral culture, but also for special training, to the end that they shall be most happy, useful and patriotic while children, and become intelligent and faithful citizens." This organization, much like other nationalist groups, tied childhood patriotism to a civil and intelligent adulthood, stressing a sense of social and political obligation.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Clara Smith Colton, "Sunday Occupations for Boys and Girls," *Congregationalist* 79, no. 26 (June 28, 1894), 893.

⁷⁷ Charles Dole, *Citizen's Catechism* (New York: The Patriotic League, 1896), 5. Dole later wrote a markedly similar tome, *The Young Citizen* (Norwood, Mass.: Norwood Press, 1899).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

Indeed, as Dole asserted in his lengthy list of “Rights and Duties,” many felt patriotic education would ensure “domestic tranquility.” Tellingly, however, the state held the utmost responsibility for creating a placid civil society. Dole listed this progression toward an orderly society: “First, through the education of the youth to orderly habits and the patriotic spirit; next by the making of just laws; and then, if necessary, by the use of the police, the militia and the regular army, and by prisons and reformatories for the confinement of offenders.”⁷⁹ This characterization of the state’s import in shaping society mirrors Progressives’ fervor for social governance. Proponents of patriotic education targeted the public schools because of their nationwide scope and perceived influence. Similarly, in response to the question, “What is the object of our public schools?” Dole responded, “To cure the evils of ignorance by education that we may thus secure skillful, thoughtful and high-minded citizens.”⁸⁰ This required children’s compliance, however, and *Citizen’s Catechism* fittingly concluded with a “Young Citizen’s Pledge,” asking students to swear, “I am a CITIZEN of AMERICA and HEIR to all her Greatness and Renown.” Furthermore, the pledge used a military metaphor in urging students’ obedience to patriotic ideals: “As it is cowardly for a soldier to run away from the battle, so is it cowardly for any citizen not to contribute his share to the well-being of his country. America is my own dear land . . . I will love her and do my duty to her, whose child, servant, and civil soldier I am.” America’s government and institutions, this pledge implied, obligated the rising generation to become patriotic “civil soldiers.”⁸¹

While *Citizen’s Catechism* offers a telling glimpse into the Patriotic League’s primary concerns, it also shows that some variation existed in the proposed platforms of patriotic

⁷⁹ Ibid., 18

⁸⁰ Ibid., 29. For social governance in the Progressive Era, see Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice in Progressive Era Chicago* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁸¹ Ibid., 43. Emphasis in original.

education enthusiasts. For one, this book agreed with the sentiments of the WCTU in casting alcohol as a decidedly negative social force. Drinking alcohol, Dole argued, “adds millions of dollars to the cost of keeping the police force, courts, almshouses, hospitals and jails.”⁸²

Similarly, despite Dole’s frequent use of military metaphors in lauding children’s patriotic duty, the *Catechism* depicted the Patriotic League, and all true Americans, as pacifists. After alluding to a “barbarous custom” that wasted myriad tax dollars, Dole plainly argued, “The custom of war raises the cost of government enormously . . . Most wars, like quarrels among neighbors, could be prevented by raising the standard of unselfish and intelligent citizenship and by arbitration.”⁸³ Indeed, this anti-war sentiment appeared amid growing calls in the late-1890s America for intervention abroad, especially among vocal nationalists.

In the mid-1890s, the American economy was mired in a deep recession, and militarists increasingly promoted war as a way of stimulating nationalist sentiment and, conveniently, the economy. This lobbying, not coincidentally accompanied by an uptick in public assertions of patriotic fervor, resulted in America’s intervention in Cuba’s war for independence in 1898. Even prior to America’s Civil War, aggressive expansionists had lobbied for the nation to intervene and overturn Spanish control over Cuba. For both strategic and psychological reasons, Cuba became a coveted site for many Americans. Reports of Spain’s poor treatment of Cuban revolutionaries increased throughout the mid-1890s. In this case war seemed advantageous for numerous reasons, offering new opportunities for the nation in trade and foreign policy. Despite these logical reasons, a war with Spain also promised to ease other American anxieties. Both North and South alike supported the war, and for many the conflict offered a unique opportunity to end sectional tensions once and for all by bringing northerners and southerners together in a

⁸² Ibid., 26.

⁸³ Ibid., 25.

fight against a common enemy. Similarly, a war with Spain and new territorial acquisitions would ease the anxieties of Americans concerned with the nation's relatively recent loss of a frontier. Indeed, assuaging frontier anxiety and promoting sectional reunion offered psychological consolation to many Americans, and as a result, a renewed sense of patriotic fervor explicitly linked with military aims grew exponentially in the years leading to the War of 1898.⁸⁴

The martial zeal of the mid-1890s bolstered appeals for patriotism in schools. Despite the pacifist leanings of groups like the Patriotic League, the WCTU, and thinkers like Josiah Strong, the bellicose posturing of the GAR and romantic racial nationalists increasingly dominated American patriotic discourse. One patriotic tome directly addressing and vehemently supporting this transition toward an explicitly martial culture in American schools exemplifies this trend. Written by former newspaper editor and prolific author John Bell Bouton, *Uncle Sam's Church: His Creed, Bible, and Hymn-Book*, published in 1895, argued that America's future overseas endeavors would create an even more strenuous national culture. "This Republic is on the eve of stirring events," Bouton claimed in the book's preface. Further, he explained, "The New Patriotism that is in the air is but a Divine instinct of preparation for them. Our 'White Navy' is something more than a harmless symbol of National power and pride. It is not a flock of doves. It means Peace only when that is consistent with Justice and Honor." Bouton continued his ode to American expansion by proclaiming Manifest Destiny of the entire western hemisphere the nation's "mission." Referencing tensions with Spain, Bouton invoked America's supposedly

⁸⁴ On the reunionist goals and successes of the War of 1898, see Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 352-354. For the war as a project of regeneration in the midst of social fears of enervation, see Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 207-209, and Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 170-216. For an in-depth look at frontier anxiety and its role in stimulating expansionist zeal, see Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993). The early roots of this expansionist ideology are well documented in Amy Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood in Antebellum America* (New York: Cambridge, 2005).

glorious destiny in advocating war. Bouton then criticized notions he felt endangered American progress, warning that “Socialists, with deceptive olive branches, and Anarchists, with real daggers, torches, and bombs, are menacing the institutions that are our heritage, bought by the Fathers with so great a price of blood and treasure.” American destiny necessitated not merely expansion, but also eliminating internal threats. The best way to ensure a patriotic consensus in America, Bouton then claimed, would be to make schools a breeding ground for loyal citizens.⁸⁵

While the martial culture championed by the GAR received a firm endorsement in patriotic texts, so too did their emphasis on the power of national symbols. *Uncle Sam’s Church* agitated for hanging flags, the Declaration of Independence, and the constitution in post offices, schools, and other federal buildings. Along with making these state institutions into “Uncle Sam’s churches,” Bouton sought to instill school children with increased reverence for the flag.⁸⁶ To Bouton, children needed patriotic education to instill traditional values that could not be taught under religious auspices. As Bouton stated, “A National Patriotic Cult must be made to supply the place of an impossible State Religion.”⁸⁷ The tenets of Christianity could not be forced on schoolchildren, but “Uncle Sam’s Church” could. Public reception of *Uncle Sam’s Church* was positive. *The Chautauquan* raved that upon reading the book, “one feels like an embodied Fourth of July and longs to fire cannons in one’s honor . . . it is brimming with feasible plans for our country’s betterment . . . a book to be read, studied, and followed.”⁸⁸ *The Literary World* disagreed somewhat, noting that although “we think we underrates the knowledge that even schoolchildren possess of our history,” indeed, “his plans deserve the attention of

⁸⁵ John Bell Bouton, *Uncle Sam’s Church: His Creed, Bible, and Hymn-Book* (Cambridge: University Press, 1895), iii.

⁸⁶ “Literature,” *Christian Advocate* 70, no. 13, (March 28, 1895), 12.

⁸⁷ Bouton, *Uncle Sam’s Church*, iv.

⁸⁸ “Miscellaneous,” *The Chautauquan: A Weekly Newsmagazine* 22, no. 4, (January 1896), 511.

reformers.”⁸⁹ Bouton’s book, though largely speculative and openly militaristic, offers a telling window into how patriotic reformers’ views shifted throughout the 1890s.

Aside from accurately predicting the boon to patriotic education a war with Spain would provide, Bouton pointed to other key developments. “The World’s Columbian Exposition at Chicago,” Bouton argued, addressing a crucial rallying point for patriotic education, was “a brilliant triumph of National Patriotism.”⁹⁰ This event, he noted, displayed America’s superiority to nations across the world, while providing an example of national unity that assuaged even the most ardent sectionalists. Bouton also noted a vital component in spreading patriotic zeal in his agitation for making post offices, “*an active centre for the exposition and propagation of the Patriotic Cult.*” Bouton rhetorically asked, and then answered, “How can this best be done? Answer: By the free, but judicious, use of *Uncle Sam’s printing press.*”⁹¹ Print media disseminated by post offices could get nationalist thought into the hands of millions of Americans, and indeed, as the litany of patriotic articles in journals, newspaper notices, and nationalist tomes attested to, print played an enormous role in stoking zeal for patriotic education. As Bouton summarized in a chapter titled “The Treason of Indifferentism,” “The public schools, where the history of the country is taught and the Constitution is among the text-books, and national songs are sung, are the very nurseries of Patriots.”⁹²

Bouton’s now-obscure book did not merely reflect a lone hyper-patriotic zealot’s political and social desires. Rather, this text reflects how in the years prior to the War of 1898, a litany of supporters began articulating and agitating for the prominent presence of national symbols, myths, and texts in schools. While the ideologies of these actors varied, they similarly sought to

⁸⁹ Untitled article, *The Literary World: A Monthly Review of Current Literature* 26, no. 4 (February 1895), 60.

⁹⁰ Bouton, *Uncle Sam’s Church*, 17.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 23. Emphasis in original.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 69.

use a state institution — the public schools — to stimulate what they deemed a productive and loyal citizenry. These reformers seized on key moments and the power of mass media to push their agenda. Making schools explicitly nationalistic, as Bouton noted, was vital in making “a national patriotic cult.” Using the schools to stimulate good citizenship was an important Progressive project. The ultimate aim of reformers of all stripes who supported patriotic education was to cultivate national unity and promote social progress. Patriotic education was not merely a romantic, conservative project, although it certainly had an element of reverence for an imagined past. Instead, these efforts attempted to reshape how students viewed the nation and its history under the auspices of creating a stable future. By 1898, reformers and writers had performed a considerable amount of work toward ensuring schools remained centers for patriotism. Increasingly, states supported legal measures requiring many of the ideals these reformers articulated, a development that even further redefined the relationship between patriotic symbols, sentiments, and the nation’s youth.

Chapter Two

The “Antidote for Anarchy”: Mandating Patriotism in New York Public Schools, 1895-1905

When the Reverend Charles Townsend addressed the Schoolmaster’s Club of New York in 1901, he used the opportunity to praise a new textbook. The aptly titled *Manual of Patriotism* — “a sumptuous compendium of 450 pages laden with the very best things of patriotic literature” — proved New York was the national leader in using public schools to “inculcate patriotism” in American youth. Townsend glowingly described this text as “enriched with the stirring music of the republic and the fireside,” and celebrated the state’s decision to place a copy in every public school. Indeed, this state-sponsored foray into stimulating patriotism in schools ably conveyed “the story of patriotic sacrifice . . . the riches of liberty and the poverties of ignorance. It tells of the meaning of blood and tears, it enlightens the mind and quickens the heart — and it weaves the major and the minor ways into civic music.” Seeking to engage New York students and instill in them a deep love for their nation’s history, the *Manual of Patriotism* included vignettes, quotes, and poems lauding war and valor alongside songs praising the nation and its history. Additionally, Townsend declared the *Manual* the best “antidote for anarchy” that “any printing press in the land [had] ever clanked and clanged out.” Placing a copy in the hands of every school administrator, teacher, and pupil in the Empire State, Townsend argued, would assure American democracy’s continued triumph.¹

This text reached Townsend by decree of the New York state legislature. New York State funded the *Manual of Patriotism* in accordance with an 1898 law compelling schools to display the American flag, honor national holidays, and induce students to participate in patriotic exercises. Charles R. Skinner, the New York state superintendent of public instruction, both

¹ Untitled Article, *Union Springs Advertiser* (Union Springs, NY), October 24, 1901, 1.

enforced this new law and created the *Manual* to ensure the state's schoolchildren received a standardized course of patriotic study. Skinner led the way in promoting the law as well.

Alongside the state's Grand Army of the Republic, Skinner helped determine the law's standards and promoted its passage in public appearances and media accounts. Twenty-four years earlier, New York State had passed a compulsory attendance law forcing parents to send their children to public or private schools where they would receive instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, and other standard subjects.² Now, the state required every child who entered the public schools to be a patriot.

In the late-nineteenth century, various private organizations, reformers, and public thinkers rallied around the common cause of patriotic education. This movement produced a litany of new print materials and inspired nationalistic fetes at schoolhouses across the nation. As the twentieth century approached, however, state governments became increasingly involved in this process. State legislatures across the nation passed laws requiring public schools to display the American flag.³ While not the first to pass such a law, New York's 1898 decree mandated the state's schools' participation in promoting patriotism. New York's law asked public schools not merely to hoist the flag on their grounds but also to hold additional patriotic exercises.

Furthermore, the act required that the state allocate funds for the creation and dissemination of what would become the *Manual of Patriotism*. In New York, as in many other states across the nation, patriotic organizations and public officials used state power to ensure future generations of schoolchildren be taught proper patriotism. These efforts made New York public schools a

² *Laws of the State of New York 1874* (97th Legislature, Regular Session), 532. The state's compulsory education law mandated that children between the ages of eight and fourteen attend either a public or a private school.

³ Albert Gray, "Notes on the State Legislation of America in 1895," *Journal of the Society of Comparative Legislation* (Vol. 1, 1896 - 1897), 235. New Jersey (1890) was the first state to pass a law requiring flags in schools and by 1895 six other states had passed similar laws. Some notable variants of these laws include New Hampshire and Vermont, who also required that the day before Memorial Day be devoted entirely to patriotic exercises, and North Dakota, who required that civil government be taught in schools.

key site for government dissemination of nationalistic propaganda where students learned a standardized version of patriotic performance. Furthermore, the celebratory interpretation of America's history and present condition promoted in New York schools emphasized Civil War reunion, the nation's military past, and a millennial vision of America's political, cultural, and educational superiority.

This chapter examines the development and enforcement of New York's patriotic education law while also highlighting its limits and long-term implications. New York's law, while suggestive of the reformers' enthusiasm for patriotic education in the Progressive Era, was not merely part of an inexorable movement toward state domination of patriotic discourse. New York's law followed soon after another leading Progressive state — Illinois — encountered serious opposition to its flag law.⁴ The public outcry over Illinois's harsh and financially burdensome law offered New York legislators an example of the constraints they faced in crafting their own flag law. The fervor surrounding the War of 1898, however, allowed them to expand the scope of their flag law in inventive ways. Indeed, New Yorkers' vociferous support for the law came amid a period of intense patriotic zeal.⁵ New York's law, while emphasizing patriotic performance in schools, also allowed Skinner access to state funds to enforce and further develop this program. This reflects reformers' excitement for patriotic education while illustrating the legislative possibilities generated by war.⁶ Similarly, the law's powerful

⁴ Examples of New York and Illinois's important status in the Progressive Era — and especially New York City and Chicago — are evident in Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice in Progressive Era Chicago* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), xxi-xxxix; Maureen Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s – 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 13; Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 140-144, 167-169.

⁵ For nationalism in the era of the War of 1898 see Cecelia Elizabeth O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

⁶ For example of how the state used war to justify new and often intrusive endeavors during World War I, see Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

advocates similarly hastened its passage and implementation. Charles Skinner championed this legislation, and his vociferous support of the law resulted in its strict enforcement, and eventually, the *Manual of Patriotism*. Schools, like other branches of the state, appealed to Progressives as key sites where they could disseminate new programs meant to ensure social efficiency and promote national progress. In New York, legislators and excited supporters alike embraced this possibility.⁷

* * * * *

New York, like many states in the late-nineteenth century, made educational reform a priority. In 1900, Dr. Albert Leonard, a former dean of Syracuse's College of Liberal Arts, offered high praise for New York's work toward modernizing their schools. Leonard singled out the efforts of state superintendent of instruction Charles Skinner as especially commendable. Writing in the *Journal of Pedagogy*, Leonard claimed, "Mr. Skinner has proved himself a man eminently fitted for the position he has filled, and a full account of the progress toward better things in educational practice made during the six years of his administration will form one of the most striking chapters in the educational history of the Empire State." A writer for *The Syracuse Post-Standard*, reporting on Leonard's article in the *Journal of Pedagogy*, "hoped that the politicians will not be allowed to supersede him by a man far less safe as the leader of the education forces of the State." Indeed, both the *Post-Standard* and the *Journal of Pedagogy* judged Skinner's work toward educational unification and standardization as exemplary.⁸ While Skinner had proven himself an enthusiastic Progressive educator, one of the chief ways he achieved this level of admiration was through his focus on patriotism. This reflected not merely

⁷ While this essay looks at how reformers used schools as sites through which to disseminate a standard version of proper American citizenship, an example of how social governance functioned during the Progressive Era in Chicago's court system is Willrich, *City of Courts*, xxi-xxxix.

⁸ "Words for Mr. Skinner," *The Syracuse Post-Standard* (Syracuse, NY), July 30, 1900, 4.

his personal proclivities, but also the shifting aims of public education. Following the nearly nationwide adoption of laws mandating attendance, public schools became sites where students mastered both traditional subjects and proper citizenship.⁹

Educational reformers hoped to cultivate good citizenship in students through several means, including detailed instruction in civics and history. Placing flags in schools, however, seemed to groups like the GAR and the WRC a simple yet effective way of stimulating students' love of country. While it had been popularly regarded since its creation as an important symbol, prior to 1890 the flag had no national holidays or solemn oaths to honor it and virtually no schools displayed it. The efforts of these organizations, then, helped make the flag a sacrosanct symbol, and state governments soon seized on this surge in flag worship. Increased interaction with this powerful national symbol, advocates argued, would bolster students' love for the flag and their country. While this romantic view of the nation's flag became widespread by the twentieth century, this symbol's role in American life remained contested in the 1890s. States gradually made the flag a fixture atop its schoolhouses, but some of these attempts met with staunch opposition.¹⁰

Establishing the contours of New York's flag law relied on precedent. While the GAR and WRC had delivered flags to schools since the early-1880s, *The Youth's Companion* began a campaign in 1888 to place a flag atop every schoolhouse in the nation. Along with the aforementioned groups, the *Companion* championed and frequently reported on state laws mandating the flag's presence at schools.¹¹ In 1890, New Jersey and North Dakota both passed

⁹ Judith Sealander, *The Failed Century of the Child: Governing America's Young in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 193; Tracy Steffes, "A New Education for a Modern Age: National Reform, State Building, and the Transformation of American Schools, 1890-1933" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2007), 344-361.

¹⁰ Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 228-232.

¹¹ "...In Training for Citizenship," *The Youth's Companion* 72, no. 4 (January 27, 1898), 50. Emphasis in original. On GAR/WRC support for this movement as well as the Youth's Companion's advocacy, see O'Leary, *To Die For*;

laws requiring flags in their public schools, and soon thereafter other states followed suit.¹² By 1905, the *Companion* reported that sixteen states had passed flag laws. Tellingly, no states below the Mason-Dixon line had adopted such legislation, although new states in the West like Arizona, New Mexico, and Wyoming had. The *Companion* offered support to any states hoping to pass their own law, promising to send a copy of an existing law to any interested organizations.¹³

As the example of Illinois shows, however, some proposed standards for the flag's display at schools proved contentious. In 1895, the Illinois state legislature passed a law mandating the United States flag's mandatory presence atop all schools, courthouses, and state prisons and charities. Soon thereafter, several groups decried this legislation's specifics. One offending aspect directly addressing schools demanded that "all colleges and educational institutions of every description in this State, whether State, county, municipal, district, sectarian or private . . . provide United States national flags."¹⁴ While the act required that all schools acquire a flag — with funding from corresponding school districts — the law asked that only public institutions procure a flagstaff. Legislators also demanded that negligent institutions pay fines. One clause warned that institutions caught without a flag would "be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof be fined not less than three nor more than ten dollars and costs of suit for each and every day that they shall so neglect to refuse to comply with the provisions of this act." Therefore, for every day following the act's enforcement on July 1, 1895, negligent institutions faced mounting fines.¹⁵

Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

¹² McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 230.

¹³ "School Flag Laws," *The Youth's Companion* 79, No 15 (April 13, 1905), 182.

¹⁴ Illinois Thirty-Ninth General Assembly, "United States Flag to be Placed on School Houses, Court Houses and Other Public Buildings," *All the Laws of the State of Illinois* (Chicago: Chicago Legal News Company, 1895), 233.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 234.

The law's insistence that all schools display the flag garnered opposition from a variety of groups. In August 1895, just a month after the law went into effect, the Northwest conference of Lutheran Teachers in Milwaukee denounced the law. The group resolved that, "the so-called flag law of Illinois [was] a gross violation of the rights of corporations not under the control of that State." To them this use of state power violated principles of religious freedom by forcing non-state religious institutions to display ostensibly secular materials. Some even alleged the law was part of a state conspiracy to weaken the power of parochial schools, whose refusal to fly the flag for religious reasons would result in steep fines.¹⁶ While religious groups condemned the law as a violation of their personal beliefs, others questioned its patriotism. In an event for the Chicago Ex-Policeman's Association publicized in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, speaker A.S. Trude denounced state legislators as "hypocrites" and "notoriety hunters." Trude claimed, "It is safe to say these men never fought under the flag about which they legislate, nor did an act in defense of its honor; they do not know the number of stars, bars, or stripes emblazoned upon it. With such tenderness do we regard it we hesitate to unnecessarily expose it to the dewdrops of the night or the sunbeams of the morning." Critics like Trude argued the law, by requiring patriotism, would subsequently lessen its importance. If exposed to the weather, furthermore, a flag could potentially become dirty and tattered, with its ragged appearance lessening its somewhat spiritual power.¹⁷

These complaints suggest that states faced unclear boundaries when attempting to enforce patriotism. Furthermore, the latter critique of the flag's overuse suggests that this symbol's role in promoting patriotism had yet to be established definitively. Despite these cases of public condemnation, Illinois still attempted to enforce its new law. In April of 1896, the state indicted

¹⁶ "Lutherans Oppose Illinois Flag Law," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Aug 2, 1895, 12.

¹⁷ "Denounces the Illinois Flag Law," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 25, 1896, 5.

the trustees of the University of Illinois, including the state's governor, for neglecting to display the flag. The University apparently had erected one flagstaff, but ignored the law's requirement that all school buildings be adorned with a flag. *The Youth's Companion* reported this indictment with excitement, noting, "it is a pleasure to feel that our flag laws are not made to be laughed at and discredited — but to be respected and obeyed. The sentiment they embody is too important to be trifled with."¹⁸ While the *Companion* later noted that the University was only indicted due to a technicality, their initial reaction displays the fervent support flag laws had in some circles.¹⁹ In advance of this indictment the Central Illinois Teachers' Association passed a resolution condemning the law. One particularly vocal member of the Association, identified by the *Chicago Daily Tribune* as Prof. Carter, echoed earlier complaints and criticized the law for both forcing schools and teachers to comply and lessening the flag's importance as a symbol. The *Tribune*, paraphrasing Carter's argument, noted, "The American Flag was too sacred to be required to float alongside a smokestack and in all kinds of weather until it looked more like a dishrag than a symbol of a great and free country."²⁰ In a mass meeting in Champaign following the indictment, furthermore, citizens expressed their anger at the ruling. The *Daily Tribune's* headline — "Flag Law is Attacked: Indignation Meeting is Held at Champaign" — evinces much of the public's disdain for the law. Those present at this "Indignation Meeting" resolved that, "the flag law [was] liable to be vexatious and oppressive in its execution and calculated to lessen the love for our national emblem rather than foster a spirit of patriotism, hence it should be repealed at the earliest opportunity."²¹

¹⁸ "Current Topics," *The Youth's Companion* 70, no. 17 (April 23, 1896), 218.

¹⁹ "Current Topics," *The Youth's Companion* 70, no. 20 (May 14, 1896), 254.

²⁰ "Teachers Discuss the Flag Law," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 29, 1896, 5.

²¹ "Flag Law is Attacked," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 29, 1896, 5.

This “oppressive” and “vexatious” law would ultimately be short lived. In June of 1896, a little over a month after the board of trustees’ indictment, a Champaign Circuit Court Judge declared the law unconstitutional. While some lauded this decision, others feared its implications. The *Central Law Journal* warned, “The effect of this decision, if affirmed, will be to make patriotism, in so far as it consists in flinging the flag to the breeze, optional.”²² The *American Law Review* similarly critiqued the decision and defended the reach of state power its enforcement necessitated. “The police power,” noted the *Review*, “in its widest sense is the power to protect ‘not only the morals of the State, and the health of the State . . . but it is also the power to preserve the safety and the welfare of the people of the state. What can more conduce to the safety, the welfare and the morals of the people than the cultivation of a healthy patriotism?’” The *Review* did note that the law perhaps went too far in requiring every school building to fly a flag but suggested that “if the judge had merely decided that the statute was sufficiently complied with by flying the flag during school hours from the single University flag-staff, his decision would have been more commendable.”²³

Despite this ruling, Illinois did not go without a flag law for long. The outrage expressed by citizens’ groups following the previous law’s passage gave legislators a firm idea of what they needed to avoid, and in 1897 the legislature passed a new law requiring flags to be flown only at public school buildings. Furthermore, only one flag needed to be displayed on school grounds. This act also repealed the 1895 law, erasing what had been a contentious and as some argued overly onerous statute.²⁴

²² Untitled article, *The Central Law Journal* 43, No. 8 (August 21, 1896), 149.

²³ “Notes,” *The American Law Review* 30 (September/October, 1896), 735.

²⁴ Illinois Fortieth General Assembly, “United States Flag to be Placed on School Houses, Court Houses and Other Public Buildings,” *All the Laws of the State of Illinois* (Chicago: Chicago Legal News Company, 1897), 230-232.

New York legislators had observed the Illinois flag saga with great interest. As Illinois put its new law into action, New York's GAR and newly minted state superintendent of instruction, Charles R. Skinner, vigorously championed the passage of a similar law. In 1897, the *New York Times* reported on Illinois's refashioned law while reflecting on its previous failure. "In a moment of patriotism that was, perhaps, the more exuberant because of its brevity," the *Times* noted, "the Illinois Legislature passed, two years ago, a law which provided for an immense amount of display of the National flag." Though criticizing the strict requirements and penalties of the previous law, the *Times* lauded Illinois's new act, which the writer felt was "likely to bring about the desired results." Illinois's previous failure gave New York patriots a clear example of what not to ask of its schools. The public fervor for war, however, would enable New York to push the limits of state-sponsored patriotism in different ways.²⁵

Charles R. Skinner played a decisive role in developing New York's flag law. In 1895, Skinner became New York's state superintendent of instruction. Skinner's background and political leanings help explain his fervor for patriotic education in New York. Prior to his tenure as superintendent of instruction, Skinner was, among other positions, a schoolteacher, editor of the *Watertown (NY) Daily Times*, and a Republican Congressman, occupying his seat from 1881 to 1885.²⁶ Prior to serving in Congress, Skinner held a position on the Watertown Board of Education for nearly twenty years. Indeed, this long-term attentiveness to educational matters combined with his political experience eventually garnered Skinner a prominent position in New York. In 1886, the then-current superintendent of public instruction Andrew S. Draper appointed Skinner New York's deputy superintendent of instruction. While Draper had spoken glowingly about patriotic education's potential during his tenure as state superintendent, Skinner made this

²⁵ "Topics of the Times," *New York Times*, July 1, 1897, 6.

²⁶ Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, "Charles Rufus Skinner." <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=S000467> (accessed 10/15/2010).

a high priority during his time in office.²⁷ Upon his election to the position of state superintendent of instruction, *The New York Times* raved of Skinner, “No man is more intimately acquainted with the workings of our schools system, and no man knows better how to develop that system.” Patriotism assumed a high priority in Skinner’s vision for New York’s school system.²⁸

Skinner’s zeal for education and belief in the importance of inculcating patriotism perhaps stemmed from his fears of political radicalism. Skinner served in Congress alongside fellow Republican and future president William McKinley in the 1880s, and while attending the 1901 Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, Skinner witnessed McKinley’s assassination. Skinner later attended the execution of McKinley’s killer, Leon Czolgosz. Reflecting on this experience years later, Skinner wrote of Czolgosz, “there is no doubt that he was an uneducated, misguided fanatic. He had listened to many socialistic speeches which aroused his murderous spirit.”²⁹ Skinner’s belief that a lack of education and socialism turned Czolgosz into an assassin exemplifies his fervor for patriotic instruction and is emblematic of the then-common concern that deviant political ideologies contributed to the moral decay of American youth. Skinner summarized his faith in the American political system by claiming the only citizen more dangerous than an anarchist is “he who finds fault with and secretly criticizes our system of government.”³⁰ To Skinner, this type of radical political dissent could and should be curbed through patriotic education.

²⁷ For evidence of Draper’s enthusiasm for patriotism, see: Andrew S. Draper, “American Schools for American Citizenship,” *Journal of Education* 35, no. 1 (January 7, 1892), 4; Henry B. Carrington, *Columbian Selections* (J.B. Lippincott Company, 1892), 350-351.

²⁸ “New Educational Officers,” *New York Times*, February 14, 1895, 9.

²⁹ Charles R. Skinner, “Story of McKinley’s Assassination,” *State Service* 3, no. 4 (April 1919), 18.

³⁰ “Referred to Board of Regents,” *Utica-Herald Dispatch*, Feb 21, 1903, 3.

The flag law that New York State eventually passed benefited from opportune timing. Skinner's push for New York's flag law coincided with the buildup to America's declaration of war against Spain. National unity became a major theme in pro-war rhetoric, and as a result, public assertions of nationalism abounded.³¹ Seizing this moment of opportunity, in December 1897 Commander Albert Shaw of the Grand Army of the Republic informed the *New York Times* that the GAR would ask for state legislation providing facilities for "patriotic exercises" at public schools. "We hope," the *Times* responded, "[students] will learn well the lesson that patriotism is not sordid; that if any of them should enlist in the land or sea forces of the United States . . . they would not deserve the name of patriots unless they were moved and inspired by their reverence for our institutions."³²

Since the 1880s, the state's GAR and the Woman's Relief Corp had provided flags to schools and advocated increased patriotism, but now the former organization hoped to make this a legal imperative. Skinner took notice of these groups' work years before ascending to his position as state superintendent. In a report of associated academic principals on civics appearing in New York's *Regents' Bulletin* in early 1893, Skinner described a moment when he witnessed the GAR's patriotic efforts in action. Skinner claimed that shortly after the GAR presented flags to a school in Rochester he saw an associated press dispatch regarding one of the school's students. This student wrote, apparently in reference to tensions between the United States and Chile, that "If you want somebody to go down and whip Chili send for us." To Skinner, this young pupil's belligerent posturing "meant that those boys understood that they had a government and were even then ready to risk their lives for it." The GAR, he noted, deserved the credit for instilling these ideas in this young boy. Skinner proclaimed this expression of

³¹ Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 352-353.

³² "Patriotism," *New York Times*, Dec. 24, 1897, 6.

militarism and unquestioning national loyalty the highest form of patriotism, and indeed, deemed it an ideology that the schools were uniquely qualified to disseminate.³³

Skinner's close relationship with the GAR perhaps stemmed from his admiration of their efforts and their similar political leanings. Skinner, and New York GAR leader Albert D. Shaw, for instance, often attended similar events, as was the case when Skinner gave a lecture on "The Greatest Need of Our Public Schools" prior to a YMCA event in 1894. Skinner and fellow Republican Theodore Roosevelt were the two most prominent speakers at this event and *The New York Times* listed Shaw as one of the most prominent attendees. Characteristically, Skinner claimed at the event that schools' "greatest need" was "that they be wholly American," and that current social conditions could be improved through lessons about the nation's past.³⁴ Shaw and Skinner shared enthusiasm for patriotic education and both held prominent positions. Similarly, both men hailed from Watertown, New York, and while Skinner served as a Republican congressman, Shaw led an organization that began as a way of promoting the careers of potential Republican politicians. This suggests that Skinner and the GAR shared connections beyond patriotic education. Shaw proved to be an able ally for Skinner, and the rest of the GAR noticed his faithful work. In 1899, Shaw's comrades elected him National Commander of the GAR, a position he held until his sudden death in 1901.³⁵

While Shaw publicly announced the GAR's plan to pursue a patriotic education law in December of 1897, the group had adopted their official plan of action, in consultation with Charles Skinner, several months earlier. The GAR's plans appeared in their "General Orders,

³³ "Associated Academic Principals: Proceedings of the Eight Annual Conference," in *Regents' Bulletin* 106, no. 14 (May 1893), 516.

³⁴ "Talks to the Chautauquans," *New York Times*, July 22, 1894, 6.

³⁵ "Shaw Commander in Chief," *New York Times*, September 8, 1899, 3; "Col. A.D. Shaw Dead," *New York Times*, February 11, 1901, 7. In 1901 Shaw died of a sudden heart attack in a Washington D.C. hotel room at the age of 60. For more on the political roots of the GAR, see chapter one.

No. 6” issued in August 1897. Here, the group’s committees on civics and history, patriotic exercises, and public celebrations submitted a joint report. Shaw claimed in an extract from the report that requiring flags in schools would enhance students’ feelings of obligation toward their nation. In an even more bombastic assertion Shaw added that this would “foster freedom’s grandest forces in uplifting our civilization to the highest plane of a free people’s government.”³⁶ Skinner played an important role in these proceedings, as the GAR appointed him an honorary member of every subcommittee. Skinner published the GAR’s findings, titled “To Promote Patriotic Study in the Public Schools,” as a pamphlet soon thereafter and disseminated it throughout the state. Skinner’s use of state funds to publish a GAR proposal displays the government’s considerable support for this ostensibly private organization’s proclamations. The GAR and Skinner cheered their respective contributions both in the former’s “General Orders No. 6,” and later in the *Manual of Patriotism*.³⁷

Skinner and the GAR’s efforts coincided with the buildup to America’s war against Spain. Skinner’s rhetoric prior to the law’s passage combined his hatred of Spain with his enthusiasm for a patriotic education law. Not coincidentally, New York’s legislature approved the flag law the day after America declared war on Spain. Less than a month before the United States declared war, Skinner espoused his disdain for Spain in a speech on patriotic education before the Patria Club of New York, an organization of “prominent and public-spirited New-Yorkers” formed in 1891 to promote teaching civics in schools.³⁸ Here, Skinner described Spain

³⁶ “To Promote Patriotic Study in the Public Schools,” in *State of New York, Department of Public Instruction, 44th Annual Report of the State Superintendent*, vol. 2 (Albany, New York, 1898), 81-82, 1284.

³⁷ These “General Orders” and the collaborative process between the GAR and the state is outlined in Skinner, *Manual of Patriotism*, iii, vi-vii.

³⁸ “Club News and Gossip,” *New York Times*, June 14, 1891, 19.

as a nation “founded on superstition and ignorance.”³⁹ In his affirmation of America’s cultural and educational superiority, Skinner added:

Seventy millions of people, with 300,000 teachers and sixteen million pupils, who have education from their fathers and mothers, have nothing to fear from 17,000,000 of half-civilized persons, half of whom cannot read or write, whose education is founded upon brutality, barbarism, and butchery, whose moral principle finds expression in Sunday bullfights and whose amusement consists of the treacherous destruction of battleships.⁴⁰

To Skinner, the barbaric Spaniards faced certain defeat due to both American military and educational superiority. Americans had a veritable army of teachers and students, whereas half of the Spain’s population, Skinner alleged, was illiterate. Furthermore, Skinner claimed that Spaniards, in contrast to the upstanding American citizenry, had lax morals, as evidenced by their proclivity for bullfighting and acts of nautical terrorism. Arguments like this stressing the potential power of public education helped justify patriotism’s mandatory presence in schools.

An elaborate GAR fete following the law’s passage and the declaration of war confirmed the present conflict with Spain’s importance in rousing public fervor for patriotism. The GAR’s Memorial Day celebration, held in Carnegie Hall, hosted a litany of GAR members, the general public, and other public figures, including Charles Skinner. According to the *New York Times*, Carnegie Hall “appeared to be ablaze with the national colors,” and brimmed with enthusiastic patriotism. Albert Shaw gave the night’s main oration, and amid a stage festooned with flags and “G.A.R.” spelled out in red, white, and blue lights, he celebrated that “we meet amid thrilling and dramatic opening scenes of another war on our annual Memorial Day.” Shaw elaborated on this conflict’s sacred purpose: “Again the voice of duty is the voice of God; and now with one heart, one purpose, and one American sentiment of patriotism our army and navy face the foes of

³⁹ “Education in Patriotism,” *New York Times*, April 9, 1898, 7. This meeting was held at the famed New York City restaurant Delmonico’s.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

liberty.” Patriotism had united the nation in the war effort, and this shared sentiment, according to Shaw, had divine origins. Strikingly, this vision of patriotism is the same one that New York State recently mandated that its students practice.⁴¹

While the buildup to war led to the law’s swift passage, Skinner and the GAR’s vision garnered some limited local opposition. Residents in Orange Country, New York, expressed their displeasure with having to display a flag in early 1898. The *Middletown Daily Argus* offered a critique of Skinner and the proposed law. The town of Crawford, wrote the *Argus*, had twice voted down appropriations for a flag, claiming it was an unnecessary expense. When the measure to erect a flag finally passed, “the sentiment of the district . . . was still against the flag foolishness, and Friday night, vandals or anarchists cut down the flag staff and hacked it into three pieces.”⁴² Whether the reference to “anarchists” as culprits mocked Skinner’s public paranoia over political deviants or expressed a legitimate concern that anti-government crusaders posed a legitimate threat to the county’s flags is unclear. Tellingly, however, the article went on to joke that Charles Skinner should provide troops to protect the next flagstaff.⁴³

Despite this limited opposition, Skinner retained his steadfast support for this law. In the same speech where Skinner denounced Spain’s barbarism, he called for patriotism and Americanization to become compulsory aspects of public education. Skinner proclaimed children needed to consider America the greatest civilization in world history.⁴⁴ The writings and speeches of figures like Patrick Henry and Daniel Webster, he continued, must be taught alongside those of Cicero and Demosthenes. Furthermore, distinctions like “German-American” and “Spanish-American” needed to be eliminated, and citizens must identify solely as

⁴¹ “G.A.R. Memorial Service,” *New York Times*, May 31, 1898, 4.

⁴² “A School ‘Deestrick’ Flagstaff,” *Middletown Daily Argus* (Middletown, NY), Jan 22, 1898, 8.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ “Education in Patriotism,” *New York Times*, Apr 9, 1898, 7.

“Americans.”⁴⁵ In this context of patriotic fervor, increased nativist sentiment, and war, the New York flag law took effect.

On April 22, 1898, the state legislature passed, and the governor promptly signed, an act “to provide for the display of the United States flag on the schoolhouses of the State, in connection with the public schools; and to encourage patriotic exercises in the public schools.”⁴⁶ The law also required that schools observe Washington and Lincoln’s birthdays, Memorial Day, and Flag Day. The law required students celebrate both the flag and national heroes while also stipulating that “nothing herein contained shall be construed to authorize military instruction or drill in the public schools during school hours.”⁴⁷ This explicit avoidance of overt militarism perhaps resulted from concessions by the GAR. Previously, the Grand Army promoted military drills in school, but gradually shifted to an endorsement of “patriotic exercises.”⁴⁸ Despite the patriotic fervor surrounding the war, dissenters still spoke out against the conflict and the potential of American imperialism, as did patriotic groups with a distinctly pacifist message. The state’s decision to take a less overtly militaristic approach to patriotism likely resulted from their desire to make the law appeal to the widest audience possible.⁴⁹ Skinner, despite his advocacy of war with Spain, had long emphasized non-militaristic aspects of patriotism. Regarding an observance of Flag Day in 1896, Skinner claimed, “admiration for the flag need not imply military spirit, but rather love of country, obedience to the law, patriotic devotion to our government.”⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Laws of the State of New York 1898 (vol. II), 1191.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ “Patriotism,” *New York Times*, Dec. 24, 1897, 6. Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 230-232.

⁴⁹ O’Leary, *To Die For*, 186-187. Patriotic groups that endorsed pacifism included the WCTU and the Patriotic League.

⁵⁰ “The Civic Outlook,” *American Magazine of Civics* 9, no. 1, (July 1896), 97. The official GAR recommendation to not include military drill in the law’s language can be found in “To Promote Patriotic Study in the Public

Despite the militaristic sentiments of some of its most vocal champions, the absence of military drill in New York's law instead reflected the tone of other state flag laws. Indeed, as Illinois's experience illustrates, overreaching could hinder the long-term efficacy of these laws. The New York law similarly displayed restraint in that it applied only to public schools, and did not require that school procure multiple flags. Instead, the law required that each public school purchase a single flag and flagstaff. The law also guarded against the aspects in Illinois's law that some claimed left the flag exposed to the weather for prolonged and potentially damaging periods. According to New York's law, the flag needed only to fly during school hours and any other times administrators deemed appropriate. Furthermore, as one section stated: "when the weather will not permit it to be otherwise displayed, [the flag] shall be placed conspicuously in the principal room of the schoolhouse."⁵¹ Even if precluded by weather New York legislators sought to keep the flag in students' sight. The law's most inventive aspect, however, was its call for "the superintendent of public instruction to prepare, for the use of the public schools of the state, a program providing for a salute to the flag at the opening of each day of school and such other patriotic exercises as may be deemed by him to be expedient." Furthermore, the law authorized Skinner and future state superintendents to "provide for the necessary expenses incurred in developing and encouraging such patriotic exercises in schools." The law essentially allowed Skinner to use state funds as he saw fit in stimulating patriotism throughout New York schools.⁵²

New York's public schools experienced an outpouring of patriotism following the outbreak of war against Spain and the flag law's passage. Frank Wright, a New York City public

Schools," in *State of New York, Department of Public Instruction, 44th Annual Report of the State Superintendent*, vol. 2 (Albany, New York: 1898), 1296.

⁵¹ Skinner, *Manual of Patriotism*, v.

⁵² *Ibid.*

school principal, gave an address during his school's opening exercises after the war's onset condemning the Spanish and praising patriotism's role in education.⁵³ After his speech, Wright instructed the school's janitor to unfurl the flag the school's teachers had sewn during the Civil War and to display it on the flagstaff. This gesture both displayed compliance with the state's new law and implied that the nation's present conflict held the same importance to the community as the Civil War. Wright finished his presentation by asserting that the patriotism his school displayed "is the patriotism of every other school in the Greater New York. It is the same as that now glowing in the heart of every true American."⁵⁴ New York public schools received their first opportunity to comply with the law's mandatory celebration of patriotic holidays on Memorial Day. Skinner gave a patriotic speech at Porter School in Syracuse to mark the occasion, which *The Syracuse Standard* pithily summarized with the heading, "Supt. Charles R. Skinner Makes the Speech at Porter School – Flags Everywhere."⁵⁵

The 1898 flag law solidified the centrality of patriotism to public education in New York. As ardent supporter Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer, President of the New York Public Education Association, noted in July of 1899, "the study of history" in public schools was "now understood to be a nursing-ground for intelligent patriotism."⁵⁶ Van Rensselaer continued, quoting a superintendent in Buffalo, that the purpose of conducting patriotic exercises in the schools was "to give children sound and clear notions regarding their duties to God, their country, their neighbors, and themselves."⁵⁷ Teaching schoolchildren to value their nation's

⁵³ "Principal Wright's Address," *New York Times*, Apr 26, 1898, 12.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ "Patriotism in Schools," *The Syracuse Standard*, May 28, 1898, 6.

⁵⁶ In addition to her stint as president of the New York Public Education Association, Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer is credited as being the first professional woman architectural critic and journalist, and published writings on women's suffrage as well as a book of poems. See Sarah Allaback, *The First American Women Architects* (University of Illinois Press, 2008), 16-17.

⁵⁷ Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, "Our Public Schools: A Reply," *The North American Review* 169 no. 112, (July 1899), 85-86.

accomplishments above all, agreed *Gunton's Magazine*, "is the aim of a true education, not to confer a cynical and half-polished scholasticism."⁵⁸ To many, the need for patriotic study constituted a national imperative. As one schoolteacher claimed, "the lack of the kind of patriotism that is needed in our everyday life is worse than the presence of an armed foe."⁵⁹

Skinner enthusiastically enforced the law and frequently toured school districts to ensure the measure would not be interpreted as merely symbolic. Skinner threatened to cut noncompliant schools' funding and publicly reprimanded school districts that had yet to purchase and display the flag.⁶⁰ In 1902, Skinner followed through on these threats and withheld funds from school districts in Franklin and Genesee counties for failing to fly flags. The law did not provide schools with the funds to erect flags and flagstaffs, seemingly putting less wealthy districts in a difficult position. Skinner, however, had little sympathy. He expected full compliance and considered this a minor cost to fulfill such an important patriotic duty.⁶¹

The cumulative efforts of the Grand Army of the Republic and Charles Skinner created New York's law, but only Skinner gave New York's patriotic education movement a definitive text. The state printed and disseminated copies of Skinner's *Manual of Patriotism* in December of 1900. Skinner compiled the *Manual* alongside Syracuse principal William K. Wickes, its official editor. Upon its release, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* heralded the manual as "money well spent. Teachers and children alike will appreciate it, and it will long continue to be a part of the equipment of the public schools of the state."⁶² Nearly a year after the book's release, Tompkins County Commissioner Edward Updike implored teachers to "make much use of the Manual of

⁵⁸ "Civic and Educational Notes: More Rubbish from the City Hall The Aim of True Education Legal Opinions Adjusted to Suit," *Gunton's Magazine*, June 1898, 400.

⁵⁹ "Patriotism in the Schools," *New York Times*, December 17, 1898, 5.

⁶⁰ "Must Fly American Flag or Lose State Funds," *The Post-Standard* (Syracuse, NY), May 20, 1902, 1.

⁶¹ "No Flag, No State Money," *New York World*, May 8, 1902, 4.

⁶² "A Manual of Patriotism for Schools," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 15, 1900, 7.

Patriotism. It is probably the best book the state of New York ever put in a school room. If I find the book tucked away out of sight, or covered with dust, or on inquiry find that it is not being used, I shall find that the teacher is neglectful of a duty.” Indeed, to Updike, the *Manual of Patriotism*’s presence in classrooms ensured students received a useful and safe education. As Updike warned, “Teaching a child how to read places a dangerous weapon in his hands unless he be taught what to read.”⁶³ Patriotic education, in these terms, not only created upstanding citizens, but also protected the nation against peril.

The *Manual of Patriotism* showed that Skinner considered the lack of patriotism in schools a serious threat. This sprawling text included over four-hundred pages and sections titled “Flag-Day Makes Sacred June 14th,” “The Flag Consecrates the Birthday of George Washington,” and “The Flag Hallows Memorial Day.” The *Manual* also featured numerous patriotic songs, poems, quotations, and speeches. Skinner also wrote a short article praising New York’s 1898 law, accompanied by its full text. In Skinner’s congratulatory assessment, the law meant that “the Empire State seeks for its countless girls and boys the inculcation of a true spirit of patriotism and a loving regard for its greatest symbol, the Flag.”⁶⁴ Accordingly, the *Manual* emphasized the importance of the flag and several of America’s most notable military and political heroes. The *Manual*’s contents resembled the variety of literature John Bell Bouton advocated in *Uncle Sam’s Church* five years earlier. Bouton, in his assessment of patriotic education’s necessity in 1895, described the value of writing patriotic tracts summarizing the lives and achievements of America’s first five presidents, as well as compiling patriotic songs and poetry. Bouton then added, “if a series of tracts of the varieties I have described, carefully and wisely prepared, were ultimately bound in book form, they would be surpassed in their of

⁶³ Rural Schools: To Trustees, Teachers, Parents, and Pupils,” *Putnam County Republican* (Carmel, NY), Nov. 30, 1901, 1.

⁶⁴ Skinner, *Manual of Patriotism*, vi.

instructiveness for the good of mankind by only one volume in the world, the Holy Scriptures.”⁶⁵
In this sense, the *Manual of Patriotism* was a textbook of biblical proportions.

The *Manual's* contents, indeed, bore several similarities to previously published patriotic texts. Much like George Carrington's volume of *Columbian Sections* or Charles Dole's Patriotic League-endorsed tome *Citizen's Catechism* from earlier in the 1890s, the *Manual of Patriotism* featured a mix of patriotic documents, poems, quotations, and songs. Skinner and Wickes's text, rather than reorienting the formula established by these works, simply increased the volume of materials and made them easily accessible to even the youngest students. The *Manual of Patriotism* presented a straightforward and consensus-minded version of American history intended solely for schoolchildren. Whereas previous patriotic volumes sought audiences among students, educators, and the general public alike, the *Manual's* assessment of America's past and present glory meant to stimulate the patriotism of the nation's future citizens.⁶⁶

The *Manual's* litany of patriotic selections featured several brief introductions crafted by Wickes and Skinner. These outlined how to most effectively use the text, and also gave insight into the state's broader aims in teaching patriotism. In Wickes's introduction to the book, he reminded readers that the *Manual* was not an adequate substitute for a history textbook. Rather, the *Manual* existed to inspire a more sentimental version of patriotism among students. Wickes asked teachers to emphasize the achievements of “commanding figures,” and most importantly to “Keep the Flag ever before the mind's eye.”⁶⁷ Wickes then added that the *Manual's* efficacy only increased when wielded by “enthusiastic and progressive” teachers. Able educators, according to Wickes, could combine the lessons of history with the celebratory programs

⁶⁵ Bouton, *Uncle Sam's Church: His Creed, Bible, and Hymn-Book* (Cambridge: University Press), 40. Further analysis of this text can be found in chapter one of this thesis.

⁶⁶ For assessments of patriotic volumes by Carrington, and Dole, see chapter one.

⁶⁷ Skinner, *Manual of Patriotism*, xi.

outlined in the *Manual*. “The possible combinations of such a plan are many,” Wickes noted, deeming them both “historically interesting” and “patriotically profitable.”⁶⁸

Indeed, the makers of the *Manual*, much like other ardent nationalists at the time, considered promoting patriotism in schools a profitable and pragmatic endeavor. Cultivating nationalist fervor, however, also necessitated contrasting America with other nations. A section titled “A Brief History of the Flag” ended with a nationalistic tribute to American civilization: “How different is the story of the nations of the Old World and of the many little countries or republics of South America in the New World!” This exceptionalist exclamation then decried other nations’ murderous spirit, exemplified by their apparent proclivity for displaying “blood-stained battle flags . . . very much as wild Indians might hang up in their wigwams, or fasten at their belts, the scalps they have taken from their victims.” Comparing other countries and their citizens to Native Americans cast American civilization as exceptional and enlightened, in stark contrast to these other barbaric and savage nations.⁶⁹

While students learned of their homeland’s myriad advantages over other nations, the *Manual* also suggested several ways they could pledge loyalty to the nation. Six patriotic pledges of various lengths appeared in a section of the *Manual*, including Francis Bellamy’s later ubiquitous “Pledge of Allegiance.”⁷⁰ Aside from vowing their loyalty to the nation in a variety of forms, the *Manual* asked students to extend this love of country into their homes. “The flag, like a guardian angel, spreads its folds, like wings, above your dwellings,” the *Manual* told students, “and guards them with unceasing care, and with the mighty power of the government.” The flag is described here as an otherworldly symbol through which the magical protective powers of

⁶⁸ Ibid., xiii.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 8. The *Manual of Patriotism* reflects the nationalistic emphasis on renewal and American civic and racial superiority common in the Progressive era. Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 387-388, Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 3-10, 14-80, Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism*.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 32.

government are transferred.⁷¹ The *Manual* offered a similarly romantic view of the flag's presence over schoolhouses. "As it floats over the proudest or poorest schoolhouse in the State," the *Manual* boasted, "it always greets you in the morning with a smile of welcome on its pleasant face, and when you start for home, waves its benediction over you, and shakes out from its folds this cheery voice: 'Come again! I'll be here to greet you.'" The flag, then, symbolized the national government's power and reflected the sanguinary sacrifices of American history, but despite its solemnity, still spoke to children in friendly tones.⁷²

The *Manual*'s emphasis on patriotic symbols went beyond just the flag. In a section titled "The Sword," the *Manual* described this titular weapon as a symbol that stands for "every sort of weapon by which brave men have lost their lives in battle." In explaining why students needed to revere this symbol of war, the *Manual* explained, "there come times in the history of every people when they must draw the sword, or perish." Indeed, military action, although costly, was a necessary endeavor according to the *Manual*: "let us not be afraid to rejoice over all true victories won by The Sword." War constituted a vital aspect of the nation's history to the *Manual*'s authors, and furthermore, as a reprinted quote from Theodore Roosevelt explained, "Americans need to keep in mind the fact that as a nation they have erred far more often in not being willing to fight than in being too wiling."⁷³ While students needed to recognize the sacrifices made in past wars, they also learned to prepare for, and perhaps embrace, future conflicts. Students also learned to appreciate America's national bird: the eagle. Using a straightforward metaphor, the *Manual* explained why the eagle was an appropriate avian representation of the nation: "If you have ever seen an Eagle shut up in a cage, deprived of the power to fly, and no scream of triumph ever issuing from his throat, it must have given you a

⁷¹ Ibid., 41.

⁷² Ibid., 47.

⁷³ Ibid., 115.

faint idea of the forlorn and unhappy plight of any human being when deprived of liberty, pining away, in hopeless captivity.” Americans, just like eagles, thrived on freedom. A soaring eagle, in fact, offered “a fine illustration of the joys of Freedom.”⁷⁴ Similarly, the text emphasized the nation’s impressive display at the Columbian Exposition, casing this moment as a symbolic reminder of the nation’s global superiority.⁷⁵

The contents of the *Manual of Patriotism* also evinced the centrality of reunification between North and South to turn-of-the-century American patriotic fervor. “One happy result of the war with Spain,” Skinner claimed, quoting his own speech before an unnamed GAR committee, “is that sectional lines have been wiped out and no longer is there any North and South in the consideration of American bravery.”⁷⁶ Affirming the centrality of the War of 1898 to American patriotic thought at the time, a section on the history of the flag claimed that in preparation for the conflict, both sides “clasped hands and marched and sailed away, under the same dear flag, to fight on foreign soil for freedom to the downtrodden earth.”⁷⁷ To Skinner, this recent conflict confirmed the friendly reunification of North and South following the Civil War and the *Manual* insisted that students agree. Instead of focusing on the Civil War’s details, meanwhile, the *Manual* emphasized what one section title described as “The Restored Union.” Excitedly, this introductory section asked, “The Boys in Blue! When can their glory fade?” Before quickly adding, “The Boys in Gray! When can their valor fade?”⁷⁸ Pointing out their scant resources and equally noble intentions, the *Manual* stressed the South’s bravery, not their fight to ensure slavery’s survival. Indeed, when discussing the war, the *Manual* cast the South as adherents to a noble “lost cause.” The *Manual* also featured Francis Miles Finch’s reunionist

⁷⁴ Ibid., 129.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 75, 157.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 349.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 55.

poem “The Blue and the Gray” at two separate points in the text.⁷⁹ Even when discussing Memorial Day, an event started and promoted by the ex-Union soldiers in the GAR, the *Manual* assured students that both the Blue and the Gray celebrated “the valor and honor of the other.”⁸⁰

The War of 1898 also received a glowing assessment in the *Manual*. A section titled “The Flag Hallows the Spanish-American War” lauded the importance of this war and cast it as a key moment in America’s recent history, offering lengthy assessments of Admiral George Dewey’s efforts alongside mournful sections about the destruction of the *Maine*. This section also featured a lengthy quote from John D. Wilson, who explained to New York schoolchildren: “The nations awake to the fact that a new power has risen with which they must reckon.” America had emerged from this conflict as a legitimate world power that in the minds of the *Manual*’s authors and Wilson alike posed a significant threat to all “despotic” and “barbaric” Old World nations.⁸¹ Tellingly, when Skinner gave the oration at the GAR’s Memorial Day celebration in 1901, he praised both the results of this war and patriotic education. Referencing the “barbaric” Spanish government in this speech at the Metropolitan Opera House — even three years removed from the war — Skinner lauded that this conflict helped keep the “spirit of 1861” alive. The other key factors in preserving patriotic enthusiasm, to Skinner, were “patriotic teaching” and the GAR.⁸² The *Manual*’s section on America’s most recent war, similarly, concluded with a rousing song titled “Dewey at Manila Bay,” featuring the chorus, “For America’s flag is the flag of the free; Her stars and stripes float o’er land and sea. Hurrah for our hero and colors three! When Dewey sailed over the ocean.”⁸³

⁷⁹ Ibid., 146. For the development of the “lost cause” interpretation of the Civil War, see Blight, *Race and Reunion*.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 206.

⁸¹ Ibid., 202.

⁸² “Veterans at the Opera House,” *New York Times*, May 31, 1901, 2.

⁸³ Skinner, *Manual of Patriotism*, 203-204.

This attempt to make Dewey one of America's many military heroes would prove less successful than supporters like Skinner had planned due in part to the prolonged, controversial, and often-dispiriting efforts of American forces in the Philippines.⁸⁴ It fit well, however, within the *Manual's* martial interpretation of history and offered students a recent example of America's military strength. The volume's last section solidified this point by featuring a lengthy list of patriotic dates. Here, Skinner asserted the importance of children gaining a thorough knowledge of events that helped develop the nation's "marvelous greatness" and "acknowledged prestige." In doing this, the *Manual* spent seventy pages listing patriotic events that occurred on nearly every day of the year, most of them military battles.⁸⁵

Media praise for Skinner and his *Manual*, although widespread, was not absolute. *The Nation*, a leading Progressive periodical, offered a scathing critique of the *Manual*, proclaiming:

What solemn nonsense it all is! Men loved the flag before they loved "Old Glory"; men died willingly for their country without special instruction in color symbolism; statesmen gave their lives to public service without reciting a flag pledge everyday . . . Reading drivel to children and having them recite doggerel can hardly have any effect except to vulgarize them.⁸⁶

In this damning review, *Nation* editor E.L. Godkin denounced what he deemed "idiotic flag fetishism." Indeed, to Godkin, the *Manual of Patriotism* had nearly the opposite of its intended effect. Not only did it give students a simplified version of history, but also it lessened their intelligence. Merely stimulating patriotism had potentially dangerous consequences. Godkin, weary of state-sponsored efforts to instill patriotism, argued that rather than just learning to love their country, students needed to understand its policies, and the government, furthermore,

⁸⁴ Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Gerstle *American Crucible*, 39-40.

⁸⁵ Skinner, *Manual of Patriotism*, 389-461.

⁸⁶ "Patriotism by Manual," *The Nation* 71, no. 1849 (December 6, 1900), 440.

needed to earn citizens' respect. This reciprocal vision of patriotism challenged the *Manual's* more romantic version of national loyalty, but voices like Godkin's remained a minority.⁸⁷

Other important figures also attacked the celebratory and highly symbolic approach to patriotism championed in the *Manual*. One perhaps unlikely dissenter, then-Princeton Professor Woodrow Wilson, offered a similar criticism of patriotic education a year prior to the *Manual's* release. Wilson's chief concern with what he deemed "spurious patriotism" in schools dealt with the tendency of reformers to inculcate patriotism without allowing children to form their own opinions. "When I see schoolrooms full of children going through genuflections to the flag of the United States," Wilson argued, "I am willing to bend the knee if I be permitted to understand what history has written on the folds of that flag." Wilson added that students needed to understand "that this is a flag of liberty of opinion."⁸⁸ Wilson would later fail to heed his own advice on the importance of allowing a place for dissent within in American patriotism. As president during World War I, Wilson urged passage of a sedition act that imprisoned hundreds of Americans for acts as small as refusing to salute the flag, and jailed anarchists and socialists for their perceived threat to the American government.⁸⁹ Nearly twenty years after the passage of New York's flag law, Skinner and the GAR's version of patriotism appeared ascendant.

Ironically, Skinner's insistence on using state power to produce and disseminate the *Manual* limited its distribution. Fiscal concerns often precluded Skinner's requests for more copies. In 1901, for example, New York governor Benjamin Odell denied funds for 20,000 new copies of the *Manual*, claiming this saved the state \$13,000.⁹⁰ Although it never reached every

⁸⁷ Ibid.; see also Jonathan M. Hansen, *The Lost Promise of Patriotism: Debating American Identity, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 152-153.

⁸⁸ Woodrow Wilson, "Spurious Education Versus Real Education," *The School Review* 7, no. 10, (December 1899), 603.

⁸⁹ O'Leary, *To Die For*, 227-236.

⁹⁰ "Over One Million Saved," *New York Sun*, May 5, 1901, 1.

child in the nation as Skinner had hoped, the *Manual* remained a well-regarded patriotic primer. As of 1904, Skinner's last year as superintendent of public instruction, the legislature ordered a reduced printing of 10,000 copies.⁹¹ Many remained staunch advocates of the *Manual* in the proceeding years, despite its decreasing circulation. A 1910 article in the Syracuse *Post-Standard* promoted the state education department's forthcoming Arbor Day celebration by joking that it occurred, "perhaps to make up for [the state] having issued but one Manual of Patriotism under the editorship of Superintendent Skinner."⁹²

Skinner retired from his position as state superintendent in 1904, albeit not without controversy. That same year the *New York Times* reported that unnamed sources charged Skinner with soliciting campaign donations from normal school principals across the state. This breach of campaign laws, the *Times* reported, irked many who felt that Skinner paid inordinate attention to public schools.⁹³ Perhaps referencing the scandal while reporting Skinner's retirement, the journal *American Education* argued, "No matter what any one may say or think of Charles R. Skinner as a man or as an educator or politician, it will be universally conceded that his devotion and loyalty to the public school never weakened."⁹⁴ Perhaps benefitting from old Republican Party ties, following his retirement from the state superintendent position President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Skinner Assistant Appraiser for the Port of New York in 1906. He later worked as New York's legislative librarian before his death in 1928 at the age of 83.⁹⁵

Despite the lengthy list of accomplishments he accrued throughout his diverse career, Skinner remained particularly proud of the *Manual of Patriotism*. In 1907, three years after his retirement, *The School Journal* curiously advertised this text in a "Notes of New Books" section.

⁹¹ "Laws of New York – By Authority," *The Telegram* (Syracuse, NY), Sep. 10, 1904, 9.

⁹² "Sentimentalists in Schools," *The Post-Standard* (Syracuse, NY), Mar. 31, 1910, 1.

⁹³ "Skinner Again Accused," *New York Times*, January 18, 1904, 12.

⁹⁴ "Mr. Skinner's Part," *American Education* 7, no. 8 (April 1904), 485.

⁹⁵ "Charles R. Skinner, Educator, 83, Dies," *New York Times*, July 1, 1928, 25.

In describing the book, now available outside of New York public schools, the journal wrote, “The time, indeed, is ripe for a closer study of patriotism in all sections of the Republic, and Mr. Skinner’s excellent book will provide an excellent aid in the right direction.” Rather than referring readers to a publishing house, however, the notice asked those interested to write directly to Charles Skinner to procure a copy.⁹⁶ Skinner reflected on the *Manual* in a 1920 letter to the editor in the *Watertown Daily Times*. Skinner wrote of his “handsome volume”: “I do not hesitate to declare the ‘Manual of Patriotism’ one of the best books of its kind ever published.” This laudatory assessment of his work appeared alongside a separate letter Skinner submitted imploring readers to elect a “military man” as president.⁹⁷ In 1942, the *Oswego Palladium-Times* reported that a lawyer who searched “old book shops” hoping to acquire the *Manual* presented a local library with a copy of the book and assured that it would assist patriotic groups in their work. Decades after its publication, the sentiments in the *Manual* still resonated with self-proclaimed patriots.⁹⁸

The creation of the *Manual of Patriotism* stands as an unprecedented state effort to provide schoolchildren with lessons in loyalty. States like New York succeeded in creating legal standards requiring the presence of national symbols in public schools. While the *Manual of Patriotism* met with limited long-term success, the story of its creation and dissemination offers a remarkable example of schools’ perceived power as sites of social governance in the Progressive Era. While private organizations had brought flags to schools for decades by the end of the late-nineteenth century, legislators ensured that they remained there. The *Manual of Patriotism* similarly exemplifies the trends of the era’s patriotic literature. Stressing Civil War

⁹⁶ “Notes of New Books,” *The School Journal* 75, no. 1 (July 6, 1907), 25.

⁹⁷ Charles Skinner, “Lincoln’s ‘Lost’ Tribute to Washington,” and “Wood as a Military Man,” *Watertown Daily Times*, Mar. 4, 1920, 4.

⁹⁸ “1,500 Books Received,” *Oswego Palladium-Times* (Oswego, NY), Feb. 11, 1942, 2.

reunion, the nation's military history, and a millennial interpretation of the nation's supremacy, this text offered students a celebratory vision of American history that cast them as the defenders of its glorious future. Doing this, Skinner and other proponents insisted, curbed students' potential adherence to deviant political ideologies and stirred a sentimental yet intelligent citizenship within them. Furthermore, the patriotic ideals articulated in the *Manual* became increasingly common in history textbooks and patriotic manuals issued in state across the nation in the years prior to World War I. According to Skinner and many of the era's likeminded patriots, through interactions with texts like the *Manual of Patriotism* and faithful observance of nationalist rituals and celebrations, students could play a vital role in ensuring the nation's continued political unity and eventual global dominance. This law and Skinner's text, then, represented perhaps not an "antidote for anarchy," but rather, a vaccination.

Chapter Three

Training the “Grand Army of the Public Schools”: Teachers, Students, and the Influence of Patriotic Education, 1890-1920

On May 1st, 1899, “Flags were in evidence everywhere” in New York City. Citizens filled the streets to commemorate the one-year anniversary of a key American naval victory in Manila. The public schools brimmed with national pride for this “entirely informal” celebration, and as the *New York Times* claimed, “the school children probably made more of the day than their elders.” Indeed, every school district in the city put on elaborate patriotic exercises. “In Public School No. 23,” the *Times* reported, “the majority of the children are foreign born, but they are intensely patriotic. The exercises yesterday morning began with the singing of a number of patriotic songs. After this some of the scholars read descriptions of the naval battle and other short sketches of the life of Admiral [George] Dewey.” Following their principal’s brief speech about Dewey’s exploits, “the color guard, composed of little girls dressed in white, brought out the National flag, and as it passed the children rose and saluted the colors amid loud cheering.” Throughout the city, schoolchildren — native-born and immigrant, male and female — all celebrated a new national military hero: George Dewey. The fetes that marked “Dewey Day” displayed the public schools’ ample nationalist ardor at the end of the nineteenth century. Cultivating this patriotic fervor, however, required proper training.¹

In the late-nineteenth century, reformers and policymakers across the nation worked to make schools a training ground for loyal patriots. These efforts resulted in several state laws requiring patriotic exercises and the presence of national symbols in schools. This movement

¹ “Admiral Dewey Honored,” *New York Times*, May 2, 1899, 3.

garnered substantial popular support, and helped create a national “cult of the flag.”² The success of these efforts, however, relied on the compliance of school administrators, and most vitally, teachers. Teachers assumed a role in the patriotic education movement both in response to threats to their authority and as a way to enhance their political and social standing. In attempting to cultivate civic pride among the nation’s youth, teachers employed materials a generation of reformers, academics, and self-proclaimed patriots created in hopes of indoctrinating future generations with what they deemed desirable American values.

Teachers across the nation disseminated a patriotic curriculum rife with militarism, a celebratory view of American history, and the cultural assumptions about gender, race, ethnicity, and religion that dominated turn-of-the-century American thought. Millions of American schoolchildren received this instruction through patriotic rituals, manuals, and history textbooks. This entrenched a distinct patriotic culture in the schools sanctifying national political heroes, symbols, and myths.³ In emphasizing the vitality of the nation’s martial spirit, furthermore, patriotic education nurtured both students’ love for their country and their willingness to fight for it. Perhaps ironically, an overwhelmingly female and working class teaching force played a vital

² Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 207-208.

³ The growth of racist thinking in the nation corresponded with a surge in immigration from southern and eastern Europe. For some examples of this see Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 94-95. For examples of this ideology at work in the patriotic education movement, see McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 209-210. These ideas also stemmed from the nation’s involvement in the Spanish American War, a key catalyst for the patriotic education movement. For examples of this, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 171-186. For an additional discussion of the importance of masculinity in promoting the Spanish-American war, see Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998). Civil War reunion, as seen in previous chapters and apparent here as well also played a considerable role in these developments. See David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War and American Memory* (Cambridge: University of Harvard Press, 2001), and for the growth of sentimentalism toward Confederate history, see Edward Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 327-340.

part in inculcating these values. Teachers effectively became drill sergeants charged with training a national patriotic army.

The decidedly militaristic nature of patriotic education had profound consequences for teachers and students. Historians have noted that militarism increased in the late-nineteenth century because of middle and upper class white male concerns about modern civilization's enervating and emasculating effects. Martial principles suggested a way to revitalize American manhood, unify a nation still divided by the Civil War, and ameliorate social problems stemming from a perceived lack of order.⁴ While historians have demonstrated that elite male reformers helped popularize these ideals, women's prominent role in the patriotic education movement complicates this story. White middle and working-class women constituted a majority of the nation's teachers and wrote many of the patriotic manuals and texts used in classrooms. This suggests that rather than simply deferring to the authority of male administrators, many teachers accepted patriotic education as a way to enhance their own social standing. For teachers struggling to gain influence and respect among both their employers and the public, embracing militaristic ideals perhaps offered greater promise than did adhering to the strict notions of piety and purity espoused by the era's Victorian female reformers.⁵ In a culture dominated by increasingly militant upper class white men, embracing the mythology promoted in patriotic education may have held considerable appeal to teachers. Women had no place in the American military, but they could play a key role in preparing a grand army of the public schools.⁶

⁴ T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994 [orig. 1983]), 98-117; Kevin P. Murphy, *Political Manhood: Red Bloods, Mollycoddles, and the Politics of Progressive Era Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 68-73, 102, 103. Murphy notes how the principles of what he deems "civic militarism" gave male urban reformers a masculine tool with which to attack political corruption, poverty, and social injustice.

⁵ Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 4.

⁶ This turn of phrase evokes the Grand Army of the Republic, a key patriotic organization that plays a considerable role in the growth of the patriotic education movement and the establishment of legal standards, both outlined in

As previous chapters have shown, private organizations and reformers conducted a determined effort to popularize and circulate patriotic materials in schools, and zealous policymakers led the way in creating new legal standards for schools.⁷ Despite the often-mandatory presence of flags, national holidays, and patriotic celebrations in schools, however, teachers faced growing calls to play an active role in creating a loyal citizenry.⁸ This chapter examines patriotic education's standards, practice, and reception. In doing so, it looks at academic and popular assessments of teachers, widely disseminated patriotic literature, history textbooks, and the writings of students from Butte, Montana, a western city shaped by the same forces of immigration, labor strife, and educational standardization as was much of the nation.⁹ Analyzing these records suggests the national scope of this movement and demonstrates the role teachers played in instilling patriotism among students. By examining the ground level effects of patriotic education, this chapter gives insight into how teachers and students experienced this profound cultural development.

preceding chapters. For studies that offer examples of the Grand Army of the Republic, the state, and the national media's role in promoting patriotic education, see Cecelia Elizabeth O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 186-193; McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 207-210, 224-234; Wilbur Zelinsky, "O Say, Can You See?: Nationalist Emblems in the Landscape," *Winterthur Portfolio* 19, No. 34 (1984), 280.

⁷ See previous chapters for more analysis of both reform groups' efforts to make patriotism a standard aspect in the nation's schools, as well as for more in-depth consideration of political and legal efforts to place patriotism in schools. The most prominent example of this is the state of New York's campaign to make patriotism mandatory in schools, a plan that several other states also adopted. New York state superintendent of education Charles R. Skinner led the way in advocating for these legal standards, and even wrote a text for the state's schools. See Charles R. Skinner, *Manual of Patriotism* (New York: Brandow Printing Company, 1900).

⁸ The amount of schools with flag laws was publicized in "School Flag Laws," *The Youth's Companion* 79, No 15 (April 13, 1905), 182. For a look at some of the earliest examples of flag laws and states' additional requirements, see Albert Gray, "Notes on the State Legislation of America in 1895," *Journal of the Society of Comparative Legislation* 1 (1896 - 1897), 235. In discussing the shaping of these legislative shifts in public education and efforts at social governance in the schools, these chapters build on contributions from the following: Tracy L. Steffes, "A New Education for a Modern Age: National Reform, State-Building, and the Transformation of American Schooling, 1890-1933," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2008), 3-11, Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice in Progressive Era Chicago* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁹ For studies of Butte's social, economic, and cultural character, see David Emmons, *The Butte Irish: Class and Ethnicity in an American Mining Town, 1875-1925* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Michael Malone, *The Battle for Butte: Mining and Politics on the Northern Frontier* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), Clemens Work, *Darkest Before Dawn: Sedition and Free Speech in the American West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).

* * * * *

A self-congratulatory notice in an 1898 edition of *The Youth's Companion* contained a striking hypothetical: "If it were possible for the FOURTEEN MILLION PUPILS of our public schools to march in single file, the line would extend over FIVE THOUSAND MILES." This example illustrated not merely the scope of public school attendance in America, but rather the assumption by some of how easily mobilized students could be if they received a thorough patriotic education. An important key to creating patriots in the nation's schools, the article noted, was *The Youth's Companion's* decade-long campaign to place a flag atop every schoolhouse in the nation. These flags, the article contended, played a vital role in "arousing public sentiment and creating interest in the subject of a better citizenship." In imagining all of the nation's schoolchildren marching in single file, this piece indicated that displaying national symbols in schools could produce a militantly patriotic citizenry. While the mere presence of national symbols had the potential to create eager patriots, the article further claimed that, "One of the most important questions discussed by educators," was "how shall this grand army of the public schools be trained in order to ensure an intelligent, loyal and upright citizenship [?]"¹⁰

As this question implied, patriotic education played a significant role in efforts to reform schools as a way of ensuring social order. Reformers and public officials sought to ensure an efficient and unified society by creating a patriotic citizenry, but the burden of inculcating these ideologies in the nation's youth fell to school administrators and teachers.¹¹ Teaching had only

¹⁰ "...In Training for Citizenship," *The Youth's Companion* 72, no. 4 (January 27, 1898), 50. Emphasis in original.

¹¹ For examples of belief in popular education solving problems of social organization and thereby hastening progress, see Rush Welter, *Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 215. For an example of the school as a site where private organizations targeted in order to address what they viewed as broad social ills, see Jonathan Zimmerman, *Distilling Democracy: Alcohol Education in America's Public Schools, 1880-1925* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 1-12. For how educational reforms affected teachers and administrators, see Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars, New York City, 1805-1973: A History of Public Schools as a Battlefield for Social Change* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 103-113, 234; James W. Fraser, "Agents of Democracy: Urban Elementary-School Teachers and the Conditions of Teaching,"

recently become a primarily female occupation. Prior to the Civil War, men held a majority of the nation's teaching positions. By 1870, however, women made up roughly sixty percent of the nation's teachers and by 1930 this number grew to eighty percent. The number of female teachers in primary grades was even more skewed. A 1905 study of 467 American cities reported that men constituted only two percent of elementary school teachers. Men occupied thirty-eight percent of high school teaching jobs, but women held an increasing majority. An advertisement from an 1892 edition of the *Journal of Education* bluntly displayed the shifting gender dynamics in schools. This "Teachers Wanted" notice featured separate columns for "Ladies" and "Men," with twenty-seven jobs available for the former and fifteen for the latter. Tellingly, all but two jobs marketed for women were for primary and secondary teaching positions, while only one of the positions for men offered a high school teaching position, with remainder promoting postsecondary and administrative positions.¹² At the same time teaching became a largely feminized profession, however, it began receiving increased scrutiny from reformers. Historians of education have argued the years between 1880 and World War I witnessed the low point of teacher influence in schools. In cities throughout the nation, mostly male officials attempted to create uniform standards and centralize control, a system historian of education James Fraser describes as "characterized by a commitment to a kind of efficiency and top-down decision making which often took on a decidedly antiteacher tone." In response to these threats to their

in Donald Warren, ed., *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989). A solid examination of the lasting legacy of educational reforms is Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

¹² Advertisement ("Teachers Wanted"), *Journal of Education* 35, no. 2 (January 14, 1892), 29.

authority, many teachers may have embraced patriotic education as a way to establish an identity as vital and even heroic community members.¹³

Despite the growing presence of national symbols and rituals in schools, criticism of patriotic education reflected increasing scrutiny of curriculum and teachers. Policymakers and reform groups had fought for the inclusion of patriotism in schools and academics and popular publications soon began weighing in on its proper application, emphasizing the considerable stakes of failing to properly train the rising generation of students. “Patriotism,” argued University of Chicago graduate student Chauncey P. Colegrove before the Iowa State Teacher’s Association in 1896, “must be taught in the public schools, and what the ‘nation’s to-morrow’ will be depends far more on the teachers of our public schools than it does the upon the preacher in the pulpit, the lawmaker, or the judge.”¹⁴ Colegrove, the son of a Baptist clergyman and later a noted author of educational texts and the president of Upper Iowa University, claimed this placed teachers in a position of unrivaled influence.¹⁵ Colegrove, however, bemoaned patriotic education’s focus on “drums and flags and bloody battles and military heroes, and dying for one’s country.” He added that if these symbols “are forever to represent in the child’s mind all there is in patriotism, these exercises may do more harm than good.”¹⁶ To Colegrove, teachers needed to push students beyond these standard assertions of national loyalty that glorified the nation’s military past.

¹³ James W. Fraser, “Agents of Democracy: Urban Elementary-School Teachers and the Conditions of Teaching,” in Donald Warren, ed., *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989). 119-120, 125, quote on 126

¹⁴ Chauncey P. Colegrove, “Patriotism in Our Public Schools,” *American Magazine of Civics* 9, no. 2 (August/September 1896), 120. Colegrove’s assessment of the link between teaching patriotism and religion was not unique. As Samuel W. Mendum, a Republican Massachusetts politician put it in the *North American Review* four years earlier, “in teaching citizenship the teacher must be an enthusiastic patriot, one in love of the institutions of the country who can *preach* patriotism as well as *teach* it.” Samuel W. Mendum, “How to Teach Citizenship,” *North American Review* 152, no. 410 (January 1891), 122. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵ “Chauncey P. Colegrove, the New President of Upper Iowa University,” *Oelwein Register* (Oelwein, Iowa), September 27, 1916, 5.

¹⁶ Colegrove, “Patriotism in Our Public Schools,” *American Magazine of Civics* 9, no. 2, 120.

While Colegrove took issue with schools' overemphasis on sanguinary and militaristic nationalism, his language also reveals the complex gender dynamics of patriotic education. Colegrove argued in favor of women's suffrage, asking his audience, "did it ever occur to you that the present generation of voters in the United States is the very first in the history of the world which had been educated by women teachers, and that those teachers are themselves not voters?"¹⁷ To Colegrove, however, the American citizen was exclusively male and patriotism was a distinctly masculine virtue. Noting that schools "are the basis of the institutional man," Colegrove deemed them sites where pupils "learn loyalty to the community and to the national flag, truth, honesty, and public spirit; for *these* qualities are the essentials of patriotism." "Genuine patriotism," Colegrove concluded, "can never be developed by itself *apart* from manhood – it *is* manhood."¹⁸ While Colegrove identified the irony of teachers' inability to vote earlier, his depiction of patriotism and manhood as inseparable qualities ignored the irony of a largely female force disseminating notions of proper masculinity to the nation's future citizens.

Other academics similarly heralded teachers' vital role in preparing the nation's male citizens. Wilmont H. Goodale, a professor of philosophy and civics at Louisiana State University, implored teachers to take a central role in creating future statesmen and citizens in 1895. Goodale recounted the 1891 advice of Louisiana state superintendent of education W.H. Jack, who claimed: "The child should be early taught *love of country*, and patriotic pride in its history and institutions should be kindled in his heart. To this end stories, poems, and anecdotes of heroic deeds should be read in the schools . . . on such occasions as might be appointed by the teachers." Jack offered teachers control over when to employ patriotic materials in schools, but

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

tellingly proclaimed that the male student most needed these lessons “kindled in his heart.”¹⁹

Goodale reiterated this sentiment near the end of this piece, contending that patriotism “must be enshrined in the heart of the American citizen with the earliest lessons of his life. He should be indoctrinated in the laws and customs of the land and taught to honor its flag and sing its national songs. Into his mind should be instilled all those principles of courage, fortitude, and patriotism which ever meet in man’s loftiest ideals of man.” Goodale neglected to mention that the teachers in charge of disseminating “man’s loftiest ideals of man” were overwhelmingly female.²⁰

That Goodale wrote from the South reveals both the national scope of this movement and its emphasis on post-Civil War reunion. The late-nineteenth century surge in romantic interpretations of the Civil War downplayed its most divisive aspects and cast the northern and southern causes as equally noble.²¹ Tensions eased enough that Goodale felt compelled to claim: “I believe that the Southern States are to-day the most favorable portion of all this country for the development of patriotic feeling.”²² Goodale later asserted that any hard feelings acquired leading to and during the Civil War had dissipated. Evoking American exceptionalism to explain the rapid progress of reunion, Goodale noted that “the most difficult thing for Europeans to understand in regard to America is the strong feeling of friendship that exists among the people who were so recently engaged in deadly strife . . . They cannot understand that at the rate we go we can get mad, have our quarrel, get over it, shake hands, join hearts, and be at something else long before the people in other countries find out that there has anything been the matter with

¹⁹ Wilmont H. Goodale, “Patriotism,” *American Magazine of Civics* 6, no. 4 (April 1895), 363.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 368.

²¹ For more on the growth of reunionist sentiments see Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 1-5, 211-299; Lears, *Rebirth of Nation*, 22-26; for how reunion influenced the patriotic movement, see O’Leary, *To Die For*, 110-128.

²² Goodale, “Patriotism,” 356.

us.”²³ Indeed, Americans had found a shared “something else” to preoccupy them in the 1890s: inculcating the nation’s children with patriotism.

Critics commonly asserted that teachers needed to prioritize patriotic education. A humorous article from a 1900 issue of *McClure’s Magazine* shows what many concerned citizens saw as faulty in teachers’ approach to stimulating patriotism. This story implied that teachers disseminated an abundance of patriotic material but that students commonly missed the point, as evidenced by its title: “The Star-Spangled Banner: Does it Get Weighed? Or Yet Wade?” This fictional tale used the example of a child who attempted to impress her parents’ friends at a dinner party by reproducing the words to “America.” This “more than ordinarily intelligent” child, however, mistakenly recounted the lyrics, praising a “sweet land of libaet tea,” and demanding that “From ev’ry mountain side, let fridmen ring.”²⁴ Author Marion Hill offered several more comical patriotic malapropisms before earnestly pleading with the nation’s teachers to ensure that “when our little tots at school are taught the words of patriotic songs, plentiful and constantly repeated explanation should go hand in hand with such instruction.” Furthermore, Hill argued: “Beautiful, indeed, is it to see a class give signs of thorough drill in inspiring exercises of collective patriotism; but to be ardently effective the drill should begin with the individual.”²⁵ Rather than simply forcing classes go through the motions of praising the flag and their forefathers, each student needed to acquire a deep love for their country. Training tomorrow’s patriots and suppressing potential dissent necessitated teachers ensure individual students’ understanding of this all-important message.

²³ Ibid., 366.

²⁴ Marion Hill, “The Star-Spangled Banner: Does it Get Weighed? Or Yet Wade?” *McClure’s Magazine* 15, no. 3 (July 1900), 263.

²⁵ Ibid., 267.

Some writers gave more critical assessments of teachers' capabilities and the patriotic education movement's aims. Author Lys D'Aimeé critiqued both patriotic education and what he deemed the nation's "noble army of martyrs": its overworked, unqualified, and improperly prepared teachers.²⁶ D'Aimeé exclusively referred to teachers using feminine pronouns in decrying the American educational system, in which a "class flounders along under the misguidance of a teacher who is clever enough to hide her ignorance, or wastes precious hours under an upright teacher who honestly avows she cannot learn enough about a subject in ten minutes or even ten hours to teach it as it should be taught."²⁷ The article implied that teachers either lacked the aptitude to train students correctly or the resources to gain a working knowledge of the material administrators expected them to teach. D'Aimeé, echoing other critics, demanded that teachers go beyond the standard militaristic fare patriotic education offered: "We teach [students] stirring patriotic songs, which tell them how noble it is to die for one's country; but the harder, nobler task to live for one's country we pass by." D'Aimeé concluded with a stark assertion of this trend's stakes, claiming, "if we do not raise up preservers we raise up destroyers of the republic."²⁸ This statement, equating the stakes of proper patriotic education with the nation's future survival, echoed the sentiments of proponents who cast this movement as a necessary way to stem potential dissent and deviance.²⁹

A similar article in *Gunton's Magazine* stressed teachers' responsibility to train the nation's future citizens. "In recent publications," author S.E. Forman claimed, "it has been charged that the public schools are the birthplace of anarchy."³⁰ Forman invoked the specter of

²⁶ Lys D'Aimeé, "The Menace of Present Educational Methods," *Gunton's Magazine*, September 1900, 261.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 262

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 268.

²⁹ This is examined in-depth in this thesis's first and second chapters.

³⁰ S.E. Forman, "Public Schools and Good Government," *Gunton's Magazine* (April 1902), 348. While Forman neglects to mention what publications made these claims, fears of anarchism were prominent in the patriotic education movement. For an example of this, see J.C. Burrows, "The Need of National Legislation against

one of the era's most feared political ideologies to emphasize the importance of proper education. To keep students from embracing anarchy teachers needed to offer students solid training in both celebratory patriotism and the basic functions of government. As Forman argued, "Citizenship and patriotism are favorite themes at all educational meetings and in school journals," and indeed, "the flag may be saluted, 'America' may be sung, short patriotic quotations may be recited, but this can hardly be accepted as instruction in civics."³¹ In Forman's estimation, failure to offer ample patriotic training reflected poorly on their abilities and harmed the nation's youth. Preparing the nation's future citizens and statesmen — an exclusively male group in this article — necessitated that teachers stress patriotic education. "One can only regret," Forman concluded, "that the efforts of teachers to train for good citizenship have been so haphazard and half-hearted."³² Even critics of the scope of patriotic education, however, acknowledged the ubiquity of patriotic rituals glorifying the nation and celebrating its military.

Patriotic instruction represented a vital but underdeveloped aspect of public education to many critics. Academics and administrators often complained that teachers inadequately promoted these ideals, constituting another threat to their already waning authority.³³ By embracing patriotic education, however, teachers responded not only to critiques but also to the potentially elevated social status they could gain by successfully molding loyal citizens. A vocal champion of the patriotic education movement, *The Youth's Companion* placed considerable emphasis on what teachers stood to gain by promoting patriotism. As previous examples show, teachers faced a new set of expectations due to the widespread influence of the patriotic

Anarchism," *The North American Review* 173, no. 541 (December 1901), 727-745. For more on growing fears of anarchism in the nation see Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 55,70; Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 83-84; O'Leary, *To Die For*, 60.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 356. For evidence of patriotism's presence in school journals, see chapter one of this thesis.

³² *Ibid.*, 358.

³³ Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 18-19.

education movement. This both placed an additional burden on teachers and offered promise. Promoting patriotism increasingly appeared as an aspect of the curriculum that could help schoolchildren become exemplary citizens and even revitalize entire communities, casting teaching in a heroic light and incentivizing the cultivation of a patriotic classroom atmosphere.

Two fictional stories published in *The Youth's Companion* in 1895 help illustrate how literature cast patriotic education as beneficial to female teachers. In February of 1895, the magazine printed a story from author Annie Fellows-Johnston titled “Washington’s Birthday at Hardyville” with the telling subtitle, “How a plucky little Teacher roused the People to Patriotism.”³⁴ The story begins with a heated argument between some of the townspeople. This argument, and the central conflict of the story, is that Schmidt, a German community member, refuses to let the town’s new teacher, Miss Atworth, use the schoolhouse for a celebration of George Washington’s birthday. Fellows-Johnston, who later wrote the well-known *Little Colonel* books, writes Schmidt’s dialogue with a comically heavy German accent and presents his views as hostile to traditional American patriotic ideals.³⁵ When one community member praises Miss Atworth’s emphasis on patriotism and derides a former instructor’s emphasis on dry facts and neglect of American civics, Schmidt responds, “Dat vas more good as learn ‘em yoost foolishness – badriodism und der flag and all dot plab ‘bout der country and der Union.”³⁶ Schmidt then claims that if the school holds this patriotic celebration of Washington he will remove his son Karl from school and instead put him to work on the family farm. When Atworth

³⁴ Annie Fellows-Johnston, “Washington’s Birthday at Hardyville,” *The Youth's Companion* 35, No. 35 (Feb 21, 1895), 86.

³⁵ Fellows-Johnston wrote for forty years before her death in 1931. The *Little Colonel* series was particularly successful, and remains her most well known work in part because of the 1935 Shirley Temple film adaptation of the books. Reflecting on her success in its 1931 obituary, the *New York Times* recounted: “Because a child once underwent a major operation without an anesthetic after receiving the promise of a set of the ‘Little Colonel’ books, Mrs. Johnston often expressed the feeling that her work had been worth while. The child recovered.” See “Annie F. Johnston, Author, Dies at 68,” *New York Times*, Oct. 6, 1931, 25.

³⁶ Fellows-Johnston, “Washington’s Birthday at Hardyville,” 86.

hears about Schmidt's intentions she expresses dismay. Karl's removal from school would disrupt a crucial aspect of the evening's patriotic exercises, as Atworth planned for him to read a famous speech by Patrick Henry. Atworth then appeals to Schmidt directly to allow his son's participation and the use of the schoolhouse with predictably successful results. Atworth's real triumph, however, occurs at the celebration of Washinton's birthday. Karl, as Atworth had hoped, delivered a stirring reading of Henry's speech, causing the crowd to demand an encore. Karl then launched into a reading of the German story "Mein Vaterland." At the culmination of this reading, Karl turns and points to the prominently displayed portrait of George Washington and the American flag and exclaims "My Fatherland!"³⁷ Karl's unexpected assertion of a distinctly American identity evinced that his teacher had promoted an atmosphere so patriotic even the son of a German immigrant hostile to American national values expressed his unwavering devotion to the nation. As described by Fellows-Johnston, the celebration then concluded with a speech by a Civil War veteran, who claimed, "that I fit [fought] for that flag, and yet, livin' here so long, and never seeing a celebration for young or old, I'd half forgot my patriotism. It's our school teacher has woke me up to seeing the truth."³⁸ This story positions the teacher as a success in Americanizing her students, inspiring patriotism, and winning the endorsement of one of the town's military heroes.

A similar story published in the *Youth's Companion* just two months later titled "The Meanest Man in Plunkett" provided an additional example of how a teacher's position could be elevated through her devotion to patriotism. In this story, Miss Stanton, the town's teacher, is seeking donations to provide the school with a flag. In the story, Stanton successfully plays off the animosities of two of the community's wealthiest members, Mr. Simpson and Mr. Blodgett,

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

to procure the necessary funds to purchase the flag despite their initial resistance. Author Emily J. Langley writes that, “all Plunkett was stirred with the news, marveling much that Plunkett was to possess the flag, but more that it should be the gift of two men whose mutual stinginess and animosity had become notorious!”³⁹ As Langley later described, Simpson and Blodgett eventually reconcile their differences. This gesture inspired immense patriotism in the townspeople, as Blodgett and Simpson were Plunkett’s only remaining Civil War veterans. “The Meanest Man in Plunkett” concluded with a Memorial Day celebration where Simpson and Blodgett raise the flag together, and as Langley imagined, “it fluttered, and flung its glory to the welcoming breeze, while the children cheered with a will, and their elders softly, with something tugging at their throats.”⁴⁰ In both of these stories Civil War veterans play pivotal roles, displaying the centrality of the shared memory of battle to the surge in late-nineteenth century patriotic fervor. Most crucially, the teachers are presented as exemplary citizens who through their zeal for patriotic instruction enriched both the community and the schools. Teachers promoted patriotic education as a way for themselves and other educators to earn additional respect, rather than simply having policymakers, reformers, and male administrators coerce them into adopting nationalistic ideologies and indoctrinating children accordingly.

In selling teachers the possibilities of embracing patriotic education, *The Youth’s Companion* also published success stories. One such account described a New York City contest among public schools to present the best “salute to the flag” and “original patriotic song.” Displaying the impressive assimilatory powers of patriotic education, six hundred Russian-born children won the contest. At the onset of their presentation, their superintendent said to them, “You are no longer Russians; you are Americans.” The students then gave a flag salute

³⁹ Emily J. Langley, “The Meanest Man in Plunkett,” *The Youth’s Companion* 35, No. 49 (May 30, 1895), 263.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

proclaiming: “We, the children of many lands who find rest under thy folds, do pledge our lives, our hearts and our sacred honor to love and protect thee, our country and the liberty of the American people forever.”⁴¹ *The Youth’s Companion* also claimed the patriotic fervor in American schools drew the attention of other nations. In 1900, the magazine reported that pictures of students saluting the flag and reciting the “Pledge of Allegiance” in New York public schools garnered positive notices from foreign nations at a Paris Exposition. The Russian and New Zealand governments reportedly both sent requests for the photos to be displayed for their respective pedagogic societies. These examples of patriotic education’s efficacy reiterated the importance of this instruction to teachers.⁴²

Popular publications promised great success to teachers who went beyond expectations and cultivated an exceedingly patriotic environment. The teacher’s periodical *Primary Plans* included a telling advertisement in its September 1908 issue. This advertisement, from the Mail Order Flag Co. in Anderson, Indiana, offered teachers a free American flag for their schools. This advertisement implored teachers to “stimulate that patriotism that smoulders [sic] in the heart of every American-born child. Be patriotic. Don’t bother the board. Get credit for something yourself.” Adding nationalist flair to one’s classroom, the ad implied, would naturally arouse students’ patriotism and possibly benefit the teacher. To attain the free flag, however, teachers needed first to procure thirty-five flag buttons for their students to sell at ten cents apiece. The profits, then, would secure the flag. Upon receiving the flag, the company offered to “place you in a position to earn extra money by writing a few letters for us to other teachers.”⁴³ The company also offered pictures of Washington and Lincoln instead of a flag. Adorning their classrooms with portraits of these national heroes gave teachers new opportunities to both

⁴¹ “An Interesting Scene,” *The Youth’s Companion* 71, no. 7 (Feb 18, 1897), 78.

⁴² “Current Topics,” *The Youth’s Companion* 74 no. 43, (Oct 25, 1900), 524.

⁴³ Untitled advertisement (Mail Order Flag Co.), *Primary Plans* 6, no. 2 (September 1908), 38.

increase their status and inflate their students' sense of patriotism. That this company considered schoolteachers' desire for flags and pictures of presidents common enough to build a business around shows the extent of schools' demand for patriotic materials. The preponderance of advertisements like the one directly beside the Mail Order Flag Co.'s notice offering a solution for "superfluous hair on the face," meanwhile, leave no question of the gender of the majority of *Primary Plans*'s readership. While female teachers could potentially gain the respect of the school board and the general public by filling their classrooms with flags and pictures of past patriots, they still faced the looming threat of superfluous hair.⁴⁴

While many criticized teachers for not giving students a sufficiently thorough patriotic education, *The Youth's Companion* and other publications cast them as national heroes. In 1905, *The Youth's Companion* published a poem titled "The Flag Above the Schoolhouse Door." This poem's author, Harriet Crocker Le Roy, praised the hanging of American flags at schools across the nation and noted their presence "in cities and in villages, in county districts far and wide." Le Roy then informed children why this mattered: "What does it mean, O careless boy, O thoughtless girl at happy play? Red for the blood your fathers shed on some far off eventful day – White for the loyalty of countless women who forbore to mourn, but gave their all to save the flag above the schoolhouse door." Le Roy sought to remind "careless boys" and "thoughtless girls" of America's past military accomplishments and the sacrifices they required. At the same time, Le Roy lauded the efforts of women who earned their glory not on the battlefield, but rather by saving "the flag above the schoolhouse door."⁴⁵

Framed in military terms, teachers' efforts seemed all the more heroic. "After all," claimed *The Youth's Companion* in a 1904 article celebrating their movement to place flags in

⁴⁴ Untitled advertisement, *Primary Plans* 6, no. 2 (September 1908), 38.

⁴⁵ Harriet Crocker Le Roy, "The Flag Above the Schoolhouse Door," *The Youth's Companion* 79, No. 6 (Feb 9, 1905), 68.

American schools, “our real national defense is NATIONAL EDUCATION.”⁴⁶ While these perceived stakes of patriotic education placed teachers under increased scrutiny, it also allowed them a chance to transcend their gender and class identities and attain a status as vital members of society. Later, this same article reflected on the successes of patriotic education and the influence of teachers, noting, “a new generation of pupils has marched out from the schools into public life and a new generation has marched in during the past sixteen years.”⁴⁷ Their success inducing millions of children to march from their schools positioned teachers as vital members of the nation’s civic military force.

While periodicals and journals attempted to sell teachers on patriotic education’s importance, publishing companies helped supplement the growing enthusiasm for patriotic education, albeit at a cost. Educational journals frequently advertised books with titles like *Songs of History: Poems and Ballads upon Important Episodes in American History* and *The Song Patriot*, and even published excerpts from patriotic texts.⁴⁸ E.L. Kellogg and Co., a New York publishing company, produced several volumes of patriotic material intended for schools. Rather than solely compiling rituals for children, E.L. Kellogg and Co. printed numerous texts on educational methods, including John Dewey’s *My Pedagogic Creed*.⁴⁹ Alice M. Kellogg crafted several manuals containing patriotic celebrations and recitations for schoolchildren as part of the company’s “Brightening the Schoolroom Series.” Described by the publisher as an “exceedingly attractive and popular series,” these manuals contained instructions on how to properly observe

⁴⁶ “How it Came About,” *The Youth’s Companion* 78, no. 4 (January 28, 1904), 50. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Early 1890s examples of such advertisements and excerpts from books can be found in the following: Advertisement (“For Exposition Day”), *Journal of Education* 35, no. 1 (January 7, 1892), 16; Advertisement (“The Song Patriot”), and Olive E. Dana, “Our Constitution: Its Makers and Our Making,” in *Journal of Education* 35, no. 14 (April 7, 1892), 211-213; Ana Isabel Willis, “The Living Flag,” *Journal of Education* 35, no. 21 (May 26, 1892), 325; George Carrington, “School Flag Honors,” *Journal of Education* 36, no. 7 (August 25, 1892), 123.

⁴⁹ John Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed* (New York: E.L. Kellogg and Co., 1897). The company appears to have focused on educational texts both for primary and secondary schools, and published a long list of texts throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

George Washington's birthday, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and a variety of other patriotic occasions in the schools.⁵⁰ Kellogg's books emphasized the importance of teaching children patriotism while offering detailed instructions on how to manufacture a patriotic atmosphere in the classroom. Furthermore, they reiterated the importance of Americanization, post-Civil War reunion, and militarism to patriotic thought at the turn of the twentieth century.

Patriotic educational materials emphasized the importance of militarism to children regardless of their gender. Although laws disallowed women from participating in military combat and gaining the heroic status equated with war, female and male students both participated in exercises lauding their nation's military. One of Kellogg's edited volumes, *Fancy Drills and Marches*, published in 1895, included a number of patriotic exercises for schoolchildren. *Fancy Drills* featured two flag drills involving both female and male students, as well as "The March of the Red, White, and Blue." This exercise, intended solely for girls, required any number of pupils divisible by three to don red, white, or blue gowns and what the author describes as "Puritan caps." The girls, divided by their gowns' respective colors, are then instructed to march into a variety of formations to the tune of "Yankee Doodle." At the culmination of the march, the girls then sing patriotic lyrics lauding, "the colors of our country's flag, in whose love we are sharing . . . we wear the colors of our flag, our country's pride and glory!"⁵¹ As marches like this show, patriotic instruction targeted all students.

In celebrating the nation's martial culture and patriotic heroes, manuals often invoked the memory of the Civil War. This theme loomed large in Kellogg's volume titled *Patriotic*

⁵⁰ Alice M. Kellogg, ed., *Fancy Drills and Marches* (New York: E.L. Kellogg and Co., 1895), 4. See also Kellogg, *Lincoln the Patriot* (Philadelphia: Penn Publishing Co., 1897); or the company's full page advertisement in the prescriptive teachers' publication *Educational Foundations* titled "Best Books for Patriotic Days" containing a list of numerous Kellogg works including *Banner Days of the Republic* and *Flag Day in the School Room* "Best Books for Patriotic Days," *Educational Foundations* 16 (1904-1905), 400.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

Quotations Relating to American History. This text contained over three hundred selections intended to inspire patriotism among schoolchildren, most of which related to past military events, heroes, or more generally, the flag. Kellogg included several pieces devoted to Memorial Day and the Revolutionary War as well as entire sections devoted to George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Ulysses S. Grant. Tellingly, *Patriotic Quotations* included several poems emphasizing sectional reunion following the Civil War. One, titled simply “Reunion,” claimed that following the “thunder of cannons” and the “clashing of swords,” Union and Confederate soldiers merely engaged in “the clasping of friendly hands.”⁵² Other poems with titles like “The Blue and the Gray” provided schoolchildren with an interpretation of the Civil War that downplayed slavery and emancipation and instead emphasized the shared interests of a reunited North and South.⁵³ The ideologies of Civil War reunion and militarism received substantial backing in patriotic literature.⁵⁴

Prescriptive literature like this provided teachers with new material and introduced students to a bevy of patriotic writings and rituals. The militaristic, gendered, and racial nature of the era’s patriotic education was also present, however, in the textbooks that public schools used. One elementary history textbook with the straightforward title *History Primer* shows that many writers considered patriotism and American history inseparable. This 1906 text included an entire appendix full of patriotic songs and poems, almost all relating to the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, or simply, the flag. The book also offered a chapter devoted to Betsy Ross and the American Flag as well as an explanation of how schools should celebrate Flag Day.⁵⁵ A text

⁵² Julia C. R. Dorr, “Reunion,” in Alice M. Kellogg, ed., *Patriotic Quotations Relating to American History* (New York: E.L. Kellogg and Co., 1898), 51.

⁵³ Francis M. Finch, “The Blue and the Gray,” in Kellogg, ed., *Patriotic Quotations*, 52.

⁵⁴ Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 278-283.

⁵⁵ Oscar Gerson and Melvin Hix, *History Primer* (Philadelphia and New York: Hinds, Noble and Eldredge, 1906), 85-89, i-xiv.

titled *Pupils' Outline Studies in the History of the United States* offered a similarly uncomplicated method of interpreting the nation's past for students. Rather than recounting American history, this text simply asked that students draw national heroes and symbols. A supplement to traditional history books, *Pupils' Outline Studies* included a section titled "Our Flag and its Defenders," that asked students to draw pictures of the flag, a soldier, and a sailor. The section concluded with an invocation to "quote an appropriate sentiment in regard to the flag from 'The Star-Spangled Banner' or some patriotic speech." A footnote, meanwhile, offered a suggestion for teachers that "a flag drill might be arranged for a closing school celebration."⁵⁶ As these texts show, instilling love for the flag and reverence for the military held considerable importance in American schools.

High school history textbooks, although relatively dry and encyclopedic compared to their elementary counterparts, also gave students a celebratory interpretation of the nation's past cast in militaristic and often racial terms. In the 1903 edition of Charles Kent Adams and William P. Trent's *A History of the United States*, for instance, a chapter on the nation's recent history emphasized the achievements of white American male heroes and the nation's military. Adams, a longtime professor of history and president of the University of Wisconsin, and Trent, a professor of English at Columbia and a well-regarded historian of the South, had impressive credentials, but chose not to offer students an overly complicated version of the nation's history.⁵⁷ Discussing the end of Reconstruction, the text told students that following the withdrawal of federal troops from the South: "everywhere the supremacy of the white people of

⁵⁶ Francis H. While, *Pupils' Outline Studies in the History of the United States* (Cincinnati: American Book Company, 1895) 110-111.

⁵⁷ On William P. Trent's career, see Wendell H. Stephenson, "William P. Trent as Historian of the South," *Journal of Southern History* 15, no. 2 (May 1949), 151-177. Charles K. Adams, in addition to being president of Wisconsin from 1892-1901, also served on the National Education Association's Committee of Ten, which was the first national committee to recommend curricula for all high school subjects, as noted in Gary B. Nash, "Creating Standards in United States and World History," *OAH Magazine of History* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1995), 3.

the South was at once established. It was a practical confession that the methods of reconstruction adopted by Congress had not been successful.”⁵⁸ Indeed, as the book noted earlier, the main folly of Reconstruction was that “the negroes, although the most ignorant part of the population, were in control of the Southern legislatures, and their legislation was, as a rule, very crude and unwise.”⁵⁹ This textbook agreed with the prevailing sentiments of Civil War reunionists throughout the country who stressed the unity of nation’s white citizens to the detriment of southern blacks.⁶⁰

A History of the United States also celebrated American involvement in Cuba and the Philippines at the turn of the twentieth century. Describing the public fervor surrounding the war, the text told students that “flags suddenly flew out from the public buildings and schoolhouses in all parts of the land. In theaters and cafés audiences cheered and sprang to their feet whenever the flag was displayed or the ‘Star Spangled Banner’ was sung. The nation throbbed with an indignant enthusiasm.”⁶¹ The text also lauded the actions of troops in the Philippines. Addressing the controversial use of a torture known as “water cure” by American soldiers, the authors offered the following assessment: “It seems clear that although there has been among the American troops some of that demoralization which always shows itself when war is conducted in tropical countries and against weaker races, but the great mass of the American forces in the Philippines have performed their duties satisfactorily.”⁶² High school students across the nation

⁵⁸ Charles Kent Adams and William P. Trent, *A History of the United States* (Allyn and Bacon’s Series of School Histories; Boston and Chicago: Allyn and Bacon, 1903), 474

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 460

⁶⁰ Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 1-5.

⁶¹ Adams and Trent, *A History of the United States*, 517

⁶² *Ibid.*, 526.

learned to interpret their nation's foreign engagements in a way that emphasized America's superior moral and racial character.⁶³

A 1913 edition of another popular high school history textbook, *Barnes's School History of the United States*, cast American history in a similar light. This text began with a telling quote from the original 1871 edition by one of the authors, Joel Dorman Steele.⁶⁴ Steele, an educator and author of multiple textbooks from New York, wrote:

This work is offered to American youth in the confident belief that as they study the wonderful history of their native land . . . Their patriotism must be kindled when they come to see how slowly, yet how gloriously, this tree of liberty has grown, what storms have wrenched its boughs, what sweat of toil and blood has moistened its roots, what eager eyes have watched every out-springing bud, what brave hearts have defended it, loving it even unto death. A heritage thus sanctified by the heroism and devotion of the fathers can not but elicit the choicest care and tenderest love of the sons.⁶⁵

This dedication, invoking the nation's martial tradition in glorifying its founders, portrayed the United States as a product and future responsibility of "fathers" and "sons," respectively.

Unsurprisingly, then, the text cast the nation's history as a story rife with white, male, and largely military, heroes. The textbook offered a similarly narrow portrait of the nation's racial and religious character. As the authors argued of the nation's Native American population: "It is earnestly to be hoped that all the red men may yet be Christianized and taught the arts of industry and peace."⁶⁶ To students, sentiments like this appeared as standard aspects of American history.

Indeed, high school history sought to influence how students viewed the rest of the world. As *Barnes's School History* told them: "Popular education has made us a peculiarly enlightened nation, and statistics prove that 'our people read twice as much as all the rest of the world who

⁶³ As this quote indicates, Americans increasingly felt that the war in the Philippines was demoralizing, and that prolonged contact with these "weaker races" would be a degrading experience for American troops. For an in-depth look at these notions, see Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 180-198.

⁶⁴ Review of *Joel Dorman Steele* by Ms. George Archibald, *New York Times Book Review*, September 8, 1900, 11. Steele has a professorship at Syracuse University named in his honor.

⁶⁵ Joel Dorman Steele and Esther Baker Steele, *Barnes's School History of the United States* (New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago: American Book Company, 1913), 6.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

read at all.”⁶⁷ In the early twentieth century, notions like these filled the nation’s textbooks and helped create a culture in schools that emphasized American exceptionalism.

One author, Charles Altschul, critiqued the inclusion of exceptionalist attitudes in school textbooks. Altschul’s book, *The American Revolution in Our School Text-Books*, examined why Americans continued to harbor animosity toward the British, and largely blamed high school textbooks. As James T. Shotwell, a professor of history at Columbia University, explained in the book’s introduction, “the text-books in history have more common been the product of a very limited knowledge . . . they have, for the most part, persisted in perpetuating ancient, uncriticized traditions which have accumulated since the events themselves.”⁶⁸ Indeed, scholars in the nascent American historical profession devoted themselves to writing texts celebrating the nation’s past as a way of inspiring confidence in its future.⁶⁹ In assessing this trend, Altschul’s text analyzed interpretations of the Revolutionary War from fifty textbooks used in the nation’s public schools, having respondents from a number of American cities list which textbooks they used. One of the cities whose textbooks Altschul examined, Butte, Montana, reported using *A Student’s History of the United States* and *A History of the United States for Schools*. Both of these texts included characteristic yet telling selections that suggest how students’ views toward their nation developed in the years preceding World War I.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 367.

⁶⁸ James T. Shotwell, “Introduction,” in Charles Altschul, *The American Revolution in Our School Text-Books: An Attempt to Trace the Influence of Early School Education on the Feeling Towards England in the United States* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1917), v.

⁶⁹ On the growth of the profession and the aims of historians in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1-17, 47-85. An overview of debates over the history profession’s role in society can be found in Joyce Appleby, *A Restless Past: History and the American Public* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

In the 1913 edition of Edward Channing's *A Student History of the United States* used in Butte schools, students learned of Americans' particular racial characteristics.⁷⁰ This text claimed that the continental United States "is fitted for varied occupations, which give the best results in the growth of a race."⁷¹ The text also claimed that due to "the effect of this environment on the physical body . . . one must admit that the European race has gained by its transfer from its ancient home to the soil of the United States."⁷² Laden with romantic and racialist interpretations of American history, Channing's textbook was one of the nation's best selling. Edward Channing's career trajectory, furthermore, evinces the historical profession's changing standards in the era. A prominent historian, Channing conducted his postgraduate studies both at Harvard and abroad, despite his dissertation being what historian Peter Novick describes as "seventy-eight (badly) handwritten pages, completed within a year and a half of getting his B.A."⁷³ Channing's text also reflected historians' belief in the importance of race in shaping American history. Indeed, he considered the influence of the "English race" the driving force of American history.⁷⁴

Wilbur Fisk Gordy's textbook *A History of the United States for Schools*, meanwhile, informed students that, "man dominating his physical and social surroundings is the central fact of history."⁷⁵ When discussing "Conditions and Problems of the Present," at the textbook's end, Gordy, the superintendent of schools in Springfield, Massachusetts, offered a frank description of students' appropriate relationship to the nation. "The greatness of a country," students learned,

⁷⁰ For an examination of the roots of this kind of racialist thinking, see Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 79-158. Also illustrative of these exceptionalist ideologies is David Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 85-95.

⁷¹ Edward Channing, *A Student's History of the United States* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913), 11.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷³ Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 48-49.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁷⁵ Wilbur Fisk Gordy, *A History of the United States for Schools* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), x.

is measured “by what its people are. If they are intelligent and patriotic, ready at all times to do their duty in the interest of the public good, their future is assured.”⁷⁶ The text concluded with a quote from Charles Sumner explaining what the elements of the American flag symbolized, and a reprinting of the “Pledge of Allegiance.” Then, under a section titled “To the Pupil,” Gordy asked students both to “name the natural advantages of the U.S.,” and “before laying aside the study of this history learn the symbolism . . . of the colors of the ‘Stars and Stripes,’ and memorize the ‘pledge.’”⁷⁷ In the early-twentieth century, these celebratory notions of nationalism remained common in the nation’s schools. The rhetorical bluster of patriots in the late-nineteenth century may have receded following the Spanish-American War, but this patriotic culture remained an important part of students’ education.⁷⁸

While textbooks display the ideologies their writers hoped to instill in the nation’s youth, school yearbooks and publications demonstrate how students received patriotic instruction in the early-twentieth century. Ardent supporters promoted patriotic education across the nation. Even in Butte, Montana — a site far away from key states in the movement such as New York — high school publications displayed ample patriotic fervor. This suggests that teachers both received prescriptive literature and made use of it. Also, both female and male students composed patriotic materials emphasizing similar themes of national pride, often lauding past and present military engagements. Female students’ active participation in praising the nation’s military force helps show that they played an important role in bolstering the nation’s martial spirit. While they could not fight for their nation’s military, they still held an important position in the grand army of the public schools.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 461.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 462.

⁷⁸ Historians commonly note that this sort of nationalism receded in this interwar period or that it played less of a role in national discourse. Often, scholars depict these notions as reappearing as a result of World War I, or they give this period less attention. See Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 334; O’Leary, *To Die For*, 172-193.

Butte High School's monthly publication *The Mountaineer* featured students' essays, editorials, and reports of school activities and celebrations. Often, student writers commented on current events, as did a brief notice in a 1907 edition of the paper. This notice mentioned an article the writer claimed, "ought to be pleasing to all patriotic Americans," reporting that Emperor William of Germany intended to send his fifth son to Harvard University. The writer deemed this a "revolutionary step," and pondered, "will those Harvard boys haze him, and if they do, will he take it in a kindly spirit?" The author then expressed hope that his experience in America might convince this young aristocrat of America's superiority, asking, "Will those conservative ideas, accumulated by generations of kings who have held the doctrine of Divine Right, will those ideas still remain? We fairly hold our breath as we await the results." To this author, America's democratic superiority could dissipate centuries of autocratic tradition.⁷⁹

Butte's High School graduation ceremonies also brimmed with patriotism. Orations in the school's 1903 exercises included "Life in a Virginian Plantation," "Puritan Influence," and "The Commercial Standing of the United States." The High School Mandolin Club contributed to this patriotic atmosphere with a performance of "Dear Old Stars and Stripes," and the following year performed a sprightly ode to "A Day in the Cotton Field." A student at the 1904 graduation ceremony also assessed "The Effect of Western Expansion Upon Our National Character." This array of performances emphasized the national contributions of the American North, South, and West, displaying the importance of promoting a sense of national unity through patriotic education.⁸⁰ Butte High also publicized "The Camp Fire Girls," a patriotic club intended for female students. The Camp Fire Girls appropriated Native American imagery while teaching

⁷⁹ Untitled Article, *The Mountaineer*, Butte (MT) High School, April 1907, 11. Butte-Silverbow Archives, Butte, MT.

⁸⁰ Butte Board of Education, *Biennial Report of the Public Schools 1904-05* (Butte, MT: Inter Mountain Printers, 1904), 222-224.

outdoors and homemaking skills. Thanks to their apparent emphasis on beadwork, “each girl will be like a real Indian maiden,” proclaimed a 1913 notice about the club. The notice also boasted that “the girls have been awarded many honors in each of the seven different crafts, healthcraft, homecraft, naturelore, campcraft, handcraft, business, and patriotism.” This club curiously mixed Victorian notions of proper female behavior with an emphasis on outdoor skills and national pride. As a 1914 article about the club reported, girls received honors “for sewing, cooking, knowing the laws and history of the United States, hikes and out-door sports.” Patriotism played a vital role in this club’s projects, equating national duty with crafting and homemaking.⁸¹

While *The Mountaineer* included notices of nationalistic performances and the formation of patriotic clubs, its material underwent a decisive shift at the onset of World War I, albeit prior to the federal government’s coercive efforts to ensure loyalty. In 1914, the school reprinted a poem the Reverend Charles F. Chapman presented at the school’s Peace Day festivities titled “Gloria Veterana.” The Reverend’s Peace Day poem celebrated not America’s early refusal to enter World War I, but rather, the completion of one hundred years of peace among English speaking nations. Despite the ostensibly peaceful nature of the celebration, Chapman’s poem lauded the American flag’s presence in times of war. Chapman wrote of the flag: “She waves her bloom o’er the warrior’s room, with the gun-salute above it . . . They paid their life in a bloody strife, on a hundred fields they bought it with the thundering boom of battle-loom, the threads of courage wrought it.” Chapman’s characterization of the flag as a feminine object waving over the “warrior’s room” evokes the gender dynamics of patriotic education. Female teachers wielded this symbol in the nation’s schools as a way of rousing the martial spirit of

⁸¹ “The Camp Fire Girls,” in *The Mountaineer*, Butte High School, June 1913, 54. “Camp Fire: Tosahbit Toyabe,” in *The Mountaineer*, Butte High School, April 1914, 20. Butte-Silverbow Archives, Butte, MT. The Camp Fire Girls was a national organization that still exists today, although under the gender neutral moniker “Camp Fire USA.”

schoolchildren. Not coincidentally, as America became involved in World War I, the militaristic character of the nation's schools became more visible than ever.⁸²

Students expressed their nationalist fervor at length in *The Mountaineer*. In 1918, following America's entrance into World War I, the school published a "Service Volume," featuring a red, white, and blue cover adorned with stars. This edition featured several contributions demonizing the Germans, most written by female students. Cora Sellers contributed a poem comparing the Kaiser to Satan, while Alice Mottelson included a selection titled "A Fantasy" where she dreamed "the vandal Hun was near . . . Destroying homes and fields in berserk rage, killing our young, nor sparing men of age." Mottelson concluded her poem with a plea for the nation's soldiers to protect their homeland from this bleak future, urging American men to "prevent this awful doom of inexorable fate; preserve your land, gain victory for your right, destroy the Hun, ere Time has found you late!"⁸³ This edition also advertised Butte High's chapter of the Junior Four-Minute, an auxiliary to the Committee on Public Information's (CPI) Four-Minute Men.⁸⁴ The CPI, an organization disseminating propaganda during World War I, created Four-Minute Men to travel the country giving brief patriotic speeches intended to garner support for the war. Butte High's adoption of this practice and the virulently pro-war material they printed suggests how deeply embedded patriotic principles had become in public schools. Rather than representing a fleeting surge in nationalist fervor, these cases instead demonstrate the success of the earlier movement for patriotic education. Reformers,

⁸² Charles F. Chapman, "Gloria Veterana," in *The Mountaineer*, Butte High School, June 1914, 68-69. Butte-Silverbow Archives, Butte, MT.

⁸³ Alice Mottelson, "A Fantasy," *The Mountaineer*, Butte High School, June 1918, 27.

⁸⁴ "School Notes," in *Ibid.*, 34.

textbooks, patriotic primers, and teachers laid the groundwork for students' assertions of loyalty in a time of war.⁸⁵

Although students hardly needed to be coerced, World War I ushered in new and repressive measures forcing teachers to promote and express national loyalty. Woodrow Wilson's administration sought to curb dissent by requiring assertions of national loyalty. Indeed, America's entrance into World War I led many to reiterate the importance of producing loyal citizens in schools. Casting out any semblance of German influence in schools became a crucial tenet of war policy, and German language courses and history books virtually vanished from schools. States also passed wartime legislation forcing teachers to take loyalty oaths. The most famous of these, New York's Lusk Laws, legally required teachers to promote the war. As a result of this legislation, New York led the nation in teacher trials and dismissals during World War I. As a result of measures like the Lusk Laws, female teachers received increasing scrutiny throughout the nation. As historian Kathleen Kennedy notes, "Numerically, schoolteachers were the women most likely to be affected by formal efforts to enforce loyalty." Although late-nineteenth century reformers also expressed concerns about teachers' loyalty to the state, World War I allowed the federal government to attack this perceived problem in an unprecedented manner.⁸⁶

Again, the example of Montana illustrates the national scope of this wartime fervor. Patriots in Montana communities increasingly scrutinized the public schools and questioned the motives of teachers. Teachers across the state faced dismissal if they did not actively promote pro-war ideologies in their classrooms. Furthermore, the Montana Council of Defense, a wartime

⁸⁵ For an example of Progressives endorsing groups like the CPI in schools, see Maureen A. Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 228-230.

⁸⁶ Kathleen Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion During World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 100-101. Quote on 101.

body created to curb seditious behavior, decreed that school librarians needed to withdraw or even destroy numerous books on German language and history. One zealous Montana citizen reported on her community's success in removing all Teutonic influence, boasting, "we 'weeded' out all german [sic] texts that were in our school library, clipped out all german songs in our books of national songs, blotted out the coat of arms and german flags in the dictionaries, and urged that every home should destroy german text and library books they possess."⁸⁷ The eager enforcement of repressive patriotism during World War I helped nationalist fervor in schools reach new heights.⁸⁸

Butte students' experiences during wartime, however, were not unique, and educators throughout the country attempted to cultivate similar expressions of national loyalty. For instance, Caroline Burnite, Director of Children's Work at the Cleveland Public Library, took interest in children's impressive assertions of patriotism during the war. Burnite deemed this one of the chief ways students could be of "great assistance" to the war effort, arguing that, "Rightly fostered, this spiritual ardor is indeed the greatest contribution to present times that children can make." Burnite cited as an example of this impressive patriotic spirit, an instance where children participated in public event at which "the Kaiser's coffin was place in a public square, and children as well as adults who had bought a war saving stamp were invited to drive a nail into the coffin." In the context of war, children's militant nature and hatred for the enemy was widely praised. World War I gave students across the country the opportunity to publicly display their enthusiastic patriotism.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Quoted in Nancy Rice Fritz, "The Montana Council of Defense," (M.A. Thesis, University of Montana, 1966), 94.

⁸⁸ O'Leary, *To Die For*, 220-245.

⁸⁹ Caroline Burnite, "Library Work with Children in War Time," *Bulletin for the American Library Association* 12, no. 3, Papers and Proceedings of the Fortieth Annual Meeting of the American Library Association (September 1918), 95-98. Quotes on 96. For other examples of sites in the nation where children expressed this zeal, see Richard Barry, "East Side's Patriotic Upheaval," *New York Times*, August 4, 1918, 51; Margery Currey, "Save Food or Pay

World War I solidified the influence of militaristic patriotism in American schools. Even Catholic schools, which aggressive patriots had previously distrusted as purveyors of foreign influence, expressed ample patriotic fervor. Following the war, the Catholic Central High School in Butte, Montana published passionate assertions of patriotism. In Central High School's yearbook, *The Gold and White*, students expressed their unwavering devotion to the nation and its military. In 1919, Mary O'Donnell contributed a poem titled "From the Heart of the Dead" praising America's effort in the war and noting that as a result, the nation, "Like 'Old Glory' triumphant, floats ever above. We owed thee our all; no more could we give; We fought, and we died, that freedom might live."⁹⁰ This edition of *The Gold and White* also featured an article pleading America to go to war in defense of Ireland, as well as selections from the school's elocution contest titled "Why We Fought Germany," and "American Citizenship." A school program for Memorial Day also contained considerable amounts of patriotic fare, including selections like "The Meaning of the Flag," "Your Flag and My Flag," and "The Flag Goes By." Butte students articulated the same patriotic sentiments reformers valued in the 1890s but with an emphasis on the nation's recent success in World War I.⁹¹

After the war's end in 1918, students still published impassioned expressions of their patriotism. The 1920 edition of *The Gold and White* contained examples from the school's "Army Essay" competition. Another essay arguing in favor of the United States' support of the Irish struggle for independence claimed Americans held natural advantages in war that would ensure Irish victory. The author expressed considerable disappointment in the United States for

Indemnity to Kaiser, Dunne Argues," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 8, 1918, 8; "Eulogies of Dead Heroes Carry Warning of Treason and Pleas for War Unity," *The Washington Post*, May 31, 1917, 4.

⁹⁰ Mary O'Donnell, "From the Heart of the Dead," in Central High School (Butte, MT), *The Gold and White* (1919), 10. Butte-Silverbow Archives, Butte, MT.

⁹¹ Central High School (Butte, MT), *The Gold and White* (1919), Butte-Silverbow Archives, Butte, MT. 31, 45-46.

refusing to come to the aid of “the only white nation subject to a government it never desired.”⁹² Student Mary Sullivan also contributed a lengthy patriotic poem praising American soldiers to the yearbook. Sullivan lauded the efforts of military members and urged them to, “Stand to your guns! Stand to your guns! Stand true, each soldier brave; Remember now your country’s creed; See proud Old Glory wave!” Professor W.K. Dwyer, the president of a nearby school district, praised all of the essays in the competition, despite noticing that some “exhibited a spirit of hatred to England, something which I did not consider pertinent to the subject.” James Cummins of the *Butte Daily Post* applauded that “the boys and girls treated the subject . . . with the missionary zeal of apostles of freedom to all the world.” Cummins then lauded students’ ability to “pass on the wonderful message of Americanism to the future. True patriotism, meaning the building of sterling citizenship, is the final object of the school.” That two years after the war’s end Central High School sponsored an essay contest focusing on the American military, allowing students to craft odes to Americanization and the nation’s “missionary spirit,” displays the enduring presence of a patriotic culture created nearly three decades prior.⁹³ The memory of World War I strengthened connections between militarism and patriotism even in parochial schools. In 1920 patriotism retained a strong hold on American schools, and students eagerly expressed their national pride in poems and editorials. The appearance of strict standards for teachers regarding patriotism during the war likely bolstered the unwaveringly loyal and militaristic instruction in schools. Even prior to the war, however, schools had emphasized these aspects of the American past. As the prevalence and severity of these restrictions shows, by 1920 the version of patriotic instruction first articulated by militarists in the 1890s appeared ascendant.

⁹² Eugene Harvey, “Genuine Americanism and Ireland Freedom,” in Central High School (Butte, MT), *The Gold and White* (1920), 27. Butte-Silverbow Archives, Butte, MT.

⁹³ Quotes from Dwyer and Cummins appeared in a series of news briefs titled “Chronicle,” in *Ibid.*, 75. Mary Sullivan’s “The American Soldier,” in *Ibid.*, 28.

An army marched out of the nation's public schools in the decades preceding World War I. Rather than solely being the product of elite white male manipulation, however, middle and working class female teachers played key roles in inculcating the patriotic ideals these citizens later vehemently expressed. Although state laws and national restrictions during wartime helped entrench ideals of militaristic nationalism in schools, this lasting shift necessitated the creation of rituals, lesson plans, and patriotic celebrations, as well as the cooperation of teachers. The transformative results of these efforts display both the efficacy of patriotic reformers in the Progressive Era and the profound social influence of schoolteachers. Patriotism — in the form of flags, the celebration of nationalistic holidays, and an emphasis on military achievements — thrived in American public schools long after the initial efforts of reformers in the 1890s. Millions of schoolchildren entered the nation's schools in this period, and many emerged with a strong knowledge of patriotic symbols, rituals, and above all, responsibilities.

Epilogue: Making Schools “Pro-American”

Thousands of enthusiastic onlookers filled New York City’s Central Park on September 9, 1919. This crowd assembled to see the famed General George “Black Jack” Pershing, leader of the American forces during World War I. Before day’s end, scores of New Yorkers had swarmed Pershing’s hotel and followed the car that escorted him through the city. Pershing’s speech in Central Park was a massive spectacle. Representing the public schools of the city, a sea of children waited in the park for three hours in an attempt to glimpse the general who held the highest military post a living American had ever received: General of the Armies. As the *Washington Post* described this event, “Standing befor [sic] a veritable forest of American flags held in the hands of more than 30,000 school children . . . Gen. Pershing personally thanked them for their patriotism during the war.” Barely able to contain their excitement, hundreds of students broke through police lines hoping to shake the general’s hand. Pershing, as part of his remarks, offered some advice to these schoolchildren that they had likely heard before: “It is upon you we must depend in the future to defend the principles of our forefathers, to defend the principles we all love so well.” Pershing also credited American children’s efforts during the war, claiming their patriotism was “an inspiration, not only to the grown-ups, but to the boys who carried the rifle at the front . . . I wish every one who served in Europe could see it as I have seen it.”¹

Pershing lamented that the young soldiers who fought on the European front were unable to witness the patriotic efforts of American children on the homefront. The scene Pershing encountered in Central Park, however, was not far removed from what these soldiers may have experienced in the preceding decades. While 30,000 children pushed through crowds for a

¹ “Children Hail Hero,” *Washington Post*, September 10, 1919, 1; Pershing’s celebrated career was summarized in his obituary, “Nation Mourns ‘Black Jack,’” *Washington Post*, July 16, 1948, 1.

chance to shake “Black Jack” Pershing’s hand, over 150,000 students flooded Chicago’s streets in 1892 to offer patriotic tributes to Christopher Columbus.² In 1899, just twenty years prior to Pershing’s speech, all of New York City’s public schools threw elaborate patriotic fetes in honor of another recent military hero: George Dewey.³ Even if the generation of Americans fighting in World War I had missed these celebrations, they likely encountered glorified odes to their nation’s past and present military heroes in their schools. Similarly, public school children for decades prior to the war had sat in the presence of an American flag and perhaps pictures of past presidents and other patriotic figures and military heroes. These young citizens likely could recite the “Pledge of Allegiance” and sing any number of national airs. Furthermore, many learned through the schools that they had a distinct obligation to American society and the state to be patriotic, loyal, and upstanding citizens.

The enthusiastic patriotism of children in the World War I era did not merely stem from America’s decision to enter the war and the subsequent reach of the federal government’s propaganda efforts. Rather, for decades prior to this conflict, a generation of reformers, intellectuals, politicians, and private organizations worked to ensure that children emerged from the public schools with a clear sense of political and civic obligation to their nation. These efforts reshaped how countless American children interacted with national symbols, myths, and rituals in school, while at the same time transforming the content of American history textbooks and lessons in civics. American education by the end of World War I bore little resemblance to its antebellum antecedents. This resulted from decades of reform efforts targeting schools that led to new standards for teacher training, curriculum, and even the presence of American flags. In the

² “The Free School Celebration.” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 22, 1892, 20.

³ “Admiral Dewey Honored,” *New York Times*, May 2, 1899, 3.

decades following the Civil War, the flag over the schoolhouse became a ubiquitous sight symbolizing the link between modern education and patriotism in America.

Schools in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were coercive sites of social governance. As a result, the growing presence of patriotism in schools in this era deserves to be considered a crucial shift. These institutions became the most important arenas for shaping not only students' opinions of right and wrong, but also their considerations of loyalty and dissent. Progressive Era reformers championing this function of the school, furthermore, brought along their existing assessments of race, religion, gender, and ethnicity. The vision of patriotism they privileged flourished for nearly three decades preceding America's entrance into World War I. Rather than simply being coaxed into supporting the war by voluntary organizations and the government during the war, then, the fervor Americans on the homefront expressed during this conflict needs to be understood as a product of what a previous generation of reformers had hoped to instill in them: a sense of duty toward their society and the state. Reformers turned to schools because they recognized their coercive power and accordingly used this to make the nation's schoolchildren ardent patriots.⁴

The story of patriotic education presented in this thesis is by no means comprehensive. There remains much to be studied in regard to the growth of patriotic sentiment in schools following the Civil War. A clearer picture of how teachers interpreted and disseminated patriotic lessons is imperative for understanding how this culture functioned, as is a broader view of how students reacted to these lessons. Similarly, uncovering how certain groups of Americans encountered this nascent trend in public school curriculum is vital to crafting a complete picture of patriotic education. African American schools in the South, schools with large populations of

⁴ For a view of World War I as a time when voluntary organizations led the way into coercing Americans into acting, see Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1-19.

ethnic and religious minorities in urban and rural enclaves across the nation, and Indian schools in the post-Dawes Act era all deserve study. So too do the inner-workings of key organizations promoting patriotic education like the GAR, WRC, and the Patriotic League. Not coincidentally, the rise of patriotic education in America also occurred concurrently to similar trends in Europe. Tracking the similarities and shared antecedents of these movements, and perhaps their differences, offers fertile ground for future historical exploration.⁵

Patriotic education did not fade from the minds of Americans in the decades following World War I. If anything, its presence in American schools only grew in subsequent years, albeit not without substantive challenges. In the twentieth century, debates over the contents of history textbooks, the “Pledge of Allegiance,” and performances of the “Star Spangled-Banner” frequently raged in various sites throughout the United States. So too did debates over the appropriate standards for teaching about religion, ethnicity, and race in schools, issues that the patriotic reformers of the Progressive Era tied directly to their cause. Even in the twenty-first century, the so-called “culture wars” over patriotism’s presence in schools show no signs of waning.⁶

In 2011, residents of Brookline, Massachusetts debated the presence of the “Pledge of Allegiance” in the city’s public schools. While several court rulings had officially rendered the

⁵ Some selected examples of how Europeanists have approached the intersection of nationalism and education can be found in Rebecca Friedman, *Masculinity, Autocracy and the Russian University, 1804-1863* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Robert Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Heinrik Meinander, *Towards a Bourgeois Manhood: Boys’ Physical Education in Nordic Secondary Schools, 1880-1940* (Helsinki: Commentationes Scientiarum Socialium, 1994); John Springhall, “Building Character in the British Boy: the Attempt to Extend Christian Manliness to Working-Class Adolescents, 1880-1914,” and J.A. Mangan, “Social Darwinism and Upper-class education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,” in J.A. Mangan and James Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987).

⁶ For a look at debates over culture wars in American public schools since the 1920s, see Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America?: Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002). See also Gary B. Nash, “The History Standards Controversy and Social History,” *Journal of Social History* 29, Special Issue: Social History and the American Political Climate: Problems and Strategies (1995), 39-49; Joel Westheimer, “Politics and Patriotism in Education,” *The Phi Delta Kappan* 87, No. 8 (April 2006), 608-620.

pledge a voluntary act, some concerned residents felt this ritual still held coercive power and wanted it removed from the schools entirely. Other parents and community members disagreed, declaring the pledge's opponents unpatriotic and arguing for its important place in the nation's schools. This battle soon made national headlines. Commenting on the situation in Brookline, Newt Gingrich, then vying for the Republican Party's nomination for president in the 2012 election, argued, "I would hope that any tax-paid school will say the Pledge of Allegiance, and frankly I'd wonder whether taxpayers ought to subsidize it if it's not going to teach people how to be patriotic and how to be pro-American."⁷ Over a century earlier, another former Republican congressman elucidated ideas remarkably similar to Gingrich's sentiments. "We must teach the children that it is grander by far to be an American to-day than it was to be a Roman citizen 2,000 years ago," claimed Charles R. Skinner in 1898. Foreshadowing conflicts over questions of ethnicity in schools, Skinner noted in the same speech, "We hear too much of Irish-Americans, German-Americans, Spanish-Americans — I say such designations have not such place in our institutions — they must be full Americans or not at all." As New York's state superintendent of instruction, Skinner, much as Gingrich would recommend in 2011, also withheld state funds from schools that neglected to display the American flag on their premises.⁸ Debates over teaching history and the presence of American symbols in schools, as these examples show, have both deep roots and continued relevance. Understanding their origins, then, is imperative.

⁷ Tovia Smith, "Parents Fight Over Pledging Allegiance in Schools," <http://www.npr.org/2011/09/19/140600621/parents-fight-over-pledging-allegiance-in-schools> (accessed September 19, 2011).

⁸ Skinner quotes in "Education in Patriotism," *New York Times*, April 9, 1898, 7; Reports of Skinner withholding funds from non-compliant school districts can be seen in "Must Fly American Flag or Lose State Funds," *The Syracuse Post-Standard*, May 20, 1902, 1; "No Flag No State Money," *New York World*, May 8, 1902, 4.

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