

RUNNING HEAD: ENGINES OF EDUCATIONAL POWER

“ENGINES OF EDUCATIONAL POWER” – THE LANCASTERIAN
MONITORIAL SYSTEM AND THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE TEACHER’S ROLES IN THE CLASSROOM: 1805-1838

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ABSTRACT

Our understanding of the tools used to teach in public school classrooms shape our understanding of the profession of teaching in the United States. This early history of technology used in education represents an under-explored subject in the history of school systems in the United States. The Lancasterian monitorial system (LMS) was an early nineteenth century educational technology, developed and promoted by an English schoolteacher (Joseph Lancaster, 1778-1838). Through a combination of devices such as sand tables and visual telegraphs, specially designed classroom spaces, and particular teaching practices, the LMS offered towns and cities in the United States a political possibility for establishing cheap, effective schools for their citizens. Part of the LMS's particular appeal lay in its specification of the role of the teacher; teachers were routinely in charge of as many as 500 students in their classroom and the system included the use of student monitors to aid in instruction. Because of the economies of scale the LMS represented, opening a Lancasterian school was considered to be an inexpensive way to pursuing the goal of establishing publicly funded educational institutions. Consequently, Lancasterian schools quickly spread throughout the United States between 1806 and 1828.

This rapid adoption had particular consequences for the nascent profession of education. Teachers in Lancasterian schools were simultaneously operators of - and components within - the innovation that these schools represented – a new educational “engine of great power.” This new role produced a new problem: where were individuals trained to execute the specific operations of the system to be found? The lack of first-

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hand knowledge of Lancaster's methods in the United States caused the operators of the new schools to confront the issues of teacher preparedness early in the establishment of publicly funded education. Lancasterian school systems employed many surprising strategies to solve this problem, including creating the first public school teacher training facility, establishing early forms of teacher certification, and using the provision of teacher training as political leverage to protect their funding. This early period in the development of the public school systems in the eastern United States also represents a time of interpretive flexibility when the role of the teacher was being defined in the discourse between different stakeholders. This discourse concerning what qualities were important for teachers to possess was sparked by the newly available possibilities represented by the technology; some of these possibilities were embraced and some rejected. The purpose of this dissertation is to understand how broadening our conception of the relationship between early teachers in the public schools and technology can inform our understanding of how teachers' roles were and are shaped by technology adoption practices.

Increasing the profession's understanding of how technology adoption practices, irrespective of the qualities of the particular technology, offer opportunities and dangers in the process of defining, or redefining, new systems and implementing roles. Because of the advent of new formats of education, including online and blended education models, and the new expectations they create, this is an especially useful time to examine the processes and discourses that created our existing system.

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COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

BFSS – British and Foreign School Society

NYFSS – New York Free School Society

NYMS – New York Manumission Society

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THE LANCASTERIAN MONITORIAL SYSTEM: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHER'S ROLES IN THE CLASSROOM (1805-1838)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In the debate about whether and which technologies are appropriate for teachers to use in classrooms with their students, what is often overlooked is that, for a time, the classroom itself and, to a lesser extent, the teacher in it were viewed as technologies themselves. Common definitions of what constitutes an educational technology create a kind of presentism that makes it difficult to see earlier equipment and expertise in use by teachers in classrooms. One of these overlooked technologies is the Lancasterian monitorial system, a set of apparatuses and techniques developed, demonstrated, and promoted by an English schoolteacher (Joseph Lancaster, 1778-1838) in wide use in schools in the United States in the first decades of the nineteenth century.¹ Like many new technologies, this system was adopted rapidly because it solved a set of problems particular to its time and place.

¹ There are a number of different names employed for this system due to an early controversy concerning whether the system owed its existence to Joseph Lancaster or another English educator named Andrew Bell. After a few years some educators, while still supporting the system, desired to distance the system from its erratic inventor/promoter Joseph Lancaster. Among names used for the system during its time period are: "Lancasterian system," "Lancastrian monitorial system," "the monitorial system of instruction," and "mutual instruction." Throughout this dissertation, I will use "Lancasterian" and "Lancasterian monitorial" to identify the system of instruction, although some quoted sources will refer to it by its other names. For a discussion of the multiple names applied to the system see: Gerald L. Gutek, et al. "Elementary Education." *Encyclopedia of Education*. Ed. James W. Guthrie. 2nd ed. Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2002. 709-722. Gale Virtual Reference Library. Document URL <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX3403200209&v=2.1&u=new67449&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=f5b1e028d8f07382f1d948f1ae701b4f>. For an example of an educator distancing his application of the system from Joseph Lancaster, see: William Russell, *Manual of Mutual Instruction: Consisting Of Mr. Fowle's Directions for Introducing in Common Schools the Improved System Adopted in the Monitorial School, Boston*. (Boston: Wait, Greene, and Co., 1826) 44-45.

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Statements by prominent individuals in support of publicly funded education in the United States were common in the first fifty years of the nation's existence and were often voiced by politicians in the new republic. These individuals included men like Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Rush, and Noah Webster, who had a range of concerns about political, social, spiritual and economic problems they saw looming for a new nation.² For many policy makers and reformers these factors were powerful arguments for a new form of schooling; problems were evident with the existing educational practices' ability to assist in creating a new kind of society. Many of the established formal educational organizations had endured significant disruptions during the American Revolutionary period; most schools were independently owned and operated and were vulnerable to sudden reversals of political or personal fortune. Less formal educational practices such as apprenticeships (on the wane even before the revolution took place) made less sense in the face of rapidly changing economic and technological conditions.³ Socio-cultural and economic factors were not enough on their own to overcome the very real economic impediment of the size of the investment necessary to make publicly funded education a reality for more than a small percentage of the children during this time period.⁴

² David Tyack, *Turning Points in American Education History* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Blaisdell, 1967), 84. Also William J. Reese, *History, Education, and the Schools* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 98.

³ William J. Rorabaugh, *The Craft Apprentice: From Franklin to the Machine Age in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 119.

⁴ For a thorough treatment of the economic conditions contributing to the political rhetoric associated with the creation of publicly funded education see: Nancy Beadie, *Education and the Creation of Capital in the Early American Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4-11. Also see Lawrence A.

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At the very beginning of the nineteenth century, this gridlock began to loosen with the introduction and rapid rise to prominence of the Lancasterian monitorial system. A novel educational system developed, demonstrated and promoted by Joseph Lancaster raised the possibility of being able to create and run publicly funded schools for a lower cost (in some cases much lower) than more traditional schools. If the new schools could be a means of ensuring a more stable society, a more educated electorate, a more literate public, and a better disciplined workforce and all this could be accomplished for a low cost, then this was a set of practices many wealthy and politically connected individuals were willing to propose. The existing heterogeneous group of independent schoolmasters operating their own institutions was as politically unpalatable to support, as it was personally unpalatable to send their own children to attend. Without the appearance of new, and more controllable, systematization of education, it would have been much more difficult, if not impossible in many places, to expand the educational opportunities available to the greater portion of the population through taxpayer support. This new system, however, created many questions about how to employ the central figures in its operation: the schoolteachers. In adopting this new system with its very different pattern of teaching, boards inaugurated a period of intense experimentation with different aspects of the job of teaching.⁵ Questions regarding teachers' responsibilities, qualifications, pay scales and working conditions inevitably arose as those supporting the Lancasterian

Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 127-28.

⁵ David Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of School Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 110-11.

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system's adoption tried to quickly grow the schools to serve a rapidly expanding population.

There are a number of reasons why recent educational history has been missing this particular story and its implications for the profession of teaching. The Lancasterian monitorial system was predominant for a critical period in the formation of public school systems (1809-1828), but most educators had discredited it as a viable educational system by the 1840's.⁶ Consequently it was not officially part of the "grammar" of the normal schools created to train teachers between 1835 and 1860.⁷ Also, since the Lancasterian conception of what a teacher does and what a student does did not ultimately prevail, contemporary definitions for those terms do not match up with the Lancasterian schools' definitions very well. Consequently, the Lancasterian monitorial system is viewed, when it is viewed at all, as an odd diversion in the history of education in the United States on the path between the vast diversity of the schools in the late eighteenth century to the incipient bureaucratization inherent in the Common School movement.⁸

⁶ See for example, Horace Mann's comment on the Lancasterian monitorial system: "One must see the difference between the hampering, blinding, misleading instruction given by an inexperienced child, and the developing, transforming, and almost creative power of an accomplished teacher..." Horace Mann, quoted in Carl F. Kaestle, *Joseph Lancaster and the Monitorial School Movement: A Documentary History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1973), 184.

⁷ While some evidence exists that suggests that some elements of the monitorial system did not completely disappear from educators' discussions of their practices, it is far easier to find examples of participants in the Common School movement dismissing it as overly mechanistic and inappropriate for schools. Most histories of the early Normal School movement omit the Lancasterian efforts at teacher training entirely. See Christine Ogren, *The American State Normal School* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), Christopher J. Lucas, *Teacher Education in America: Reform Agendas for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), and especially Jurgen Herbst, *And Sadly Teach: Teacher Education and Professionalization in American Culture* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

⁸ Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience 1783-1876*, 396. Also David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University

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In spite of the circumstances that have clouded its part in the story of how the early public school systems formed, the Lancasterian monitorial system and its adherents had a long lasting impact on the educational establishment. Most important in this regard is how the Lancasterians envisioned the work of the teacher and their emphasis upon teacher training certification in, admittedly rudimentary, efforts to enforce that vision.⁹ The role of the teacher was specifically designed in this system and formed a large part of the technical innovation that was the Lancasterian monitorial schools. The role of the teacher was simultaneously that of the operator of a great pedagogical machine for producing educated citizens and also as a critical component of that machine. This duality invites the analysis of how the importance of teachers in Lancasterian schools influenced the design and implementation of this new educational “engine of immense power”¹⁰ in the United States and, conversely, how the Lancasterian system might have shaped this profession. Broadening our conception of the relationship between teachers in these early schools and their available technology can change our understanding of how teachers’ roles were and are shaped by technology adoption practices.

Questions for the Study

How did the adoption of the Lancasterian monitorial system shape the role of the teacher in the United States in the early nineteenth century? For many cities and towns in the United States, especially in the Mid-Atlantic region, their initial forays into publicly

Press, 1974), 41.

⁹ As will be demonstrated later in this study, the Lancasterians are often credited with being an important predecessor in the development of teacher training including the normal schools.

¹⁰ John Foster, *An Essay on the Evils of Popular Ignorance*, 2nd ed. (London: B.J. Holdsworth, 1821), 124.

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funded schools involved adoption of the Lancasterian monitorial system. Despite this lack of publicly funded educational institutions, the system's ideas about who would be successful as teachers still needed to be integrated into existing socio-cultural systems which sometimes held drastically different definitions. A period of intense interpretive flexibility emerged and the negotiations between established educational formats and the new schools lasted throughout the period of the system's influence in the United States.¹¹

This dissertation will investigate how the Lancasterian monitorial system had an impact on the development of the role of teachers in the new public school systems that were created in the urban centers of the eastern United States. This will be done through the examination of the particular experiences of representative teachers working within Lancasterian schools receiving some form of public funding or operating within a framework of governmental oversight.

Methodology

Since this study entails an investigation of the actions of teachers in the Lancasterian monitorial schools, there are some issues with gaining access to primary source information. It would not be possible, given the random preservation pattern of the documents that have survived from the early Lancasterian schools and teachers, to present a complete picture of these teachers, or of the schools they taught in. This would

¹¹ For the purposes of this study, I will treat the period of the Lancasterian monitorial system's greatest influence in the United States as running between 1805 and 1838. 1805 is the date of the establishment of the first Lancasterian schools in the United States. 1838 is the date of Lancaster's death – coincidentally both events happened in New York City although both creator and schools travelled throughout the country. For the establishment of the New York City free schools and an apparent Lancasterian predecessor in 1805, see William Smith, *Journal of a Voyage in the Missionary Ship Duff* (New York: Collins and Co., 1813), 276-8. For Lancaster's death, see David Salmon. *Joseph Lancaster* (London: Longmans, Green for the British and Foreign School Society, 1904), 65.

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be true whether the inquiry was framed to focus on the Lancasterian movement worldwide, in the United States, or even within a single city or state. However, using the materials available, an interesting picture can be drawn of the conditions experienced by individual teachers within the system and their reactions to them. A secondary picture will hopefully also emerge of the network of Lancasterian teachers which existed within the United States and between the United States and other countries including Great Britain, Canada, Haiti, and Australia as these teachers were linked by training pedigrees and sending institutions in ways that teachers in earlier forms of elementary education were not. These linkages and cross-fertilization of different locations by teachers moving from training centers, most often schools themselves, and new schools suggest a version of teacher professionalization that did not survive, but presents an intriguing alternative to the bureaucratization that eventually emerged in the late nineteenth century.¹²

I would like to offer an analysis of the shifting definition of "a teacher" that these individual teachers represent. These shifts were spurred by the rapid adoption of the Lancasterian system, and in the process of negotiating these shifts different actors would make decisions shaping the public school systems that were eventually created. Towards this end, I have collected many different kinds of primary sources including school manuals, meeting minutes, newspaper reports and advertisements, autobiographies and biographies, and census data. Unlike many other teachers in the first decades of the nineteenth century, teachers in Lancasterian schools worked to a schedule that is far closer to what we today would consider full-time or more. For this reason, the

¹² Tyack, *The One Best System*, 97-104.

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organizations which initiated and ran the schools are also important to this story, and I have examined original records related to the management for institutions such as the New York Free School Society in New York City, the New Haven Lancasterian School, the experimental school employing “Mutual Instruction” in Boston, and the Corporation for the Relief of Poor Children in New Brunswick which ran a smaller Lancasterian school in central New Jersey.

While it is true that some authors have looked at the phenomenon of the Lancasterian monitorial system in brief, there have been several calls from historians for an approach that uncovers details of the schools’ operation “on the ground.”¹³ Silver in his book *Education as History: Interpreting Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Education* speaks of such research into the Lancasterian system’s history in specific schools in the United Kingdom. Silver notes that the conclusions drawn from studies of activities in specific schools are significantly different from the conclusions scholars could make from studying the parent organization, the Borough Road school.

There were differences between Lancaster's claims and the realities. [...] There have continued to be abundant statements about the intentions of the founders of monitorial system, about its stated methods, about its defects, its critics and its demise - but nothing about the detailed operation of monitorial schools, no sustained effort to match theory with reality.¹⁴

Any attempt to match theory with reality in an analysis of the Lancasterian Monitorial system needs to confront the application of the techniques and devices in the

¹³ For another example of a similar call, see Diane Ravitch, “Why Study New York?” in *Educating an Urban People: The New York City Experience* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1981), 15.

¹⁴ Harold Silver, *Education as History: Interpreting Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Education* (London: Methuen, 1983), 19.

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classroom. In part, this would mean confronting the designed role of the teacher and the specifics of how those teachers were identified, trained, and went on to operate in their schools. The teacher in this situation is part of the “technology” of the school classroom, and part of that analysis needs to account for the teacher as a functional part of that technology. How the teachers in the schools embraced, negotiated with, or rejected the roles specified for them, both by Lancaster’s system and by the boards implementing it, forms an important part of the story and will be discussed in the chapters of this study.

These schools were in most cases viewed as interventions – a technique used by philanthropic organizations for promoting civilized Christian citizenship and avoiding juvenile delinquency among a host of other social ills all while instilling a modicum of education. Specially trained teachers were a critical component of this technique as can be seen from the efforts some organizations went to in obtaining a Lancasterian school master.¹⁵ Some evidence remains of differences between Lancaster’s original techniques and apparatuses and the modifications made in various locations by different teachers and this evidence is especially important to collect together and capture as an example of teachers’ efforts to affect the system they worked within.

Definitions

¹⁵ Examples of this may be found in the records of several Lancasterian systems, the most prominent being the New York Free School Society, who was among the systems who sent to the British and Foreign School Society for a teacher trained in Lancaster’s methods. See A. Emerson Palmer, *The New York Public School: Being a History of Free Education in the City of New York* (New York: Edwin C. Hill Co., 1908), 40-41.

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While the Lancasterian monitorial system has been classed as a “forerunner” of educational technology¹⁶ it is perhaps time to revisit this definition given newer theories of interpreting technologies and their inter-relationship with society. E. M. Rogers’

Diffusion of Innovation includes a discussion of this bifurcation:

A technology is a design for instrumental action that reduces the uncertainty in the cause-effect relationships involved in achieving a desired outcome. A technology usually has two components: (1) a *hardware* aspect, consisting of the tool that embodies the technology as a material or physical object, and (2) a *software* aspect, consisting of the information base for the tool.¹⁷

Using Rogers’ definition a technology can (indeed typically does) include ideas as well as techniques. The “hard” technologies associated with Lancasterian schools – sand tables, the particular design of the classroom, the use of blackboards, and others – lose a great deal of their meaning without a consideration of their “software,” the ideas and techniques that they were built to support. Using ideas about diffusion to think about this school system may open up new avenues for scholarly exploration. For example, diffusion studies present multiple opportunities to look at different adoption patterns between states and organizations as evidenced by different decisions about teacher credentials and qualification requirements.

This inclusion of practices and organizational structures into the Lancasterian monitorial system as a technology is important for a more complete interpretation of its effects. What Lancaster accomplished was not so much his achievement in his own classroom, but the creation of the promotable package of ideas that would allow the

¹⁶ Paul Saettler, *The Evolution of American Educational Technology* (Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1990), 33.

¹⁷ E.M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 5th ed. (New York: Free Press, 2003), 13.

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school to be visibly successful to policy makers and other stakeholders. When these individuals were convinced of the effectiveness of the system, one of its selling points was that another successful school could be readily replicated elsewhere - a point which may have appealed to these individuals as it provided them with a kind of philanthropic toolkit that could be readily exported to new locations.

For an example of how replication was designed into the system, one area of particular interest was the efforts made in Lancasterian manuals to show how to establish not just the school but also the administrative structures necessary for complete execution of the plan. Some manuals for the system published in America contained forms to be filled out by the teacher for reporting student attendance and progress, presumably to the governing boards.¹⁸ The practices of setting up the school “societies” themselves was also material covered in the manual. This strategy is recognizable: computer code is more rapidly adopted when it is packaged in well documented libraries with utility programs bundled in to speed novices in getting set up and beginning a coding project. In effect, making the system easy to adopt becomes a design priority.

The Lancasterian monitorial system bundled its ideas about classroom management and teaching practice with ideas about how to set up and finance an organizing society and defining the relationships between the society’s board, its constituents, the parents and children, and its employee, the teacher. While these additions may have initially been rooted in Joseph Lancaster’s enthusiasm for his own creation, the net effect was to suggest a structure for a whole host of new relationships

¹⁸ *Manual of the System of Teaching Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Needle-Work, in the Elementary Schools of the British and Foreign School Society* (Philadelphia: Benjamin Warner, 1817), 69-90.

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between the educator and the class as well as between the educator and the larger society. This is effectively the root system for what would eventually expand into the “one best system” that came to dominate public educational practices in the United States.¹⁹

Some of the aspects of how the Lancasterian system was adopted in the United States make it ripe for certain kinds of sociological analysis including ideas about how society interacts with, shapes and is shaped by technologies. An interpretation of the Lancasterian monitorial system from the perspective of the history and sociology of technology might yield unexpected benefits in understanding the dual role of the teacher and the change over time in educators’ perceptions of the system. One of the major works associated with the social construction of technology methodology is Wiebe Bijker’s book *Of Bicycles, Bakelites and Bulbs: Towards a Theory of Sociotechnical Change*. Although educational technology remains relatively unexplored by the history of technology field, the socio-cultural tools could attempt to answer interesting questions like: Why could the Lancasterian schools that seem to be efficient, effective educational environments to initial observers could also be seen to be as “sham” education by other observers? Why did the alternate version of the role of the teacher offered by Lancasterians die off and did portions of that version of the role live on in other ways?

¹⁹ David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 81. For an example of this kind of deliberate packaging of computer languages see Leo A. Meyerovich, and Ariel S. Rabkin, "Socio-PLT: Principles for programming language adoption," *Proceedings of the ACM International Symposium on New Ideas, New Paradigms, and Reflections on Programming and Software*, 39-54. ACM, 2012.

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Social construction of technology theory offers some critical tools for thinking about these kinds of issues and a methodology for looking at these kinds of questions.²⁰

Using the ‘working’ of an artifact as an *explanans* in the study of technology seems equivalent to using the ‘hidden hand of Nature’ as an *explanans* in studies of science. [...] The “working” of a machine is not an intrinsic property of the artifact, explaining its success; rather, it should figure as a result of the machine’s success.²¹

The Lancasterian system is a good example of this principle as it is difficult to explain how so many people in the first two decades of the nineteenth century saw Lancasterian classrooms as fantastically efficient and effective educational engines – in short, a technology that worked – whereas in the 1830’s and 1840’s the classrooms for many observers became shrill, noisy centers of bullying stupidity, where “the baby of five was the all-sufficient teacher of the baby of four...”²² Attempting this kind of analysis will require historical detail, but may lend new insights into the early history of educational technology.

Significance of the Study

There are three areas that this study will cover that will contribute significantly to the available knowledge of the history of education in the Republican period of the United States. First, there has been very little contemporary analysis of what ideas and

²⁰ For further discussion and examples of this methodology see Wiebe Bijker, *Of Bicycles, Bakelites and Bulbs: Towards a Theory of Sociotechnical Change* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997) and Thomas P. Hughes, *Human-built World: How to Think about Technology and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) and *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*, eds. Wiebe Bijker, Thomas P. Hughes, and Trevor Pinch (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

²¹ Bijker, *Of Bicycles, Bakelites and Bulbs*, 14.

²² Kaestle, *Joseph Lancaster*, 187.

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personnel were traveling between geographic locations in what was the first nation-wide educational “reform” movement. The ways that the training, manuals, and experimentation with the system were passed from place to place needs to be considered to learn more about how these new teachers’ work was shaped by ideas about both the system and its effectiveness.

In cases where Lancasterian schools were not independently operated, which include the most widely emulated systems of New York City, Philadelphia, Georgetown, DC and Albany, NY local actors in their deliberations on whether to create a school and how to create a school were swayed by political pressures as well as reports in the local press to adopt the Lancasterian system. In effect, this was the first educational technology to undergo a hype cycle.²³ In some ways the existence of publicly funded educational institutions, especially but not exclusively in cities, is predicated upon the availability of technologies that promised to be effective and inexpensive to implement and the understanding of that technology (however limited or skewed) by the local actors. Having a better understanding of this phenomenon would improve understanding of how technologies with educational dimensions interact with publicly funded schools.

For example, one author who throughout his scholarship has questioned the magical thinking surrounding the adoption of educational technologies is Larry Cuban, most prominently in his book *Oversold and Underused: Computers in the Classroom*.²⁴ His earlier book *Teachers and Machines* discusses educational technologies prior to the

²³ Larry Cuban, *Teachers and Machines: The Classroom Use of Technology since 1920* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1986), 5-6.

²⁴ Larry Cuban, *Oversold and Underused: Computers in the Classroom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 7-8.

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introduction of the computer in the classroom including film and radio and presents an argument concerning the adoption (or non-adoption) of these technologies in schools. Cuban describes teachers as being situationally constrained; given the complexity of their task and the bureaucracy of the organization that houses their activities, they are more limited in their technical options than proponents of technology change recognize:

School and classroom structures... have established the boundaries within which individual teacher beliefs and an occupational ethos have worked their influence in shaping daily pedagogy. ... The constraints, pressures, and channeling that the school and classroom contexts generate are the invisible, encompassing environment that few recognize as shaping what teachers do daily in classrooms. It is – forgive the commonplace observation – the water that surrounds the fish.²⁵

As the Lancasterian monitorial system was typically used in the first publicly funded school systems established in many cities, these adoption decisions were made with a very different set of constraints. This is, in itself, another aspect of the history of technology use in school that deserves greater attention. In many cases the schools' bureaucracy – the situation that constrains in Cuban's argument – is itself a product of earlier technology adoptions such as the choice to implement Lancasterian classrooms in the first place.

Additionally, most of the books focused on the monitorial system cover only one geographic area - usually just one city in the United States. This pattern in the scholarship diminishes the importance of cross-country and cross-region activity to disseminate the system. It also results in making it too easy to miss the individual stories of the teachers working in the schools. For example, one teacher, who remained almost entirely

²⁵ Cuban, *Teachers and Machines*, 64.

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nameless in the public record, trained dozens of other successful schoolmasters influencing at least seven or eight towns and cities' eventual school systems. Another teacher returned to his native state from teaching at the frontier and went on to rework his hometown's school districts based on his hard won experience.²⁶ By tracking only the efforts in one location, the ripple effects these schoolteachers had upon the systems they operated within are invisible. Writing in his review of Menand's book *The Metaphysical Club*, historian Donald Warren describes the inadequacy resulting from leaving the teachers' experiences out of the analysis:

Finding teachers can be more difficult ... barely a faint paper trail survives to lead historians to them. ... teachers of olden times may literally no longer exist, their voices lost beyond recovery. In these all-too-common cases, historians determined to grapple with the details of cultural transformation posit teachers on the basis of surviving shards of an education policy environment, which will always be both local and extended. If sought, multiple fragments of evidence may come to light at distances far removed from schools and classrooms. Besides biographies and autobiographies, where teachers' footprints may be dimly visible at best, numerous governmental and professional associations (national and state) maintain archives with relevant documents. Occasionally, this detective work produces personal correspondence. More commonly, it unearths telling details about salaries, tenures, preservice and inservice professional preparation, and performance evaluations. ... The historians being reviewed here may have been frustrated in their search for individual teachers, yet still able to reconstruct the work and workplaces of groups of teachers. The point is not to leave a hole where education and its essential transmitters belong. This gap can be filled; if left unattended in reconstructions of American social formation, the analyses and narratives remain unfinished.²⁷

Literature Review for the Lancasterian monitorial system in the United States

²⁶ Shepherd Johnston's and Lemuel Shattuck's careers as teachers in Lancasterian schools will be examined in detail in chapters 2, 3, and 4 of this study.

²⁷ Donald Warren, "Beginnings Again: Looking for Education in American Histories" *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Autumn, 2003), 404.

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While the Lancasterian monitorial system is not the most obscure of the various “scientific” educational systems of the nineteenth century in the United States, there are few scholars who have provided it with undivided attention, usually addressing it as an ancillary component of the development of the urban public school systems.²⁸ Many comprehensive histories of education in the United States omit direct mention of the system entirely. Also, as the Lancasterian monitorial system was adopted world-wide in countries from Afghanistan to Venezuela, in some cases being the acknowledged foundation of a nation’s educational system, the system has received attention in the histories of education that focus on other nations which in some cases provides insight on how the system functioned internationally and spread. Scholarship on the subject is correspondingly spread out over many different works with a wide spectrum of foci. For this reason, this study is centering its inquiry on the interactions within the system affecting teachers’ work in the United States between 1805 and 1838 and the review of the previous literature on the subject reflects this.

The Lancasterian monitorial system, itself, has had some scholarly attention but there are very few books published within the last fifty years subjecting it to any sustained analysis and there is little that focuses on the system as its main subject. There is one book by Carl Kaestle entitled, *Joseph Lancaster and the Monitorial School Movement: A Documentary History*, which is a collection of texts from the 1800-1848 time period dealing with various aspects of the system. Kaestle’s work also includes an

²⁸ For an example see: James Pyle Wickersham, *A History of Education in Pennsylvania* (Lancaster, PA: Self-Published, 1886), 288.

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excellent introduction, giving a somewhat more balanced picture of the system than many authors, which suggests that deeper dives into the topic uncovered more aspects of how the system was viewed by its contemporaries. Although most individuals from the early twentieth century onward would view the Lancasterian classroom with disdain, Kaestle describes it as even, with the right teacher, “possibly fun.”²⁹

Other late twentieth century historians such as Lawrence Cremin and, especially, the “revisionist” scholars writing about the development of the public schools in the United States in the nineteenth century, such as David Tyack and Michael Katz, sometimes also regard the Lancasterian schools as important precursors to the development of the public schools. Their focus of interpretation is on the development of school systems as channels for social control and bureaucratization, for which the hierarchical monitorial techniques of the Lancasterian system are an interesting metaphor for how schools operate in the larger society.³⁰ The unit of analysis for these scholars, however, is the larger political, economic, and social systems that educational organizations evolved to co-exist with; Lancasterianism is but one phase in a much larger story, and correspondingly is given little direct attention in their works.

During the late twentieth century there have been a small number of articles written focusing specifically on Lancasterian monitorial schools. Some focus on the

²⁹ Kaestle, *Joseph Lancaster*, 7.

³⁰ See Lawrence Cremin, *The American Common School* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1951), Lawrence Cremin, *The Wonderful World of Ellwood Patterson Cubberly* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, 1965), Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars, New York City, 1805-1973* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), Michael Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), and Tyack, *The One Best System* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), among others.

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history of Lancasterian monitorial schools in particular geographic locations.³¹ More focus typically on specific aspects of the system, either technically in the case of the visual and architectural arrangements of the classroom, or socially in terms of the schools as an influential instance of the market revolution in action.³² For example, in the book *New Media 1740-1915* one article entitled “Children of Media, Children as Media: Optical Telegraphs, Indian Pupils and Joseph Lancaster’s System for Cultural Replication” by Patricia Crain, focuses on the use of the system with Native American students for purposes of assimilation into the dominant culture.³³ These articles, while providing interesting analyses of the system’s cultural context and appeal to various groups in early nineteenth century do not provide a great deal of insight into how the Lancasterian monitorial system might have affected teachers as individuals. Nor do they typically have specific analysis to offer on the question of how individual teachers’ alignment with the system altered their careers or the development of the profession in the United States.

³¹ Eudenia Roldan Vera, “Order in the Classroom: The Spanish American Appropriation of the Monitorial System of Education,” *Paedagogica Historica*, 41:6, 655-675. Also Kim Tolley, “A Chartered School in a Free Market: The Case of Raleigh Academy, 1801-1828,” *Teachers College Record*, vol 107, no 1, 59-88. Also Bruce Curtis, “Joseph Lancaster in Montreal: Monitorial Schooling and Politics in a Colonial Context,” *Historical Studies in Education*, vol 17 no 1 (2005): 1-27. Also Tina H. Sheller, “The Origins of Public Education in Baltimore, 1825-1829,” *History of Education Quarterly*, vol 22, no 1 (Spring 1982), 23-44.

³² David Hogan, “The Market Revolution and Disciplinary Power: Joseph Lancaster and the Psychology of the Early Classroom System,” *History of Education Quarterly*, vol 23, no 3, 381-417. Also Barbara Finkelstein, “Dollars and Dreams: Classrooms as Fictitious Message Systems, 1790-1930,” *History of Education Quarterly*, vol 31 no 4 (Winter 1991), 463-487.

³³ Patricia Crain, “Children of Media, Children as Media: Optical Telegraphs, Indian Pupils, and Joseph Lancaster’s System for Cultural Replication,” in *New Media, 1740-1915*, eds. Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey B. Pingree (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 61-89.

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It is interesting to note that scholars during the nineteenth century present a divided picture of the system. Since most of the authors writing about school history at this time were educators themselves, much that was written during the first fifty years after the diminishment of the system is colored by pride in the new school systems and also by ongoing reform efforts that were trying to eradicate lingering vestiges of the Lancasterian monitorial system in the public schools. Some of this dissonance can be seen in two of the earliest published histories of the New York Public Schools: *Public Education in the City of New York* written by Thomas Boese in 1869 and *History of the Public School Society of the City of New York* written by William Oland Bourne in 1870. Boese is willing to be quite critical of the educational choices of the founders of the New York City public schools. He refers to the “radical weakness in the machinery of the monitorial system” associated with the addition of more advanced topics of study and finds it difficult to understand how the learned trustees could have expected any teacher to have handled as many tasks as were expected of them under the Lancasterian system.³⁴ In contrast Bourne describes the system in a more positive light: “Although it was an economical system it did not *cheapen* knowledge...”³⁵

The difference in attitudes may have been a result of personal relationships with the subjects the books were addressing. While Boese worked for the Board of Education, which continued in its task of educating the masses, Bourne was apparently quite close

³⁴ Thomas Boese, *Public Education in the City of New York: Its History, Condition, and Statistics* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1869), 47-48.

³⁵ William Oland Bourne, *History of the Public School Society of the City of New York With Portraits of the Presidents of the Society* (New York: Wm. Wood & Co., 1870), 601.

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with the Trustees of the original Public School Society that had been subsumed into the Board in 1853.³⁶ While both works are valuable for providing detail about the administrative workings of the New York City Schools, neither author does much analysis of the how the earlier system might have shaped their contemporary system. It is valuable to note how early a certain kind of ambiguity evolved around official accounts of the Lancasterian system. There are several other books from the nineteenth century that go into some depth of detail of the operation of the large public school systems on the Lancasterian plan, but they, too, stop short of any detailed analyses of how the system worked or how teachers operated within it.³⁷

Most frequently the earlier historians tend to characterize these schools as precursors (sometimes even important precursors) to the eventual public school systems throughout America, especially in the Mid-Atlantic region as devices that acclimated citizens to the idea of using public funds to pay for education. One of the best examples of this perspective would be Ellwood Patterson Cubberly's description of the system in use in the United States, adding that "They also made the common school common and much talked of, and awakened thought and provoked discussion on the question of public education."³⁸ This is a conclusion which is not seriously disputed by later histories, but since most of these authors used the state or the school system as their unit of analysis,

³⁶ Boese has many complimentary things to say about the trustees of the New York Free School Society (later to become the Public School Society). In contrast, Bourne's dedication of his book to the last president of the society George Trimble, seems to speak to an individual relationship with members of the board. Ibid., iii.

³⁷ Wickersham, 283-288. Also Palmer, 25-29.

³⁸ Ellwood Patterson Cubberly, *The History of Education* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), 664.

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the characteristics of teachers in the schools, their training, or of the system that they used is rarely discussed in much detail.³⁹

Two works that are exceptions to this pattern of focusing on the larger system are John Franklin Reigart's *The Lancasterian System of Instruction in the Schools of New York City* and Charles Calvert Ellis' *Lancasterian Schools in Philadelphia*, both of which contain valuable details about the management of the two large urban school systems which provided training and recruitment centers for the Lancasterian movement.⁴⁰ Both include some focus on individual teachers and the importance of the Lancasterian movement towards establishing the need for teacher training. Since both books were written in the early twentieth century, both of them are written in the context of Progressive educational reform movements, that were attempting to eliminate remaining vestiges of the system. Reigart's condemnation of Lancasterianism is particularly vehement. He was himself, during his career as an educator, a principal in New York City's P.S. 2, itself a prominent site of early Lancasterianism, and an inheritor of the problems the system created.⁴¹ Both authors' analyses of the impact of the Lancasterian system are also constrained by their geographic framing of the phenomenon. While this is

³⁹ One partial exception to this can be found in Monroe's discussion of the Lancasterian monitorial system which does make an explicit connection between Lancasterian schools and calls for teacher training: "If school teaching itself was not recognized as a special professional art the management of the monitorial school was." Paul Monroe, *Founding of the American Public School, Vol. I* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1940), 490.

⁴⁰ John Franklin Reigart, *The Lancasterian System of Instruction in the Schools of New York City* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1916). Also Charles Calvert Ellis, *Lancasterian Schools in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1907). It is interesting to note that both of these works were originally dissertations and both seem to have been published.

⁴¹ National Education Association of the United States, *Fiftieth Anniversary Yearbook and List of Active Members of the National Education Association* (Winona, MN: National Education Association, 1907), 833.

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understandable, one of the most remarkable characteristics of the system was the extent and rapidity of its spread, so consequently both authors do not note or discuss that a network of teachers existed within the United States or the larger scope of the Lancasterians' impact.

Three books from the latter half of the twentieth century focus particularly on the history of early teachers as a professional group, which make them useful for this study's analyses, although none of them centers on teachers in Lancasterian schools specifically. Carl Kaestle's book *The Evolution of an Urban School System* has a very detailed breakdown of the tax records of the individuals identified as schoolteachers in New York City in 1795, which is just before the Lancasterian schools were initiated there.⁴² Kaestle's analysis centers on how the New York City schools evolved from consisting mostly of independent operators in a free market system into a dominant public school organization that eventually taught the great majority of children. The Free School Society's Lancasterian schools played an important role in that story, but their teachers are not broken out for individual attention in Kaestle's argument as the earlier teachers are, and the interaction between the individual teachers and the technology of the system is also not examined.

Paul Mattingly's book on the development of the profession of teaching, *The Classless Profession*, is an examination of the efforts of the early educators to define their work as the work of professionals as opposed to hired hands. Mattingly centers the book

⁴² Carl F. Kaestle, *The Evolution of an Urban School System* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 37-47.

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on teachers just after the Lancasterians' broadest influence in the 1820's and none of the individuals discussed in his book were prominent during the early formation of the public schools under this system.⁴³ Barbara Finkelstein's *Governing the Young* is another book centered on the details of teaching practices in the classroom, beginning with the early nineteenth century as the subject for investigation.⁴⁴ These books' approach primarily uses groups of teachers (whether grouped by chronology, geography or professional association) as the unit of analysis as opposed to the institutions that employed them and as such are much closer to the study being proposed here. However, none of the books performs an analysis of the potential impact that the early association with a specific set of techniques and materials may have had on the profession of teachers.

There are few scholarly works specifically discussing the history of educational technology, which is an intended focus of this analysis of the Lancasterian monitorial system. There are two major authors in this literature who are frequently cited: Paul Saettler and Larry Cuban. Saettler's *The Evolution of American Educational Technology* does look at Lancasterian schools as an instantiation of a kind of educational technology; specifically it is characterized as a "forerunner."⁴⁵ However, since the book is covering educational technology from its earliest antecedents in classical Greece and Rome to the early era of computerized instruction, it does not spend much time on the Lancasterian

⁴³ Paul Mattingly, *The Classless Profession: American Schoolmen in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1975).

⁴⁴ Barbara Finkelstein, *Governing the Young: Teacher Behavior in Popular Primary Schools in Nineteenth century United States* (New York, Falmer Press, 1989). Also Barbara Finkelstein "Governing the young: teacher behavior in American primary schools, 1820-1880, a documentary history." PhD diss., Columbia University, 1970.

⁴⁵ Saettler, 33-36.

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system. Saettler does not do much exploration of the sociocultural issues surrounding the early Lancasterians and does no significant analysis on the impact this technology might have had on professional roles. For Saettler, the Lancasterian monitorial system is only an odd predecessor to the more media-oriented educational technologies of recorded sound, film and computer technology.

Larry Cuban's principal book focusing on the history of educational uses of technology in American schools is *Teachers and Machines: The Classroom Use of Technology Since 1920*, a work that clearly does not cover the time period of the Lancasterians. What is particularly useful for this study in Cuban's analysis is the description of the boom/bust hype cycle of various technologies in the public schools (of which, it may be argued, the Lancasterian monitorial system is the earliest example) and examination of the sociocultural contexts of schools and administrations that educational technologies were trying to fit into and make more efficient.⁴⁶

One particularly salient idea in Cuban is the exploration of how limited the impact was of these technologies on teacher practice – expressing the root of a common idea among educational technology practitioners of the teacher as the roadblock to innovation. There is a handful of books and journal articles that have brief discussions of the history of educational technology, none stretching back further than the early twentieth century.⁴⁷ For many contemporary scholars of the field, whether the subject is termed “educational

⁴⁶ Cuban, *Teachers and Machines*, 5 & 88-92.

⁴⁷ Robert A. Reiser, “A History of Instructional Design and Technology: Part 1: A History of Instructional Media,” *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 49:1 2001: 53-64. Also Robert A. Reiser “The Field of Educational Technology as Reflected Through its Definitions,” *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 45:3 1997: 53-64.

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technology” or “instructional technology,” either there is nothing “technical” happening in schools in the nineteenth century or the relevance of this time period has not been demonstrated as yet.

There are also a small number of dissertations written on the use of the Lancasterian monitorial system and the creation of Lancasterian schools in the United States.⁴⁸ These works primarily focus on the establishment of Lancasterian monitorial schools in specific geographic areas such as Detroit, Michigan and Colombia. One dissertation written by Ray Rost does cover a broader spectrum of the Lancasterian schools and devotes a chapter to the discussion of system’s potential impact upon the evolution of teacher training facilities in the United States.⁴⁹ Rost’s argument does not tie the Lancasterians’ focus on teacher training to specific characteristics of the system however, although it does have an interesting chapter with a discussion of the system’s implementation in secondary and higher education in the United States.

The development of teacher training in the United States is associated historically with the normal school movement. This movement was mostly associated with other educational theories and systems such as Pestalozzianism, that became the educational

⁴⁸ For example: Gary Joseph Pasioka, ““A place for everything”: A personal interpretation of Joseph Lancaster, the monitorial system and its application in Detroit.” (Ph.D. diss., Wayne State University, 1990) In Dissertations & Theses: A&I [database on-line]; available from <http://www.proquest.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu> (publication number AAT 9118917) also Everett Figueroa Peralta, “The English legacy of Joseph Lancaster to the Mexican philosophy of education: 1825 to 1925.” (Ed.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2005) In Dissertations & Theses: A&I [database on-line]; available from <http://www.proquest.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu> (publication number AAT 3166153).

⁴⁹ Ray Charles Rost, “The Influence of Joseph Lancaster and the Monitorial System on selected Educational Institutions, 1800-1850.” (Educational D. diss., Rutgers The State University of New Jersey - New Brunswick, 1968) In Dissertations & Theses @ Rutgers University [database on-line]; available from <http://www.proquest.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu> (publication number AAT 6809164; accessed May 1, 2009).

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system championed by leaders on educational policy such as Horace Mann. The normal school movement is treated quite thoroughly in Jurgen Herbst's *And Sadly Teach: Teacher Education and Professionalization in American Culture*, Christine Ogren's *The American State Normal School* and James W. Fraser's *Preparing America's Teachers: A history*.⁵⁰ Yet none of these authors explores the potential relationship between the Lancasterian systems and the larger normal school movement and there is very little discussion of the Lancasterian monitorial system at all in histories of teacher training in the United States.

⁵⁰ Jurgen Herbst, *And Sadly Teach: Teacher Education and Professionalization in American Culture* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), Christine Ogren, *The American State Normal School* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and James W. Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A history*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 2007).

CHAPTER 2: A BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF THE LANCASTERIAN MONITORIAL SYSTEM AND ITS TEACHERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Introduction

The Lancasterian monitorial system has received limited attention in histories of education in the United States and consequently is frequently misinterpreted in contemporary analysis of educational phenomena.¹ Schools operating with the Lancasterian system do not map exactly to our contemporary schema for what schools and classrooms look like and how they function. Children assigned to be monitors acted as “teachers.” Classrooms held upwards of 700 students with one teacher issuing commands through crude signaling systems. Schools operated under organizational structures that blurred the lines between modern definitions of public, parochial and private schools. All of these factors make it easier to relegate the system to the under-examined status of “precursor” when it perhaps would be better to think of the Lancasterian wave as what Bernard Bailyn termed a “soft, ambiguous moment when the words we use and the institutions we know are notably present but are still enmeshed in older meanings and different purposes.”² In some sense, this analytical bias is understandable, given the heterogeneous cornucopia of the available educational options

¹ Sun Go and Peter Lindert. “The uneven rise of American public schools to 1850.” *The Journal of Economic History* 70, no. 01 (2010), 5. Go and Lindert’s conclusion that Northeast and urban areas’ expenditures per pupil could reflect public attitudes’ towards education in the early nineteenth century is problematic. While the conclusion may still hold, without accounting for the fact that many of these locations were experimenting with the Lancasterian system specifically to lower per pupil costs while expanding access to schools for new segments of the population, it misses critical facts in explaining the spending data. If the Lancasterian monitorial system was discussed in some detail in major overviews, their analysis may have arrived at different conclusions.

² Bernard Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society: Needs and Opportunities for Study* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1960), 14.

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during the early Republican time period.³ It is also a misunderstanding that monitorial schools were nearly all charity schools and that the system was only employed in major urban areas such as New York and Philadelphia—two factors that also make it easier to marginalize this phenomenon in the overall history of education in the United States. Many of the major overviews of the history of education in the United States devote a paragraph or two, sometimes a page or two, to the system. This reduces its complexity to one or two key features, and leaves out much of the detail. The negotiation of these details, as will be argued later in this study, potentially ties the system to a broader understanding of our contemporary relationship between schools, teachers, and technology.⁴

One final factor that complicates the written history of the system is that the Lancasterian monitorial system would not have been as widespread or as influential if it were not for the fact that it was eponymous. Joseph Lancaster was simply a contradiction in terms for much of his life, especially once he achieved prominence: a fat, unkempt, and profligate Quaker, an unlearned schoolmaster, a teacher vocal about the uselessness of corporal punishment driven out of his own association for “beating his students for pleasure,” – an individual supremely in control in one of his classrooms and almost never in control when out of it.⁵ The bizarre character of the system’s creator again makes it

³ Bailyn, 18-19 and Cremin, *American Education*, 388-9. Here, the whole notion of family, church, and community being more prevalent as educational systems in place at this time.

⁴ Joel Spring, *The American School, 1642-1996* 4th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 52-56.

⁵ While researching Joseph Lancaster it is a small pleasure to read his different biographers describe these essential contradictions in his character. Two examples include Joyce Taylor, *Joseph Lancaster: The Poor Child’s Friend. Educating the Poor in the Early Nineteenth Century*, (Kent, England: The Campanile Press, 1996), 75-76 and Mora Dickson, *Teacher Extraordinary: Joseph Lancaster 1778-1838* (Sussex, England: The Book Guild Limited, 1986), 141. Taylor’s discussion of Lancaster’s eventual excommunication and

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easy to view the system, itself, as a side street off an avenue that the Common School movement for the most part eschewed. However, the system was in wide use throughout the United States, in well over a hundred publicly funded and private schools, in both urban and non-urban areas, in the first twenty-five years after its introduction. Given its spread it would be a mistake to think that it did not shape the eventual patterns of school development.

In this chapter, a more detailed summary of the inception and technical details of Lancasterian monitorial system will attempt to demonstrate that some of the less widely described aspects of the system had an influence on the schools and systems of education available in the United States during the early republican period. To further this argument, a description of the educational opportunities available in Massachusetts, New York and New Hampshire prior to the wider adoption of the Lancasterian system will be explored.

Joseph Lancaster and his system's inception and popularization in U.K.

In the United Kingdom in the late eighteenth century there were a number of issues that were pressing on individuals interested in social reform. Some of these issues were perennial problems for those bent on improving the lot of their fellow human beings. For example, too many people did not recognize Judeo-Christian values (with particular emphasis on Protestantism) as guidance towards their personal salvation.⁶

distancing from his own society is probably the most even handed account of the charges of sadomasochism and other erratic behaviors leveled against Lancaster. Taylor, 91-92.

⁶ John Doheny, "Bureaucracy and the Education of the Poor in Nineteenth Century Britain," *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. XXXIX No. 3, August 1991, 333.

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Some of these problems were new – for example, recent events in pre- and post-revolutionary France suggested that individuals unencumbered with a sense of their stake in society might be more willing to engage in more revolutionary actions than they had been previously.⁷ There were also some old problems dressed up in new clothes: changing economic conditions had pressed more working class people into cities where they would be engaged in labor which may require a process of acculturation to business and, more importantly, management practices which were unfamiliar to populations living in rural areas. The notion of making education more readily accessible by using free schools as a locus for a range of these solutions had been moving from discourse to discourse for some time and small scale implementations such as Sunday Schools and small, charity-funded schools had been established. It was into this environment that Joseph Lancaster created his first school and his first classroom, and in many ways he was an individual with the right ideas at the right time.

Joseph Lancaster could have been, quite easily, simply a zealous young man, imbued with religious fervor and gifted with a way with children who spent his life teaching and passed away, without champions and unsung. His enemies were fond of pointing out Lancaster's lack of education and unprepossessing manner; in many ways the thing that made him most unappealing to them was his presumption, which was, in fact, the source of his fame.⁸ What Lancaster had done in his classroom was not, in all

⁷ Taylor, 61-2.

⁸ It would be interesting to merely catalog the variety of dismissive comments that were written about Joseph Lancaster during his lifetime as it would be a virtual encyclopedia of early nineteenth century vituperation. Characteristic would be a comment written in an 1805 letter by Dr. Bell to Sarah Trimmer:

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probability, anything new—nothing that had not been done before by teachers in classrooms and many authors have pointed out earlier originators for many of his innovations. What Lancaster had accomplished was to aggregate a set of tools and techniques, some of which were definitely in use prior to his adoption of them, into a system that he then managed to associate with his own school. During the long controversy fought in the United Kingdom concerning the adoption of his system, his detractors were fond of pointing out how Andrew Bell, an Episcopalian priest with a degree from Saint Andrews University in Scotland and in many ways a far more viable candidate for honors in terms of background, preceded Lancaster in the use of some of the most lauded tools of the Lancasterian system.⁹ These attacks presume that the quality of being the originator of the tools was the important thing, but apart from giving Lancaster a permanent reason to believe in his persecution, these attacks did little damage to the important quality Lancaster did provide. Joseph Lancaster gave his system a narrative (“inventive schoolmaster aids needy children!”) and a reason to fit these pieces together (“these schools are possible and they are replicable – start your own!”). It becomes difficult to talk about the Lancasterian monitorial system without reckoning

“Ever since I conversed with him, and read some of his familiar letters, I have suspected that he has much assistance in his published works of every kind. He is illiterate and ignorant, with a brazen front, consummate assurance, and the most artful and plausible address, not without ability and ingenuity, heightened in its effects under the Quakers’ guise.” Cited in Charles C. Southey, *The Life of the Rev. Andrew Bell*, vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1844), 149. Another example would be “big, greasy, sloven” in “Edinburgh Sessional School” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol. 25. No. CXLVIII, 1829, 133. If these were the comments that were written down during Lancaster’s lifetime, it is reasonable to expect that what was spoken was quite possibly even more malicious.

⁹ Specifically the attacks usually focused on the Lancasterian system’s use of monitors and sand tables. These tools and techniques were clearly in use elsewhere before Lancaster’s adoption of them. Most biographers of Lancaster and Bell think that it is unlikely that Lancaster had more than a passing exposure to Bell’s practices prior to the publication of his first book describing his own use of these techniques and tools. Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 26, Kaestle, *Joseph Lancaster*, 4, and Dickson, 47.

with the force of Joseph Lancaster as a personality, because it is that voluble and irrepressible personality which turned it into a *system* in the first place.

Joseph Lancaster: A Brief Biography of the First Lancasterian Schoolteacher

Joseph Lancaster was born in a less affluent southern district of London called Southwark in 1778 to a family who was, at best, hanging on to the lowest rung of the middle classes. His father was a former Army officer, who received a small pension supplemented by his manufacturing of baskets and caned chairs but, unlike many male children born into a working class family, Joseph appeared to be a son unlikely to follow his father into those professions.¹⁰ An early incident in Lancaster's life frequently cited by his biographers was his running away at the age of fourteen. Lancaster's ambition was to try to board a vessel to sail to Jamaica and once arriving in Jamaica to educate the slaves working on the sugar plantations.¹¹ This combination of enthusiasm for the grand gesture and education as philanthropy was to remain a hallmark of many of his actions and although he was quickly returned to his family, he did not lose his missionary zeal for the possibilities of education for transforming the lives of those who were frequently regarded as uneducable or those whose education was deemed unwise or wasted effort. It is also worth pointing out that the ultimate failure of his grand scheme to provide spiritually liberating educational opportunities to the slaves of Jamaica can also be considered as a recurring characteristic for many episodes in his life.

¹⁰ Taylor, 3.

¹¹ Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 2.

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After spending time working as an assistant at a local school in London where he was unimpressed with the teaching practices employed there, he decided to open up a school for himself in his father's workshop. In keeping with his earlier philanthropic impulse, while he did initially charge some fees for his school, eventually he decided that he would not charge tuition for most of his students, many of whom came from the poorer classes.¹² Lancaster, at various times, even provided food and clothing for the most indigent of his students even though he himself was probably little better off than they were and straining the resources of his own parents.¹³ This extraordinary act of charity of course produced a large class of students and may have also encouraged some of the more engaged students and their teacher to view themselves as something closer to a family.¹⁴ Lancaster quickly surmised that he would not be able to entice an outsider to join him in his teaching labors without any hope of pay, so he devised a set of practices to enable his classroom to swell to hundreds of students with only himself as the teacher.

It is clear that Lancaster's early school quickly drew the attention of England's nobility – the first were “John, fifteenth Lord Somerville, and ... John, the sixth Duke of Bedford.”¹⁵ One early twentieth century biographer says that an early list of financial supporters of the school included: “the names of three dukes, three duchesses, four

¹² Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 16.

¹³ Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 5 and Dickson, 29.

¹⁴ By 1805 Lancaster himself called a group of monitors and assistant teachers who lived with himself, his young wife, and daughter as “the Family” sometimes referenced as Lancaster's first efforts at teacher training. Dickson, 47. To a contemporary ear the cult-like echoes are unfortunate but not completely inapt. Taylor, 17.

¹⁵ Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 16. These connections were formed in early 1803.

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marquises, nine earls, twelve countesses, two viscounts, fourteen ‘lords,’ twenty-three ‘ladies,’ fifteen ‘sirs,’ thirty-six members of parliament, two archbishops, and nine bishops, besides such foreigners as a prince, a baron, a baroness, an ambassador, and a general.”¹⁶ The quick admiration of Lancaster’s innovations by England’s elite may have been a contributing factor to Lancaster’s decision to take an enormous financial risk and open up a larger school, expanding his capacity to one thousand students. However, as would be amply demonstrated in his later life, Lancaster was certainly capable of seeing a ten guinea donation from a duchess as sufficient surety to embark on a debt of a thousand pounds.

Lancaster was plagued by his own erratic, irresponsible, and ultimately self-defeating behavior. His Royal Lancasterian Society, founded quickly after his meeting with King George III, enjoyed a terrific level of support from England’s nobility as well as the more functionally important Protestant reformers and mercantile elite. However in 1814 the board of this institution had to sever itself from its namesake to limit the financial damage Lancaster’s constant and unaccounted expenditures were causing it and was consequently renamed the British and Foreign School Society. Lancaster himself, who was spending increasing amounts of time out of his classroom promoting the system, began to demonstrate unmistakable signs of deterioration. He was imprisoned for debt, accused of whipping boys in his care for pleasure, and all the while publicly demonstrated his willingness to pronounce invective upon the very men who were trying to save his organization and his reputation. After the publication of his repudiation of the

¹⁶ David Salmon, ed., *The Practical Parts of Lancaster’s Improvements and Bell’s Experiment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), viii.

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men working to save his reputation *Oppression and Persecution* in 1816, many of the original society's supporters began to limit their efforts on the behalf of Joseph Lancaster although many continued to push for continuing to expand the number of schools using his system.¹⁷

It was this addiction to publishing that was both Lancaster's downfall as well as his making. Lancaster's publication of his initial book in 1803 discussing his practices definitely suggested that there was the possibility of scaling this solution to expand the number of schools affordable for the lower classes. Lancaster was quick to point out that ways to scale the solution were already built into the system through the eventual promotion of monitors to the role of teachers that is a consistent theme throughout his manuals for the system. Lancaster's early focus on teacher training, may have had self-aggrandizement at its heart, but did prove to be one of the lasting contributions made to English (and later American) schools. Ultimately the goal that Lancaster promoted was the possibility to propagate free schools throughout the world and, in large part, it was this vision that his supporters were investing in.¹⁸ In view of these ambitions, ultimately

¹⁷ Lancaster's rhetoric in many cases verges on the overblown, and in self-defense often crosses over to the hysterical. As an example: "Joseph Lancaster hesitates not to declare that by reason of the hypocritical friendship of Joseph Fox and William Allen his public work has sustained more injury and his mind suffered severer wounds than from all other sorrows of his life in combination." Joseph Lancaster, *Oppression and Persecution; or a Narrative of a Variety of Singular Facts that have occurred in the Rise, Progress, and Promulgation of the Royal Lancasterian System of Education* (John Evans & Co., Bristol, 1816), 6. Board members excoriated in Lancaster's 1816 publication must have been grateful to Roberts Vaux and other members of Philadelphia's Board of Controllers for inviting Lancaster to depart England for America in 1818. A few of them, including William Allen, contributed money to his travelling expenses for emigrating. Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 55.

¹⁸ Although Lancaster on most occasions was unable to see himself as separate from the system, prior to the reorganization of the Royal Lancasterian Society into the British and Foreign School Society Lancaster was warned by friend and financial supporter William Allen that "they were determined to maintain the cause without him." Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 49.

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the thrust of the big centers of Lancasterianism began to focus on the spread of the system itself, and this focus on the training of new teachers became one of its characteristics.

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Description of the philosophy, practices, and apparatuses in the Lancasterian monitorial system

The most prominent feature of a Lancasterian classroom, whether in England or the United States, was undoubtedly the use of student monitors to present a large portion of the instruction and to keep the large numbers of students in order.¹⁹ Monitors were more capable students who were usually, but not necessarily, older than their charges. Supervised by the teacher, they were put in charge of rote teaching their “draught” of about ten to twelve students, but individual monitors would hold other responsibilities as well.²⁰ Monitors were placed in charge of dictation, attendance, the library, keeping the peace during the students’ entrance into the school building and also supervised egress to and from the street and kept the students’ “general order.”²¹ Manuals for Lancasterian schools would give the details for the duties of as many as twenty separate monitor types operating in a school with “monitor generals” acting as intermediate supervisors to appoint and rapidly train interim monitors to perform in the capacity of temporarily absent monitors.

¹⁹ Throughout this study it is necessary to refer to a wide variety of published manuals on the Lancasterian system. There is no single manual that can be treated as a “master source” as Lancaster perpetually made minor revisions to his own work, publishing many different editions. Various editions were probably more prominent references than others at different times, but it is difficult to tell much about the relative prominence of one work over another. For this reason, citations will be made to a number of different manuals. It should be noted that one exception to this pattern that is suggestive of teachers’ ongoing process of revising their practice is a copy of the 1820 NYFSS *Manual* in Harvard University’s Gutman Library. This copy was at some point rebound with a practitioner’s handwritten notes interleaved with the text including comments on various practices from the manual being “obsolete” and suggesting alternative strategies.

²⁰ It is interesting to note that in at least one manual for operating a Lancasterian school there is the suggestion of still further levels of hierarchy, since they mention that monitors had special desks for the use of themselves “and their assistants.” New York Free School Society, *Manual of the Lancasterian System, of Teaching Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Needle-work, as Practised in the Schools of the Free-School Society, of New-York* (New York: Samuel Wood and Sons Printers, 1820), 8.

²¹ Ibid., 46-59.

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Teachers of Lancasterian schools are cautioned in many of the teachers' manuals to take particular care in choosing which children were to act as monitors, as these were considered to be positions involving some leadership and poor choices would impair the functioning of the classroom.²² Monitors who could not perform their duties successfully would have had a disproportionately adverse effect on the school. Lancaster in his *British System of Education* gives a particular example of this, referencing the work of the monitor in leading a group of students reading in a draft's semi-circle:

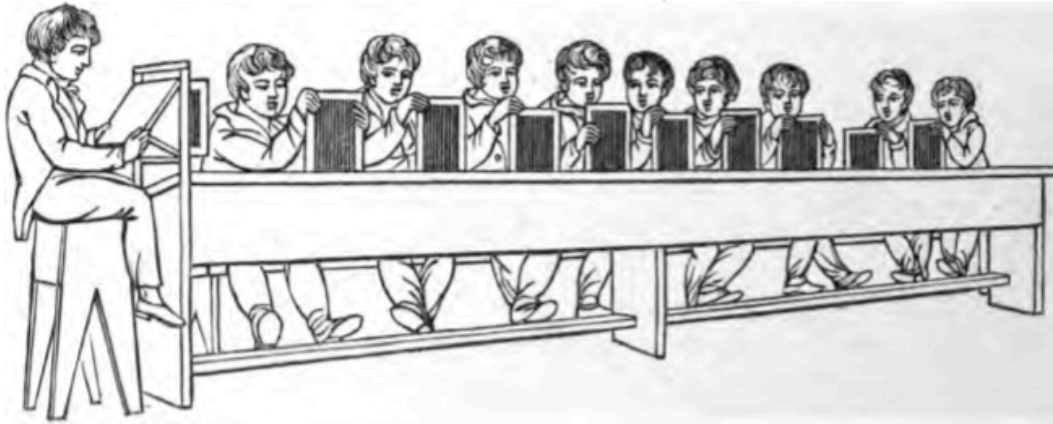
It is very important that, in all these modes of teaching, the monitor cannot do as the watermen do, look one way and row another. His business is before his eyes; and, if he omit the performance of the smallest part of his duty, the whole semi-circle is idle or deranged...²³

²² Most of the Lancasterian manuals mention the importance of careful selection of children to be monitors, but a particularly good example is available in Joseph Lancaster, *The Lancasterian System of Education with Improvements; By its founder Joseph Lancaster, of the Lancasterian Institute, Baltimore*, (Baltimore: Wm. Ogden Niles, 1821), 7.

²³ Joseph Lancaster, *The British System of Education*, (Washington DC: Joseph Milligan, 1812), 30.

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A plate from the New York City manual for Lancasterian schools gives some hint of the special location and higher status assigned to monitors in the Lancasterian system.



Monitor's Seat and Desk.

Figure 1, from the *Manual of the Lancasterian System, of teaching reading writing, arithmetic, and needle-work, as practiced in the schools of the Free-School Society, of New-York, 1820. Plate 4.*

Lancasterian schools were also noted for their use of equipment, designed to keep education efficient and affordable. Lancasterian schools were among the first to widely attempt to adhere to proscribed notions of effective classroom and school architecture, although this did not stop schools from being opened in former taverns and factories.²⁴ Lancasterian school manuals often promoted these devices' capabilities before discussing the instruction, curriculum, or the teachers and monitors involved in the system.

²⁴ For the school opened in a former tavern building, see the Corporation for the Relief of Poor Children in New Brunswick (hereafter CRPCNB) *Minutes*, meetings during 1812. For further details of New York City's P.S. #3, the school that opened in a factory, see Bourne, 685.

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One example of these devices, more curriculum-oriented than others, was the “alphabet wheel,” pictured below. The wheel was comprised of two circles of wood, one with the letters of the alphabet printed on its perimeter, the other with a hole cut out of it to act as a shield hiding all but the letter under current study by the group. A monitor would revolve the rear wheel to expose new letters as the group progressed in their lessons.

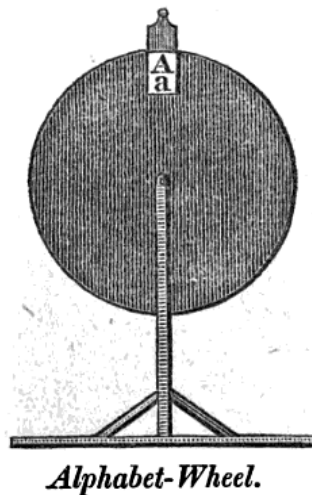


Figure 2, from the Manual of the Lancasterian System, of teaching reading writing, arithmetic, and needle-work, as practiced in the schools of the Free-School Society, of New-York, 1820. Plate 2.

The intent of many of these devices was to provide cheaper, more robust alternatives to the expenses of providing students with individual books. This may be looked at as a crude early attempt to provide students with media that was more tailored to their particular abilities but the primary purpose was cost savings. In a manual from a Boston schoolteacher there is an interesting description of how use of this device may

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have both solved and exacerbated the problem of young children's use of school materials.

While the larger scholars are reading in the First Class Book, Popular Lessons, & c, the younger are reciting at a revolving alphabet wheel, so constructed that only one letter is presented to the view at once. The scholars are encouraged to be critical in their corrections of each other, and to refer every doubtful case to the instructor (sic). To prevent confusion, a slate is fastened to the front of the desk, on which the scholar writes a short account of the dispute, containing all the particulars except the names of those concerned in it. This gives frequent opportunity to correct their spelling and grammar, and it confers ease in committing their thoughts to writing. In some questions on pronunciation, the criticism has been extremely minute and accurate.²⁵

Sadly, missing from this description is how the students who were still learning their letters were able to write a "minute and accurate" discussion of the task at hand on the slate, although it is possible that a monitor was employed for this purpose.

Some of the devices and techniques described in the Lancasterian manuals were simply functional. Given the large number of young children in even a smaller Lancasterian school, the tasks of putting away coats and taking attendance at the beginning of the day could easily create disruptions that would eat up large amounts of time. Lancaster detailed benches with holes for hats to go into in an early manual providing one partial solution for the outer clothes storage problem. He then updated this idea by proposing that boys wear their hats on a string and, at the command "Sling hats," put them behind themselves.²⁶ Attendance forms registering students' attendance and reasons for absence were attached at the end of many manuals as examples of the kinds

²⁵ Russell, 98.

²⁶ The updated manual with the addition of "Sling hats!" command is Joseph Lancaster's *Improvements in Education, as it Respects the Industrious Classes of the Community* (New York: Collins and Perkins, 1807), 92.

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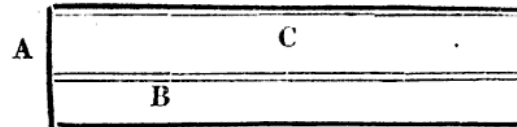
of recordkeeping that would not have been embedded into teachers' work up to that point in time.

If Lancaster had little money with which to operate his initial school, he was full of clever ideas to save money by reducing the use of paper and books. The newest scholars in writing did not practice using pens, which were expensive and time consuming to produce, instead worked with cheaper alternatives. Lancaster in his earliest publications seems to save a special emphasis for the criticism of teachers lacking in the skill or energy to properly supply their students with pens.

It is very essential to their improvement, that their pens should be good; and it operates on their minds in a very discouraging manner when otherwise. *I am credibly informed that some masters use pinions in their rough state, neither dutched nor clarified, of course they split up with teeth like a saw, and write just as well.* (emphasis Lancaster's)²⁷

Since one of the teacher's primary uses of time was in the construction and maintenance of pens, any technique that would reduce this time was a boon. The students with the furthest to go in their acquisition of writing would therefore begin on a "sand table" where they would form the letters with their fingers or with sticks in the sand surface. From there they would progress to the use of chalk and slates before they were permitted to write on paper. As the construction of the sand table was one of the parts of this innovation that Lancaster could point to as his improvement, diagrams for them were commonplace in Lancasterian manuals.

²⁷ Lancaster, *Improvements*, 14.



The letter A, shows the entire surface of the desk, which is supported by two, three, or more legs, as usual for such desks, and according to the size. B is a vacant space, where the boys lean their left arms, while they write or print with the right hand. The sand is placed in the space C*. The double lines represent the ledges (or pantile laths) which confine the sand in its place : sand of any kind will do, but it must be *dry*. The boys print in the sand, with their *fingers*: they all print at the *command* given by their monitor. A boy who knows how to print, and distinguish some of his letters, is placed by one who knows only a few, with a view to assist him ; and particularly, that he may copy the form of his letters, from *seeing* him make them. We find this copying one from another, a great step towards proficiency. In teaching

Figure 3: Sand table diagram and description from Joseph Lancaster *The British System of Education*, 7.

Books, which were another major expense for schools, were used very sparingly in the Lancasterian system. A small number of books could serve a large number of students if the books were printed at “three times larger than the common type size” and only “one page to the leaf” and then glued down to boards and hung at “draught stations” around the perimeter of the school room.²⁸ The groups of students would then rotate from their desks to the draught stations to work with different textbooks one page at a time. Lancaster maintained that this made it possible that “*two hundred boys* may all

²⁸ Ibid., 24-26.

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repeat their lessons from *one* card, in the space of *three hours*.”²⁹ Essentially the class would march past the book’s pages hung on the wall reading them in turn, greatly reducing the use of individual books.

Lancasterian manuals also contained detailed directions for the dimensions and construction of classrooms, teachers’ platforms, students’ desks, and hat racks, among other equipment.³⁰ In some of the Lancasterian manuals there is relatively little detail on the actual curriculum of these schools, but most of the descriptions seem to cover reading, spelling, writing and a limited amount of arithmetic. Girls also received instruction in sewing and one New York City manual had copies printed that even came with needlework examples attached to better illustrate that portion of the curriculum.³¹

Discipline was another characteristic feature of the Lancasterian schools. Students were expected to respond to commands from the teacher and their monitors. These commands were signaled from the teacher to the monitors by use of the “visual telegraph” which was used to deliver signals to the monitors to let them know what actions should be performed at that particular moment. This device consisted of a large post with a sequence of cue cards with codes written on them (for example a large “F” signified “face front” while “SS” indicated the command to “show slates”).³²

²⁹ Ibid., 27.

³⁰ NYFSS, *Manual of the Lancasterian System*, 5-19.

³¹ Ibid., un-numbered pages.

³² Joseph Lancaster, *Improvements*, 10.

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Lancasterian schools also used hand signals and bells to signify changing activities.³³

While it may seem relatively commonplace and innocuous, the specification that all Lancasterian classrooms should have a clock visible to the students would have been another small step towards socializing populations unused to keeping specific hours to the use of this technology.

Although common in most other early nineteenth century schools, corporal punishment, such as whipping, was not promoted in the Lancasterian system. However, Lancaster's manuals suggest a variety of creative alternatives to whipping such as hanging wooden logs around students' necks, shackling students at their desks, and putting students into a sack or basket suspended from the ceiling of the classroom.³⁴ Shaming was the operative principle instead of physical pain, although more commonly employed for student motivation was an incentive system involving tickets or tokens awarded to exemplary monitors and students that promoted order. These markers of effective participation or commendable carrying out of one's duties could be exchanged for prizes, such as balls, kites, and books, at proscribed intervals.

These prizes were prominently displayed in the classroom as achievements to be won by the students.³⁵ Indeed, one of the only images of a Lancasterian classroom from this time period clearly displays the hoops, kites, bats and other toys festooned from the

³³ Edward Baker, *A Brief Sketch of the Lancasterian System* (Troy, New York: F. Adancourt, 1816), 15.

³⁴ Joseph Lancaster, *The British System of Education*, 68-70.

³⁵ For a commonplace example of such an awards system, see NYFSS, *Manual of the Lancasterian System*, 61-63. For a somewhat less enthusiastic prize system there is a good description of how teacher William B. Fowle employed incentives in Russell's *Manual of Mutual Instruction*, 86.

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rafters of the classroom and labeled “Rewards for Boys” although in other schools girls also exchanged tickets for prizes.

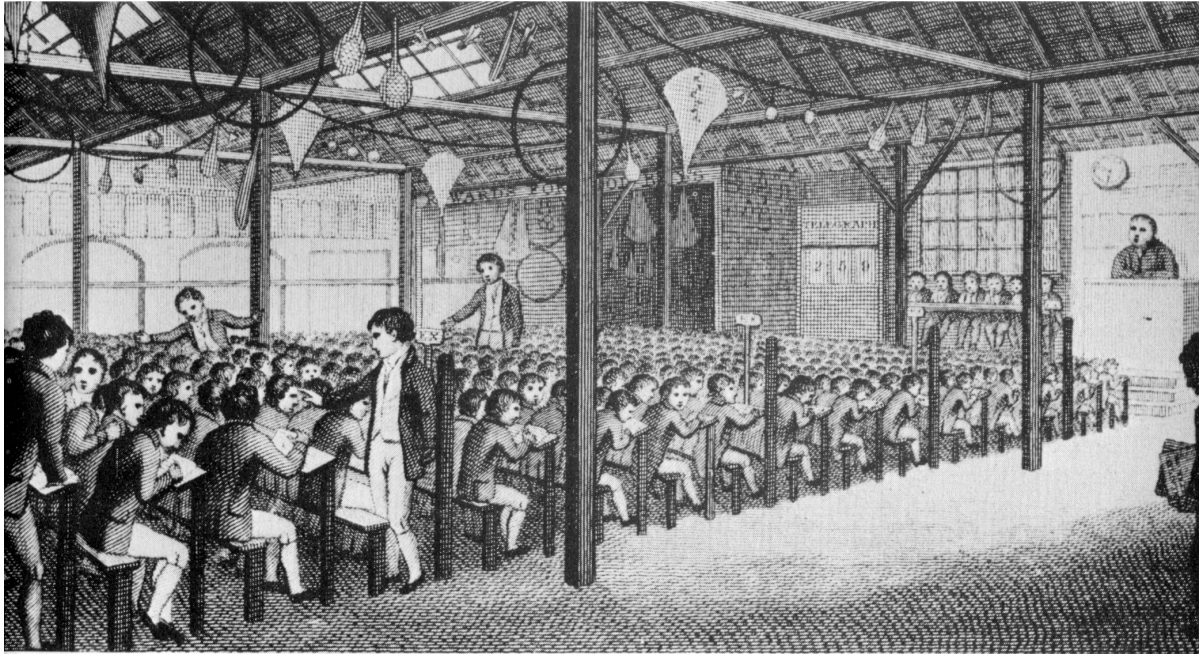


Figure 4, A Lancasterian classroom – image sometimes attributed to the New York Pestalozzian Society (Saettler, *History of Educational Technology*, p. 25)

Commands of the Monitor-General—Movements and Exercises of the Scholars.

PLAN I.

Nine o'clock—Coming into School.

- | No. of
Order. | | No. of
Fig. |
|------------------|--|----------------|
| 1. | Monitors in writing. Mount forms.—They stand up on their several forms, near the telegraphs, which show the eight classes; in order to observe the children as they enter their respective classes, (according to the order they have taken in the yard,) with their hands behind them, to prevent their playing tricks. | 1. |
| 2. | Front (fig. 2 excepted).—The children now place themselves in front of the forms or benches. | D 2. |
| 3. | Hats off.—Every one takes off his hat with his right hand. | 3. |
| 4. | Sling hats.—They each take the string fixed in the hat, fasten it to their coat-button, and throw their hats behind their backs. | 4. |
| 5. | Monitors. Down. | |
| 6. | Kneel: prayers.—They all pray, kneeling, either on the forms or on the floor. | 5. |
| 7. | Stand up.—This command is given by ringing a bell. | |
| 8. | Take places.—All go to their forms, and seat themselves. | 6. 7. |

PLAN II.

Five minutes past nine.—Writing (first exercise.)

Note.—The first class has a portable telegraph, to which is attached an alphabet. The monitor commands,—1. Hands on knees. 2. Make ready: the scholars place the fore-finger on the edge of the desk (fig. A 2). 3. Form the letter. 4. Look well before you make it. The monitor, with his wand, shows them the letter; and they all trace it in the sand with their fore-finger (fig. A 1). 5. Hands behind. The monitor corrects

The organizing principle behind the entire system was Lancaster's dictum: "A Place for Everything and Everything in its Place" — so central that several schools even had the phrase emblazoned on the walls.³⁶ Followers of the specific plans included in these early manuals would have had every student and monitor, as well as the teacher, accounted for in increments of five and ten minutes throughout a regimen of educational activities spanning a very full day. Pictured to the left is an example of the kind of scheduling students could expect from an article discussing the use of Lancaster's system in France.³⁷

³⁶ Joseph Lancaster, *The British System of Education*, 4.

³⁷ "The Lancasterian System of Education in France", *The Monthly Magazine or British Register*, no. 317, 3 of vol. 46, October 1, 1818. (London: J.W. and C. Adlard), 194.

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A fuller example is available from Ezra Coffin's detailed notes written while training to become a Lancastrian teacher in Guildford, NC.³⁸

Yale University Library
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Yale University Library
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

List of Monitors, and their				time of acting as such in school.				
Class	Time	Hours of appointment.	Which class taken from.	Class	Time	Hours of appointment.	Which class taken from.	
I	Alb.	From 9 to 10	from the 5th or 6th class.	V	Alb.	From 9 to 10	From the 6th or 7th class.	
	"	10 - 11	5th		"	10 - 11	8th	
	"	11 - 11½	5th or 6th		"	11 - 11½	8th	
	Blk.	2 - 3	5th or 1st ciphering		"	2 - 3	1st ciphering	
	"	3 - 4	3rd or 4th		"	3 - 4	6th	
II	"	4 - 5	5th or 1st	"	4 - 5	1st		
	Alb.	From 9 to 10	6th class	VI	Alb.	9 - 10	8th class	
	"	10 - 11	5th		"	10 - 11	2nd division of	
	"	11 - 11½	8th		"	11 - 11½	8th	
	Blk.	2 - 3	1st class ciphering		VII	Alb.	9 - 10	8th class
"	3 - 4	3 or 4	"			10 - 11	2nd division of do.	
"	4 - 5	1st	"	11 - 11½		subject to writing order.		
III	Alb.	From 9 to 10	6th class	VIII		Alb.	9 - 10	8th class
	"	10 - 11	5th			"	10 - 11	2nd division of do.
	"	11 - 11½	8th		"	11 - 11½	subject to writing order.	
	Blk.	2 - 3	1st ciphering class		IX	Alb.	2 - 3	2nd class ciphering
	"	3 - 4	2nd			"	3 - 4	4th or 5th
"	4 - 5	1st	"	4 - 5		2nd		
IV	Alb.	From 9 to 10	6th class	X		Blk.	2 - 3	3rd class ciphering
	"	10 - 11	5th			"	3 - 4	6th
	"	11 - 11½	8th or 7th		"	4 - 5	6th	
	Blk.	2 - 3	1st ciphering		XI	Alb.	2 - 3	4th class ciphering
	"	3 - 4	5th or 6th			"	3 - 4	6th
"	4 - 5	1st	"	4 - 5		6th		

p. 32

p. 33

A class working through a school day on such a fragmented plan would have experienced something very different from the practices of earlier teachers' classrooms. While there would probably not have been much direct contact between students and the teacher, it did expose students and teachers to a set of practices reinforcing hierarchical models of work organization.

One of the other elements of the Lancastrian monitorial system that received much attention both during the system's ascendancy as well as for years afterwards was

³⁸ Elijah Coffin, "Explanatory Notes, showing the mode of Organizing and conducting a School upon the Genuine Lancastrian Plan." Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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Lancaster's articulation of the principle of "emulation." In its essence, emulation was the Lancasterian term for what contemporary educators would call motivation – the perceived need to provide students with direct motivation to do their tasks in the classroom. In Lancaster's own phrasing, "The very nature of expectation, is to operate as a wire-drawing machine to human industry."³⁹ As a selling point for system enthusiasts, the quality of emulation took on a Christ-like dimension; one proponent thought, "Virtue, order, sobriety, and the love of justice and of knowledge, are inculcated by this system."⁴⁰ Continuing on to a common theme in boards' discussions of the merits of the system, the author discussed the kinds of children produced from contact with this great principle:

In England the committee (the British and Foreign School Society) in their reports publish, that not a single instance has come to their knowledge, of any pupil, (out of the many thousands educated at the Lancasterian Schools) having been convicted of a crime. The order of the school, the organization of the classes, the obedience inculcated, the influence imperceptibly operating on the mind, to induce order and regularity, give to this mode of teaching an advantage over all others.⁴¹

Emulation took on many dimensions beyond the direct prize giving already described, as there were layers of practices designed to foster emulation in students. One dimension of emulation was the competition between students for their ranking within their group and within the class as a whole. Some descriptions of the classroom's working describe this competition as occurring multiple times an hour – after every "show slates" command.

³⁹ Lancaster, *Improvements*, 18.

⁴⁰ Benjamin Shaw, *Brief Exposition of the Principles and Details of the Lancasterian System of Education, Interspersed with Remarks on its Progress and Effects* (Philadelphia: 1817), 16. Shaw himself is listed as a member of the British and Foreign School Society in the front matter of this work.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

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Every boy is placed next to one who can do as well or better than himself; his business is to excel him, in which case he takes precedence of him. In reading, every reading division have the numbers, 1, 2, 3, &c. to 8, suspended from their buttons. If the boy who wears number 8, excels the boy who wears number 7, he takes his place and number in exchange for which the other goes down to the place and number 8. Thus the boy who is number 8 at the beginning of the lesson may be number 1 at the conclusion of it and vice versa.⁴²

A student could change their rank throughout the day and it was part of the duties of the teacher to keep the work tuned to each student's capabilities by moving the student between drafts to appropriately assign work to them. The notion of places was not particularly Lancaster's, this technique was certainly in use by other school masters. The extent to which Lancaster extrapolated the idea most certainly was a hallmark of his system.⁴³ Lancaster's own goals, as initially described by him in one of his early pamphlets, were initially straightforward:

The author expected to be able to educate children at the rate of about one guinea per annum; his object was to try several experiments in education, by which it could be ascertained, what number of children could be educated under one person, by the most expeditious means, and at the smallest expense: and this object was attained in an eminent degree.⁴⁴

As Lancaster's innovations connected with the desires and ambitions of a range of additional actors, they took on a life of their own as the technology was disseminated around the world.

⁴² Lancaster, *The British System of Education*, 57.

⁴³ Bruce Curtis, "'My Ladie Birchely must needs rule': Punishment and the Materialization of Moral Character from Mulcaster to Lancaster" in Kate Rousmaniere and Kari Delhi ed., *Discipline, Moral Regulation, and Schooling: A Social History* (Garland reference library of social science, vol. 944. Studies in the history of education; vol. 4, 1997), 35.

⁴⁴ Joseph Lancaster, *Outlines of a Plan for Educating Ten Thousand Poor Children, by Establishing Schools in Country Towns and Villages; and for Uniting Works of Industry with Useful Knowledge* (London: Free School Borough Road, 1806), 7.

Spread of the Lancasterian monitorial system in the United States and worldwide

The spread of the Lancasterian monitorial system from England to other parts of the world happened fairly quickly. Outside of the British Isles, the United States was among the very first countries to express an interest in the possibilities the system presented. A contemporary educator familiar with current communication theory can almost picture Lancasterianism spreading as a meme through the trans-Atlantic channel of philanthropic Quakers.⁴⁵ The Quaker sect was particularly interested in non-sectarian approaches to solving social problems, although their solutions were very firmly Protestant by nearly any calculation. One such Quaker, Benjamin Perkins, later the secretary of the New York Free School Society, visited Lancaster's school in 1802 and returned to New York City and published the first American edition of Lancaster's *Improvements* in 1807.

As a Quaker, Perkins was also in communication with Thomas Eddy, another Quaker businessman and philanthropist who was involved in an even wider variety of social reforms. At some point during this period, Eddy received a pamphlet on Lancaster's system written by a Scottish merchant and author named Patrick Colquhoun. Perhaps most notable for his establishment of one of London's first police forces,

⁴⁵ Eugenia Roldán Vera and Thomas Schupp, "Network analysis in comparative social sciences." *Comparative Education*, 42, no. 3 (2006), 422. Although this article focuses on the spread of Lancasterianism throughout South and Central America, not the focal geographic area of this study it offers a potentially valuable methodology for tracing teachers' influence. "... if SNA (Social Network Analysis) offers interesting possibilities for comparative analysis proper, this set of techniques is particularly well suited for understanding broader processes of import or export of certain knowledge, ideas and models across different regions. This kind of transmission may take place at different levels: across nation-states, across different regions within nation-states, or from cosmopolitan centres - such as world cities - to other places."

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Colquhoun's contributions engendered a discussion between the two men about the nexus of education and policing problems in urban areas.⁴⁶ For reformers like Eddy and Perkins, New York was in great need of a non-sectarian solution to the problem of education for its lower classes. By the New York Free School Society's own reckoning in 1823, New York City at the time of Eddy and Colquhoun's correspondence had "...but five charity schools ... these were small and for the exclusive benefit of the children of the several religious sects supporting them."⁴⁷ The Lancasterian system offered a way for the reformers to address their problem.

It can be argued that the addition of Dewitt Clinton to the group of reformers that founded the New York Free School Society in 1805 was transformative. While other efforts at creating free schools existed at the time in other cities in America, Clinton was a rising political star in one of the power broker families which controlled much of New York state at the time and had the platform of first the mayor of New York City and then the governorship of New York State to assure an audience for these ideas.⁴⁸ Clinton became an ardent advocate of publicly funded education in general and the Lancasterian system in specific and Clinton viewed the Englishman's innovation as being peculiarly well suited to a new country free from a state religion which had sparked such controversy for Lancaster in Great Britain. As Clinton remarked in his address on

⁴⁶ Samuel Lorenzo Knapp, *The Life of Thomas Eddy Comprising an Extensive Correspondence with Many of the Most Distinguished Philosophers and Philanthropists of this and other Countries* (New York: Conner and Cooke, 1834), 158.

⁴⁷ NYFSS, *18th Annual Report*.

⁴⁸ Evan Cornog, *The Birth of Empire: DeWitt Clinton and the American Experience, 1769-1828* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 69. Also Edward Augustus Fitzpatrick, *The Educational Views and Influence of De Witt Clinton* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1911), 48-9.

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monitorial education at the opening of the permanent building for New York Public School #1 in 1808, “His tree of knowledge is indeed transplanted to a more fertile soil and a more congenial clime.” New York’s protestant reformer community ties as well as its heavy rhetorical investment in both the Lancasterian system as well as teacher training made it broadly influential throughout the United States on these topics. Minutes and annual reports from the New York Free School Society reveal frequent correspondence with other free school societies requesting trained teachers as well as sending their own people to be trained.⁴⁹

Consequently, the prototypes for the urban public school systems in the United States were typically Lancasterian system schools. Of the ten largest cities in the US in the 1810, 1820 and 1830 censuses all of them had some Lancasterian schools and the four largest (New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Boston) all had public schools that were officially using the Lancasterian method at some point between 1806 and 1838.⁵⁰ The system at the crest of its approval claimed approximately 150 schools throughout North America with schools as far north as Montreal, as far south as Savannah, South Carolina, as far west as Detroit, Michigan, Belleville, Illinois and Louisville, Kentucky as well as worldwide in such exotic locales as Russia, Afghanistan, Madagascar, China, Egypt,

⁴⁹ A good example of this kind of request is available in NYFSS *Minutes*, August 1, 1817. A letter received from Mary C. Taylor, “First Directress of Savannah Free Schools” states, “We have lately established a Free School in Savannah on the Lancasterian plan, but as yet have not been able to obtain a proper teacher for it. ... if the Managers of said institutions would allow a person to be taught in the Schools for two or three months so as to get a knowledge of the Lancasterian plan.” The request was granted by the Board.

⁵⁰ Campbell Gibson, “Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places: 1790-1990.” United States Census. <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/twps0027.html>. For the official adoptions and eventual rejections of the Lancasterian monitorial system in the principle cities of the United States see: Sheller, 23-44. Also Boese, 27 and 72. Also Ellis, 39-40. And Stanley K. Schultz, *The Culture Factory: Boston Public Schools, 1789-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 264-7.

Venezuela, Greece, New South Wales, Mexico, and the West Indies.⁵¹ One of the reasons the system could spread so far in the United States was because typically there was little in the way of educational organizations for it to displace.

Teaching prior to the monitorial system's adoption and after the monitorial system's adoption: the example of Lemuel Shattuck

The new Lancasterian schools and school systems were significantly different from the schools that existed before, but this is a difficult difference to quantify with any exactness. It also is a thorny problem to try to generalize about teachers in the United States during this time period simply because there was no systematic pathway that individuals would have followed to begin teaching as an occupation.⁵² Consequently their educational patterns are hard to track and much of the available information about educators in the period leading up to and just after the Revolutionary War is concentrated upon faculty in the early colleges of the United States, which are inappropriate comparisons for the eventual teachers in the Lancasterian schools.⁵³

To try to keep to comparisons between the Lancasterian teachers and teachers in the late colonial and early republic (1776-1806) periods prior to the adoption of the system in the U.S., this next section will focus primarily on teachers at the elementary school level who taught basic subjects such as reading, arithmetic, spelling and writing.

⁵¹ Lancaster, *Improvements*, xiv. Taylor's biography of Lancaster lists in an Appendix a more complete list of where the system was adopted. Taylor, 118.

⁵² Fraser, 21. Also, Cremin, *American Education*, 364.

⁵³ Fraser, 22.

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The major differences to be detailed between these two groups of teachers are, first, that teachers in the Lancasterian system schools performed a *defined and specific* role in the classroom and, second, that this systematization of the role involved with the adoption of the Lancasterian system would involve a reaction to the ambiguous social status of teachers prior to the advent of that system.

This section will also examine what the conditions were on the ground in many schools that would have made the Lancasterian system an attractive option for students, teachers, and, to a lesser degree, parents working within the range of existing educational options. This will be done primarily through the example of Lemuel Shattuck's career as a schoolteacher. Most schools in the first half of the nineteenth century were independent entities often employing only one or two teachers.⁵⁴ While in an urban area like New York City there were enough schools to provide more than half of the residents' children with some form of education, the schools would vary widely in quality.⁵⁵ In smaller towns and more rural areas, a common practice was to bring in a teacher for an eight to twelve week period to form a temporary class a few times a year. Shattuck's career spanned both rural and urban areas and offers the opportunity to look more closely at both employment patterns.

⁵⁴ In some cases there were also jobs in schools that were subordinate to teachers, such as ushers and other forms of assistants. For example, John Teasman initially served as an assistant to William Pearson in the African Free School before assuming the position of teacher in 1799. Isaac Hopper, "A List of the Members of the New York Manumission Society" Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, 26. DOI SW09-A0010661.

⁵⁵ Kaestle, *Evolution of an Urban School System*, 51.

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In both settings there were problems with stability of the schools as institutions; presenting problems in terms of analyzing the distinctions between these schools and the new schools adopting the Lancasterian system. Despite the limitations of any generalizations, manifestly this was not a business, which in most cases would or could provide the prospect of a consistent income to a teacher. Correspondingly there were few individuals who worked as teachers more than part time or for more than a few years.⁵⁶

This instability also fed another problem for teachers: because there was no certification of their credentials, any individual could claim to possess the qualifications to instruct which was as true for the most elite institutions as well as the meanest district school.⁵⁷ In many places where education was considered to be of secondary importance this could result in the employment of barely literate individuals. As Maryland minister Jonathan Boucher complained in 1773:

...at least two thirds of the little education we receive are derived from instructors, who are either INDENTURED SERVANTS, or TRANSPORTED FELONS. Not a ship arrives either with redemptioners or convicts, in which schoolmasters are not as regularly advertised for sale, as weavers, tailors, or any other trade; with little other difference that

⁵⁶ As an example of the short duration of teachers' employment, Lemuel Shattuck's history of Concord Massachusetts, true to Shattuck's predilection for statistics, lists all the school teachers in the town's public grammar school from 1785 until 1831, with the average length of tenure being about a year and three months. Lemuel Shattuck, *A History of the Town of Concord, Middlesex County, Massachusetts: From Its Earliest Settlement to 1832: and of the Adjoining Towns, Bedford, Acton, Lincoln, and Carlisle, Containing Various Notices of County and State History Not Before Published* (Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Company, 1835), 222. Shattuck does not indicate that any of the teachers employed by the grammar school were anything less than satisfactory, "Few towns provide more ample means for acquiring a cheap and competent education."

⁵⁷ Fraser, 12, 25.

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I can hear of, excepting perhaps that the former do not usually fetch as good a price as the latter.⁵⁸

Scholars have noted that in some cases the awarding of the position of schoolteacher position was viewed as a way to lessen the drain on public welfare. “During the colonial era, prevailing social policy often awarded teaching positions to individuals who were incapable of succeeding financially in the competitive economy. Public jobs like gravedigging, bellringing, and schoolteaching customarily were offered to social dependents: the handicapped, widows, alcoholics.”⁵⁹

While there were undoubtedly some schoolteachers who did not fit this common profile, and although the status problem differed in its particulars from region to region, for most of the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century the popular image of the profession was not entirely wholesome. The gradual shifting to public forms of school funding pushed the promoters of Lancasterian schools to look for the creation of teacher training standards and institutions. This coupled with higher salaries would help to ensure that those participating in the school system would not view teaching as a way station on their way to another, more admirable and lucrative profession. Demonstrating that Lancasterianism would create a cohort of stable and committed teachers would combat the potential association with the stereotypes surrounding teachers and make it easier for public funding advocates to make their case.

⁵⁸ Joseph Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution; in Thirteen Discourses, Preached in North America Between the Years 1763 and 1775, with an Historical Preface* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), 183-4.

⁵⁹ Michael Sedlak, “Let Us Go and Buy a School Master: Historical Perspectives on the Hiring of Teachers in the United States, 1750-1980” in *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work* ed. by Donald Warren (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 260.

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Lemuel Shattuck left behind a record documenting both his experiences as a student and as a teacher in the heterogeneous mix of educational opportunities. In his lifetime Shattuck worked as a teacher both in non-Lancasterian and Lancasterian schools and went on to attain some prominence as a publisher, local historian, genealogist, and public health statistician.⁶⁰ Through this combination of interests, he valued his own experiences in teaching to be sufficiently important to document, and his unpublished autobiography describes many of the schools at which he learned and taught for. Shattuck attended schools in Massachusetts, which probably had the most developed school system of any state in the country at the time. However, as will be seen, this did not necessarily mean that the schools were consistently available or effective at imparting learning to their students even when they were an option.

Shattuck's autobiography also demonstrates many of the differences between non-Lancasterian and Lancasterian schools and the differences in opportunity between non-Lancasterian and Lancasterian teachers. Shattuck's experiences in teaching may have been exceptional in other respects, but in the peripatetic nature of his employment he probably was no more or less steadily employed than other young men in his situation. The economic and spiritual pressures that shaped his employment decisions would have been characteristic for other young men contemplating education as a livelihood at this point in time.

When Lemuel Shattuck was a young man in central Massachusetts, he was not a member of a well-to-do family. While his father, who was a farmer and a shoemaker, did

⁶⁰ Walter F. Willcox, "Lemuel Shattuck, Statist Founder of the American Statistical Association", *The American Statistician* Vol. 1, Iss. 1, 1947, 11-13.

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have a predisposition towards books and education, his ability to provide formal educational opportunities for his children was limited and Lemuel did not receive much formal schooling. In his son's opinion, his father also inculcated other qualities, which were central to his son's success. "Next to moral and religious duty, industry and economy were the great virtues he inculcated in his children."⁶¹ The schoolhouses where Lemuel went to school were "not more comfortable than common barns are nowadays," and were probably ill-heated in the two months the schools were kept during the winter as well as hot and dusty during the two months they were run in the summer, comprising the entirety of the school year for that district.⁶²

The schoolhouses were ill equipped as well, "without any seats excepting stools made of slabs in the most rough and coarse style, and a simple inclined board around the walls to accommodate those who wrote." Shattuck did not like attending school much, preferring the work at home, and claimed in his autobiography not to remember much that he learned in the first few years at these schools. He did remember his teachers from these schools and provides a list of them, none of whom seem to have lasted more than two years at their post most continuing on for only one year. "All my reading, and my whole education indeed was almost accidental, depending on circumstances which happened to occur."⁶³ Given that there were no schools established on a permanent basis that were available for him to attend, this quality of happenstance would have been

⁶¹ Lemuel Shattuck, unpublished autobiography, Massachusetts Historical Society, 10.

⁶² Ibid., 15.

⁶³ Ibid., 18.

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characteristic of laboring family's children's experience outside of urban areas such as New York, Philadelphia, or Boston.

While Shattuck does not discuss the circumstances surrounding his decision to attend the Academy in New Ipswich in 1811 at 18 years of age, he attended this school for about two months. This period of attendance seems to mark a shift in his attitudes towards formal education. Immediately after this brief time at the New Ipswich Academy, he contracted to keep school in Mason, Massachusetts. The board of the teacher being put out to bid at auction, he lived in an "one story house, and contained two rooms only for the accommodation of husband, wife, five children and the 'school master.'" ⁶⁴ This began a seven year period wherein Shattuck alternately would attend the Academy for short periods of time, teach for various "schools" in the area, and labor for his father as a farm hand. When he was teaching, these small schools would be kept for typically eight weeks at a time, at salaries ranging from \$13 to \$15 per month with board.

While it is clear from his re-employability that in the view of the school districts he was sufficiently educated to successfully fulfill the contracts for teaching given him, he did not consider his teaching to be a true profession akin to the ministry or law. "I then began seriously to think of obtaining a public education, and of qualifying myself for a profession." ⁶⁵ School teaching was not lucrative enough when school was in session to be able to provide for himself without resorting to other employment, although it might have been had the schools been run for more than a couple of months at a time. After ill health began to make prolonged study of Latin and Greek inadvisable—subjects necessary for

⁶⁴ Ibid., 22.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 25. In this context, "public education" is meant in its older sense of being at a school instead of education at the hands of a private tutor.

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admittance into nearly any of the colleges in operation during the first third of the nineteenth century—other professions seemed less of a possibility. He also found farm labor less desirable as a means of support at this time and Shattuck chose to leave Massachusetts for the environs of Albany, New York where more opportunity awaited.

Mr. B. Fairbanks, formerly of New Ipswich, but then of New York, on a visit to his friends, called on me frequently, and stated that he had several acquaintances living in Troy, Albany, and other places in the state of New York, and that he had no doubts should I go there, I might obtain a good school the whole year round on a fair compensation; and with this occupation I might indulge my desire of being useful.⁶⁶

Within two days of arriving in Troy, Shattuck was hired to teach by the third school district in Troy, and in the autobiography he comments “there was a demand for teachers at that time.”⁶⁷ Atypical of the period was the requirement that, as a teacher, he be examined by the Inspector of the Schools to be certified to teach. More typical was what happened at that examination:

I accordingly appeared before the board for examination. They however did not examine me but gave me the following certificate without asking me any questions being convinced that I was competent for my business from what they had already witnessed of my management of the school, or else unwilling to expose their own ignorance.⁶⁸

The certificate issued by the board and laboriously copied into the manuscript, pays scant attention to any intellectual qualities or instructional aptitude possessed by Shattuck; like the numerous other certificates and recommendations Shattuck kept and recorded in his autobiography the certificate is more concerned with his moral character

⁶⁶ Ibid., 25-26.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 42.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 50.

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and church affiliation. Shattuck records his monthly income during his eighteen months in Troy as “about \$18 per month” – higher than his income during his period teaching in Massachusetts district schools and, more importantly, more consistent.⁶⁹

After observing the Lancasterian schools in operation in Troy and Albany, Shattuck realized that obtaining training in the system could be a helpful qualification.

It occurred to me that if I could obtain a knowledge of this system of teaching it might increase my usefulness very much, and give me many other advantages I did not then possess.⁷⁰

William A. Tweed Dale, the teacher of the Albany Lancaster school was receiving about \$700 per annum for his teaching at that time, over three times what Shattuck earned in that time period.⁷¹ Within two weeks of Shattuck’s entering into training with Dale, he was entertaining offers for year round employment to open Lancasterian schools in Detroit, Utica, and Ithaca, finally settling on Detroit’s offer of \$800.⁷² The Lancasterian system offered Shattuck a route to seeing teaching as a full time career. Instead of approaching teaching as a part time opportunity to better his income over other occupations such as clerking or haying (both of which jobs Shattuck had had to take on to earn enough money to keep himself while teaching at the temporary town schools)

⁶⁹ Ibid., 51.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 54-55.

⁷¹ Shattuck’s autobiography states that his total income for teaching in Troy during the fifteen month period of his stay there prior to going to the Lancasterian school in Albany for training was about \$18 a month or \$270. Ibid., 51. For Tweed’s salary, see: Theodore V. Van Heusen, “The Albany Lancaster School” *Transactions of the Albany Institute* vol. 11, 131. Also a noted abolitionist, Tweed Dale appears to have been an uncommonly colorful figure, and in one history of the Albany school is described as “...a familiar and interesting figure in Albany in those days, as he was daily seen upon streets wearing a red wig and a gayly colored calico wrapper, riding astride a donkey.” J. L. Dykeman, “The Lancaster School, Albany N.Y.” *Albany Medical Annals*, vol. xxxix, no. 4, 135.

⁷² Shattuck, *Autobiography*, 56. Also Pasieka, 204.

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Shattuck embarked on teaching as a full time venture, eventually investing his own funds in purchasing school supplies and travelling the long distances to the locations with opportunity.⁷³ Many more individuals would find teaching in Lancasterian schools a similar opening up of opportunity; when Shattuck left Detroit he communicated again with William A. Tweed Dale to find another teacher from the trainees among Dale's Lancasterian school at Albany.

Early Lancasterian Teachers in the United States

The initial republication of Lancaster's book *Improvements in Education* in New York in 1807 fanned the interest in solving the problem of educating the masses but the Lancasterian system had already begun to attract teachers to use it in the United States. Some teachers were quick to recognize that the system could improve their employment prospects or at least enable them to take on more students if they were independent operators of schools. At least one such school operated by an individual teacher made a trial of the practices described *prior* to the New York Free School Society's celebrated opening of Public School #1 under the Lancasterian system in 1806:

At this period a book on education published by the celebrated Joseph Lancaster was presented for my perusal... After a careful examination of his plan, the arrangement of the respective classes, and the simplicity of the management, by which a much greater number of scholars could be taught, and that their advantages of more rapid improvement were self-evident, no time on my part was required as to the propriety of its immediate adoption. ...

⁷³ Shattuck, *Autobiography*, 57.

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After a continuance in this school about six months, I obtained ample proof of Mr. Lancaster's system being the most eligible, both to the teacher and scholars; and that its introduction into schools of any description will be attended with superior advantages.⁷⁴

This passage, written by William Smith in 1813, demonstrates some of the early tinkering with methods common in American schools of the period. William Smith was the first teacher in the United States on record as having adopted the Lancasterian monitorial system, although he is much more frequently cited as being the first teacher using the system by virtue of his work with the New York Free School Society. Although he was an Englishman recently arrived in New York, he was apparently unacquainted with Joseph Lancaster's work in the Borough Road School and had opened up his own school only after a venture into the dry goods business with a friend had "not answered our expectations."⁷⁵ Based on the chronology of Smith's book, his school would have opened sometime around August of 1805 and switched over to the Lancasterian system sometime in the fall of 1805. Smith almost immediately experienced a characteristic advantage from his (albeit brief) experience in running a Lancasterian classroom. Nearly simultaneously with his opening of his school, the New York Free School Society was forming and making plans for opening a school of its own.⁷⁶

The key actor in this chain of events was Thomas Eddy, previously mentioned as a Quaker with broad interests in a wide variety of social reform efforts. Eddy was intimately involved with the formation of the New York Free School Society and had

⁷⁴ Smith, *Journal of a Voyage in the Missionary Ship Duff*, 276-7.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 276.

⁷⁶ Reigart, 17.

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brought Lancaster's system to the attention of the boards of both the New York Free School Society and the New York Manumission Society.⁷⁷ Both organizations pushed for rapid adoption of the system in their schools. The Manumission Society required John Teasman, the teacher of its school, the African Free School that had been in operation since 1794, to switch over to the Lancasterian system in early 1806.⁷⁸ It took the New York Free School Society a little longer to open Public School #1, but when they went to hire a Lancasterian teacher they found an appropriate candidate in William Smith, who was probably the only person in New York City, apart from possibly John Teasman at the Manumission Society's African Free School, with experience teaching with the system. In Smith's own words:

The trustees, after many adverse circumstances, resolved to commence their arduous undertaking; and having been made acquainted with my humble attempt to introduce the Lancasterian system into New-York, and that it was attended with the expected advantages, among the many teachers who offered themselves, the preference was given to me to superintend their school; which was opened in May, 1806, in a small apartment in Bancker-street.⁷⁹

The kind of competitive advantage that teaching in a Lancasterian school provided was a welcome form of certification. Smith, if he can be said to have had a profession up to this point in his life, would probably have to be classed as a failed missionary, a failed merchant, or a failed linen draper – his experience as a teacher was limited to less than one year he had been operating his school prior to his appointment to

⁷⁷ For the correspondence between Thomas Eddy and Patrick Colquhoun see Knapp, 188-198. Also Kaestle, *Evolution of an Urban School System*, 80-83.

⁷⁸ Robert J. Swan, "John Teasman: African-American Educator and the Emergence of Community in Early Black New York City, 1787-1815." *Journal of the Early Republic* (1992): 331-356.

⁷⁹ Smith, *Voyage*, 278.

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P.S. 1.⁸⁰ Weak as the distinguishing criteria of prior Lancasterian teaching may have been when examined logically, it was still one of the only functional certifications available to teachers at this point in time.

Many of the individuals exposed to Lancasterian schools in the United States, especially those working in the schools prior to 1820, seem to have enjoyed more stability at their positions and broader employment mobility if they chose to move. Some of these individuals would even fight to preserve the perceived value of the Lancasterian “credential,” such as it was, by engaging in competitive newspaper announcements detailing the specifics of their training lineage to Lancaster.⁸¹

Female teachers in Lancasterian schools

Female teachers were working in Lancasterian system schools from early in its history, but it took a little longer for women to break into the ranks of Lancasterian teachers in the United States. The initial schools using the Lancasterian system in the United States were primarily schools exclusively for boys. This is not surprising given that formal educational institutions at the time were targeted at boys. However, there were a few early Lancasterian schools for girls, which necessitated hired female teachers. Over time, many co-ed and girls’ schools emerged using the system that likely expanded the opportunities for women teachers using the system. The first Lancasterian school on

⁸⁰ Smith had been one of the original “tradesman” missionaries sent to Otaheite (Tahiti) by the London Missionary Society in 1797 and was also among the group that abandoned the mission in 1798 to flee to Australia for protection. Histories of that mission list him as having been a linen draper in England before applying to join the group sailing for the South Seas. Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895* (London: Henry Frowde, 1899), 127.

⁸¹ Ellis, 23.

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record as being taught by a woman was the Aimwell school which opened in Philadelphia in 1809 or 1810 but the female Lancasterian teachers do not seem to have enjoyed quite as much employment mobility from their association with the schools as some of the male teachers did.⁸² While there were women teaching in Lancasterian schools during the early adoption of the system, boards of the schools seem not to have been nearly as concerned about their training as they were for the men.

For example, in 1817 the New York Free School Society board minutes show that the board agreed to pay for the passage and living expenses for a young man named Shepherd Johnston to travel to Philadelphia to observe the teaching of a Lancasterian teacher prominent in Philadelphia named James Edwards.⁸³ Johnston had been a pupil in New York City's Public School #1 and had already opened and run a Lancasterian school on his own in New Brunswick, NJ for over a year—a qualification which would have been sufficient on its own for running a school based on the board's prior employment patterns.⁸⁴ Johnston would return to New York to open Public School #3 in 1818, but there is no record that the woman, Sarah Fields, who opened up the girls' section of Public School #3 a little after, received similar training. She is simply noted as having

⁸² Ibid., 9.

⁸³ NYFSS *Minutes*, November 7, 1817. Also Ellis, 30. Johnston's name is sometimes spelled Johnson in the various records associated with the school.

⁸⁴ Corporation for the Relief of Poor Children in New Brunswick *Minutes*, Alexander Library Special Collections, Rutgers University. Meeting notes from April 6, 1814, May 22, 1814, September 3, 1814, June 10, 1815, August 5, 1815, April 9, 1816, and November 20, 1816 relate the details of Johnson's employment. Specifically, the meeting of September 3, 1814: "That the President be requested to write to the Trustees of the Charity school in New York and acknowledge the obligation we feel under to them for sending us a Teacher so well qualified for our school." Johnson had been a Monitor General in New York's P.S. #1 prior to his employment by the New Brunswick board.

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been hired and being paid \$250 per annum in the board minutes.⁸⁵ While direct statements that women did *not* need training are unavailable, most board minutes only reflect concerns about obtaining training of their male staff members.

Familiarity with the system though did have its advantages for female instructors of Lancasterian schools; many were family members of male teachers and presumably had some exposure to the operations of the classroom. Prominent examples of women employed through family connections would include Betsy Lancaster, Joseph Lancaster's own daughter in the Philadelphia model school, Lucy Baker, wife of Lancasterian teacher Edward Baker in Philadelphia, and Susan Picton, the wife of Lancasterian teacher Charles Picton imported by the New York Free School Society to open Public School #4. Susan Picton taught the girls' division of Public School #4 until the birth of her first child seems to have required her to retire from the workforce.⁸⁶

Because the period associated with the adoption of Lancasterian schools predates the period typically seen as the beginning of the feminization of the teaching profession, typically the period just before and after the Civil War, a more detailed investigation of the female teachers in Lancasterian schools would surely yield interesting insights into the early phases of this phenomenon.⁸⁷ However, because their numbers were smaller and

⁸⁵ NYFSS *Minutes*, November 3, 1820. No mention is made of Ms. Fields' credentials or qualifications between the announcement of the intention to hire a teacher for the girls' division in P.S. #3 in the October 6, 1820 meeting and her employment announcement.

⁸⁶ NYFSS minutes, December 3, 1819. Picton's name is sometimes spelled "Pickton" in other sources.

⁸⁷ Kate Rousmaniere, "Good Teachers are Born, Not Made: Self-Regulation in the Work of Nineteenth Century American Women Teachers" in *Discipline, Moral Regulation, and Schooling: A History*, ed. Kate Rousmaniere, Kari Dehli, and Ning de Coninck-Smith, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 118-9. Also, Sarah E. Montgomery, "Why Men Left: Reconsidering the Feminization of Teaching in the Nineteenth Century." *American Educational History Journal* 36, no. 1 (2009), 219-220.

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the boards in the larger cities which did employ larger numbers of women (such as New York City and Philadelphia) did not find their activities as important there is much less in the existing written record to provide data on the subject. Consequently, this study will focus primarily on male teachers in Lancasterian schools in the United States.

Decline of the Lancasterian Monitorial System in the United States

While the system was as far flung as the energies of the British Foreign School Society and Joseph Lancaster could make it, in the United States the system began losing supporters at the end of the 1820's. Some scholars associate this downturn with the sudden death of DeWitt Clinton who was at the time both the president of the New York Free School Society and the governor of the state of New York.⁸⁸ Although there had always been critics of the system, in the years immediately following his death opponents' voices seemed to become more influential in the absence of the powerful Clinton.⁸⁹ One author, after noting that the system's historical tie to the education of the poor may have been a factor, described the phenomenon as it happened in Pennsylvania: "Once the tide had set in against it, the official disappearance of the Lancasterian movement was almost as precipitate as had been its rise."⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Fitzpatrick, 47 & 89.

⁸⁹ For an example of this early criticism in an 1818 letter from an Albany schoolmaster to De Witt Clinton: "...I have with care examined its operation, and beg leave with humble confidence to express my opinion, - that with respect to that part of the system which properly designates it Lancasterian, there is nothing in it calculated to facilitate the improvement of the pupil: and the experience of a few years, I am persuaded will reduce that system to its original and proper sphere - the instruction of those who cannot otherwise obtain instruction." Quoted in Kaestle, *Joseph Lancaster*, 177.

⁹⁰ Joseph J. McCadden, *Education in Pennsylvania 1801-1835 and its Debt to Roberts Vaux* (Manchester, NH: Ayer Publishing, 1978), 43.

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It took some time for the system to lose its official status in the major public school systems; Philadelphia officially stopped using the system in 1836. It took until 1853 for New York City to discard the system with the dissolution of the Public School Society, which was the final version of the Free School Society.⁹¹ In smaller ways the effects may have been felt sooner; in the second and third decade of the nineteenth century many Lancasterian schools and societies had been founded in New York state, the number was sharply curtailed after DeWitt Clinton's sudden death.⁹²

The rise and then fall from prominence of the Lancasterian Monitorial system in U.S. education was so abrupt that its suddenness is one of the few salient facts that most historians of education comment on.⁹³ However, the detailed nature of the responsibilities placed on the teacher shaped that role. For a brief time, teaching was associated with the implementation of a new technical system—raising the status of the occupation for that period. While that association would not survive the system's downfall, some of the system's other implications for teachers, most notably that teaching is the same thing as exposing students to information, continued to be associated with the job throughout the nineteenth century.

⁹¹ Ibid., 43. Also Boese, 81.

⁹² Fitzpatrick, 118.

⁹³ Richard J. Altenbaugh, *Historical Dictionary of American Education*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 209.

CHAPTER THREE: TEACHERS AS TRAINERS OF OTHER TEACHERS

One way that the rapid adoption of the Lancasterian monitorial system in the early nineteenth century shaped the work of teachers was by pressing the question of teacher training. Individual schools in the United States in the late eighteenth century, while concerned with producing educated individuals who might become teachers, were not overtly concerned with growing an educational system as such. Early American schools tended to be less concerned with how to spread their successes (when successes were apparent) because concern about education was viewed as a family issue, if not even an individual issue.¹ But the Lancasterian monitorial system had replication of itself built directly into its DNA—even the initial act of Lancaster’s authoring his first book detailing the system in 1803 was born out of the urge to spread the system further. The system’s continual reference to the question of growth, of spreading its benefits still further, continually played on the perceived advantage of scalability. Scaling up the number of schools employing the system pressed the question of teacher training. This emphasis moved more individuals, and particularly politicians, to see the work of the teacher as not just providing learning to their students. To perpetuate this nascent rhetoric teachers, through providing training in how to run a school as well as provide learning to their students, also served to work to raise their status, perpetuate their schools, and grow Lancasterianism as an institution that was changing the world. This shift was something

¹ For a more detailed discussion of the shift from decisions made by families and individuals on educational questions to external agencies see Bailyn, 45, 78. Also Rorabaugh, 121-4.

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new the Lancasterian system promoted and represents a change from the prior status quo.²

The work of the teachers in monitorial schools, as initially conceived by Lancaster and as further embellished by the practitioners who followed him, was one of the central creations of the system. However, what the Lancasterians meant as the work of teachers engaged in running classrooms is difficult to understand from a twenty-first century perspective. Teachers in Lancasterian classrooms did not resemble their twenty-first century counterparts with regards to their teaching practices or many other aspects of their work as teachers. More significantly, Lancasterian teachers and their practices also bore little resemblance to the existing stock of U.S. teachers operating in their own era in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.³ Proponents of the Lancasterian system were intent on spreading the benefits of the system as widely as they could, and the push to rapidly adopt the Lancasterian method focused public attention on teachers and their work in a way that spurred the creation of systems of teacher training and certification.⁴ Additionally, as this chapter will explore, the Lancasterian system also frequently gave the teachers in the Lancasterian schools responsibility for training novices in the mysteries and the art of running a classroom. This chapter will focus on the issues

² Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic*, 58. “The trustees of the Public School Society attempted to standardize procedures and content, introduced supervision, carried on teacher training, and articulated more clearly the different levels in their system. They spoke enthusiastically about the efficiency of a large, rule-governed organization and dreamed of completing the ‘perfect system.’”

³ Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience 1607-1783*. (1970, Harper and Row, New York), 505.

⁴ This is one of two aspects of the legacy of the system that are frequently mentioned when the Lancasterian monitorial system is discussed by historians, the other being the acclimatizing of taxpayers and officials to spending public monies for education. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education*, 29, Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic*, 59-60, Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876*, 396.

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surrounding teacher training for the Lancasterians in the United States as one of the primary ways the system tried to propose and promote a different kind of teacher and as such is a focus of the present study.

It would have been extraordinary if the extollers of the Lancasterian system had ignored the importance of the teacher in these schools. Teachers were central to the operation of these institutions. They chose the monitors, trained the monitors, enforced the rules of the school and the board, did direct instruction, devised curricula, assessed students' progress, and, in some locations, were even responsible for collection of tuition fees assessed on the families of students who were deemed able to pay something for the "free" schooling.⁵ If a contemporary observer were to imagine what several hundred children would do in a large room *without* someone's direction they would probably concur that it would be important to have a trained hand at the wheel. Teachers were the alchemists in the Lancasterian scenario, taking the relatively mundane ingredients of untutored children, empty rooms, minimal equipment, sand, slates, paper, and ink and (hopefully) turning out model citizens. If the teachers were the key to running a Lancasterian classroom and if there were going to be more Lancasterian classrooms this would create a great need for successful operators of this new engine of great educational

⁵ Examples of teachers collecting tuition in schools that were free for at least some of their students would include the African Free School, the Lancasterian school in New Brunswick, NJ, Detroit, MI, and, for a time, the New York City schools attempted to collect tuition. It is interesting that while the teachers collected these monies, there does not seem to have been a teacher who was given the task of determining *which* students needed to pay for their schooling, this judgment was typically executed by the Boards controlling the school. NYMS Vol 4, Committee minutes 1818-1834, Corporation for the Aid of Poor Children in New Brunswick, Minutes, specifically meetings in 1820-1826 (need to pull the specific dates).

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power.⁶ Since the system relied upon these specific functions, defined as tasks for a trained individual to do, boards seem to have viewed the work of teachers differently. While in the past they may have only cared about moral qualifications for the work of instruction, suddenly there was a pressure to establish different schools with different teachers exhibiting technical qualifications for their work. This is one key aspect of how the Lancasterian teachers differed from their predecessors.

Why were the U.S. Lancasterians so concerned about teacher training?

The Lancasterian schools and school systems in the United States were very focused on training teachers for two reasons, one operational and the other political. The operational issue related to the desire to spread the benefits of cheap education to as many children as possible as quickly as possible. William O. Bourne in his *History of the New York Public School Society* in a special section on “Monitors” notes that: “The trustees of the Society believed that they were introducing to the people of the United States a system of great value, specially adapted to the necessities of the underlying masses of society. Whatever, therefore, could increase its efficiency and multiply its powers, was adopted as fast as circumstances or means allowed.”⁷ And while the initiators of the largest Lancasterian schools and systems were specifically interested in targeting the poorest classes, the rhetoric gradually expanded to include the notion that saving middle class parents from sending their children to the uncertainly operated private schools became popular. And

⁶ The idea of the classroom as machine or engine is rife in early nineteenth century discussions of the Lancasterian Monitorial System. Kaestle, *Joseph Lancaster*, 11-13, specifically John Foster, *Essay on the Evils of Popular Ignorance*, (London, 2nd edition, 1821), 124.

⁷ Bourne, 609.

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thrift could be appealed to as a virtue as expressed in a tract sent to parents in New York City by the Lancasterian Public School Society and signed by “A Father and Fellow Citizen”:

Do you know that books, slates, pencils, pens, ink, paper - *every thing* is found for the scholars, if necessary, so that all you will have to do will be to send your children clean, regularly, and punctually to school. *You need not be at the least expense.* There is abundant provision made, and to shew you how liberal it is, I will state that, in the course of between seven and eight months, the different Schools have altogether been furnished with 2000 geographies, 1000 grammars, 2000 popular lessons, other reading books 3000, 1000 lead pencils, 300 pen-knives, 150,000 quills, 2,500 slates, 200,000 slate pencils, 50 gallons of ink, 2,000 yards of muslin, 40,000 needles, 200 lbs. of soap, 300 cart loads of sand for the floors. ... I repeat it; I wish you would go and see those things, and tell the teacher that you wish to send your children to the school. ... *You have a right to send them.* One person has just as good a right as another, let his circumstances be what they may.⁸

To accomplish these goals, more qualified teachers were needed and obtaining them was not always simple. The political reason for Lancasterians’ focus on teacher training was that school systems found a political and economic advantage in pointing out the problem of spending public funds on potentially unqualified instructors. Public discussion of the disadvantages of continuing with the current crop of teachers, most notably in Dewitt Clinton’s addresses to the New York State Legislature during his terms as Governor, gave Lancasterian schools, especially the larger systems such as New York’s Free School Society, an excellent argument for why they should receive the state’s money as opposed to other kinds of schools and educational organizations.⁹ This

⁸ *Public Schools, Public Blessings*, (Mahlon Day, New York, 1837), 20-22. This tract published by the New York Public School Society (previously the New York Free School Society) is an excellent example of using both the thrift and quality arguments in practice to convince parents to make use of the schools.

⁹ In an 1820 address to the New York State Legislature DeWitt Clinton was fairly explicit in his endorsement of the Monitorial system’s spread: “In six thousand common schools, organized under the act

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logic was especially popular throughout the 1810's and 1820's when the political power of the system's supporters was at its height.

Both political and operational concerns, either separately or in combination, can clearly be seen at work in many interactions between teachers and their governing organizations. In two incidents in particular, the Lancasterians' focus on how teachers would create other teachers highlights the difficulties school creators faced. Both these incidents involve the growth of the Lancasterian system in New York City, but also demonstrate how the Lancasterian schools began to act as a network to pipeline qualified (albeit *marginally* qualified) teachers to new locations. These incidents also expose the opportunities the system's popularity provided for the few individuals who could claim knowledge of the system and the ability to train others in it.

In this chapter I will provide a discussion of the operational reasons for the system's focus on teachers training teachers as well as an overview of the political arguments made in favor of the Lancasterian monitorial system schools and how they were enhanced by the emphasis Lancasterian schools placed on training. This will be followed by an exploration of two specific incidents where the importance of this aspect of the teacher's activities was thrown into high relief. Throughout, it will be seen how these nascent attempts at teacher certification were successful at providing some structure to a previously underspecified occupation (teachers would eventually need to be

for their establishment, three hundred thousand children are taught, and \$160,000 are annually appropriated to the compensation of the teachers. ... There are probably twenty schools in this state conducted on the Lancasterian system exclusively ... In some of these establishments, several young men have been recently instructed as Lancasterian teachers; and it is to be hoped that this system will be carried into the most extensive operation." *The Speeches of the Different Governors to the Legislature of the State of New York*, (Albany, NY: J. B. Van Steenbergh, 1825), 183.

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certified). It will also be seen how the system was unsuccessful at giving the occupation of teaching sufficient definition to push for barring untrained individuals to work as teachers. Lancasterians frequently declared that without training in the skill of teaching in a classroom individuals should not be able to teach. This separation of the intellectual and educational qualifications of the individual proposing to instruct versus their technical skill to do so is the major departure from the past that deserves exploration.¹⁰

Teacher training in the United States prior to the Lancasterians

Between 1600 and 1810 there was no meaningful way to formally recognize whether a person had any qualifications in the skill of teaching. This is different from saying these early teachers were uneducated, although some clearly lacked formal educational credentials. Individuals working as teachers in the United States from the seventeenth century on received education from a variety of sources. However, early educators plying their trade would not have distinguished their practices in the classroom as a separate skill, nor would they have been asked to produce documentation of their ability to practice the mystery and arts of teaching. Furthermore, there was no identified provider of what would be specifically termed “teacher education” or “teacher training.”

¹⁰ It is the case that many of the Lancasterian supporters used images of factories and mechanistic tools to describe the benefits of their approach. “As a social phenomenon Lancaster’s method applied the recognizable industrial principle of the division of labor; and this machine imagery mirrored and gratified the aspirations of the age.” Kevin John McGarry, 1985, *Joseph Lancaster and the British and Foreign School Society: The evolution of an educational organization from 1798 to 1846*, unpublished dissertation University of Wales.) v. That being said, the Lancasterians’ insistence on certification, technical details of the spaces and apparatuses, specifics of techniques used by teachers and monitors, among other characteristics suggests that this emphasis on well-tuned and productive machinery went beyond an appreciation for metaphor.

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The closest thing to identifying whether or not a teacher was qualified to practice in the community was licensing, as was carried on in a number of locations, mostly at the local level. Over time, individuals wanting to teach were issued licenses by various parties, beginning with colonization corporations such as the Dutch West India Company in New Netherland, through bishops and governors in Virginia, New Hampshire, and New Jersey, and ending up by the early nineteenth century with most licensing being performed by local government bodies such as town councils and selectmen.¹¹ The licensing procedure had much more to do with church affiliation, moral rectitude, and community standing rather than intellectual development or academic credentials and licensing teachers as a practice did not take much hold.¹²

For example, there is little or no evidence that any licensing official in these early licensing arrangements were concerned with content knowledge qualifications. The early history of teaching is littered with comic reports of applicants' and committees' ignorance of and, in some cases, outright dismissal of "book larnin," and it is almost certain that no one would have asked the prospective teacher to demonstrate any particular pedagogical skills. The market was the primary filter here – an individual who could pay the licensing fee in the few instances where it was required probably had some capital, and hence some access to the materials of school keeping, which was in itself an important part of keeping a new school afloat. If the new schoolmasters were not able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the market that their students were making some

¹¹ Christopher J. Lucas, *Teacher Education in America: Reform Agendas for the Twenty-First Century* (1997, St. Martin's Press, New York), 7-8.

¹² See for example, Christine Ogren, *The American State Normal School: "An Instrument of Great Good"* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) 11-12. Also Mattingly, *The Classless Profession: American Schoolmen in the Nineteenth Century*, 7-8.

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progress then they would not be able to prosper for very long. The most important constituents to impress with qualifications were distinguished local citizens whose endorsements could be printed in newspaper advertisements. The capability of these prominent individuals to identify content mastery or pedagogical acumen was itself, needless to say, uncertified.

The lack of formal credentialing was only one of many factors exposing early Republic teachers to difficulties if not (sometimes justified) outright popular ridicule. Teachers were often only teaching for a brief period of time before moving on to other professions. Some simply doubled up teaching with other occupations such as the ministry, hat-making, grave-digging, bookkeeping, and surveying which provided plenty of reasons for onlookers to doubt a teacher's devotion to the field.¹³

The public perception of teachers as relatively unskilled individuals with little social status had political dimensions. City and state governments, even those interested in increasing the amount of public monies spent on the education of their citizens, were hamstrung. The problem of giving public money for the employment of some of the lowest status individuals in the community was real. Teaching would have to be raised up as an occupation, in political rhetoric if in nothing else. The Lancasterians' articulated differences from more traditional classroom practices such as managing squadrons of children, operating signaling apparatus, and the like may have made this process a little easier. The constant identification of the system with technical aspects of the work of teaching provided the new kind of teachers with the appearance, if not always the reality, of being different from the old, less revered, and less defensible kind.

¹³ Fraser, 34-35.

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The historiography of teacher education and the normal schools in many cases do not differentiate the brief period where monitorial schools were in the spotlight as providers of teacher training. This is understandable because their vogue was brief, but they do represent an important point of inflection between the earlier forms of teacher training (or lack of same) in the United States, and the nascence of schools set up specifically to train teachers. Many histories of teacher training in the United States date the first appearance of efforts to provide teachers with some specific education in the mysteries and the arts of school keeping to either Samuel Hall's teacher training institute in Concord, Vermont in 1823 or to the Normal school established in Lexington, Massachusetts in 1839 which later moved to West Newton, finally settling in Framingham, Massachusetts in 1853 where it continues on as Framingham State University.¹⁴ However, some historians point out that Philadelphia's Model School, established in 1818 was the first effort to train teachers in the United States to receive public funding. Joseph Lancaster's direct involvement with the school was relatively brief due to his epic irresponsibility and ego, but the school remained as a center for the training of teachers in Lancasterian methods for a decade.¹⁵

¹⁴ Juergen Herbst's work *And Sadly Teach*, 57-62 includes a clear discussion of both these institutions.

¹⁵ Ellis describes the passing of Lancasterianism in Philadelphia as "gradual" and that the "Act to consolidate and amend the Several Acts Relative to a General System of Education by Common Schools" passed in Pennsylvania in 1836 did not remove it from use entirely. Ellis, *Lancasterian Schools in Philadelphia*, 75.

The Teacher Labor Shortage and its Solutions

The Lancasterian schools have been described as a “fantastic incubus” which education in the United States labored under.¹⁶ While the incubus held sway, however, many locations searching for a way to expand the number of educational institutions, especially charity schools or those receiving some form of public funding, saw Lancasterian practices as a viable solution. However, without an available teacher who knew what he or she was doing, the Lancasterian solution was still politically attractive but considerably harder to implement. The Corporation for the Relief of Poor Children in the City of New Brunswick was founded by an act of the New Jersey state legislature to ensure the successful use of a bequest by a generous citizen to provide education for the city’s poor. It took nearly two years for the board to find a suitable teacher for their school and lost him to New York City’s schools shortly after they raised his salary. Their commitment to run a Lancasterian school survived despite these setbacks, and their continued efforts to find and retain a trained teacher over the next ten years suggest that verbal commitments to teacher training did not do enough to eliminate a labor shortage hampering the expansion of schools.¹⁷

While the system was already spreading well beyond its home in England in the first decade of the nineteenth century, there were still only a small handful of schools in the United States using it in 1810. These small boards may have been particularly hard

¹⁶ Thomas Dunlap, *Introductory Address at the Commencement of Central High School, February 12, 1851...* (Philadelphia, 1851), as excerpted in Kaestle, *Joseph Lancaster*, 188.

¹⁷ Corporation for the Relief of Poor Children in the City of New Brunswick Board Minutes. Minutes of meetings held on April 2, 1816, May 7, 1816, and November 11, 1816 discuss the efforts to retain Johnston and his eventual return to New York City’s free schools.

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pressed to find qualified teachers; it wasn't easy for the boards in larger cities to find them either. The War of 1812 eliminated one strategy school boards had sometimes employed to find teachers: hiring them away from English institutions. As one example, the Georgetown school board wrote to Joseph Lancaster personally to request aid in finding a qualified individual to teach in their school. This proved to be something of an educator daily double, as Lancaster responded in 1811 by sending two teachers instead of one. The Ould brothers, Robert and Henry, were affiliated with Lancaster's Borough Road school in England, which was often the recipient of similar requests from the United States as well as other countries.¹⁸ The brothers, who opened successful schools in Georgetown and Washington, DC, arrived just before the outbreak of war with England and the burning of their new city by their countrymen a few years later in 1814. Another Borough Road associate Edward Baker emigrated in 1815 right after the cessation of hostilities at the request of the New York Free School Society.¹⁹ While boards in the larger urban areas could employ this strategy, a lack of resources or contacts with the Borough Road establishment would have meant that most smaller cities and towns would have to look to other populations for qualified teachers to emerge and fill the shortage.

One Alternate Source for Teachers: Monitors

One potential source of qualified individuals, frequently described as a natural advantage of the Lancasterian system, were the monitors in the schools. In the eyes of

¹⁸ David Salmon, "Retrospect," *The Educational Record with the Proceedings of the British and Foreign School Society*, February, 1908 vol. XVII, No. 28, 492.

¹⁹ Salmon, "Retrospect," 474-494 has a selective list of countries that worked with the BFSS to promote the establishment of Lancasterian schools.

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many of the system's promoters, it was the monitors who would eventually become teachers for schools employing the system and thus become natural propagators of the techniques.²⁰ Under this ideal model, teachers in their classrooms would, eventually, produce more individuals capable of going out into the world to open still more classrooms. Andrew Bell, the rival for Lancaster's honors in England for developing the monitorial system, was often quoted as saying "Give me four and twenty children today and I will supply you with as many teachers tomorrow."²¹ The process of running the day-to-day operations of the classroom would have this wonderful by-product of trained teachers created from the class monitors and, on first glance, would appear to serve as a solution to the teacher shortage. It certainly was an advantage so widely touted by proponents of the system that it must have been a convincing argument in the eyes of the philanthropists, businessmen, and politicians when deciding whether or not to adopt the technology.

The system of employing monitors, in many ways, would have appeared to be a natural starting point for creating teachers. Experience quickly taught many of the American schools that not every monitor was going to perform well when he or she

²⁰ Henry K. Oliver, "Lecture VIII on the Advantages and Defects of the Monitorial System" in *The Introductory Discourse and Lectures Delivered in Boston before the Convention of Teachers and other Friends of Education Assembled to Form the American Institute of Instruction, August 1830*, (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little and Wilkins, 1831), 207.

²¹ Schaeffer, Nathan C. (1905) "Taxation for School Purposes" in Report of the Committee on taxation as related to public education to the National Council on Education, July, 1905, National Council on Education, Minneapolis, MN p. 40. Another contemporary source for the quotation was the *London Quarterly Review*, No. 11, August 1811 as reprinted in 2nd edition (John Murray, London, 1820, p. 269) which went on to hint at another reason why monitors may have been viewed as ideal instructors: "...these teachers (monitors) had no other occupation, no other pursuit, nothing to employ their minds but this single object; they could do that only which they were assigned to do, and they did it the better because they themselves knew nothing more than what was perfectly level to the capacities of their pupils."

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stepped into that role.²² For example, the New York Free School Society's schools employed general monitors, who were a kind of super monitor in that they had the privilege of supervising other monitors and even temporarily appointing replacements when monitors were absent. The description of their appointment in the Free School Society's manual of 1820 gives a sense of the importance of their role for these schools:

The office of monitor general of order being a place of honor, it should be granted to a pupil who is worthy of it. Consequently the boys in the eighth class who have made the greatest progress in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and whose conduct has been the most regular, have a right to aspire to the station of monitor general of order. ... The master appoints a pupil to this office and he does it with some degree of formality. ... The monitor general of order stands on the platform to give all his commands and is only accountable to the master.²³

Individuals appointed to the role of general monitor by the teacher were, from the overview given of their roles in the manual, encompassing in their work much of what today would be considered the responsibilities of the teacher and most of the manuals for the system stress the importance of the work monitors did.

The New York Free School Society experimented with many different forms of the relationship between these "super" monitors and the schools, including indenturing monitors as apprentices until the age of twenty-one.²⁴ This experimentation seems to suggest one form of dissatisfaction with the practical problems of using individuals with a great deal of exposure to the techniques employed in Lancasterian schools but very

²² Riegart, 97.

²³ *Manual of the Lancasterian System, of teaching reading, writing, arithmetic, and needle-work, as practised in the schools of the Free-School Society, of New York*, (New York: Samuel Wood and Sons Printers, 1820), 52.

²⁴ NYFSS Minutes, October 2, 1818.

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limited formal education as teachers. The experimentation also included various forms of compensation including direct pay, room and board, prizes, and, opportunities for professional development in other cities as evidenced by Shepherd Johnston's trip to Philadelphia in 1817-8.²⁵

The Lancasterian monitorial system clearly had some practical challenges, if only with regards to the large scale of the classroom, that required some form of teacher training for educators to practice the method successfully. However, the argument for the use of monitors as partial instructors without pay also diluted the message that teachers needed particular skill sets to employ in their practice. After all, if unpaid children could do large portions of the job what was the teacher receiving a salary for? Also, leaving the monitors uncompensated for their work seemed to produce problems including, predictably, a tendency to abuse their authority.²⁶

Some of the general monitors in the New York Free School Society were promoted to become teachers, but this was not always the case. Examples of individuals benefitting from this kind of internal promotion would include Shepherd Johnston, Jotham Wilson, and Stephen Okie all of whom are noted in the Society's annual reports and board minutes as former monitors. The Society's annual reports also on occasion mention specific monitors who left New York to teach in other locations. However, it is also clear that the Society's board appointed individuals other than monitors to assume

²⁵ See chapter 2 for a fuller description of this episode.

²⁶ Riegart, 100. Corruption charges against monitors seem to have been somewhat common, even resulting in one case in the large-scale forgery of prize tokens in Lemuel Shattuck's Detroit Lancasterian school. One such student, B. O. Williams, later reminisced about the incident, "I must now refer briefly to a subject that perhaps the least said the better, but as it was probably among the first, if not the first, attempt at counterfeiting or issuing of bogus currency in the territory (Michigan), ought to be preserved." *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collection* (Lansing, MI: W.S. George and Co., 1884), 550.

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the position of teacher in at least half the cases of teacher hiring between 1810 and 1828. For a prominent example, Lloyd D. Windsor, who took over P.S. #1 from William Smith in 1816, is listed in the New York Death Newspaper Extracts as being born in 1771, well beyond the age range of a possible monitor during the school's period of operation.²⁷

It appears that the New York Free School Society board frequently chose adults, when viable alternatives were available, over the younger general monitors. This is not a straightforward case of age discrimination as many schools, both Lancasterian and non-Lancasterian, were run by teenagers who had been assigned or assumed the role of teacher. It may have been that since the training of adults who wished to become Lancasterian teachers was an important component of the NYFSS schools, the board may have wanted older individuals to serve and would bypass monitors in the process. For example, George MacAlpin, who was appointed to be a general monitor along with Shepherd Johnston in P. S. #1 in 1810, unlike his compatriot did not ever get full employment as a teacher with the NYFSS, as was the case with most of the monitors listed in the board minutes between 1817 and 1828.²⁸ A monitor who was paying attention to these trends could have seen that not everyone was going to rise to the role of teacher, and this may have proved a further disincentive to provide due diligence to their responsibilities, a problem noted by some critics of the system.²⁹

²⁷ Ancestry.com. New York, Death Newspaper Extracts, 1801-1890 (Barber Collection). Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2005. Retrieved from: <http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?h=142732&db=barber&indiv=try>. The Resident British Aliens list for the war of 1812 also lists Lloyd D. Windsor, the teacher of New York's Public School #1 after William Smith's departure, as having emigrated around 1800.

²⁸ Bourne, 609. Also Riegert, 114.

²⁹ Central Society for Education, *Schools for the Industrious Classes or The Present State of Education Among the Working People of England 2nd ed.* (London: Taylor and Walton, 1837), 29-30.

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The idea of monitors as future teachers may also have been one aspect of the Lancasterian system that had some difficulty when transplanted from its English origins to the United States. In 1839 the Reverend S. Wood, an English commentator on the Philadelphia Lancasterian schools, remarked on the inability of some monitors to be in attendance to their duties with enough consistency or alacrity to provide the required results. Wood further speculated that this may have been a dimension of running Lancasterian schools outside of their native land: the republican independence of the American students was a problem. “From what I saw of the children in the United States, I do not believe that it would be practicable to get a set of monitors to work over hours as I have seen them work in England; they would not submit to the drudgery...”³⁰

Monitors were apparently not going to provide a complete solution to the problem of finding enough teachers to open as many schools as the system’s promoters could wish. Invitations were issued in the press to interested adults to come to a school to observe and assist for a period of two to ten weeks. After this residency, the individual become qualified, for some definition of the term, as a Lancasterian teacher.³¹

Lancasterians themselves seemed to find this training to be an important marker of who they were professionally. Lancasterian schools were sometimes advertised with their

³⁰ Rev. S. Wood, “An Account of the Common Schools in the States of Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania,” *Central Society for Education Third Publication Papers* (London: Taylor and Walton, 1839), 283-284.

³¹ Numerous examples exist of young men coming to schools in New York City, Albany, Georgetown, and Philadelphia to learn more about the Lancasterian system as I will detail in this chapter, but it is interesting to note that in those discussions of teachers arriving to be trained, I have only found one instance of a woman described as having learned the system from a “training center” (Robert Ould’s school in Georgetown), and in that instance the woman goes un-named. *Manual of the System of teaching reading, writing, arithmetic, and needlework in the elementary schools of the British and Foreign School Society* (Philadelphia, 1817, Benjamin Warner, p. x). Whether this was an omission on the part of the boards or if women were discouraged from getting trained or if the boards simply did not care whether the women employed as teachers were trained at a model school is unknown.

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schoolmaster's training pedigree listed—sometimes to the third degree of association with Lancaster. For example, one particular training lineage can be traced through the existing literature. The following was issued to a teacher, Mr. Alexander Garden.

Certificate of a real Lancasterian Teacher, which system can only be learnt by personal application and study in a well organized school.

I, PETER ULRICK, (who learnt the system of the original school in Philadelphia, under the direction of *Edward Baker*, a pupil of JOSEPH LANCASTER, the inventor, and having practised it for a considerable time with numbers of children with all the improvements since its first introduction, and possess a regular certificate of the fact,) do hereby certify, that Alexander Garden has practised and studied in Spratt's Ville Model School, under my direction; and that having undergone a public examination, I do believe him qualified to teach one hundred children the elements of a common education by this system, and to apply the same principles in teaching several other branches of knowledge.

In testimony whereof, I have subscribed my name and affixed the seal of St Peter's Model School, this 15th day of October, 1822.

Peter Ulrick³²

Ulrick would have had reason to understand the value of the training Garden had received. Ulrick's method of determining where to get trained as a teacher himself is the best indication we have to that effect since he was so quick to repeat his credentials.

Ulrick advertised his Lancasterian school for sale in August of 1817 citing poor health as the reason. By November, further newspaper announcements revealed his reopening of "The New and Real Lancasterian School for Both Sexes" – "He states that having discovered that the mode hitherto practised in the city and Liberties, called the Lancasterian System, was not correct in its practice, but only a faint attempt at it, he has

³² *Western Carolinian*, November 12, 1822 as cited in Charles L. Coon's *North Carolina Schools and Academies, 1790-1840: A Documentary History*. (Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company: 1915), 189-190.

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engaged Mr. Edward Baker, to thoroughly instruct him...” Baker was charging teachers to learn the system and seems to have routinely published reports in the Philadelphia newspapers of his student’s accomplishments with the system through public examination.³³ This turmoil in the credentials race for teachers wishing to demonstrate their credentials suggests an evolving understanding of what “true” Lancasterian methods entailed. Despite the shifts, the value of having “true” training seems to have remained a trump card for teachers who possessed it.

Individuals intending to take up teaching would have potentially shown up at any of the dozens of Lancasterian schools looking for some form of training. Evidence that such training (or at least, what the participants themselves and the school boards defined as being trained) took place in Albany, New Bern, Georgetown, and New Haven, Connecticut exists in letters, board minutes and other materials. In some cases, such as Detroit and New Brunswick, New Jersey, the current teacher was simply training a replacement. This may have been frequently done when there were insufficient resources to send the trainee to one of the larger school systems such as New York City or Philadelphia. In other cases the teacher at the school, even in smaller locations, acted as a locus for the spread of Lancasterianism throughout the area.

One such case of a local school that was an active center of Lancasterianism is Robert Ould’s school in Georgetown, DC. As previously mentioned, brothers Robert and Henry Ould arrived in the United States bearing a personal recommendation from Joseph Lancaster in the form of a glowing letter later reprinted in the Lancaster School Society of Georgetown’s edition of the manual for running a Lancasterian school:

³³ Ellis, 32.

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... an accomplished, experienced person, whose tried ability, experience, and attachment to the system would guarantee success to your proposed school was of more value to you than any novice could be at half the expense. On looking over all my schools, I found but one young man answering the description, that was willing to go, and he was unwilling to leave England without his brother a brother bound to him in affection from his infancy ... Both the young men have quitted respectable situations and connections to embark in your cause...

Considering the situation of Georgetown, its increasing prosperity and proximity to Washington, and the circumstance of your having the first school-master from me that has been sent to America, altogether a matter of national importance, you have, in Robert Ould, a young man who has the plan and the love of it in the very grain of his habit, now become by practice confirmed, and indeed like second nature.

He will make school masters for the United States as many as may be wanted.³⁴

This is exactly what Robert Ould seems to have done.³⁵ In a report dated November 8, 1815, it was stated: "Georgetown has built a commodious and comfortable house for the Lancasterian School in which more than 500 children are taught, and from which instructors have been sent forth and are now disseminating education from this *alma mater*, throughout the United States."³⁶ Ould prepared schoolteachers for many towns and localities in the southern part of the United States including, Alexandria, Petersburg, Winchester, King William County, and Fredericksburg. Richmond's school was one of the most prominent in the area, championed by a local bigwig, Thomas Ritchie, and Ould

³⁴ Joseph Lancaster, *The British System of Education*, 128-129.

³⁵ Henry Ould taught a Lancasterian school in Washington, DC for a time, then apparently left his situation to become a farmer. E. F. Wall "Joseph Lancaster and the origins of the British and Foreign School Society" (Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1966). Appendix III.

³⁶ John Clagett Proctor, "Joseph Lancaster and the Lancasterian schools in the District of Columbia, with incidental school notes," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, vol. 25 (1923), 6.

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trained its teacher.³⁷ Perhaps his greatest legacy, fulfilling Lancaster's hint about the proximity of Georgetown to Washington, DC, was his involvement in the training of teachers and his interactions with the federal government to promote it.³⁸

Despite their insistence on teachers having been trained, it cannot be assumed that the instruction provided to prospective teachers in the running of the classroom by the other Lancasterians was in any way rigorous. Lemuel Shattuck's experiences at William A. Tweed Dale's school in Albany, New York have already been discussed, but are worth expanding upon as an example here. Shattuck reported that Dale simply left him in charge of the school for two or three weeks at a time for a period of three months.³⁹ Specific instruction in how to conduct the classroom was not forthcoming from Mr. Dale, which would have been entirely in keeping with the larger pedagogical approach demonstrated by the system. Since exposure to information as opposed to explanation of material was thought to be sufficient for children to master content, it would not be surprising if this principle were thought to be sufficient for teachers learning the system's methods as well. However, this ineffectiveness would ultimately cause problems for both the teachers and the organizations employing the Lancasterian system. If the training was

³⁷ Barbara J. Griffin, "Thomas Ritchie and the Founding of the Richmond Lancasterian School." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (1978): 447-460. An article in the publication *The Academician* prints Ould's January 1819 report of the school's activities and claims 35 teachers had been prepared in all since the opening of the school in 1811. Robert Ould, "Report", *The Academician*, (New York: Charles N. Baldwin, 1820), 271.

³⁸ Ould also attempted to engage Thomas Jefferson on the topic of Lancasterian education by sending him a copy of an abridged manual written by Lancaster. Jefferson declined to take the bait. In a letter to Ould thanking him for the book, Jefferson commented that. " . . . when that method was first introduced I was too much engaged in business to pay more than a very limited attention to it, altho' it was the subject of considerable discussion before the public; and since my retirement no circumstance has led my enquiries towards it." Thomas Jefferson Library Collection (Library of Congress), *Catalogue of the library of Thomas Jefferson. Compiled with annotations by E. Millicent Sowerby* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1952-59), 506.

³⁹ Pasioka, 203.

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not actually connecting teachers with the necessary qualities to be effective operators of the classrooms, then it would be easy for critics to question both the necessity of the training as well as the existence of trainable qualities, the scalability of the system, and the system itself.

The Lancasterian system of establishing teachers' training credentials may have been crude. When analyzed through the lens of contemporary research in learning and cognition, the emphasis even a crude system placed on the teacher and the corresponding need it developed for *trained* teachers was still a major step towards the professionalization of public school teachers. If public monies were going to be spent on education, there would need to be some evidence that efforts were being made to be sure that the interventions would be effective.

Teacher Training and the Politics of Public Funding for Schools

Many of the Lancasterian system's supporters in the United States used political influence to draw the public's attention to the problem of teacher training. DeWitt Clinton repeatedly drew attention to this issue in speeches given both as mayor of New York City and as governor of the state of New York.⁴⁰ Politicians such as Clinton who continually focused on the need for publicly funded solutions to the perceived educational needs of the fledgling nation provided a kind of pressure to solve the problem of potentially spending public money on unqualified or under-qualified teachers. This attention, in turn, gave Lancasterian groups an excellent argument for why they ought to

⁴⁰ Fitzpatrick, 109.

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receive public funds. One example of this linkage expressed in a legislative act would underline the importance of engaging in teacher training:

That if any surplus school monies shall remain in the hands of the Trustees, after an ample compensation to the teachers employed by them, it shall and may be lawful for them to apply such surplus, *to the instruction of schoolmasters on the Lancasterian plan* (emphasis added), to the erection of buildings for schools, and to all the needful purposes of a common school education, and to no other purposes whatever.”⁴¹

It is interesting to note that the first thing the legislators intend for the surplus, even before erecting school buildings, is the training of teachers.

Educational organizations clearly paid attention to this emphasis. For example, between 1814 and 1826 the New York Free School Society in its annual reports consistently draws attention to its teacher training activities. The Society saw this as an important component of its work and it highlighted these efforts in a number of different ways. Sometimes the information is given that one of the former students of the New York Free Schools had received employment in another school system. Sometimes the Society would report that other locations such as “Mount Holly, NJ, Musquito Cove, Long Island and Caracas, Venezuela” had sent their teachers to be trained at the New York Free Schools.⁴² Most overtly, as will be explored in detail, during the Bethel Baptist Church crisis, the NYFSS grounded part of its appeal to the State legislature for the denial of state monies to the church’s educational efforts on the distinction that while the

⁴¹ “An Act respecting the Free School Society of New York City, passed April 5, 1817,” *Laws of the State of New-York, Passed at the Thirty-Ninth, Fortieth and Forty-First Sessions of the Legislature From January 1816 to April 1818. Volume IV* (Albany: William Gould and David Banks and Stephen Gould, 1818), 150.

⁴² NYFSS *Tenth Annual Report*, 1816.

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Bethel Baptist Church did nothing to create new teachers, the NYFSS had been working to produce a cohort of trained Lancasterian teachers for nearly two decades.

Charles C. Andrews and Training at Bethel Baptist Church Schools

As already discussed, the certification battles Lancasterian teachers engaged in Philadelphia indicates that, for Lancasterian teachers at least, there was a real difference between the true practitioners and charlatans. The fact that these conflicts can be traced through the Philadelphia newspapers at the time provides evidence that the Lancasterian teachers also believed that the public needed to be informed of, and were in fact interested in, the nuances of teacher qualifications.⁴³ The looming danger of public expenditure on the charlatans was discussed in an 1817 manual:

It is to be feared that many of the teachers in our cities and country are not qualified to teach. They do real injury: but, unfortunately, the least qualified are generally the most successful, not in teaching, for they are unqualified, but in obtaining a livelihood. They resort to the policy of working low, or accommodating themselves to the necessity or penury of their employers. The Lancasterian System would remedy this evil, because it enables a teacher to instruct a thousand at a much cheaper rate. On the old plan, thirty pretenders would be supported in the abuse of the morals and intellect of the same number.⁴⁴

Distinctions were being drawn between true practitioners of the Lancasterian system and less valid forms of the teacher in other locations and these discussions also revolved around questions surrounding teacher qualifications.

Charles C. Andrews was a teacher at the New York African Free School, an effort by the New York Manumission Society to educate African-American children in the city

⁴³ Ellis, 45-51.

⁴⁴ *Manual of the System of teaching reading, writing, arithmetic, and needlework in the elementary schools of the British and Foreign School Society* (Philadelphia: Benjamin Warner, 1817), xi-xii.

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of New York as well as demonstrate "...a black skin is not necessarily associated with moral worthlessness or mental imbecility."⁴⁵ Andrews was a white teacher hired in 1809 to replace an earlier African-American teacher, John Teasman, officially by virtue of the fact that he knew the Lancasterian monitorial system.⁴⁶ Given the overlap in the membership of the New York Manumission Society and the New York Free School Society, it is likely that the prominent men promoting the Lancasterian system in New York already knew Andrews.⁴⁷ Where Andrews initially learned the system is unclear from the available record—city directories list him in 1806 and 1807 as working as a bookkeeper so his direct exposure to the system was probably limited.⁴⁸ It is possible that he could have learned the system from observing Teasman, although there is no record in the Manumission Society's minutes that he did so. Andrews may have also observed

⁴⁵ Charles C. Andrews, *The History of the New York African Free Schools*, (New York: Mahlon Day, 1830), 56.

⁴⁶ Swan, 131.

⁴⁷ John Murray was one of the New York City elite active on both boards. This kind of overlap was extremely common in this period. William W. Cutler, "Status, Values and the Education of the Poor: The Trustees of the New York Public School Society, 1805-1853." *American Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1972), 70.

⁴⁸ David Longworth, *Longworth's American almanac, New York register, and city directory, for the twenty-ninth year of American Independence* (New-York: D. Longworth, 1804), David Longworth, *Longworth's American almanack, New York register, city directory, for the thirtieth year of American Independence*. (New-York: D. Longworth, 1805), David Longworth, *Longworth's American almanac, New York register, and city directory, for the thirty-first year of American independence* (New-York: D. Longworth, 1806). David Longworth, *Longworth's American almanac, New York register, and city directory, for the thirty-second year of American independence* (New-York: D. Longworth, 1807), David Longworth, *Longworth's American almanac, New York register, and city directory, for the thirty third year of American independence* (New-York: D. Longworth, 1808), David Longworth, *Longworth's American almanac, New York register, and city directory, for the thirty-fourth year of American independence* (New-York: D. Longworth, 1809), David Longworth, *Longworth's American almanac, New York register, and city directory, for the thirty-fifth year of American independence*. (New-York: D. Longworth, 1810). Charles C. Andrews does not appear in Longworth's city directories until 1806. The British Aliens register for the war of 1812 suggests that he arrived in the United States sometime around 1802 at the age of 20. Kenneth Scott, *British Aliens in the United States During the War of 1812* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1979), 60.

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William Smith's teaching at P.S. #1 which may have been the only other Lancasterian system school open before his taking over the African Free School from Teasman. However, like many of the teachers associated with the monitorial schools run by the New York Free School Society, he was soon training other individuals to become Lancasterian teachers in a number of settings.

While some teachers received training from Andrews in the African Free School, he also helped to establish Lancasterian schools for the Bethel Baptist Church in New York City. Specific details of his efforts on behalf of the Bethel Baptist Church's efforts to establish Lancasterian schools are available in a statement Andrews made to the New York State Legislature in March of 1824. In this statement, Andrews portrays his initial efforts on behalf of the Bethel Baptist Church as being conducted through his sense of the charity and importance of the work.

“...when it was proposed by the Rev. Johnson Chase to establish a free school in the basement of the meeting-house of the Bethel Baptist Church in Delancey street, for the purpose of educating poor children connected with the congregation, and others in the neighborhood of the meeting-house, I readily assented to aid in so good a work, and offered my advice, as a teacher on the Lancasterian plan, in the promotion of a school to be conducted on that system.”⁴⁹

Andrews was not unaccustomed to aiding various Lancasterian enterprises, the Board minutes for the New York Free School Society also notes his help in the preparation of their 1820 manual for publication.⁵⁰ The assistance Andrews provided to the Bethel Baptist schools, there were eventually three such schools, which made them a kind of system unto themselves, took several forms. Andrews taught the teachers of the

⁴⁹ Quote of Andrews from statement as replicated in Bourne's *History*, 61.

⁵⁰ NYFSS Minutes, May 19, 1820.

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Bethel Baptist schools the mechanics of the Lancasterian system, visited the schools weekly to check on their progress, and also supervised “the literary concerns” of the schools, which probably involved the establishment of the schools’ collection of books and other materials. Andrews did receive some compensation from the Board of the Bethel Baptist church schools for his work. It may have been in his interest to perform, as Lancasterianism was at its zenith in New York City at the time, and more successful schools using the system was beneficial for one so closely and so long associated with its use in America.⁵¹

Offering this kind of assistance for local churches and charity groups in New York City by the Manumission Society and the New York Free School Society - closely related as they were - was not unknown at the time. The New York Free School Society had made arrangements with the British and Foreign School Society⁵² to bring over a teacher from the Borough Road School in 1818 to assist with setting up “a proper Lancasterian school.”⁵³ Charles Picton, the new teacher, arrived in advance of the building for his intended school, P.S. #4, being ready, so he was lent out to a local church in the meantime to assist with the establishment of their Lancasterian school. Picton’s specific duties for the church are not recorded in the minutes of the New York Free

⁵¹ Andrews claims in his *History* that the African Free School was the second school in the United States to use the system. Andrews, *History*, 17. Andrews may have discounted the earlier school William Smith had operated in New York City prior to teaching in P.S. #1 in 1806 as not a true Lancasterian school.

⁵² The former Royal Lancasterian Society had changed its name in 1814 once Joseph Lancaster had been found more of a hindrance than a help to its work. Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 49-50.

⁵³ For Picton’s employment by the NYFSS, see Bourne, 31. Also, George F. Bartle, “Joseph Lancaster’s ‘House Lads’ – Who they were and What happened to them,” *History of Education Society Bulletin*, vol. 58, Autumn 1996, 51-52. Charles Picton was the brother of one of Lancaster’s first apprentice teachers, John Picton. John Picton was one of the members of the “Family” of monitors and teachers that Lancaster surrounded himself with.

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School Society, but it is reasonable to assume that his work encompassed many, if not all, of Andrews' tasks for the Bethel Baptist church. What was manifestly different, however, was the scope of Bethel Baptist's ambitions, specifically the ambitions of their pastor, Johnson Chase.

Chase had found a potential way to use the state school fund to advance the fortunes of his church. By 1817 the New York Free School Society had found the Lancasterian monitorial system schools to be cheap to run and, anticipating that greater attendance was possible if they could open up additional schools, had applied to the New York State Legislature for permission to use some of the state monies not just to pay teacher salaries but also to build buildings. This legislation, once enacted in April of 1817, had inadvertently opened the possibility for churches running charity schools to apply for the same public monies. The churches also entertained the possibility to construct buildings that, while acting as schools part of the time, were also used for church services. Johnson Chase, description of whose motives ranged from solely charitable to rapacious greed depending on what side of the controversy is telling the story, had pushed for rapid expansion of the church's educational efforts (a phenomenon not unknown among Lancasterian supporters). As noted by Andrews in his 1824 statement:

Subsequently, Mr. Johnson Chase, having obtained a special act from the Legislature respecting the surplus funds of the said school, proposed to buy lots and erect a large school-house in Elizabeth street. This proposition was objected to by all the trustees as departing from the original plan, and as calculated to involve the church in difficulties which she was unable to sustain, and so greatly to increase the duties of the board, that a second school could not properly be attended to on their part. However, after several attempts to obtain the consent of the board, even with the offer of said Chase to build a school-house on his own account

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and credit, his proposals were accepted. A school-house was built and a school opened, contrary to my views and advice frequently expressed to Mr. Chase.⁵⁴

Andrews, in corroboration of several of the statements provided by members of the New York Free School Society in the matter, goes further to state that there was no need for the two additional schools as the New York Free School Society already had one school (P.S. #3) in place where the Bethel Baptist church was planning on opening its third school and had another school in the works (P.S. #5) for where the Bethel Baptist church was planning its second. Andrews' statement reflects some of the interconnectedness of the Lancasterian supporters in New York City, but even more importantly he grounds a major part of his opposition to Chase's expansion on the effect the church's operation of the school was having on the teachers and on the public's perception of the system itself.

...from the views I have already expressed, and which I have had ever since the second school was established, together with a persuasion that the male teachers have never been so compensated as to induce them to maintain a reputation equal to other similar institutions, and knowing that men so situated merely remain in such employ to subsist while they are anxiously looking for more favorable opportunities, never can feel that energy which is absolutely necessary in teachers of well-conducted Lancasterian schools; finding, also, that this state of things was intended to continue notwithstanding the discouragement manifested by teachers, arising from their vain attempt to procure an increase of pay; and considering, also, that I was employed by gentlemen who viewed the operations of the Bethel Board in an unfavorable light, I considered it my duty to relinquish my membership with the said Bethel Board, and to resign the superintendentship of the schools under their care.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Charles C. Andrews, "Statement to the New York State Legislature, March 11, 1824" as quoted in Bourne, 61.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 62.

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Andrews went on to specify the teacher salaries for the Bethel Baptist schools at \$300, \$350, and \$400 per annum as opposed to \$600 to \$1000 per annum at the New York Free School Society schools as well as the African Free School.⁵⁶

The claims made by the New York Free School Society proponents in the litigation where Andrews' statement was entered had to do with the separation of church and state, which is where some attention has been paid to this episode in the history of education.⁵⁷ But the focus of many of the arguments made by the Free School Society had to do with the specifics of the operation of these schools and the quality of their "Lancasterianism." The schools were "disorderly," "unclean," and ill-kempt and were not to be considered representative of the system that they were nominally working under. Andrews' activities with the Bethel Baptist Church can be seen as an effort not only to propagate the knowledge of the system's workings within individual classrooms, but also as an instance of one individual teacher's input (however ignored in this instance) into the larger organizational operation which set the conditions under which the teacher operated.

As an example of the creation of political positions regarding publicly funded education, this incident suggests an awareness of a weak point in the Lancasterian supporters' arguments for the public funding of their efforts. While the system was open to some interpretation, the growing number of teachers applying the system would

⁵⁶ The other aspect of the pay issues Andrews is referring to can be summarized as follows: not only were the teachers of the Bethel Baptist Lancasterian schools earning less than their counterparts in the NYFSS and NYMS schools, they were also expected to donate a portion of their salaries back to the Bethel Baptist church. The \$1000 per annum salary listed here was Andrews' own salary from the New York Manumission Society at the time he made his statement to the State Legislature.

⁵⁷ Ellwood Patterson Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States, a Study and Interpretation of American Educational History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1919), 177.

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inevitably lead to widening gaps between the system in principle and the reality of the system in practice under the guidance of teachers with limited experience operating in less than ideal circumstances. If Lancasterian schools were not coupled with the notion of qualified teachers and schools in policy makers' eyes, then the case for continuing to send money from Albany to the New York Free School Society was less compelling. However, as will be discussed in the next chapter, teachers and organizations employing the Lancasterian system also had incentives to innovate within the system.

Shepherd Johnson and the opening of the New York Public High School for Boys

The largest centers of the Lancasterian movement—New York City and Philadelphia—both focused attention on the creation of new schoolteachers for the growing system in the smaller towns. But as one of the most rapidly expanding cities in the nation, New York was also in great need of teachers and that need created a skills market that could be beneficial to trained teachers. One particular incident involving the creation of a monitorial high school is a good illustration of this phenomenon, as it relates to one of the most prominent proponents of the Lancasterian movement and one of the first experiments with moving the system's practices into higher forms of education. It also highlights the gulf between knowledge of the system and practical knowledge of application of the system.

John Griscom, author of one of “the most widely-read manifestos”⁵⁸ on the subject of monitorial schools, wanted to open a new Lancasterian school in the early

⁵⁸ Kaestle, *Joseph Lancaster*, 170.

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1820's that would experiment with using the system to teach more advanced subjects. He joined forces with a well-regarded classics teacher, Daniel Barnes, to form the New York High School Society. The two men together began to raise funding for this project. This was an important moment in the Lancasterian movement because the monitorial schools had been up to this point associated with the rudimentary education of the poor.

However, commentators continued to wonder about the system's applicability to higher branches of education and supporters of the movement continued to forecast its success in secondary and higher education.⁵⁹ If the new high-profile high school were a success, it would demonstrate the capacity of the system to move into more advanced educational institutions as well as broaden its attraction to a middle-class population who were reluctant to send their children to schools that were widely associated with charity.⁶⁰

Although Griscom and Barnes are repeatedly publicly credited with having initiated and run the widely influential Public High School for Boys in New York City in 1825⁶¹, as it turns out, neither of them actually knew how to run a Lancasterian school. Griscom's autobiographical material gives insight into how teacher recruitment was one of his key concerns during this period: "he (Griscom) wrote to James Pillans, then Rector of the High School of Edinburgh... "I am aware that in attempting to imitate your school,

⁵⁹ Rost, 81-83.

⁶⁰ Without a set pattern of school names in place, "high school" does not necessarily correspond either to the kinds of education we would expect in the twenty-first (or even twentieth) century or to the ages of the students who attended the school. It is interesting to note that at least one author considers the "high school" to have a special relationship to the monitorial system: "It is probable that in New York the term high school was commonly used during this period [1825-1860] to indicate the monitorial system of instruction, while academy referred to form of control and support." Paul Monroe, *Founding of the American Public School System*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1940), 411.

⁶¹ Walter Gifford, *Historical Development of the New York State High School System* (Albany, NY: J. B. Lyon, 1922), 22. Also Bourne, 10.

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especially at this distance and in this country, one formidable difficulty will occur at the very threshold. We may learn the system, but where shall we get *the man*? All schools depend essentially upon the *quo animo* of their management.”⁶² Griscom may have recognized that Lancasterian schools were peculiarly dependent on the qualities of the individual acting as the teacher.

The school, once it opened, was a success as it gave instruction both in commercial subjects as well as the classics necessary for study at colleges, like nearby Columbia where Griscom had previously lectured. “The school was opened on the 1st of 3^d month, 1825, with about 250 scholars; and so rapidly was it filled to its utmost limits in the course of a short time, that several hundred applications were unavailingly made, and had to wait for vacancies...”⁶³ The success of the school had the by-product of once again exacerbating the need for teachers. “To obtain and organize judiciously a corps of assistants qualified to manage well so large a number of boys, was a work of difficulty. The monitorial system was new to nearly all the pupils, their parents, and *even to the assistant teachers themselves*.”⁶⁴

In the *Autobiography* Griscom himself admits to being no better informed on the subject than the prospective students and parents. “We had had no experience in it (the monitorial system), excepting the teacher we had obtained for the primary department. Him we drew from one of the public Lancasterian schools, by advancing his salary from

⁶² John H. Griscom, *Memoir of John Griscom, LL. D.*, (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1859), 204.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 208.

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\$800 to \$1200.”⁶⁵ This was a handsome recruitment tactic in the incipient field of professional education, and may be considered a sign that the value of that individual’s particular skills was noteworthy, although Griscom does not name him as an individual in the text.

For at least a brief period of time, it would seem that some teachers, by virtue of the fact that they had the particular technical skill of operating a Lancasterian classroom were accorded high salaries and a greater degree of economic mobility than they would enjoy after the 1830’s. The annual salaries in New York City were quite high for Lancasterian schools with most male teachers receiving \$800 and housing for themselves and their families. From extant reports, it appears that, even in smaller schools in less populated areas, the initial salaries for Lancasterian teachers in the late 1810’s and early 1820’s were quite high.⁶⁶ While the few women who taught in the system typically were paid much less (salaries ranged between \$150 and \$300 at least partially depending on the size of the school) the men seemed to receive good pay, especially if they could demonstrate a direct connection back to the Borough Road School or Joseph Lancaster.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Ibid., 208-209. This teacher is almost certainly Shepherd Johnston who is listed in the NYFSS Board minutes in 1825 with a salary of \$800 as having left the NYFSS to accept an offer from Griscom to help establish the Public High School for Boys. Johnston, apparently disappointed with the limitations placed on his salary within the NYFSS, had already actively solicited other employment from the Committee in Boston. Correspondence from Shepherd Johnston to Lewis Tappan, Folder 1, Committee for Superintending the School of Mutual Instruction Papers, City of Boston archives.

⁶⁶ For an example of this pattern see: G. Rogers, *History of the County of Schenectady, N.Y. from 1662 to 1886*, (New York: W. W. Munsell & Co., 1886), 122-123. Also, CRPC records show a similar pattern occurring in New Brunswick.

⁶⁷ For example, Charles Picton upon arrival from the BFSS received \$800 a year with housing immediately. Another imported Lancasterian teacher, William A. Tweed Dale, as previously noted, received \$700 a year in Albany, New York in 1814. For Picton’s salary: NYFSS February 5, 1819. For Dale’s salary, T. Van

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The reason for the higher salaries paid to Lancasterian teachers might appear to be quite simple. Lancaster himself, when hired to run the model school to train teachers in the system, was paid \$1200 a year between 1818 and 1819 in Philadelphia.⁶⁸ Lancaster had a particular insight on where the raise in teachers' salaries might have to come from, namely from the savings realized by the monitors in his system. "The consequence is that as scholars increase, the expense for each individual decreases, leaving one master competent to govern and teach many, instead of very few pupils, increasing his own salary, providing funds for rewards, and yet on the whole saving a great expense."⁶⁹

While the act of running a school was associated with a specific set of skills like the Lancasterian monitorial system, successful teachers who could demonstrate credentialed knowledge of the system's workings enjoyed larger salaries and more professional opportunities through the rapid spread of the schools. That tie between teachers and technical system was weakened with the eventual ruin of Lancaster's reputation in the United States. After the winding down of the Lancasterian monitorial school movement in the late 1820's and early 1830's, it became easier to associate the profession with less qualified, and perhaps more importantly, less well compensated individuals, usually women. Although the initial calls for state funded teacher training mostly originate with proponents of the Lancasterian monitorial system, it was the

Heusen, "The Albany Lancaster School," *Transactions of the Albany Institute*, Vol. 11. (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons & Co., 1887), 131.

⁶⁸ Joseph J. McCadden, "Joseph Lancaster and the Philadelphia Schools," *Pennsylvania History*, 3:4 (Oct. 1936), 229. This arrangement for his leading the Philadelphia Model School did not last long due to Lancaster's chronic inability to work effectively with adults.

⁶⁹ Joseph Lancaster, *The Lancasterian System of Education with Improvements*, (Baltimore, MD: Wm. Niles, 1824), 7.

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movement to found normal schools that would eventually succeed in establishing even limited teacher training, which provided the labor pool that would solve the staffing problems of the new schools.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Ogren, 12.

CHAPTER 4 – TEACHERS AS AUTHORS AND INVENTORS

“The person who first introduced into a school the principle, *as a* principle, of conducting it by means of the scholars themselves, is as much the discoverer of that principle, as Franklin of electricity, or Jenner of vaccination. The facts were known before then, but in an insulated and unproductive form; they systematized them and thus communicated to us a new power.”¹

Lancasterian teachers were implementing a new technology, the monitorial classroom, that had excited interest in education all over the world. Despite the novelty of the classrooms, there exists a clear pattern of teachers innovating new techniques, apparatuses and curricula within them. Why did Lancasterian teachers feel the need to continually create “improvements” in their classrooms? Why did they then write manuals about them? How did their work as inventors and authors shape their sense, and their employers’ sense, of themselves as individuals with specific knowledge to convey? The purpose of this chapter is to answer these questions by describing how the innovations teachers were making to the system were connected to the practice of publishing manuals. The publication of manuals initially, and then, later on, the creation and publication of Lancasterian lessons, textbooks, and other materials were used by teachers and sometimes school systems to promote the system itself, individual modifications within the system, and the teachers’ skills in implementing it.

One of the roles that many of the Lancasterian teachers took on was as authors of manuals describing how the schools were run and, in some cases, also as authors of textbooks for use in Lancasterian schools. The manuals, especially, were characteristic of practicing Lancasterian teachers. From examining the records, it appears that for many

¹ Quarterly Review No. 11, August 1811 as reprinted in 2nd edition (London: John Murray, 1811), 267.

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Lancasterian teachers arriving in a new location, the first thing they did was open a school and the second thing they did was write a book explaining the details and extolling the virtues of the system. This activity seems to have been particularly encouraged by the boards of school systems employing them for several reasons. Larger school systems typically had more of a teacher training problem than individual schools experienced, but two reasons not related to teacher training were particularly pressing.

First, because of the innovation of providing free or low-cost education to the citizens of a city or locality, manual authorship sometimes seemed to address a combination of goals. Promotion of the ideals of broader access to schooling was a necessity during a time when this could not be considered as a given among the community. It was also considered necessary to provide an education to the public in the specific details of what the boards were doing with the money being spent. As previously discussed in chapters two and three, one of the problems facing advocates for public education was the perception that boards were giving the money to a class of shiftless, ignorant, and possibly immoral schoolteachers and promoting the new techniques and apparatuses associated with Lancasterianism was a kind of antidote. Second, adoption of a British system of education possessing some overt associations to a European-style class hierarchy was seen as necessitating alterations and improvements to the system as Lancaster originally envisioned it. Manual authorship, whether undertaken by individual teachers, or pushed by the school boards employing them, was one way to demonstrate that the system had been adapted for American students and could be adapted further to

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incorporate American improvements and curricula not considered appropriate for British charity pupils.²

Innovation, as both a spur to publishing as well as the inspiration for schools, teachers, and, to a lesser extent, students, seemed to be almost the life blood of the system. A new way of doing things in the classroom could inspire the publication of a revised manual or pamphlet, the publication could be sent out to prominent individuals, creating the interest in instituting new schools which in their turn provided new classrooms to innovate in. While the possibility existed for rapid growth and competing ideas were thin on the ground it seemed that Lancasterian teachers saw great possibilities in participating in the innovation/publication cycle. If creating new teachers was one important component of Lancasterian teaching in the United States, creating new opportunities through innovating and publishing was another aspect embraced by many of its most prominent teachers.

This chapter will begin by detailing the association between the creator of the system and the practices of self-promotion of educational innovation. In several cases school boards in the larger cities would begin by re-publishing an edition of Lancaster's original manual to introduce the concepts of the system, but most moved on to producing their own version of a monitorial system manual. These manuals served several purposes

² Many original histories of the New York Free School Society, right from the first widely published history which was appended to a new American printing of Joseph Lancaster's *Improvements in Education*'s third edition, emphasize that while the board were enthusiasts about the Lancasterian monitorial system, they also felt the need for the system to be modified to reflect the temperament of the new nation and indulge in a little patriotic chauvinism. "The intelligent reader will doubtless meet with some observations in the course of the work which are not strictly applicable to this country; but they are without doubt founded on correct views of the state of society in Great Britain. Far distant, it is hoped, will be the period, when the poor in the United States shall be reduced to that state of depravity and degradation to which they are consigned in the older countries of Europe." (New York: Collins and Perkins, 1807), xxx-xxxi)

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and this chapter shall examine one such manual's development in detail to show how this activity, although undertaken at a particularly stressful point for the organization, attempted to achieve multiple goals.

Some individual teachers also engaged in manual production as well as textbook authorship in an effort to publicize various curriculum innovations and apparatuses they had developed for themselves during their instructional work in Lancasterian classrooms. While not every teacher saw this as an important function of their position, and in fact some teachers appeared to have balked outright at writing manuals, some teachers seem to have treated this work as a chance to position themselves for increased opportunities within the field.³ As a peculiar characteristic of Lancasterian teaching, this is one of the ways that the teachers found to enhance their professional character. Several specific examples of innovation and authorship will be explored.

For two teachers in particular, John E. Lovell and William Bentley Fowle, their individual professional characters were particularly developed through textbook authorship which seemed to enable them to outlast the system that initially threw them into prominence. This chapter will also detail the role that innovation and publication played for these individuals.

The Value of Publication in Spreading the System

The activities of authorship and invention were associated for both teachers and systems employing the Lancasterian method, although the reasons for engaging in these

³ For an example of less than enthusiastic cooperation on the part of a school system's teachers towards manual authorship, see NYFSS Minutes for February 5, 1819.

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activities were different for the two groups. School systems, such as the New York Free School Society, would find that publishing the details of their schools benefitted them politically if not financially. For individual teachers however, the activities of authorship and invention would have been of peculiar attraction because of the association they had with Joseph Lancaster. The Lancasterian teachers in the United States that published manuals could very well have taken their cue from the originator of the system. Lancaster was a promoter of his techniques almost to the point of feverishness. As some of his critics saw it, Lancaster was a promoter to the point of eliminating every other positive quality in the man. This was especially true for those who met Lancaster in America after his initial burst of creativity had dwindled. One such commentator remarked that Lancaster's arrival in New York was problematic even while the system was at its political zenith there because "he had little to offer that was new," and that "his opportunity of essentially doing much to further his system was cut off."⁴

Lancaster's description of his school in his first book (the first of dozens of descriptions he would eventually pen) can be seen as either the enthusiastic effusions of a young man discovering his purpose or the efforts of a canny promoter to reach more potential subscribers. Irrespective of interpretation, the fact that he was capable of recruiting new financial backers for himself and his educational efforts every few years throughout his entire adult life suggests a master advocate for whom publication was a prominent technique. "The extent of the delusion," as described by an early historian of the New York Public Schools was, "so widely and so energetically advocated that

⁴ John W. Francis, *Old New York: Reminiscences of the past sixty years* (New York: Charles Roe, 1858), 185-186.

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thousands of intelligent men believed that a final and immediate remedy had been found for the evils of popular ignorance and that the era of universal intelligence had begun.”⁵

Even Lancaster’s initial fame can be seen as the result of early and frequent self-authored publications describing his work. A comparison may be drawn between Lancaster’s rapid celebrity and the initial obscurity of a man who could claim precedence of publication of many of the same ideas. Dr. Andrew Bell, Lancaster’s great rival, initially published a description of his experiments with a monitor system for a school in October of 1797, predating Lancaster’s first school and predating Lancaster’s first publication by at least five years.⁶ While Bell was first to coalesce some of the major aspects of the educational innovation into a published work and the first to go to press with his ideas, the major difference seems to have been his approach to publication. Bell’s biographers credit him with having been just as convinced as Joseph Lancaster of the importance and the utility of his discoveries, but for whatever reason, he chose not to do much to promote his ideas outside of a small circle. Bell’s diffidence with regards to the publication of his work seems to have been at the very least a miscalculation.

Anxious as Dr Bell had now become for the publication of this report, he did not anticipate its obtaining a rapid sale, or attracting at first general attention. “These 830 copies,” he says in his letter of instructions to Mr Bensley the printer, “will, I apprehend, be a great deal more than sufficient for an edition; for I imagine that such an humble publication will produce little attention, less credit, and far less profit. ...” (adding) “I desire that so humble an essay may not be advertised in the London newspapers oftener than thrice in all, viz. - once in the *Times*, 23d October; once in the *Sun*, 30th October; once in the *Star*, 6th November.”⁷

⁵ Boese, 27.

⁶ Taylor, 46. Also Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 22.

⁷ Robert Southey, Charles Cuthbert Southey, *The Life of the Reverend Andrew Bell Comprising the History of the Rise and Progress of the System of Mutual Tuition* vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1844), 40.

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One copy of the 830 copies of Bell's *Experiment* reached Joseph Lancaster as a young schoolmaster; according to Lancaster this occurred at some point after his own newly founded school had begun experimenting with monitorial methods. Although it is difficult to untangle the multiple claims made later, during the long controversy over whose creation had precedence, Lancaster's first book in 1803 does credit his reading Bell's work with at least consolidating his own ideas, "...if I had known it, it would have saved me much trouble, and some retrograde movements."⁸ Lancaster apparently threw himself whole-heartedly into the promotion and expansion of his school, an activity that Bell was not able or willing to engage in, as noted by his biographers, somewhat defensively.

Unless Dr Bell had abandoned all clerical duties and made education his profession, he could not have promoted the extension of his discovery more than he did. He had spared no pains in rendering the report perfect in all its parts; and having thus laid before the public a clear description of the system, together with most abundant testimony to its success in the only establishment where it had been tried, he had done his part, and it remained for the nation, and especially for those engaged in education, to discharge theirs.⁹

In Bell's vision of the schools, once perfectly expressed the innovation would speak for itself, consequently in Bell's opinion there was no need for him to speak for it. Bell does seem to have reconsidered his approach after Lancaster shot to prominence. After meeting with Lancaster in 1804 to discuss alterations to his publication based on Lancaster's implementation of it, Bell abandoned his original plan to condense the second edition of his *Experiment* and instead expanded the text from 48 to 84 pages,

⁸ Joseph Lancaster, *Improvements in Education as it respects the Industrious Classes of the Community* (London: Darton and Harvey, 1803), 64.

⁹ Southey and Southey, 43-44.

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which is suggestive of the power Lancaster had to inspire authorship in others.¹⁰ It was in 1804 that Lancaster's book made its way to New York City and created enough interest in the system to inspire the New York Free School Society's establishment of P.S. #1 – Bell's slower embrace of publication and promotion of his innovative classroom techniques may have contributed to Lancaster's, not Bell's, system being the main educational system taking root in the United States.

Manuals in the United States

Many of the organizations instituting and controlling Lancasterian schools in the United States seemed to feel the need to publicize the details of the schools in order to make it clearer what these new forms of education were meant to do. In some cases, the rhetoric employed in this promotion would cross over into outright idolatry. When DeWitt Clinton spoke at the opening of the new building for the New York Free School Society's P.S. #1, he ran through all of the most compelling reasons for embracing the monitorial system then, dipping into the language of Protestant reformers, comes close to making a direct comparison between Lancaster's innovations and more specifically sacred blessings:

...when I view all the bearings and tendencies of this system – when I contemplate the habits of order which it forms, the spirit of emulation which it excites, the rapid improvement which it inculcates – when I behold the extraordinary union of celerity in instruction and economy of expense – and when I perceive one great assembly of a thousand children, under the eye of a single teacher, marching, with unexampled rapidity and with perfect discipline, to the goal of knowledge, I confess that I recognize

¹⁰ Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 24. In an effort to understand the two different men's characters (one an endless promoter, the other a more reticent clergyman) it is interesting to note that after sending Lancaster 50 copies of his revised work in 1805, Bell still "emphatically refused to subscribe" to Lancaster's society.

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in Lancaster the benefactor of the human race. I consider his system as creating a new era in education, as a blessing sent down from heaven to redeem the poor and distressed of this world from the power and dominion of ignorance.¹¹

Clinton was not alone in making exaggerated claims for the system – Benjamin Shaw in an early manual published in Philadelphia managed to ascribe Napoleon’s success as a tyrant to a lack of Lancasterian schools in France.

...a nation, who could boast of having some of the most enlightened men in the world, degraded... through the ignorance of the great mass of her population. Had the people of that nation been educated... by the Lancasterian method, they had never suffered military or ecclesiastical despotism, to shut up in darkness, the dawn which promised so glorious a day.¹²

However, communicating the practical knowledge of the system to the (hopefully) philanthropic individuals and members of local government who would be lobbied for financial support was more important over time than high flown rhetoric. One contemporary reviewer of Shaw’s octavo makes the point of balancing these two, sometimes competing, priorities succinctly:

His pamphlet is a very concise and satisfactory delineation of a Lancasterian School; and from reading it any man of intelligence and perseverance might know how to establish one in the city or country. But to support these district establishments universally, in our money-making, and money-loving republic, is the difficulty.¹³

Many societies and individuals in the United States began by re-publishing some of Lancaster’s works, and, later, the British and Foreign School Society’s revisions of them in American editions, typically with prefaces or appendices discussing the specific

¹¹ DeWitt Clinton, “Address of Governor DeWitt Clinton” speech delivered on December 11, 1809 as reprinted in Bourne, 19.

¹² Benjamin Shaw, *Brief Exposition of the Principles and Details of the Lancasterian System of Education interspersed with remarks on its progress and effects* (Philadelphia: 1817), 18.

¹³ “Article X”, *The Quarterly Theological Review; conducted by the Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely, A.M. of the city of Philadelphia*, Vol. 1, section 9, 103.

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histories of the local Lancasterian or Free School Societies. One such publication was *The British System of Education: Being a complete epitome of the improvements and inventions practised by Joseph Lancaster: To which is added, a report of the Trustees of the Lancaster School at Georgetown, Col.* which was printed in Georgetown and Washington, DC in 1812. Another was the *Manual of the System of teaching Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Needle-Work, in the Elementary Schools of the British and Foreign School Society* reprinted in Philadelphia for the Philadelphia Society for the Establishment and Support of Charity Schooling in 1817. The New York Free School Society actually reprinted British manuals in 1807 and 1814; the 1814 republication is notable for including full listings of the subscribers to the Society, along with a helpful form for anyone wishing to make a contribution posthumously either of cash or real estate:

From the preceding list of donations and subscriptions, it will be seen, that this society has been favoured with many public and private contributions: and while the Trustees acknowledge, with great satisfaction, the reception of such liberal assistance, they are not without hope that many others will yet be found willing to imitate the same benevolent example; and as some persons, who are blessed with extensive means of doing good, may perhaps feel disposed to contribute to this institution, by will, it may not be improper to add the form of a bequest and a devise, adapted to this particular case.

FORM OF A BEQUEST OF A MONEY LEGACY.

ITEM. I give and bequeath to "The Free-School Society of New-York," the sum of to be paid to their Treasurer, for the time being, for the use of the said society, in carrying on the benevolent designs of their institution.

**FORM OF A DEVISE OF REAL ESTATE, AND
GROUND RENTS.**

ITEM. I give and devise unto "The Free-School Society of New-York," their successors and assigns for ever, all that, &c. (here describe the property or Ground rent) together with the appurtenances.

Figure 5: Page image from *An Account of the Free-School Society of New York* (New York: Collins and Co., 1814), 70.

As the Lancasterian schools and organizations in the United States spread to more locations and political support for the system swelled, the pressure to accommodate local educational ideologies grew and teachers and boards began to produce manuals. These manuals still mostly repeated the practices (and sometimes even the language) of the British editions, but began to incorporate more specifics from the local institutions' implementations. Many of the manuals written in the United States were written with at least two major purposes. One purpose was spreading the word of the wonderful Lancasterian system so that other teachers could adopt the system in their own schools.

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The other, sometimes more overt, purpose was to make the case for Lancasterian educational methods to prominent individuals and to demonstrate the activities of the educational institution in adapting and implementing Lancaster's original techniques and apparatuses.

This promotion of the system to philanthropic individuals and government officials sometimes meant that some of the home-grown manuals were more in the nature of brief sketches of the schools they were meant to detail—often it is difficult to tell how one of the schools would actually function in absence of more specific instructions. Contemporary readers sometimes remarked on this lack of detail at the time, and one author was prompted to comment that, “the Author is very anxious to caution the public and individuals against supposing that the System can be learnt by reading this or any other Book.”¹⁴ Edward Baker's admonition that an understanding of the system could not be obtained from his manual suggests an ambivalence on the part of some instructors towards the manuals – or perhaps a desire to view the direct training of teachers by other teachers (probably a larger source of income for Baker) as paramount over the more abstracted transmission of skills through a text.

Manual production was also aligned with the training question in a different way. For some instructors, manuals may have had an additional function that was more about establishing the author's ability to train than for the reader's actual edification. Authoring a manual constituted a method, in the absence of stronger credentialing mechanisms, for demonstrating an individual's alliance with, and mastery of, the system. The Lancasterian

¹⁴ Edward Baker, *A Brief Sketch of the Lancasterian System, Intended As a Companion in Visiting a Lancasterian School, with Advice to Committees on the Establishment, Management and Examination of Such Schools* (Troy, N.Y.: Printed for the author, by F. Adancourt, 1816), 1.

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Society in Albany, NY worked rapidly with their principal teacher, William A. Tweed Dale, to publish a manual in advance of a promotional tour Dale was taking to assist in “the more general introduction of the Lancasterian system of education...” throughout the western part of New York state.¹⁵ The manual was published with a page of errata, possibly the result of the hurried production. Dale was already one of the model teachers for new Lancasterian educators, having trained many teachers in addition to Lemuel Shattuck in the Albany school. Shortly after publishing *Manual of the Albany Lancaster School; or, The System of Mutual Instruction Simplified, Improved, and Adapted to the United States* in 1820, Dale was called upon by the Committee for Superintending the School for Mutual Instruction in Boston to assist them in setting up an experimental school employing the Monitorial method.¹⁶ Dale evidently set up the system at the new school in Boston during its opening weeks with a member of the Committee, William Bentley Fowle, working alongside him to ascertain how the system actually worked.¹⁷

¹⁵ William A. Tweed Dale, *Manual of the Albany Lancaster School; or, The System of Mutual Instruction Simplified, Improved, and Adapted to the United States*, (Albany, NY: Websters and Skinners, 1820), 91.

¹⁶ Committee for the School for Mutual Instruction Collection, City of Boston Municipal Archives, “Mr. Fowle’s observation on Mr. Tappan’s report of his visit.” Fowle, who throughout his reports of the experimental Lancasterian school was reporting on how Mr. Dale had left matters comments tartly that “...Mr. Dale, although he did much, yet left much undone. He began nothing as it should have been begun, and he left unsettled many of the points which are the subject of Mr. T’s animadversion.” Lewis Tappan in his somewhat critical report of a visit to the school submitted on January 19, 1822 stated “I am of the opinion that W. Dale would be an acquisition, equal to a high salary, if he could be settled in this town merely as a reader. Compared with him Mr. Fowle is not a first rate reader.”

¹⁷ Voicing a sentiment not unfamiliar to novice teachers today, Fowle reported back to the Committee: “I took the school fully sensible of the importance of the experiment, and of my own inexperience. I placed great reliance upon my zeal in the cause of education, but I hoped much also from the instruction of the gentleman (Dale) who was to open and organize the school. In this hope I was completely disappointed...” Evidently, Dale was as ineffective as his manual. Fowle took over the school as principal teacher at some point in late 1821 or early 1822. William Bentley Fowle, “Report of the State of the School of Mutual Instruction, April 1, 1822”. Committee for the School of Mutual Instruction Collection, City of Boston Municipal Archives.

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Copies of Dale's manual were also offered as prizes for monitors in the Boston school in 1821. The monitors, perhaps understandably, exhibited "great unwillingness" to accept the book in lieu of other items.¹⁸

The use of manuals to inform the body politic was particularly intense in New York State. After having reprinted several versions of earlier Lancasterian manuals, the New York Free School Society also decided to produce a manual to detail the workings of their schools.

On consideration of the propriety of printing a Manual of the Lancasterian System as practised in our schools for the uses of our own & other Teachers, and to promote a more extended knowledge of the System it was Resolved That it is expedient that a Manual be printed and that Jeremiah Thompson, Rensselaer Havens, and Samuel Wood be a Committee to have one prepared in such form as they may judge proper, That the Committee employ our Teachers in compiling the Manual, and that the co-operation & assistance of Charles C. Andrews, teacher of the African School be requested.¹⁹

Unfortunately, almost immediately after reaching this resolution there seems to have been a sudden awareness by the New York Free School Society Board that they were rapidly exceeding their anticipated income from donations and remittances from the State Legislature. The sources of financial stress were multiple and pressing. The Free School Society had just opened up Public School #3 at the junction of Christopher Street and Hudson. This school became so popular with student attendance rising so quickly that the board had immediately raised the teacher, Shepherd Johnston's, annual salary from \$700 to \$800. Additionally, the Board was effectively committed to opening Public

¹⁸ William Bentley Fowle, "Statement of Tokens, Sept. 21 to Nov. 24, 1821", Committee for the School of Mutual Instruction Collection, City of Boston Municipal Archives.

¹⁹ NYFSS Minutes, December 4, 1818.

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School #4 on Rivington Street shortly after the opening of #3, having imported Charles Picton from the British and Foreign School Society. Picton was an expensive employee; he had been promised \$800 per year for his services as well as \$200 for a house rented for himself and his family until such time as the school building was ready.²⁰ The Board went into action to try to remedy the shortfall by reaching out to the Legislature and brandishing the outreach efforts through the manual as justification.

In the 1819 memorial to the New York State Legislature petitioning the legislators for \$10,465 the Board took the time to point out the Society's extensive commitment to the spread of Lancasterianism including teacher training activities and:

By direction of the Trustees, Lancasterian Lessons have been printed for the use of the Junior Classes in Country Schools and they are now engaged in preparing a manual of the System, for the assistance of Teachers in organizing and conducting their schools on the plan pursued in this City.²¹

The sum the Board planned on spending for printing the manual was \$500 and no compensation was set aside for the teachers' extra work. The teachers unsurprisingly, had other ideas about the merits of the additional work they were being asked to perform. In light of the sudden financial retrenchment the schools in general were facing and salary reductions they specifically were being confronted with. "...on carefully examining the subject, it was the unanimous opinion of the teachers and the Committee that the printing

²⁰ See NYFSS Minutes, June 1818 for Picton's original employment and February 5, 1819 for decision on the monies for the house rental. Part of the compensation for the teachers in the early New York City public schools was the living spaces provided for themselves, their families, and the monitors general in separate apartments in the school buildings.

²¹ NYFSS Minutes, January 19, 1819. It is at this same board meeting that the Board voted to permit Joseph Lancaster, just arrived in the United States, use of their classrooms for delivering lectures. Palmer in his history of the New York City Schools somewhat facetiously credits Lancaster for inspiring the production of the 1820 *Manual*. Palmer, *The New York Public School* (New York: Edwin C. Hill Co., 1908, 43).

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of a Manual would be no advantage to the Schools under the care of this Society.”²²

Given that the Board was facing a shortfall of \$11,465 for the year, even with additional money voted to the Society by the State Legislature it may not have seemed like the most effective use of the teachers’ time, or the fairest.

Although the members of the Manual Committee were unanimous in their recommendation to the Board that plans for the publication be abandoned, the Board of Trustees as a whole do not seem to have agreed with them. The Committee was re-formed immediately with new members of the Board representing the interests of the Society and the Committee resumed its work in May of 1819.²³ Work proceeded slowly through the remainder of the year, until the January 7th, 1820 Board minutes provide a clue as to the sudden breakthrough: “...it was determined to adapt the British Manual as the basis, but that such alterations and amendments should be made, as were in use in the schools.”²⁴ Effectively a large portion of the manual was a reprint, but as the promotional function was unimpeded by the repetition, this does seem to have been an ideal solution. Arrangements were made to add sewing samples to the manual to supplement the descriptions of the needle-work curriculum. Board minutes describe the efforts that were made to sell and distribute the finished work.

The committee on the manual report that agreeably to the direction of the Trustees they have had One thousand copies printed in 250 of which they propose to insert the patterns of sewing when they shall be wanted. They have made arrangements for a small number of these patterns at an additional expence of fifty cents...

²² NYFSS Minutes, April 2, 1819, the report of the Manual Committee appears to have been submitted on March 27, 1819 and then read into the minutes of the larger meeting.

²³ NYFSS Minutes, May 7, 1819.

²⁴ NYFSS Minutes, January 7, 1820.

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They recommend the price to be fixed at 75 cents without the sewing patterns and \$1.50 with them and that Collins & Co. & Samuel Wood & Sons be employed to sell the work for a commission of 33 1/3 cent. ...²⁵

It was resolved that a copy of the Manual be presented to each member of the Legislature & that a number sufficient for this purpose be forwarded to the President at Albany.²⁶

Many copies of the manual were distributed in Albany by DeWitt Clinton.

Clinton, who was President of the New York Free School Society from its founding in 1805 through his death in 1828, was currently serving his first term as Governor of New York. 175 copies or nearly 20% of the original print run were handed out in Albany, which may be another indication of how perhaps the primary purpose of the manual was to serve as an education for the Legislators more than the potential teachers.

²⁵ NYFSS Minutes, March 3, 1820.

²⁶ NYFSS Minutes, March 3, 1820. Boese comments “as the minutes of the Society itself soon pronounce the book unsalable even at 75 cents ... rather light pay for the embodiment of so much of personal experience and labor.” *Public Education in the City of New York*, 34.

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Table of Lancasterian Manuals with American authors or revisions published in the United States: 1807-1830 ²⁷	
Date of publication	Title and Author
1816	<i>A Brief Sketch of the Lancasterian System Intended As a Companion in Visiting a Lancasterian School: with Advice to Committees on the Establishment, Management and Examination of Such Schools.</i> [Edward Baker]
1817	<i>Brief Exposition of the Principles and Details of the Lancasterian System of Education, Interspersed with Remarks on Its Progress and Effects.</i> [Benjamin Shaw]
1820	<i>Manual of the Albany Lancaster School; or, The System of Mutual Instruction Simplified, Improved, and Adapted to the United States.</i> [William A. Tweed Dale]
1820	<i>Manual of the Lancasterian System, of Teaching Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Needle-Work, As Practised in the Schools of the Free-Society, of New York.</i> [Lloyd D. Winsor, John Missing, Shepherd Johnston, Charles Pickton, Charles C. Andrews]
1821	<i>The Lancasterian System of Education, with Improvements.</i> [Joseph Lancaster]
N.D.	<i>A Brief Sketch of the Real Lancasterian System of Education With Advice to Committees on the Establishment, Management and Examination of Such Schools</i> [Peter Ulrick, quite likely actually Edward Baker's text republished]
1826	<i>Manual of Mutual Instruction; Consisting of Mr. Fowle's Directions for Introducing in Common Schools the Improved System Adopted in the Monitorial School, Boston. With an Appendix, Containing Some Considerations in Favor of the Monitorial Method, and a Sketch of Its Progress.</i> [William Russell & William Bentley Fowle]
1827	<i>A Pocket Manual of the Lancasterian System of Education, in Its Most Improved State: As Practised in the Model School, First School District, Pennsylvania.</i> [J. L. Rhees]

²⁷ Due to the nature of these publications this list is necessarily incomplete. Some manuals which were close to straight reprints from the British original editions and which do not provide alterations to the descriptions of the operations of the classroom to accommodate American tastes or describe classroom practices in the United States have been omitted. Full citations to all manuals in the table will be in the bibliography.

Charles C. Andrews and his *Lancasterian Geography*

The New York Free School Society board minutes also note the compensation plan for the New York teachers participating in compiling and editing their 1820 manual.

In consideration of the extra time of our Teachers and of Charles C. Andrews employed in the formation of the Manual the Committee suggests to the Board the propriety of giving to each of them 25 copies of the work and 75 additional copies to Charles C. Andrews as a remuneration to him for with holding a manual of his own compilation which he had entertained an idea of publishing.²⁸

Charles C. Andrews actually did publish a book in 1820 – a kind of hybrid of a textbook and a manual showcasing some of the innovations he had been experimenting with. Andrews was employed between the years 1808 and 1830 as the teacher of the New York African Free School, one of the earliest schools to adopt the Lancasterian method.²⁹ Andrews probably had been asked by the New York Free School Society to assist in the preparation of the text because he would have been one of the most experienced teachers employing the system in the country having assumed his post under contentious circumstances in 1808.³⁰ Andrews capitalized on that reputation with the other 1820 book, *Lancasterian Geography* in which he is the sole listed author and which is more clearly an effort to establish himself as an expert operator of Lancasterian schools in general. Andrews was, at this particular moment, also among the highest paid Lancasterian teacher in New York City as the system's spread was picking up speed

²⁸ NYFSS Minutes, March 3, 1820.

²⁹ Carleton Mabee, *Black Education in New York State* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1979), 21-22.

³⁰ Swan, 335.

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throughout New York State.³¹ Opportunities for Andrews to increase his salary through his teaching appointment to a philanthropic organization were probably limited: in fact, after rapid increases in the first few years of his teaching, his salary finally fixed at \$1000 around 1822 and did not increase for most of his remaining tenure with the Manumission Society.³² Publication of a textbook designed for use in a popular educational system may have represented a way to increase his income while simultaneously raising his profile among the practitioners of Lancasterianism in the state.

Andrews knew from first hand experience that the curriculum of the Lancasterian system was very limited. The academic curriculum in the African Free School that he taught covered reading, arithmetic, and writing and even these limited subjects were considered by some to be more concerned with demonstrating the basic intellect of the free black children he instructed as opposed to addressing the cognitive skills that would be required of them in their likely futures as servants and brute labor.³³ Andrews addresses this gap between his books' intended audience (schoolteachers teaching in

³¹ Manumission Society minutes show Andrews receiving a bit more than the recently reduced \$800 salaries of the NYFSS teachers. New York Manumission Society records, 1785-1849 "Treasurer's Account Book September 24, 1819 – April 12, 1849, undated" accessed from <http://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15052coll5/id/31512/rec/1> (nyhs_nyms_v-04_012.jpg, nyhs_nyms_v-04_022.jpg). The account entry for May 18, 1821 shows Andrews' quarterly salary as \$220. A later entry for February 11, 1823 shows Andrews' quarterly salary as risen to \$250.

³² Manumission Society minutes, November 8, 1810, March 3, 1811, June 18, 1812. Isaac Hopper's index minutes show Andrews receiving \$500 per annum in 1809 and 1810 then rising rapidly to \$750 in 1813 and 1814. Hopper, 27. Andrews' salary remains steady throughout the 1820's until his resignation from the school in 1831.

³³ Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 139. Also Anna Mae Duane, "Like a Motherless Child": Racial Education at the New York African Free School and in *My Bondage and My Freedom*." *American Literature* 82, no. 3 (September 2010): 465-6. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost.

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schools with a large charity component) and the more typical parties interested in teaching geography in his introductory material for *Lancasterian Geography*.

There was growing interest in expanding the reach of the system to encompass what was in the early nineteenth century considered secondary education.

...the advantages resulting from the adoption of the Lancasterian, or monitorial system... have already been great, yet, it is presumed, that still greater may reasonably be expected by applying that system to some other branches besides reading, writing, and arithmetic, if introduced and prosecuted with prudence and discretion.³⁴

That “prudence and discretion” is a clear nod to the still largely unsettled question of how much public education the taxpayers in states like New York were willing to pay for. Andrews is sure that the teaching of his subject will prove both within the capacity of the students as he articulates what may act as a general justification for educational technology and curricula expansion:

...Geography is at least one of the most useful branches of school learning; and that it forms one of the principal items in the various courses of study in all our respectable seminaries. Whatever, therefore, tends so to simplify this subject as to accommodate the capacity and opportunities of that portion of our youth, who have but little time to spend in school, will, it is believed, receive the approbation of those who take pleasure in promoting useful knowledge.³⁵

Respectable seminaries with fee-paying, middle class students would quite commonly have been offering instruction in geography and these kinds of schools were where forward thinking Lancasterian promoters in the United States were beginning to direct their energies in the early 1820's. The High School in Edinburgh, Scotland had

³⁴ Charles C. Andrews, *Lancasterian Geography*. (New York: Samuel Wood, 1820), iii.

³⁵ Andrews, *Lancasterian Geography*, iv.

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introduced the Lancasterian method into its operation in 1811 with many reports of success.³⁶ One prominent New York City educator had already seen for himself; John Griscom's visits to the school in 1818 were already setting the stage for his eventual creation of the stock company to found the New York Public High School for Boys in 1824.³⁷ If the Lancasterian movement in New York State were to push for more advanced subjects, a textbook tailor made for the use in the schools in a popular subject would likely result in extra income.

Andrews' work is also a good example of the teacher inventing new devices for use within the Lancasterian classroom. Lancaster's sand tables, visual telegraphs, and board lessons were beginning to suggest additional new devices that could be produced and used within the classroom to improve its operation. The text of *Lancasterian Geography* begins with the description of one such device, the "Hydro-Geographic Map":

A piece of plank, about two feet long, and one foot eight inches wide is prepared by clamping the two ends to prevent it from warping; this being done, an ideal map* [*Andrews' footnote: A map of any *known* place would be preferable, were it not for the difficulty of finding a place that would present *all* the required parts at one view. ...] is delineated with a pencil, showing Continents, Islands, Peninsulas, Isthmuses, Capes, &c. &c. Then, all the parts for water must be hollowed out so as to admit water, which will then exhibit, in a very striking and natural manner, an Ocean, Sea, Lake, Gulf, Bay, Strait, River, Harbour, &c.³⁸

³⁶ Rost, 82.

³⁷ John Griscom, *A Year in Europe: Comprising a Journal of Observations in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Switzerland, the North of Italy, and Holland*. Vol. 2. (New York: Collins & Co., 1823), 336.

³⁸ Andrews, *Lancasterian Geography*, 7-8.

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The little representation of geographical items would be finished off with a reef, light-house, mountains, and, once the apparatus' hollows were filled with water, a harbor with a buoy marking its entrance. One island would be used as a plug to drain off the water after use. The remainder of the book reads much like the report of a geography bee, with parts broken out for the various students in the monitorial draught. It is probable that the Hydro-Geographic map was the primary innovation Andrews was interested in promoting beyond the concept of teaching geography in Lancasterian schools in the first place. The map device was given equal weight with the manuscript of the book in the endorsement provided by three Columbia professors in the end material as well as recommendations from eleven more educators from other free schools in New York and its environs.³⁹

Andrews does seem to have been successful in presenting himself as an authority on Lancasterian schools. As previously discussed in chapter three, he consulted with other institutions opening schools on the monitorial plan such as the Bethel Baptist Church's on their operations. This was work for which he was paid according to his testimony to the New York Legislature.⁴⁰ His choice to list himself simply as "Lancasterian Teacher, New-York" on the title page of the book suggests a willingness to distance himself from the African Free School as well as a broader application of his talents. Just as William Bentley Fowle seems to have craved acceptance in a broader scholarly community and used his publications to try to reach that goal, Andrews may

³⁹ Andrews, *Lancasterian Geography*, 59-60. See also, NYFSS Minutes, July 7, 1820. The New York Free School Society particularly noted in their endorsement that the ingenious invention would be also useful in "private families."

⁴⁰ As cited in Bourne, 61-62.

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have been seeking a way to set himself slightly apart from the poorer classes his classrooms educated and his authorship gave him an opportunity to do so.



Plate of School when in Draughts.

From Manual of the Free School Society, 1820

Figure 6: Monitorial students reading from Lancasterian lessons in draught stations.

Lancasterian Lessons

One of the original innovations in the Lancasterian system was the use of “Lancasterian lessons” – which were essentially large scale pages reprinted from schoolbooks employed in the likely absence of enough books for all the children attending a monitorial school.⁴¹ Lancaster does not describe the use of them in his original manual from 1803, but with each new edition Lancaster continued to embellish on his original ideas and Lessons appear to have been one of the earliest additions. This was therefore an addition that was available when the system began to spread; Lancasterian lessons are described in the 1807 New York City republication of the third

⁴¹ David Salmon in his biography of Joseph Lancaster calls the Lessons “reading sheets,” but the term “Lancasterian Lessons” is the more common term in the United States.

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edition of *Improvements in Education*.⁴² It is likely that Lessons were in use in the Lancasterian schools in the United States from an early date. New York Free School Society schools, for example, seem to have come up with their own versions then made available for sale. Edward Baker, a Lancasterian teacher who made a brief stay in New York as the teacher of the Troy Lancasterian school and published his manual while there, mentions them as a necessary staple for establishing a new school in Schenectady.

MR. BAKER'S ANSWER.

SIR—In answer to your queries respecting the Lancasterian system of instruction, I will give you as particular an account as the time permits.

First—As to the *expenses* of establishing a school for 500 children. The slates will cost about one shilling each; the other articles necessary in the school are as follows, with the prices affixed, viz.

500 slates,	62 50
A set of Lancasterian lessons	20 00
A set of New-York do	1 00
A set of psalms	1 50
Boards for lessons and other use, about	22 00
84 Spelling Books, divided into 4 parts, \$3 per doz.	21 00
28 Testaments, bound in 8 divisions, about	18 00

Figure 7: On Lancasterian Schools, Copy of a letter to Mr. E. Baker, Principal of the Lancasterian School, Troy. From *The National Register*, Vol. 2, No. 12, November 16, 1816, 183.

As his school continued to expand, Lancaster, like most other schoolteachers, encountered the expense of books for his students. In the earlier 1803 manual Lancaster suggested a scheme whereby teachers could work together to have schoolbooks printed and sold at cost to members of the group, thus saving the teachers considerable money.⁴³

⁴² Joseph Lancaster, *Improvements in Education* (New York: Collins and Perkins, 1807), 50-1.

⁴³ Joseph Lancaster, *Improvements in Education 2nd ed.* (London: Darton and Harvey, 1803), 36.

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However he apparently hit upon lessons as an alternative solution to the problem and described the functional reason behind this particular strategy:

It will be remembered that the usual mode of teaching requires every boy to have a book: yet each boy can only read or spell one lesson at a time, in that book. Now, all the other parts of the book are in wear, and liable to be *thumbed* to pieces; and whilst the boy is learning a lesson in one part of the book, the other parts are at that time useless. Whereas, if a spelling book contains twenty or thirty different lessons, and it were possible for thirty scholars to read the thirty lessons in that book, it would be equivalent to thirty books for its utility.⁴⁴

The wear and tear on books through student use was a major concern for both charity and independent school boards supervising the institution's expenditures and Lancaster's invoking of that particular fear was shrewd.

...it is desirable the whole of the book should be printed three times larger than the common size type, which would make it equal in size and cost to three common spelling books, value from eight pence to a shilling each. Again it should be printed with only one page to a leaf, which would again double the price, and make it equivalent in bulk and cost to five or six common books; its different parts should then be pasted on pasteboard, and suspended by a string to a nail in the wall, or other convenient place
...

⁴⁴ Joseph Lancaster, *Improvements in Education*, (New York: Collins and Perkins, 1807), 50-1.

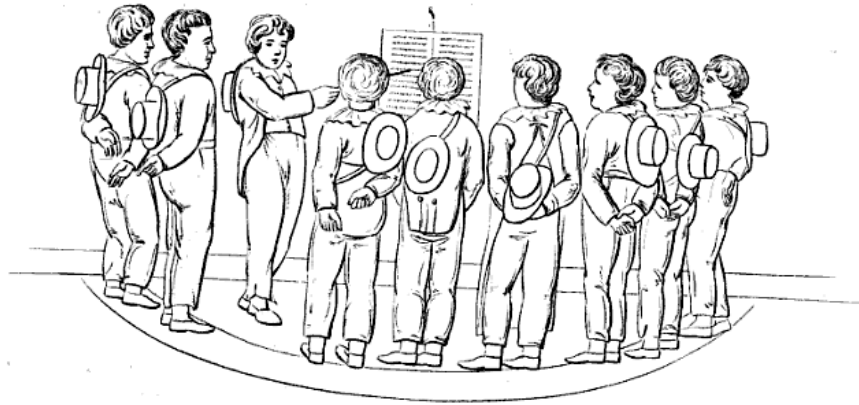


Figure 8: Boys reading from a lesson. From *Manual of the System of teaching Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Needle-Work, in the Elementary Schools of the British and Foreign School Society* (Philadelphia: Benjamin Warner, 1817).

When the cards are provided, as before mentioned, from twelve to twenty boys may stand in a circle round each card, and clearly distinguish the print, to read or spell, as well or better than if they had a common spelling book in each of their hands. ... If the value and importance of this plan for saving paper and books in teaching reading and spelling will not recommend itself all I can say in its praise from experience will be of no avail.⁴⁵

Lancaster established a printing press on the premises of his Borough Road School for the purpose of publishing his works as well as printing Lancasterian lessons for the use in the new monitorial schools.⁴⁶ The idea of printing what were essentially posters for use in a classroom seems straightforward enough and it is not hard to imagine these tools being replicated easily in any town large enough to support a printing press. However, the call for Lancasterian lessons was evidently significant, and the lessons were, along with slates, one of the most requested articles for teachers to bring with them

⁴⁵ Ibid., 50-1.

⁴⁶ Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 35.

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when establishing new schools. As two examples of this phenomenon: Charles Pickton brought copies of Lancasterian lessons with him to New York City in 1818 even though New York was evidently producing their own at that point in time, and Lancasterian lessons are listed in the supply expenditures for the missionary school at Eliott in Mississippi (now Holcomb, MS) opened by Cyrus Kingsbury in 1820.⁴⁷

A more usual example of importing lessons would be the Ould brothers arriving in America in 1810 with the lessons in hand “These gentlemen brought with them several sets of the cards containing the lessons, &c. &c. used by Mr. Lancaster in his school...” which evidently expedited the establishment of the Georgetown and Washington, DC Lancasterian schools. This was viewed as an additional inducement for parents to send their children as “The cards, &c. belonging to the school, are used, so that no books need be provided by the children.”⁴⁸ Philadelphia’s Society for the establishment and support of Charity Schools also published their own lessons, following the same pattern of alteration to conform to local educators, which were evidently a source of revenue as well.

Pursuant to a resolution of the Society, the Manual of the Lancasterian System published by the British and Foreign School Society, has been republished, with a concise history of our own Society prefixed, and also the Lancasterian Lessons, very much amended and adapted to the Schools of this country; both of which are now offered for sale.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ For Picton’s importing of Lancasterian lessons, Palmer, 43. For Kingsbury’s establishment of the Cherokee missionary school, *Twelfth Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1821), 112.

⁴⁸ Joseph Lancaster, *The British System of education*, 125-6.

⁴⁹ *Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Philadelphia Society for the establishment and support of Charity Schools*, December 31, 1817 reprinted in the *Christian Herald and Seaman’s Magazine*, vol. 5, no. 1, April 4, 1818, 28.

Textbook Publication by Notable Lancasterian Teachers

While many Lancasterian schools used the lessons and the system as a whole suggested the economy of dispensing with books in favor of the lesson placards, many schools and teachers also employed textbooks in their classrooms. The curriculum materials teachers were working with in schools not employing the Lancasterian system were typically haphazard and frequently dependent on what books the children could bring with them from home. One contemporary source points out: “Much difficulty will be experienced from the diversity of books found in every school; and it is to be lamented that parents are so unwilling to purchase a new book, however improved, while any book, however antiquated and unsuitable, is already owned.”⁵⁰ Schoolbooks “adapted” for Lancasterian classrooms offered their authors the advantages of potentially appealing to both formal and informal educational environments—some of the texts suggested the possibility of their being useful in family settings as well as schools—as well as being used in schools outside of the Lancasterian systems. Two teachers who created new curriculum areas for Lancasterian schools and published textbooks to support the instruction of new subjects (as well as generate additional income for themselves) were John E. Lovell in New Haven, Connecticut and William Bentley Fowle in Boston, Massachusetts.

John E. Lovell had originally been a monitor under Joseph Lancaster before Lancaster was separated from the Borough Road school. Lovell taught at several Lancasterian schools in England before sailing for America at the request of Joseph

⁵⁰ Russell, 13.

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Lancaster in 1819.⁵¹ Arriving in the United States, he stayed with the Lancaster family first in Philadelphia, then in Baltimore where apparently he assisted Lancaster in his newly established school.⁵² Upon receiving an offer of employment in 1822 from New Haven, Connecticut from the School Committee, he left Lancaster in Baltimore and established a flourishing school in the basement of a Methodist Church. The school was successful “immediately” and the rolls quickly rose to 390 registered students with 330 in consistent attendance. Lovell was widely regarded as an excellent instructor. Even after the Lancasterian system fell into disrepute his reputation continued undiminished. He taught at the New Haven Lancasterian school with one period of interruption in the 1820’s until his retirement from teaching in 1857. Lovell appears to have been a remarkable character to many who met him: histories of himself and the New Haven school tell of a suit for breach of promise during his youth and Lancaster, in a classic case of the pot calling the kettle black, termed him “a spendthrift.”⁵³

Lovell’s case is also of interest as an example of a Lancasterian teacher whose personal interests shaped his teaching: he was an enthusiastic speaker and introduced the innovative subjects of elocution and oratory into his school. Many histories of New Haven and the school comment on this aspect of the education the children were receiving; one example:

⁵¹ American Council of Learned Societies, “John Epy Lovell”, *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol 11, (New York: Scribner, 1937), 440.

⁵² Joseph Lancaster, *Epitome of Some of the Chief Events and Transactions in the Life of Joseph Lancaster*, (New Haven: Baldwin and Peck, 1833), 19.

⁵³ Dickson, 269.

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Among the pleasing associations connected with the school are recollections of its annual exhibition, the leading feature of which was a dramatic performance by the boys, rendered with the daring accessories of costumes, scenery, drop curtains, and footlights. Had this entertainment been called a play it would have startled the moral sense of the community, but under the title of “an exhibition” it was viewed with delight by the most rigid of audiences.⁵⁴

Lovell’s students’ performances were not unique in contemporary elementary schools, exhibitions were commonplace, but in their emphasis on public speaking and dramatic skill they were unusual for a Lancasterian school from this period, especially a school that was ostensibly a charity institution. The performances of the New Haven Lancasterian school involved considerable preparation and expenditures on props and sets (one 1832 performance cost the organizers nearly \$195 for its materials) and were enthusiastically attended with advance ticket sales numbering in the hundreds at 25 cents each.⁵⁵ This investment in time and energy may have been productive of greater student engagement with their education both at the time and for years to come - alumni of the school met for decades afterwards at testamentary dinners where they extolled the virtues of the school and their teacher.⁵⁶ It is also possible that Lovell found this material particularly interesting on an individual level: “...with the hope that it may inspire many a young mind with the love of moral and intellectual excellence.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Henry Taylor Blake, *Chronicles of New Haven Green from 1638-1862: A Series of Papers Read Before the New Haven Colony Historical Society* (New Haven, CT: The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Press, 1898), 197.

⁵⁵ Matt Alexander, “Moral Reform Through Charity Schooling: The New Haven Lancasterian School, 1822-1835”, *The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin*, Vol. 56, Summer/Fall 1991, Nos. 3-4., 141.

⁵⁶ *Memories, Reminiscences, Etc. in Verse of the Old Lancasterian School: With a Portrait of Its Teacher, John E. Lovell* (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Press, 1897).

⁵⁷ Lovell, *The Young Speaker*, 6.

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Lovell may have originated his employment of oration and public speaking in his teaching during his brief sojourn at the Mt. Pleasant Classical Institute at Amherst, Massachusetts in the late 1820's. There is no definitive evidence that he taught the subject in schools prior to his time spent there. Henry Ward Beecher's attribution of the development of his oratorical skills to Lovell while he was a student at Mt. Pleasant is particularly interesting. Beecher's recollection provides a clue to how the drill aspect of Lancasterianism in particular might have worked to produce one of the most noted orators of nineteenth century America:

I had from childhood a thickness of speech arising from a large palate, so that when a boy I used to be laughed at for talking as if I had pudding in my mouth. When I went to Amherst I was fortunate in passing into the hands of John Lovell, a teacher of elocution and a better teacher for my purpose I cannot conceive. His system consisted in drill, or the thorough practice of inflexions by the voice, of gesture, posture, and articulation. Sometimes I was a whole hour practising my voice on a word - like "justice." I would have to take a posture, frequently at a mark chalked on the floor. Then we would go through all the gestures, exercising each movement of the arm and the throwing open the hand. ... I was drilled as to how far the arm should come forward, where it should start from, how far go back, and under what circumstances these movements should be made. It was drill, drill, drill, until the motions almost became a second nature. Now I never know what movements I shall make. My gestures are natural, because this drill made them natural to me.⁵⁸

Once possessed of the idea that oratory and public speaking could be useful curricula in a Lancasterian school, Lovell appears to have applied his skills as a textbook author (he had earlier published an arithmetic textbook for Lancasterian schools in 1823) to the problem of developing materials for his students. His two textbook series, *The United States Speaker* and *The Young Speaker*, were mostly collections of short pieces

⁵⁸ William C. Beecher and Samuel Scoville, *A Biography of Henry Ward Beecher* (London: Samson Low, Marston & Co., 1891), 95. The *Dictionary of American Biography* entry for Lovell also claims that Edwin Booth, the famous nineteenth century thespian, was another of his pupils.

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for students to use in their speaking exercises as he himself acknowledged. However, the addition of many diagrams to aid students in obtaining “the culture of Delivery” was deliberate in the 1833 *United States Speaker*: “The plates are designed not merely as embellishments. It is believed they may be studied with advantage.”⁵⁹



Figure 9: “Poetical Gestures”: Plate from 1836 edition of Lovell’s *United States Speaker* textbook.

The series proved so successful, running through over a dozen printings and multiple editions, Lovell expanded on his franchise with the introduction of *The Young Speaker* in 1840.⁶⁰ This book also greatly increased the use of images to portray the

⁵⁹ Lovell, *The United States Speaker*, iii-iv.

⁶⁰ Clifton Johnson, *Old-Time Schools and School-Books* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1904), 300.

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various movements and gestures to enable Lovell's instruction to expand beyond the confines of the New Haven Lancasterian school.

Next to the example of an accomplished instructor - who is not often to be obtained, for this subject has been most singularly neglected - no doubt, *good pictures* are the best medium of instruction. The idea is, that the pupil will be benefited thus; - the gestures presented in these pictures will be impressed upon his imagination, and he will address them to other similar passages, as occasion shall require, and ability direct.⁶¹

Oddly, Lovell expresses some concerns about the effectiveness of his technique:

"The plan is at least *original*; how far it shall prove *serviceable*, must depend upon the fairness of experiment, and the intelligent judgment of others."⁶²

LESSON LXXIV.

VENGEANCE.—PERCIVAL.

VENGEANCE calls you! quick, be ready—
Rouse ye, in the name of God:
Onward onward! strong and steady—

THIS figure presents the *third right hand gesture, palm down*. The pupil will notice *two dotted lines*; that going from the *star* denotes an *upward* movement—which, with the pause of the hand for an instant, forms a *suspending* gesture;—these gestures are so named because they hold the audience in suspense, by the preparation which they make for the *stroke*;—the other line denotes a *downward* movement;—



these movements are the *course* of the gesture; previous to the *downward* movement, the hand is thrown back *quickly*, a *few inches*, from the point which it occupies in the picture, that it may make the *stroke* upon the word *dash* with the greater *force*; the hand comes to *rest* immediately after the word *earth*. This gesture is proper to the language of *reprehension*, *denunciation*, *extermination*, *anger*, and the like.

[Dash to earth] the oppressor's rod.
Vengeance calls! ye brave, ye brave!
Rise, and spurn the name of slave.

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THE YOUNG SPEAKER.

When the cold northern blast blows both chilly and rudely,
And the rain patters hard at your windows and door;
As you hear the blast howl, look around on your comforts,

THIS Figure represents a boy with his *hand upon his heart*. In the expression to which the gesture is applied, the *course* begins; at the word *heave*, the *stroke* comes upon the word; *sigh*, and the hand falls to *rest* upon the word *poor*. The *pressure of the hand upon the breast*, is the *stroke*. Boys, when they first attempt to make this gesture, are apt to press the *elbow down to the side*;



this is inelegant; the hand should be brought up in a *graceful curve* and the arm *rounded easily out*. The hand will be properly placed if the middle of the fingers is directly on the spot where the beating of the heart is felt. This gesture is appropriate to expressions of *pity*, *compassion*, *appeals to heaven* and the *personal feeling* of the speaker.

And [heave a kind *sigh* for the indigent poor.]

Figure 10: John E. Lovell's great curriculum innovation for his Lancasterian school: the use of oratory. Images from *The Young Speaker*: Lovell's textbook ran through over a dozen editions.

⁶¹ Lovell, *The Young Speaker*, 6.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 6.

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Lovell continued to teach at the New Haven Lancasterian school until 1857, at which time he retired from teaching but continued writing and publishing textbooks for at least another decade. Lovell's success with the Lancasterian system is the more impressive when considered against the relative lack of enthusiasm for the system in New England generally (the system was more successful in the Mid-Atlantic region, especially in New York and Pennsylvania) and its reputation as a pedagogy lacking in opportunities for expression of personality or reflection. Lovell's accomplishments were associated for some with "his ability to infuse a highly mechanical system of instruction with the warmth of personal magnetism" and his students' continuing appreciation of his qualities suggest that this interpretation holds some truth.⁶³

William Bentley Fowle, despite lacking Lovell's more conspicuous Lancasterian pedigree, is another example of a Lancasterian teacher who found success in textbooks and curriculum innovations. Fowle initially served as a member of the City of Boston's school committee to experiment with the monitorial system in an effort to curb rising costs. Boston's 1818 law which expanded access to free public education to elementary school students created a much larger body of students and traditional classrooms and budgets were forecast to become quickly strained.⁶⁴ Fowle came to observe and administer and remained to teach – based on later outcomes this may be a nice example of an artist finding his true medium.

⁶³ American Council of Learned Societies, "John Epy Lovell", *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol 11 (New York: Scribner, 1937), 440.

⁶⁴ Schultz, 42, 262.

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The almost accidental nature of how he found his way to teaching is a substantial difference in Fowle's background from Lovell and many other Lancasterian teachers.⁶⁵ Fowle started his employment not as a monitor or a teacher but as an apprentice to Caleb Bingham, a well known Boston author and publisher of textbooks. Fowle's unpublished autobiography goes into great detail as to how he studied from Bingham's books in a grammar school in North Bennett Street, Boston. "Little did I think when I was reading spelling and reciting from Mr. Bingham's book, looking up to their author as something more than mortal, that I should revise and publish those same books and even close the eyes of their author when he 'fell asleep.'"⁶⁶ Although Fowle was a successful student in Boston's public schools, including Boston Latin, in 1810, his father's business was encountering many difficulties and Fowle decided to seek his own living instead of continuing his education. Although it precluded a college education, which must have been difficult for a boy nicknamed "Minister" from an early age, the apprenticeship to Bingham had its benefits:

Mr. Bingham's business was very limited. He had compiled and published the *Columbian Orator*, *American Preceptor*, *Child's Companion*, *Young Ladies' Accidence*, *Astronomical and Geographical Catechism*, and *Juvenile Letters*. ... We printed a large edition of the *Orator* and *Preceptor* every year, and it soon became my business to read the proofs. I had so much time to myself, that I read a great deal, chiefly solid books, and in less than a year, I began to study French without a master, for I could not pay one.

⁶⁵ In support of the fact that he was an enthusiastic teacher there is the following comment by Lewis Tappan in his report to the Boston Committee after visiting Fowle's first school: "There is some fear the master lacks a little in dignity. His zeal appears unabated..." Lewis Tappan, "L. Tappan's Visitation 23rd of March 1822", Committee Superintending the School of Mutual Instruction Materials, City of Boston Archives.

⁶⁶ William B. Fowle, unpublished autobiography, Massachusetts Historical Society Archives, 8-9.

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In the store there was little to be done. Mr. B. had no enterprise, and so had his nephew (John). Nothing was expected of me. The effect of this was to form in me the habits of a student rather than those of a man of business, and I never overcame the bias thus acquired. John was so careless and illiterate, that I was early called to read the proofs of Mr. B's school books, and, in a year or two Mr. B. found I was so much sharper than he was that he resigned their correction entirely to me. This was of great service to me, for it made me exact in my orthography and punctuation.⁶⁷

It was an unusual sequence of events that initially propelled Fowle into authorship. Caleb Bingham was a graduate of Dartmouth College and through his connections with the president of that school another man, Prince Saunders, was introduced to himself and his staff at his store. According to Fowle, Saunders used his connections within the upper circles of the educational community of Boston to raise a subscription to enable him to teach a school for the free black children in Boston. Saunders, who was about 37 at the time, also was looking to continue his own education. "In 1812 Saunders who was acquainted with many young men proposed to about a dozen of [us] to form an association for mutual improvement." Fowle continues, "We formed the Belles Lettres Society, and allowed Saunders to be a member."

We met every Saturday evening, and every member was required to write a composition upon a given subject, each member giving one in turn, and each in turn delivering an Address, instead of a composition. This society continued about two years, and here I began to write English.⁶⁸

Fowle's distinction between the writing he had done in the schools and the proofreading he had done in Bingham's shop is typical for the period. The writing taught in the schools was merely the mechanics of writing, with very little to do with explaining

⁶⁷ Fowle, *Autobiography*, 31

⁶⁸ Fowle, *Autobiography*, 35.

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the practices of authorship or composition.⁶⁹ Fowle's compositions and eulogies written during his membership in the Belle Lettres society (several members apparently passed away during the club's lifespan) were the first original works that were published in the Boston papers and press. The Belle Lettres society itself was an important component of Fowle's education, and he continued membership in the club despite that its small dues strained Fowle's purse to the utmost.⁷⁰ In that it was essentially a social club that centered its activities around reading and writing, the society that Fowle described was not particularly uncommon for the time period. Many young men seeking alternatives to college curricula that slanted heavily towards Latin, Greek, and the ministry found such collations of like minded individuals to be helpful in forming social and business, as well as academic connections.⁷¹ Fowle comments that, in addition to effectively introducing him to the woman who would become his wife (a sister of one of the other members), "Most of the members became teachers or professional men, and no society probably ever did more good." It should be pointed out that the interracial connection that

⁶⁹ Beth Barton Schweiger, "A Social History of English Grammar in the Early United States" *Journal of the Early Republic*, 30 (Winter 2010), 537.

⁷⁰ Fowle, *Autobiography*, 35. The dues were "less than two dollars" but Fowle points out that he had nothing from Bingham in the way of wages except for a few sporadic gifts of five dollars over the years of his apprenticeship.

⁷¹ One prominent example of this kind of society, possibly too prominent to admit of a real equivalence, would be Benjamin Franklin's Junto from a somewhat earlier period. A more analogous example in terms of scope and socio-economic status of the participants would be the small club formed in New Brunswick by Charles Dunham Deschler in the 1820's. For Franklin's Junto, Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography, Poor Richard, and Later Writings* (New York: Library of America, 2002), 621. For the New Brunswick club, Charles Dunham Deschler papers, Special Collections, Alexander Library, Rutgers University. According to several scholars, Saunders himself became a notable proponent of Lancasterian schools in Haiti during the reign of Emperor Henri Christophe. Fowle's discussion of his relationship with Saunders appears to be self-contradictory and may be worth further scholarly attention. Arthur O. White, "Prince Saunders: An Instance of Social Mobility among Antebellum New England Blacks." *Journal of Negro History* (1975): 526-535.

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established the club is, however, quite unusual even for the Bostonian abolitionist circles that Fowle traveled in.

Fowle at the end of his apprenticeship and the departure of Bingham's nephew who noted that Fowle "knew more of the business than he did" went into co-partnership in the faltering publishing house. Purchasing out Bingham's heirs seriously strained his finances and,

At last, after struggling along to great disadvantage, I took charge of the Monitorial School, which, as one of the Primary Committee, I had assisted in establishing, and I did this in the hope that I could apply the salary to the payment of my obligations to the Bingham heirs, while I carried on the store, by the help of my brother Thomas, who was my apprentice.⁷²

Fowle's pressing need for cash to pay off his notes to the Bingham's necessitated him to revise some of Bingham's earlier textbooks that he had purchased the copyright of for republication as well as author a French dictionary and compilation of oratorical works for use in the classroom. Although financial need seems to have spurred some of his textbook publication, his work as a teacher was enabling him to spot some opportunities. Fowle decided that, "...needing an English Grammar in my school, I prepared and printed one in 1821 or 1822, and used it in the School of Mutual Instruction. It was a radical grammar differing greatly from Murray, and nobody used it but myself."⁷³ Fowle would go on to author many more textbooks, both explicitly for use in

⁷² Fowle, *Autobiography*, 44.

⁷³ Fowle, *Autobiography*, 55-56.

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monitorial schools and other institutions over the next thirty years innovating curricula such as calisthenics, drawing, and French in publicly funded schools.⁷⁴

Fowle also was actively interested in the apparatuses used in schools. One of the tasks he had performed for the Committee for Superintending the School for Mutual Instruction was to travel to New York City to observe the Free School Society's Lancasterian schools as well as the African Free School in 1821. He observed Andrews' Hydro-Geographic map in action, but commented that "I do not think it could be of any use after the first lesson, the only object being to exhibit to the eye the natural division of water."⁷⁵ Fowle's report contains many details of the practices of the New York Schools, including a drawing of a new signaling system. This new system had been put into place since the 1820 manual and replaced the signaling wheel or "visual telegraph" depicted in the book.

⁷⁴ Jan Todd, *Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 71. Todd describes Fowle as "a man who played a major role in the introduction of purposive exercise to American women..."

⁷⁵ William B. Fowle, Report to the Committee Superintending the School of Mutual Instruction. City of Boston Archives, Boston, MA. Fowle shortly thereafter wrote and published his own book for teaching geography in monitorial schools. William B. Fowle, *Practical Geography, as taught in the monitorial school, Boston*. (Boston: T.P. and J.S. Fowle, 1824)

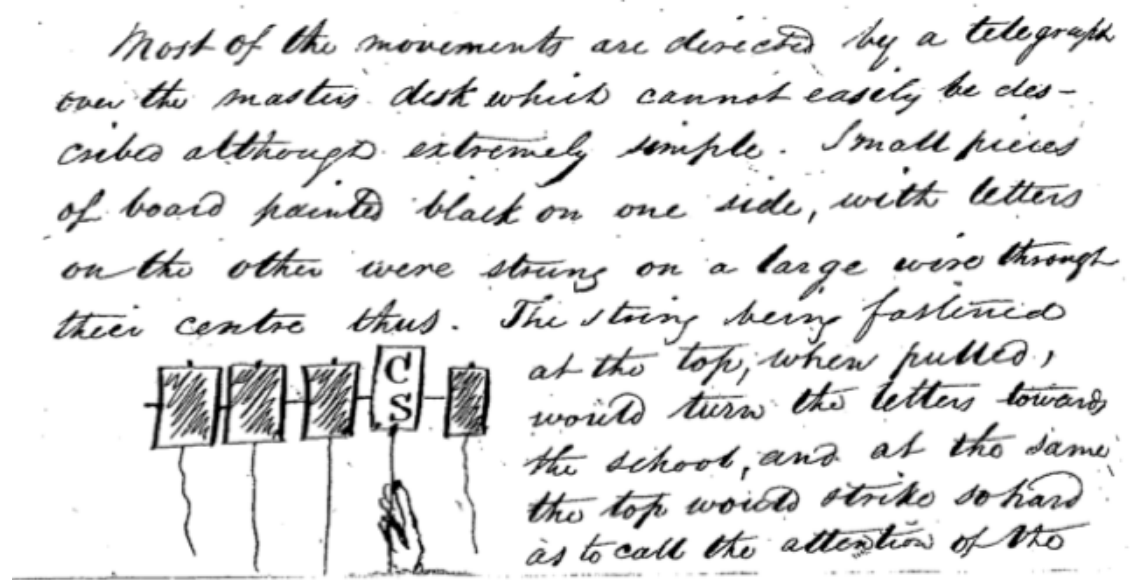


Figure 11: From Fowle's 1821 report on the New York City schools to the Committee for Superintending the School of Mutual Instruction.

Fowle was equally excited to obtain scientific apparatus for his second monitorial school, the Boston Monitorial School for Girls, which was reported to be one of the most completely equipped schools of its time. Fowle claims, "I introduced into Boston the use of blackboards of which I had eight or ten."⁷⁶

The Prospectus that I wrote for the Proprietors, and the Five Reports they published, show what my plan was, my apparatus was made under my direction, or by myself and we had better apparatus than any school or academy in the country, better than any college but Harvard, and perhaps Yale.⁷⁷

The school's "cabinets" for scientific materials and tools for experimentation apparently astonished visiting lecturers (Fowle was evidently unable to cover the complete range of natural philosophy by himself and would bring in instructors for chemistry) – the school even had a "lookout" on the roof for instruction in astronomy.

⁷⁶ Fowle, Autobiography, 63.

⁷⁷ Fowle, Autobiography, 64.

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Intertwined with Fowle's descriptions of his tools in his Prospectus are discussions of the new subjects that his monitorial classrooms could cover.

The course of studies, which is calculated to occupy three years, is as follows:- Reading, Spelling, English Grammar, Composition, Rhetoric, Modern and Ancient Geography, use of the Globes, Projection of Maps, intellectual and written Arithmetic, Elements of Geometry, Algebra, Demonstrative Geometry, Principles of Perspective, Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Chemistry, Botany, Book-keeping by single entry, History of the United States, General History, History of England, History of Greece, History of Rome, Natural Theology, Moral Philosophy, Evidences of Christianity, Logic, Latin, and French. Some of these studies are required of all the scholars and others are allowed as evidences of distinguished proficiency and as motives to higher efforts.⁷⁸

Fowle's inventiveness was fortunately extremely productive – the new school had been founded as a stock company at the urging of one of the parents of a female monitor from Fowle's earlier, publicly funded co-ed school. Fowle consistently in his monthly reports to the supervising Committee members praises the girls' work in his classroom above the boys', who were evidently much less motivated despite the use of reward tokens and the like.⁷⁹ When offered a salary of \$1400 guaranteed, Fowle chose instead to take the option of sharing in the profits from the school should there be any, which worked out to be far more financially lucrative. The profits for the school also paid for the many devices and advanced curricula for the students (Fowle even eventually brought in instructors for instrumental and vocal music, dancing, drawing, and calisthenics) as well as providing a new home for the growing school.

⁷⁸ Russell, 92-93.

⁷⁹ William B. Fowle, monthly reports for 1822 and 1823, in the School for Mutual Instruction collection, City of Boston Archives, Boston, MA.

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Such things may be common now, but, when I began, I had no precedent, and always took the lead. Our apparatus & cabinets were worth \$3000 dollars, and the surplus income of the school had paid for it all, the proceeds of the 100 shares being expended upon the building.⁸⁰

Fowle continued to publish throughout his career as a teacher, eventually tallying over fifty textbooks in multiple editions. His willingness to innovate eventually moved him further away from Lancaster, but he persisted in supporting the monitorial system (at least as he practiced it) straight through his later association with Horace Mann.⁸¹ Fowle was the editor and publisher of Mann's *Common School Journal* from 1848-1852 and Mann received intelligence and support from Fowle throughout the controversy surrounding his *Seventh Report to the Boston School Committee* in 1843.⁸² Fowle's association with the Common School Movement is a rare example of a vehement adherent to the monitorial system continuing to wield influence after the system's wane in the early 1830's.

⁸⁰ Fowle, *Autobiography*, 66.

⁸¹ William B. Fowle, *The Teacher's Institute: Or, Familiar Hints to Young Teachers*, (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1866), 188.

⁸² William J. Reese, *Testing Wars in the Public Schools: A Forgotten History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 121. For Fowle's involvement with *The Common Journal*, Mariolina Rizzi Salvatori, *Pedagogy: Disturbing History, 1819-1929* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), 155.

CHAPTER 5 – FAILING AT TEACHING: THE IMPACT OF LANCASTERIANISM ON U.S. TEACHERS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

During its adoption in the United States in the early nineteenth century, the Lancasterian monitorial system was, by some measures, a tremendous success. The individuals employing the techniques enjoyed benefits from their association with new methods of solving social problems. This association provided the work of teachers in classrooms the opportunity to be viewed in the light of other new technologies. This association with such innovations as the manufactory floor provided attention to teachers by groups that saw them in a new light. By other measures, however, some individual teachers using the monitorial system did not succeed in negotiating the differences between the new kind of teaching and the old. Sometimes the controlling organizations' ideas about what constituted an effective teacher were at odds with the ideas held by the teachers themselves, and this caused problems for individuals.

The question of whether or not the teachers and the technology were failures, however, is more complex than it may appear at first blush. The question of whether or not a technology is working is clearly dependent on which actors or stakeholders are being asked.¹ For example, while the monitorial system was appreciated for its novelty in some parts of the United States, most notably New York, in other areas such as New England the novelty was a problem for those individuals and communities with more entrenched commitments to specific ideas and existing organizations in the field of education. Put succinctly, for Boston's public school administration, "While the monitorial system had the advantage of being inexpensive, it bore the disadvantage of

¹ Bijker, 15.

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being innovative.”² The novelty of the techniques was a characteristic of the system working for New Yorkers because its newness was an asset to the politicians and philanthropists needing to demonstrate the system’s efficacy (the novelty being efficacy enough for some purposes). In Boston, the novelty proved to be a problem for some stakeholders who needed to make arguments about educational superiority or expense.

Technologies promise solutions to problems—but supporters of Lancasterian schools employed rhetoric that defined so many different problems that the technology was promising to solve. One individual might find the Lancasterian classrooms to be working because it solved a problem that might be particularly pressing from their perspective, for example, the problem of providing social control over potentially disruptive children. Another individual might look at the same school and find it enormously lacking because it didn’t solve the problem that was pressing from their perspective—that of imparting an education beyond rote memorization of semi-secular dogma. Different stakeholders had different purposes when adopting the technology, and some of those purposes were ultimately met but others weren’t. That schools in their implementation of the system would drift from Lancaster’s “pure” vision, in itself a fiction, was inevitable. The distance between what the rhetoric promised and what was actually happening on the ground created disappointment, and in the dissonance between the rhetoric surrounding the system and the reality some teachers found themselves in difficult positions.

While the Lancasterian monitorial system was at the height of its influence, teachers held more power because they were key elements in a new and valued

² Schultz, 265.

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technology. Their role was defined as the operators of the system. Through an examination of the details of cases where teachers were not successful operators of the technology it may be seen that when the value of what the operators offered was diminished, it became difficult to differentiate between the individual and the technology. The teachers' corresponding value was also diminished – resulting in less socioeconomic mobility, more precarious employment, and disillusionment with the system. Also some teachers were perhaps more vulnerable, because their positions were more equivocal. When their boards saw the outcomes from the school as positive, the system often got the praise – when the boards were dissatisfied with the outcomes it was also possible to seize on the individual teacher as the source of the problem. Overall, the fact that the schools were now using an explicit system, permitted some actors to define success for teachers in relationship to their understanding of how the system was meant to operate. On occasion, these understandings could be at variance with what the teachers understood their work to be and these misunderstandings would have significant consequences for individual instructors.

In this chapter I will describe the ways in which the very flexibility of the ideas surrounding the new role, itself at least nominally defined by the adherence to the new Lancasterian techniques, created problems for the teachers attempting to perform the work and succeed in their employment. An example of how differences in classroom management, school governance and other policies caused strife among teachers in one city and questions for a teacher charged with replicating the system in another city will be explored. One teacher's personal conception of the monitorial system provides an insight into how the teachers were still individuals and even when advocating for the system

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came to it with their own backgrounds and experiences which sometimes made it difficult to function within the schools. Finally, the story of two teachers in the African Free School demonstrate how racial politics played into the definition of who counted as a “qualified” teacher even in a school celebrated for its adoption of the Lancasterian method.

Lancasterian teachers and interpretive flexibility

Different stakeholders held different perspectives about what were the most important points on which the system should be evaluated. Variations within the system caused problems, in part because one of the selling points of the Lancasterianism was that it was a predictable, observable, and replicable system. The whole point for many adopters was that using the monitorial system could potentially provide observable differences between the often-derided existing schools and the newly created ones.

As discussed in the preceding chapter, William Bentley Fowle is an unusual example of a Lancasterian teacher who had begun working in a school through his association with the school board committee charged with investigating the system for possible adoption in the Boston schools. Fowle’s committee had originally employed Albany’s schoolmaster William A. Tweed Dale to assist in the experiment of running a monitorial school. However, in Fowle’s assessment in several reports to the committee, Dale was not effective in explaining how the school was meant to operate. Fowle eventually had to take over and fill in an unexpectedly large number of gaps left by Mr.

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Dale in the training of the teacher.³ There were still quite a few questions about the operation of such schools and the committee decided to send Fowle to New York to investigate the details of how the most prominent American examples of Lancasterianism worked. Fowle's report back to the committee upon his return shows many examples of how the operation of the schools on the ground could differ from each other greatly, and how they could differ in significant ways from their representation in their promoters' descriptions.

Fowle visited the four schools of the New York Free School Society as well as the African Free School. Fowle's teaching experience may have been more limited than the instructors whose classes he was visiting, but he still seems to have reported largely with a practicing teacher's perspective. Evidence of this crops up in the first page of the report with his insight into the results of an uneven approach to classroom management:

Visited Free School No. 1. Chatham St. near the City Hall. Mr. Windsor, the teacher was very polite and showed me every thing very willingly. Visited No. 2 in Henry Street under Mr. Missing. Both the above schools were very thinly attended, They were in poor condition, although the masters appear to labor hard enough. It was evident that they were not uniform disciplinarians by their extraordinary efforts on this occasion.⁴

Fowle was also quick to note the differences among the four male teachers of the schools. Lloyd D. Windsor and John Missing, who had been employed the longest by the Free School Society, were deemed relatively ineffective in Fowle's view. Shepherd Johnston and Charles Picton, younger men teaching in the newer P.S. 3 and P.S. 4 ran

³ William Bentley Fowle, "Report of the State of the School of Mutual Instruction, April 1, 1822". Committee for the School of Mutual Instruction Collection, City of Boston Municipal Archives, Boston, MA.

⁴ William Bentley Fowle, "Mr. Fowle's Report of his visit at New York". Committee for the School for Mutual Instruction Collection, City of Boston Municipal Archives, Boston, MA. 1 (unpaginated in the original).

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more impressive schools and received the majority of the attention in Fowle's report. All the masters troubled Fowle in some particulars, however. "I thought them all far below the demand in Boston so far as required knowledge is concerned."⁵ Picton and Johnston, both having been brought up through the system from boyhood may have been especially wanting in Fowle's assessment. Neither man would have had much opportunity for other academic endeavors. This was especially true for Johnston, who was repeatedly referenced by the New York board as having had all his education in their schools.⁶ Fowle's description of Picton and Johnston also suggests they may have evinced a different perspective on the purpose of teaching from Fowle's conception of the work: "They wanted also what if I lacked would cause me to resign immediately, I mean love of the business, literary pride, and a desire to benefit the community by improving the children."⁷

There are large differences between the male instructors described in Fowle's report with regards to corporal punishment practices ranging from the erratic discipline of Windsor and Missing to the more stringent and more physical approaches of Picton and Johnston. As Joseph Lancaster was widely known as being an opponent of corporal punishment in schools, these differences would have been a significant variance both from official representations of the system (in locally produced manuals as well as by

⁵ Ibid., 1.

⁶ For Picton's educational background through the British and Foreign School Society: Wall, Edward Flavin. "Joseph Lancaster and the origins of the British and Foreign School Society." PhD diss., Columbia University, 1966. Appendix III. For an example of the NYFSS board's promotional use of Johnston's education: *New York Free School Society Eleventh Annual Report*.

⁷ Fowle, "Report of visit", 4

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Lancaster) as well as variance from teacher to teacher. The African Free School's master's approach towards disciplining his students is also singled out by Fowle as counter-productive. Andrews' whipping of his Monitor General after an incidence of insolence to another monitor is noted by Fowle who commented, "if the M. G. (monitor general) was good for any thing as he appeared to be, disgrace would have done him more good."⁸

Although most of his report centers on the male instructors, Fowle makes a point of commenting that the appearance in the girls' classrooms of No. 3 and No. 4 was of "very fine order." Fowle also notes interesting differences in instructional practice between the classrooms of the white schools and the African Free School. "In all the schools but the African, no corrections are made by the children. The monitor reads a sentence and the others, follow in rotation and having nothing to do between whiles they gaze about or do something worse. At the African School as soon as a mistake was made by the reader, all who correct him spoke out."⁹

The system as implemented in the New York schools visited by Fowle also does not match up with the published and much promoted stories of mechanical and orderly movement of the students in a Lancasterian classroom. "I did not find that simultaneous movement towards the reading stations I had been led to expect. At the best school the children were nearly 15 minutes in going out to read, and as long in returning..."¹⁰

⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰ Ibid., 5.

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One source of Fowle's largely negative impressions of the New York Free Schools could be the long standing rivalry between the two cities for predominance in any field of endeavor. A more probable source was a real difference between the kinds of schools Boston was anticipating and the kind the New York Free School Society was supplying. Boston's legacy of free public education at the grammar school level, most famously in the Boston Latin School, provided for a student body at the elementary school level with a different set of expectations for student achievement. Boston's law reforming their public education system in 1818 had been created to redress the problems created by the original system: "The requirement that no child of seven years or more could enter the schools without being able to read and write made it impossible for many of those not attending to go to school."¹¹ Opportunity for further education would be there for those who learned to read and write well in Boston's new schools. In 1820 over 1,600 students were in Boston's new primary schools with almost 350 of them able to move to the advanced curriculum of the grammar schools.¹² Fowle's own committee had been formed for addressing the question of how best to contain costs for the new groups of students the law had provided access to education to.

New York's students, on the other hand, had no free or publicly subsidized grammar or high schools at that point in time, and their presence in the free schools was a marker for the paths to the working class that most of the students were expecting to take. These differences can be marked out in a passage from Fowle's report which details how

¹¹ Schultz, 34.

¹² Ibid., 43.

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this made for a big difference in classroom management even in outwardly similar schools:

Having therefore none or very little teaching to do, the masters can direct all their attention to the discipline, and in this respect, Nos. 3 & 4, and the African school are excellent. I think No. 4 the best. . . . The seats were far apart, the children all barefooted, and the seats so high their feet did not reach the floor. But more than all, the children were so low and poor that the most arbitrary government was established and enforced, for they had no other school to run to if turned out of these. Passive obedience and nonresistance was the order of the schools. Much flogging was used in all the schools, and the more because rewards were not given as with us.¹³

The implementation of the system could not be the same between the Boston and New York schools because the social conditions surrounding the students had a large effect on the outcomes from the techniques the teachers were using. A teacher trying to answer his questions about school operations under the Lancasterian system would be, despite the promise of a replicable system, turned back on his own experience of teaching for the answer – usually resulting in further alteration of the methods.¹⁴

An observed phenomenon that seemed more troubling to Fowle than the corporal punishment seems to have been the inability for the New York board to grasp what was going on in their own schools. The teachers had told him privately that they were very dissatisfied with their employment. Shepherd Johnston would go so far as to aggressively pursue what he perceived as an opportunity to teach in Boston by writing a letter to Lewis

¹³ Fowle, "Report of visit," 1.

¹⁴ Fowle comes to this conclusion explicitly at the end of the report, commenting that "I doubt not we shall in time mature a system which will prove that if Boston began last, she began where the older cities left off." Fowle, "Report of visit," 6.

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Tappan, a member of the committee that had sent Fowle to New York.¹⁵ Fowle saw the anxiety of the teachers about their jobs as being an incomplete, but real reason for some of the problems in the schools. "...the situation of the masters is so uncertain that they cannot feel deeply interested, permanency, where there is any pride, being very essential. ...this damped all their exertions."¹⁶

Furthermore, the board did not seem able to effectively observe the teachers in their classrooms. Fowle describes a day at P.S. 4 when a board visit was announced: "...little business was done that day, except sending for absent children and manoeuvring. (sic)" The visit itself was also a disappointment to Fowle, whose own reports to the Boston Committee on the operations of the monitorial School there were larded with details of classroom management. "The examination was superficial enough and showed that the improvement of the children made no part of the inquiry of the visiting committee." After a few minutes of dictation, the class is interrupted by the Vice President of the Board (Thomas Eddy) who asks them to "clap their hands or do some such motion" for the benefit of the other visitor, "an old gentleman who, having no heirs, might be tempted to do something for the schools." The classroom accordingly beat time until they were tired, mechanical obedience seeming as positive an outcome to display for external assessment as any intellectual achievement the students might have produced.¹⁷

¹⁵ Shepherd Johnston to Lewis Tappan, 24 January, 1822, Committee for the School for Mutual Instruction Collection, City of Boston Municipal Archives.

¹⁶ Fowle, "Report of visit," 3. For Johnston's application to the Boston committee: Shepherd Johnston, "Letter to Lewis Tappan, January 21, 1822", Committee for the School for Mutual Instruction Collection, City of Boston Municipal Archives, Boston, MA.

¹⁷ Fowle, "Report of visit," 3-4.

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The board also, in Fowle's estimation, did not seem to know what to do with the expertise that it had imported at some expense from the British and Foreign School Society. Charles Picton had been in charge of No. 4 for about two years when Fowle visited. Picton had been asked to accomplish a number of reforms, with a view to bringing the New York schools into conformity with the source of Lancasterianism. However, the transformations that Picton made were much less dramatic than the Free School Society board had likely anticipated and in the case of changes to the rewards system (a perpetual source of discussion for many boards) backfired significantly:¹⁸

It seems the trustees sent to England for Mr. Pickton (sic) to reorganize their schools. He came and found the N.Y. schools as good as the best in England. He made a show of reorganizing, and then accepted the mastership of No. 4. The custom then was for the trustees to redeem the tokens or rewards every month, which caused an infinite deal of trouble and dissatisfaction, and induced Pickton to do without rewards. The trustees not knowing his real motive, and seeing his school as good as the others directed them all to discontinue rewards, which amounted to 12 dollars per month in each school, and now no money rewards are given except such as the instructors choose to give on their own account.

Fowle found the removal of the direct incentives made many of the commonplace tasks of the classroom much more difficult. And corporal punishment was neither an ideal substitute for the pennies or trinkets of the reward system nor was it part of the system as advertised. After a while, realizing the loss, Picton quietly replaced the rewards system in his classroom with tickets which, when accumulated, would entitle the student to a play day. If even the official representative of Lancasterianism was resorting to interpretation based on a mix of personal feeling, local custom, and economics then the

¹⁸ Fowle's own committee reports give an extremely detailed picture of how the rewards worked in his school. For Picton's arrival in New York, NYFSS Minutes (look up the appropriate dates), also Bourne, 40-41 and Reigert, 91.

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monitorial classroom would have represented, to the perspective of a practicing teacher, less of an off-the-shelf solution to be employed. Fowle would go on in his own schools to evolve the system to a point where it may have been monitorial in name only; the adoption of the Lancasterian techniques entailed much more effort on the part of the instructors responsible for making the system work.¹⁹

Mann Butler's resignation

Individual instructors most certainly had different ideas about what the teacher was supposed to do in the Lancasterian classroom. Fowle's report on the New York City schools provides ample examples of the differences between the teachers in one system, as well as the differences between the expectations raised by written descriptions of the systems and the reality on the ground. Another example of the differences that could arise and cause difficulty for instructors was the question of whether or not to meld with the new system more traditional curricula and practices of education and the assessments related to them. For some teachers, there appears to have been a particular distinction between the skill of conducting a class and the intellectual abilities of the instructor. For example, in describing one of his monitors from the New Haven school in an article written a few years after the Lancasterian movement as a whole had passed its zenith, but while his school was still in its heyday, John Lovell discusses the difference as observed in one case:

...although talents and knowledge should be looked to in the choice of monitors, these qualifications are yet not always accompanied by that *tact*,

¹⁹ Fowle's teaching was appraised by Lancaster during one of Lancaster's visits to Boston in the late 1820's. Lancaster, while still being positive in his assessment of Fowle's teaching, "refused to acknowledge it as a legitimate branch of his system." Fowle, *The Teacher's Institute*, 188.

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which is the distinguishing trait of an able instructor, whether man or boy. The best monitor I ever had – a lad by the name of Atwater, was as a *student* nearly at the bottom of the class of monitors. He was, however, as a *teacher*, not only equal to them, but far excelled all of them in the results produced in his classes. I never saw his students idle, or uninterested, - all was zeal, emulation and delight.²⁰

Other teachers had prior, more conventionally academic, qualifications for their positions – some of the time and effort to attain these, as in the case of William B. Fowle’s own career as a teacher and author, would have made them difficult to dismiss in favor of the more elusive “tact” described by Lovell. In more traditional educational approaches, the erudition of the teacher was much more directly associated with assessments of their teaching skills. Mann Butler was one of the individuals who had joined the ranks of Lancasterian teachers after a semi-successful, although somewhat peripatetic career as an educator. His unusual background before becoming associated with the monitorial system was a contributing factor to his interactions with his board. This provides an illustration of how individual teachers’ ideas of their roles in the Lancasterian enterprise could create a gap between their own and their employers’ expectations.

Butler was born in 1784 in Baltimore, MD to an apparently well-to-do family and so was somewhat older than many of the other teachers in Lancasterian schools and, through social connections and background, probably enjoyed more professional options than most of them. Indeed, based on his education, before beginning to teach (in a

²⁰ John E. Lovell, “An Account of the Lancasterian System of Instruction, as pursued by Mr. John E. Lovell, in the 1st District School, New Haven” These descriptions appear in a letter to the Secretary of the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools in Connecticut. In *Appendix to the Report of the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools, May 1840* (Hartford, CT: Board of Commissioners Common Schools, 1840).

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Lancasterian school or otherwise) he had had much more educational opportunity than most of his contemporaries. After he spent over a decade of his childhood with his mother's family in England, he came back to the United States in 1798 to receive further training as first a doctor and then as a lawyer from St. Mary's College in Georgetown, DC.²¹ His legal career seems to have suffered after moving to Lexington, KY – according to some contemporaries his proximity to the greater skill of Henry Clay may have been the cause – and he took up school teaching.²² After working in a sequence of schools during the 1810's, he eventually in 1816 became the first principal teacher of the Jefferson Seminary, a school chartered by the Kentucky General Assembly in 1798 and at least partially financed through state land holdings.²³ Disappointed in the level of the students he was working with, he left the Jefferson Seminary for a time and he was employed in Transylvania University first as "Principal of the Preparatory Department" then as a professor of mathematics in 1823-24.²⁴

Mann Butler returned to teach at the Jefferson Seminary in Louisville in 1826 in partnership with another college educated man, Francis Edward Goddard. The partnership dissolved in public acrimony in 1827. Goddard evidently questioned Butler's

²¹ "Mann Butler" in schools collection, Tri-County archives, Louisville, KY.

²² Lewis Collins and Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 2 vols. (Covington, Kentucky: 1874), 641.

²³ It is interesting to note that Butler's salary is reported to have been \$600 per year with two assistant teachers each making \$500 and, at Butler's apparent insistence, only 45-50 students in the school at a time. Dwayne Cox and William James Morison, *The University of Louisville* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 5. Also "Jefferson Seminary" in *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, ed. John E. Kleber. (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1992), 467-8.

²⁴ *Catalogue of the officers and students of Transylvania University, Lexington, Kentucky; January 1823* and *Catalogue of the officers and students of Transylvania University, Lexington, Kentucky; January 1824*, retrieved from ancestry.com. Original data: *College Student Lists*. Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society.

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understanding of, and methods for instructing students in, trigonometry and Butler responded with a grandiloquent rebuttal in the local paper.²⁵ Butler resigned (again) and came back (again) for a final period teaching at the Jefferson Seminary, but not before the following anonymous item – perhaps an attempt at face-saving on the part of Butler - was published in the same paper as his tirade to the parents of the seminary students:

We understand that the situation of Principal Professor in Jefferson College, near Natchez, has recently been tendered to MANN BUTLER, Esq. of this place, and that he has declined the acceptance of it, and will continue to devote his attention to his private Academy in this place.²⁶

Butler's sense of his own academic accomplishments and credentials as an educator may have made it necessary to preserve his dignity. Those academic accomplishments were associated with the traditions of the classical education Butler had received and now worked to impart to his students. Those traditional subjects of Latin and Greek, however, were increasingly a source of problems for the Jefferson Seminary. A populist bent in the local community produced a more pronounced adulation of the "Common Man," and a corresponding suspicion of a partially publicly supported school that was focused on developing the elements of a classical education in its students. The Seminary was attacked in the local papers for its curriculum, and eventually had to revise its slate of offerings to focus more on writing and bookkeeping.²⁷ This same tension may have also produced in Butler a willingness to respond to the cry for more appropriately

²⁵ Mann Butler, "To the Patrons of the Jefferson Seminary," *Louisville Public Advertiser*, September 8, 1827, 3. Butler is particularly eloquent on the subject of the "generous and magnanimous provoker" of his officiousness.

²⁶ *Louisville Public Advertiser*, "We understand that the situation..." October 10, 1827, 3.

²⁷ David Post, "From the Jefferson Seminary to the Louisville Free School: Change and Continuity in Western Education, 1813-1840", *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, 86, Spring 1988, 110.

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republican educational institutions in other ways. In June of 1829 he was appointed to investigate the monitorial system schools in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston on behalf of the Mayor and Council of the City of Louisville – an event which even received some attention in the New York papers.

The inhabitants of the Western States are taking great interest in the improved system of free schools. We learn from the Louisville Advertiser that Mr. Mann Butler, a gentleman of science, has been deputed to visit the Eastern States, to make himself familiar with the most improved systems. Mr. Butler has arrived in New York and commenced his tour of observation among the schools.²⁸

Butler in his report to the Mayor upon returning expressed an admiration for the New York Public High School and the schools of Boston in particular, in part because of their ability to extend the curriculum beyond the elementary subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic. Butler also pays particular attention in his report to the different formats of teaching displayed in the schools. The New York Public High School, for example:

The organization of this seminary is the most complete and extensive of any I visited, whether professing to employ the aid of monitors, or acting upon the more ancient method. At the same time it will be perceived, there is a great admixture of adult instruction. Indeed no class (and it is a great excellence) is permitted to act as monitors, which has not been prepared for their duty by previous instruction under adult preceptors. After discharging their duty as *monitors*, repeating with subordinate classes, the lessons which they have honorably executed as scholars, the monitors with their pupils withdraw on a signal to their respective duties with some adult teacher in a recitation room... Thus a perpetual alternation of lessons under *senior instruction*, and repetitions of former lessons as *monitors* is kept up through the establishment.²⁹

Butler's report was evidently met with enough approbation to enable the City Free School in Louisville to open almost immediately on the monitorial system. Indeed, in the

²⁸ For Butler's appointment and tour of monitorial schools: "City Free School", *Louisville Public Advertiser*, June 10, 1829, 3.

²⁹ Mann Butler, "Report of Mr. Mann Butler to the Hon. Mayor and Council of the City of Louisville," *Louisville Public Advertiser*, August 12, 1829, 3.

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newspaper account of Butler's report on the same page immediately to the right of

Butler's story is an advertisement for the new school to be taught by Butler himself:

CITY FREE SCHOOL.

THIS PUBLIC SCHOOL will be opened for the reception of pupils, on the **MONITORIAL SYSTEM**, in the house on Green street, immediately back of the dwelling house now occupied by Mrs. Mathews, on the first day of September next. It will go into operation under the superintendence of Mr. Mann Butler and a competent assistant. Mr. Butler has recently returned from a tour of inspection of the most approved Monitorial schools in the eastern cities; in the course of which, he has obtained a large amount of information, most necessary to the successful establishment and conduct of the school. The course of instruction to be (for the present) pursued in the institution, will embrace, spelling, reading, writing, verbal and written arithmetic, English grammar, with composition, geography, with the use of the globes, and book-keeping. Application may be made to the undersigned trustees of the school, any two of whom are authorized to admit pupils to the institution, agreeably to the subjoined extract from the ordinance respecting said school.

JAMES GUTHRIE, Chm.	WILLIAM SALE,
J. H. OVERSTREET,	FORT COSBY, Jr.
JAMES ANDERSON,	SAM. DICKINSON.

"Be it ordained by the Mayor and Board of Councilmen of the City of Louisville, that all white children under the age of sixteen years, shall be admitted into said school, and to all the rights and privileges thereof, under such rules and regulations as the board of trustees may from time to time adopt."

Figure 12: Advertisement for the Louisville City Free School, *Louisville Public Advertiser*, August 12, 1829, column 5.

Subsequent advertisements for the school in that same month state that the new monitorial school occupied space owned by the Jefferson Seminary while the house on Green street was fitted up. Having cannibalized the Seminary's principal teacher and moved into its premises, it is possible that the new City Free School simply swallowed what was left of the Seminary, which closed its doors for good in 1829.³⁰

³⁰ "City School" advertisement, *Louisville Public Advertiser*, August 26, 1829, 3, col. 4. For the closing of the Jefferson Seminary: Dwayne Cox and William James Morison, *The University of Louisville* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 5. Also "Jefferson Seminary" in *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, edited by John E. Kleber. (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 1992), 467-8.

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Butler was the principal teacher of the City Free School in Louisville for a few years, during which time the school was apparently successful. However, after a while, Butler's advocacy for the monitorial system ebbed. Butler possessed a good deal of self-importance regarding his academic credentials, and, as already discussed, could display a kind of truculence when challenged on that basis. Nearly every statement to the press involves not only a litany of his bona fides, but also a declaration of the number of years he had been an educator in Kentucky – one could almost be forgiven for coming to the impression that Butler had been teaching in Kentucky since its admission to the Union in 1792. Butler would also have had more exposure to traditional academic hierarchies through his own education and career which may have colored which aspects of the Lancasterian schools he paid attention to on his tour.

For example, Butler's report to the Mayor dwells on the secondary schools in New York and Boston and gives short shrift to the elementary schools in Baltimore and Philadelphia – evidently no recorded visit was paid to the elementary schools in New York City. The high school in Philadelphia is examined for its particular combination of academy and monitorial institution:

In this establishment the monitorial system was first met in full application to all the branches of classical education as well as to the modern languages, French, Spanish and Drawing. ... The labors of the monitors in teaching Latin, Greek, French and Drawing (which I personally inspected) were generally facilitated by interlineal translations prepared by the teachers of this establishment. In this seminary the monitorial system is carried to a lofty height and on an expanded and animating scale.³¹

³¹ Mann Butler, "Report...", *Louisville Public Advertiser*, August 12, 1829, 3.

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It is possible that Butler believed that eventually the Louisville school could blossom into a full scale monitorial system similar to New York's with a classical academy at the top. The mayor and City Council, however, were still requesting a focus on more mundane curricula and pushing Butler for adherence in the day-to-day operations to the classroom structure expected from a Lancasterian school. Given Butler's previous insistence on employing assistant teachers and keeping class sizes small, this may have had more to do with containing costs than a sense of remaining in lockstep with the Lancasterian system. The tension erupted into open dissent in 1834. The government apparently moved to find a replacement for the principal teacher and Butler, ever quick to perceive a slight, responded:

Sir,

The City government having thought it fit to imply a Misgovernment of the City School without any exception, or formal enquiry – and the trustees having advertised for Suitable teachers, as they allege by direction of the Municipal authority. I feel bound in courtesy to it, and justice to a professional character of 28 Years Standing to Resign my situation in the City School as I now do to the City Council whenever a successor may be appointed.³²

Butler's sense of his value in the classroom was out of alignment with the source of his value from the operators of the school. Although he was supportive of the monitorial ideal of students instructing other students, he apparently was also contorting that ideal to fit his conception of how a classroom worked. For Butler, the teacher was still the primary provider of instruction. In his defense of his actions he points to the same issue that other observers of monitorial schools found open to criticism – the lack of

³² Mann Butler, "Letter to the Hon. Mayor of Louisville", dated June 27th, 1834. Jefferson County Public Schools Archives and Records Center, Lexington Kentucky.

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academic experience on the part of the “instructors” and their corresponding inferiority in teaching their draughts.

My department has always been Monitorial to the extent of those duties which cannot be performed by Myself, claiming as I do a superiority to any monitor, and professing to do the City and its Children more service than any monitor or unfinished scholar could do. These efforts, in conformity with the ordinance of 1830, are conformably to all the instructions of the Trustees and the public Reports of the Trustees and to the committees of the council for the last five years, have been misinterpreted into an effort to escape from my duty. To exert myself and bring every aid of experience into the service of the city school, instead of committing the task of instruction to the boys who come to the institution, has been stigmatized as a departure from duty.³³

Butler ultimately could not square his conception of monitorialism with the City Council’s and claimed that “On those terms no teacher who is worthy of the publick trust will, or ought to serve two masters of such opposite dispositions and irreconcilable views.” Butler’s resignation from the school may be read as an expression of frustration with the distance between what was valued in more traditional educational institutions and what qualities were championed in the adoption of the new system.

One remarkable aspect of Butler’s resignation is his inability to have seen the very thing in the monitorial schools that he visited which would ultimately cause his departure. Did he think his school would somehow be exceptional, perhaps because of his own personal qualities? Butler did conform to the Lancasterian movement in other ways: in calling for professionalizing of teachers and pushing for training and education of teachers. Butler was among the founders and the first president of the Kentucky Association of Professional Teachers in 1833 during his tenure with the Louisville City Free School. That same year he also attended a general education convention in Kentucky

³³ Ibid.

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which produced the following resolution: “*Resolved*, That this convention considers the establishment of a college for teachers, exceedingly desirable and important.”³⁴ Mann Butler served on the committee charged with enforcing the resolution.³⁵

Ultimately, the teachers in most Lancasterian schools, especially those funded in whole or in part with public monies were not in the independent school operator model. Discrepancies between the board’s conception of the work of the teacher and the teacher’s conception of their own work were inevitable given that the new model was still so flexible. However, teachers who had to answer to boards instead of the market could find that boards and their corresponding responsiveness to political and economic realities could be as unpredictable as the vicissitudes of the marketplace. If the board was unhappy with the teachers as individuals for other reasons, Lancasterianism could serve as a cover for separating the teacher from the institution.

The New York Manumission Society and the firing of John Teasman from the New York African Free School

The case of the use of the monitorial system in the African Free School in New York City presents an unusual case. Where Lancasterian teachers were a desired commodity, they tended to remain with schools for longer periods, only leaving of their own volition when circumstances pressed them (such as Lemuel Shattuck leaving the Detroit school after his salary went unpaid for a long period) or other opportunities arose (such as Shepherd Johnston leaving the New Brunswick school to return to New York for

³⁴ "COMMON SCHOOLS IN KENTUCKY." *New York Observer and Chronicle* (1833-1912), Dec 07, 1833, 194. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/136198041?accountid=13626>.

³⁵ Richard Ferguson, "General Education Convention." *Western Luminary* (1824-1834), Nov 20, 1833, 75. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/126874658?accountid=13626>.

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a higher salary). The African Free School is one of the only cases where a teacher was listed in the record as having been let go for performance reasons, although, as this analysis will discuss, alternative interpretations have been made.

The New York African Free School opened in 1787 with twelve students. The school was started by the New York Manumission Society in 1787 to extend help “to the children of this injured and long degraded race amongst us.”³⁶ The tenor of much of the Society’s discussion of their school is overtly paternalistic to a contemporary ear, even in comparison to similar rhetoric about the schools for white students.³⁷ Cornelius Davis was the first teacher, who was hired at 120 pounds per year. The compensation was inadequate and, “(a)fter nearly ten years, almost certainly due to insufficient income to support himself and family, Davis resigned.”³⁸ In 1797 the school regrouped, William Pirsson replaced Davis at a salary of \$500 a year, a female teacher, Abigail Nichols, was employed at \$200 a year, and a former slave named John Teasman was hired as an assistant teacher or usher at \$120 a year. Salaries were raised a short while later to \$625 for Pirsson, \$200 for Teasman, and \$250 for Nichols. Tension over rising instructional staff costs and the intervention of a yellow fever epidemic seems to have spurred another redeployment of resources in 1799: Pirsson was let go, Teasman’s salary raised to \$300 and Nichols continued in the female department for \$200.³⁹

³⁶ Andrews, *History*, 7.

³⁷ John Rury, for example, discusses how the Society’s policy of visiting the homes of their students to “check their moral standing” probably limited the school’s growth. Although the school received money to subsidize its efforts from the New York State Legislature, it did expect parents to pay a small amount towards tuition for their children. Rury, 236.

³⁸ Swan, 335.

³⁹ Swan, 335-6.

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Teasman would have been old to be an assistant teacher when he began at the African Free School although the subordination of a black instructor to a white one would have seemed natural to the Manumission Society (or indeed to most groups of philanthropists in New York at the time). Teasman was about 45 when he assumed the primary teaching job; he had been born in New Jersey around 1754 and was a former slave himself. Teasman was required by the board to begin using the Lancasterian Monitorial System in the African Free School sometime during the year 1806.⁴⁰ While he was probably not the first teacher in New York City to use the system – if William Smith’s 1813 *Journal* is to be trusted, Smith’s use of the system in his private school would have begun in 1805 – Teasman was among the very first teachers in the United States to adopt Lancasterian practices.⁴¹

Teasman however was not only a teacher but also a prominent member of the free black community in New York City and his political activities eventually brought him into conflict with the Manumission Society. Teasman was central to the creation of one of the earliest black benevolent societies, the New York African Society for Mutual Relief among whose officers were many of his former students, mentioned as the first organization of free blacks chartered by the New York State Legislature.⁴² Teasman also participated in many events such as parades celebrating the 5th of July and the annual

⁴⁰ Swan, 337.

⁴¹ Smith, *Journal of a Voyage in the Missionary Ship Duff*, 276-7.

⁴² Daniel Perlman, “Organizations of the Free Negro in New York City, 1800-1860” *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Jul, 1971), 183.

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celebrations of the abolition of the slave trade in New York after 1808.⁴³ To the Board of the Manumission Society, however, parades and celebrations were undesirable expressions of pride that were to be discouraged as they presented the possibility of tipping over into “riotous behavior” and they were unhappy that Teasman chose to be a visible supporter of these festivities. “Above all, it was the paternalistic attitude of the men of the Manumission Society that in great measure generated the formation of an independent black community. ... This penchant of the Manumission Society to be the religious and moral guardian of the African race was crucial to the transition from black subservience to independence and self-reliance.”⁴⁴

In 1809 matters came to a head when the African Society planned a large ceremony in commemoration of the one year anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. The Manumission Society objected to this planned fete and sent a committee to ask the African Society not to have the event. The African Society rejoined that the incurred expense would make it too costly to cancel and their procession was carried out as planned. About three months later the Manumission Society dismissed Teasman from his position as teacher, claiming that there was no progress being made by the students, despite there being little in the records of the board to indicate dissatisfaction with Teasman’s work previous to this point.⁴⁵

⁴³ John Rury, “Philanthropy, Self Help, and Social Control: The New York Manumission Society and Free Blacks, 1785-1810” *Phylon*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (3rd Qtr., 1985), 239.

⁴⁴ Swan, 339.

⁴⁵ Swan, 338.

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The Manumission Society appears to have sent up a separate committee of “Trustees of the School” who visited the school at regular intervals, although with varying membership and consequently varying levels of scrutiny.⁴⁶ The minutes referring to the school in the two years leading up to Teasman’s dismissal document the abrupt shift in the board’s attitude:

In July of 1807: “That the School has been visited monthly – under the impression of an Improvement arising from the enlargement of the School Room & Introduction in some measure of Lancaster’s System of Education they have resorted thereto – it appears from the opportunity they have had since, that considerable advantages will result therefrom. Willet Hicks, chairman, Robt H Bowne, Secretary.”⁴⁷

In November of 1807: “That attention has been paid to the Duties assigned them, the number of Scholars who generally attend are about Eighty & considerable improvement is evinced. Signed Rob’t H. Bowne, Sec’y”⁴⁸

In July of 1808: “The school is large and has been visited and examined as the Constitution contemplates, to a pretty good degree of Satisfaction. Willet Hicks, Ch.(air), Robert H. Bowne Sec’y”⁴⁹

In September of 1808: “The School has been monthly visited, which consists of upwards of One Hundred Scholars and it is with pleasure they see and announce to the Society the increasing order and decorum of the School and improvement of the children. Robert H. Bowne, Secretary.”⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Moseley’s dissertation on the Manumission Society notes that some time shortly after Teasman’s firing, the committee switched from having its members appointed each quarter to electing the entire board annually. T. Robert Moseley, “A History of the New-York Manumission Society, 1785-1849” (doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1963), 236.

⁴⁷ NYMS Minutes, July 14, 1807.

⁴⁸ NYMS Minutes, November 1, 1807.

⁴⁹ NYMS Minutes, July 10, 1808.

⁵⁰ NYMS Minutes, September 9, 1808.

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In January of 1809: “That the School has been visited monthly the number of Scholars attending of late are smaller than usual.”⁵¹

In April of 1809: “The Trustees of the School report that they have attended the School monthly and have examined the Scholars as usual – It is with regret they inform the Society that the children have made little or no improvement for many months and that the Trustees have concluded to employ a new master in place of the present one. Robert H Bowne, Chaireman, Thos Collins, Sec’y”⁵²

The connection between the events of early 1809 and Teasman’s dismissal from the African Free School is not certain, but the only evidence available in the minutes of the NYMS board seems to point to a somewhat sudden change of heart about the teacher’s capabilities. Teasman immediately opened his own school which he operated until his death in 1815 – in an address to the New York African Society for Mutual Relief in 1811 he asked his listeners to remember “the happy success of the African Free School in the illumination of our minds.”⁵³ The board’s choice to replace Teasman was an Englishman, Charles C. Andrews. One of the first reports submitted by the School Committee after Andrews’ appointment states, “That the School under the present teacher is daily advancing in respectability owing principally to the adoption of Lancaster’s system of education and to the extraordinary exertions of a teacher well qualified to conduct the same.”⁵⁴ Andrews in his later history of the African Free School described the transition to the Lancasterian System in 1809 without reference to John Teasman and

⁵¹ NYMS Minutes, January 10, 1809. It is worth noting that attendance did typically dip in the winter months due to weather conditions and illness so the drop in enrollment may or may not have been meant to be attributed to Teasman’s performance of his duties. Moseley, 214.

⁵² NYMS Minutes, April 11, 1809.

⁵³ John Teasman, *An Address Delivered in the African Episcopal Church, On the 25th Day of March, 1811, Before the New York African Society for Mutual Relief, Being the First Anniversary of Its Incorporation* (New York, 1811), 10. See also: Perlman, 183.

⁵⁴ NYMS Minutes, November 14, 1809.

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under-reporting the number of the students during Teasman's tenure by as much as half, counting the class sizes as "40-60."

Andrews in his history of the African Free School describes himself in the third person as "a teacher... who understood that system" and implies that the shift to Lancasterianism (with its accordingly large class sizes) happened under his watch.⁵⁵ Teasman may not have willingly adopted the Lancasterian system, and it may not have been possible for him to follow the system closely given the only sources of knowledge of the system in New York City at the time were second hand and limited. However, from the organization's minutes, the School Committee of the Manumission Society considered what Teasman was doing in the classroom to be the Lancasterian system and the African Free School under Teasman's tenure as teacher was often held up as an exemplar of the Lancasterian method in use in the United States.⁵⁶

Andrews did oversee the African Free School during the bulk of its existence – the school ran from 1787 until 1835 with Andrews in charge of first the only school, then in charge of the largest school in the small system of schools run by the Manumission Society from 1809 until 1831. The number of students in Andrews' school grew greatly during the first half of his tenure, which some scholars attribute to Andrews' employment of the Lancasterian system. This conclusion typically misses that Teasman was using the system for more than two years before Andrews superseded him. Also, there is the question of Andrews' initial qualifications to take over the school in the first place, for if

⁵⁵ Andrews, *History of the New York African Free-Schools*, 17.

⁵⁶ As an example of this kind of notice, Dewitt Clinton's speech on the opening of P.S. #1's new building in New York City mentions the benefits of the Lancasterian system for that school. Bourne, 22.

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Andrews was already familiar with the Lancasterian monitorial system when he took on the job, it was, at best, an undocumented familiarity.

Andrews, according to the Manumission Society board minutes, was reportedly already “well qualified” to take over a Lancasterian school in 1809. However, there is no remaining evidence that he taught at any school in New York City, Lancasterian or otherwise, prior to assuming the position. City directories for New York City only show “Charles C. Andrews” as an accountant in 1805 and 1806 – no entries exist at all for him in 1807-1808 although Longworth’s 1808 directory lists 214 other teachers and individuals employed in various educational capacities.⁵⁷ Andrews’ entry in the U.S. Marshal’s Returns of Enemy Aliens and Prisoners of War during the 1812 war lists him as having been in the United States since approximately 1802, which makes it a remote possibility that he trained with Lancaster in London. However, lists of qualified Lancasterian teachers from the British and Foreign School Society do not include his name.⁵⁸

A final possibility is that Andrews may have trained with William Smith in New York City’s P.S. #1. No direct evidence is available for this, but some circumstantial evidence exists. On the page of the Manumission Society board minutes directly facing the page with the note of John Teasman’s dismissal it is announced that “William S.

⁵⁷ *Longworth’s City Directory*, New York for the years 1801-1809 was consulted. Longworth’s directory for 1808 was used for the compilation of the list of teachers and is available as an appendix to the study.

⁵⁸ For Andrews’ year of entry into the United States: ‘War of 1812 Papers’ of the Department of State, 1789-1815; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M588, 7 rolls); General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives, Washington. D.C. retrieved from ancestry.com. Andrews applied for naturalization on April 28, 1809, almost immediately after receiving the position with the African Free School. For Andrews’ absence from available lists of teachers trained at Lancaster’s school E.F. Wall, “Joseph Lancaster and the origins of the British and Foreign School Society.” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1966), Appendix III.

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Burling, and William Smith, were elected members of the board of Trustees of the School.”⁵⁹ Further documentation from Manumission Society records indexed by Isaac Hopper in the 1820’s provides additional information of how information about Lancaster’s method may have been passed from individual to individual. Hopper’s index shows Smith joining the Society in 1808 at about the same time as John Griscom, who was employed as a school teacher in a non-Lancasterian school at the time, but who was using William Smith’s school room for an evening course of lectures in chemistry.⁶⁰

If Andrews did train with Smith, that would make him no more qualified in the Lancasterian sense than Teasman as neither Smith nor Teasman trained with anyone directly associated with Lancaster or his acolytes. Teasman also would have had much more practical experience than Andrews at running a Lancasterian school. It is true that it would have been difficult for the Manumission Society board to insist on employing a directly trained individual. However, members of the Manumission Society board were also on the board of the New York Free School Society (the most prominent examples would be Thomas Eddy and John Murray, Jr.) who awarded the teacher’s position in the whites-only school P.S. #1 to William Smith over “the many teachers who offered themselves” in part because of his previous experience with the system.⁶¹ If experience of the system were not paramount in the boards’ consideration of who to employ (and it is likely that it wasn’t), both Andrews and Smith, when writing of their respective hiring

⁵⁹ NYMS Minutes, April 11, 1809.

⁶⁰ Isaac T. Hopper, “List of Members of the New York Manumission Society” available from the Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College archives. Identifier SW09-A0010661. Retrieved online from http://tritych.brynmawr.edu/cdm/ref/collection/HC_QuakSlav/id/4605.

⁶¹ Smith, 277.

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decisions, discuss it as if it were. Even in schools that had adopted at least some aspects of Lancasterianism, technical qualifications of the individual could be superseded by other qualities when determining who was an appropriate candidate to teach.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This dissertation is an exploration of different phenomena surrounding the work of teachers in Lancasterian monitorial classrooms in the United States in the early nineteenth century and how these phenomena shaped the work of teaching. This exploration is grounded in the idea that the investigation of the details of Lancasterian teachers' work is important because there were many different actors attempting to make sense of these new tools and techniques. In light of the novel and overt identification of the Lancasterian monitorial system as a technology used in a specifically educational context, these negotiations between actors to establish the system as first a "working" and then a "non-working" tool represent the collaborative construction of the work of teachers by a variety of different participants. The nature of the heterogeneous mix of venture schools, charity schools, and publicly funded schools meant that this group of actors involved in determining the work of teachers included policymakers, philanthropists, parents, taxpayers, students, and, most importantly, the teachers themselves.

The work of these participants would eventually bring the swirl of ideas surrounding what constituted the work of the teacher in the monitorial classroom, along with other associated questions, to a state of closure. As one set of ideas became dominant, a host of possibilities were foregone.¹ A new nation was having a new kind of debate on how the educational opportunities available to its citizens would create new kinds of economic, spiritual, social, and civic life. This is a debate that we are not yet

¹ Bijker, 87. "Closure leads to a decrease of interpretive flexibility – to one artifact becoming dominant and others ceasing to exist. ... It is important to recognize that the process of closure is almost irreversible – almost, but not completely."

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finished with, as calls for the reconfiguration of the work of teachers in light of new technological options have intensified.

The Lancasterian schools and teachers were among the first to establish publicly funded school systems, in the United States as well as other countries.² While the system may have fallen out of favor in the United States after a relatively short period of time, it was the method of education that was inculcated into the daily practice of hundreds of new teachers through its emphasis on teacher training. This “installed base” of practitioners helped to create a shape in the classroom that teachers would fill for decades to come. The fact that it was the first system of specific educational practices to be widely adopted in a new nation like the United States also makes the examination of its consideration, adoption and then rejection particularly interesting in light of where and how educators in the United States have subsequently considered technological innovations to adopt in the classroom.

The work of the teacher in the classroom was a fundamental element in the technology of the Lancasterian system, but it was not an element that could be relied upon to perform with great consistency. Even at the height of the Lancasterians’ influence in the United States, concerns were raised about individual variation on the

² See, for example: Marcelo Caruso and Eugenia Roldan Vera, "Pluralizing Meanings: The Monitorial System of Education in Latin America in the Early Nineteenth Century 1." *Paedagogica Historica* 41, no. 6 (2005): 645-654. Also G.F. Bartle, 'The Role of the British and Foreign School Society in Elementary Education in India and the East Indies 1813-1875,' *History of Education*, 23, no. 1 (1994) 17-3. Also J. Tschurennev, 'Diffusing Useful Knowledge: The Monitorial System of Education in Madras, London and Bengal, 1789-1840,' *Paedagogica Historica*, 44, no. 3 (2008), 245-64; Bruce Curtis, "Joseph Lancaster in Montreal: Monitorial Schooling and Politics in a Colonial Context" *Historical Studies In Education*, 17(1), 2005, 1-27; L. Mesquita, "The Lancasterian monitorial system as an education industry with a logic of capitalist valorisation." *Paedagogica Historica*, 48(5), 2012, 661-675. doi:10.1080/00309230.2012.658159

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teaching practices in schools that were nominally “monitorial.” In his manual published upon his arrival in Baltimore, Joseph Lancaster described the situation:

BALTIMORE - Gross imposition has here raised prejudices against the system, by unqualified persons pretending to teach – not aware that theory alone cannot be a qualification for the discharge of a practical duty, or that it will not answer for a teacher to be studying a book, when he ought to be conveying instruction. The obvious remedy for abuses by teachers, recommended to the founder of the system, has been the establishment of a school under his own care, as a model of what the system can effect, and a seminary where teachers may be practically rendered conversant with its powers, under his immediate eye, and receive his own certificate of their proficiency.³

Joseph Lancaster’s solution was, predictably, more Joseph Lancaster. But an aspect of the problem was the notion of the possibility of “gross imposition” itself. A gross imposition implies a lack of adherence to an existing standard. If anyone could be expected know about the standard, it would have been Lancaster himself, the founder of the system. The creation of a more widely held set of beliefs, even if they were inconsistent between the various actors in the system, is one of the most important ways that the Lancasterian monitorial system influenced the work of teachers in the United States in the early nineteenth century and thereafter.

The differences between teachers in the classrooms were not the only possible variation. Different schools employed different funding strategies, worked out different staffing strategies, were housed in different sorts of buildings and served different populations. This plurality of forms during the period of adoption decisions among educators would begin to settle into the “grammar of schooling” a generation later as the

³ Joseph Lancaster, *The Lancasterian system of education, with improvements* (Baltimore: published for the author, 1821), Xv.

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later group of school reformers including Mann, Barnard, and Carter were convinced of the value of systematizing the wide variety of educational forms into something more predictable.⁴ This diversity of different forms of schools and teachers within them and the discussions surrounding their creation and evaluation demonstrates the interpretive flexibility of educational institutions at this earlier period.

The existence of several large school systems (largely urban and largely for the poor) as well as hundreds of smaller schools using the method represent an “installed base” that continued to exert its sway. The “installed base” would represent a challenge that policy makers in individual cities and towns would increasingly need to meet. The hype surrounding the Lancasterian schools in Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and Washington DC had its uses. Having shown that schools could be operated successfully (for some definition of “success”) at low costs, even if a town decided not to create a school it would have to be a forgone option. Whether the goal was a more educated workforce, a more morally inclined citizenry, or streets free of imagined or real drunken and debauched children, there was a technique available to be employed as a remedy. More readily available educational opportunities provided on a mass scale as an intervention became available as a remedy. The Lancasterian monitorial system may be regarded as benefiting from the accident of its timing, but after its heyday, it would be difficult for anyone to regard the education of other people’s children as not within their ability to influence, whether through overt control, or through choosing not to employ this method.

⁴ Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering Toward Utopia*, 134.

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The Lancasterian monitorial schools pushed the question of what constituted the proper scope of a teacher's work in a way that had not been significant before in the public discourse in the United States. "The attempt to embody these false opinions into institutions, and the attention given to, and the discussion of, these institutions undoubtedly helped men to see the true nature of education, and to realize the true function of the teacher."⁵ The fact that the details of how the system operated in many cases did not match up with the discourse also provides an insight on just how long the problems of the interactions between teachers and technologies have been "wicked."⁶

Looking at the details of how one important group, the teachers in the schools, worked within (and, in some cases, without) this system demonstrates some of the plurality of roles still possible for these individuals at the inception of the schools. The fact that not all these possible functions survived is not surprising, as some stakeholders have pushed them outside of the accepted definition of teacher's work. This is especially true of teachers' activities as authors and inventors, which would probably have diminished from market pressure and an inevitably limited demand if nothing else.

The fact that some of the discussions surrounding the role of teachers in the schools are familiar in the contemporary debates on education reform suggest that the conversation surrounding the nature of the work of teachers and its relationship with technology continues. Take, for a single example, the current frustrations described within American schools' culture of testing.

⁵ J.P. Gordy, *Rise and growth of the normal school idea in the United States*. (Washington DC: U.S. Bureau of Education. Circ. Of Information, 1891, no. 8).

⁶ Hilda Borko, Jennie Whitcomb, and Daniel Liston. "Wicked problems and other thoughts on issues of technology and teacher learning." *Journal of Teacher Education* 60, no. 1 (2009): 3-7.

Though few educators would seriously entertain a project that sought to remove examination entirely, many would situate themselves as working to resist its variously "corrupting" effects. Here, resisting examination becomes a matter of allegiance to higher educational ideals. If only we could escape some of its influence, if only we could remove aspects of its imprint from the child. If only we could just examine a little less and educate a little more.

Sentiments like this are misconceived. The logic of examination constitutes modern schooling and education as its ontological condition. As such, it cannot be removed or meaningfully resisted without radically dismantling the school as a social and historical project (Peim, in press). To understand the extent to which examination now constitutes schooling, it is necessary to investigate the social systems within rather than upon which examination was formed (Hoskin, 1979; Peim, 2001). The modern examination was not independently invented and then imposed upon educational institutions as if from above. Rather, it was developed as part of a broader regime of educational technologies that combined to form the architecture of modern schooling.⁷

The described tension between the ideals of education and what the teacher is in the classroom to do is a common thing to find in normative discussions of what contemporary schools ought to be doing. Looking at where that tension was initiated provides a possible starting point for more fruitful discussions, what were the ground conditions when that tension began? The negotiation for how the work of the teacher as an educator within the school (as opposed to a disciplinarian, a spokesperson for a set of values, or as a producer of testing outcomes): how did it begin and how was it conducted? What possibilities were considered and which were rejected and on what basis? And have the new possibilities presented by a newer generation of tools and

⁷ Ansgar Allen, "The Examined Life: On the Formation of Souls and Schooling" *American Educational Research Journal* 2013 50: 216

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techniques seriously altered those conditions? Or are we at the beginning of another cycle of technological “hype”?⁸

The Lancasterian monitorial system may be a strange interlude in the history of American education, but it is currently a resonant one. New technologies and new economic pressures have created greater pressures on educational institutions to find different configurations for the resources of materials, teachers, physical spaces, and student activities. Two white papers produced in 2011 and 2012 by the Innosight Institute report on research undertaken to first catalog then categorize the different forms of K-12 schooling where schools were experimenting with different forms of blended learning; the blending being between in person instruction in the classroom and online instruction, sometimes instructor led, but sometimes programmed instruction based on various algorithms.⁹

The Innosight research identified over 80 different programs and schools that were implementing different forms of educational program with varying degrees of instructor involvement in different aspects of the work. “The programs profiled in this study ... were highly varied in the way that students experienced their learning across several dimensions, including teacher roles, scheduling, physical space, and delivery methods.”¹⁰ Additionally, “... many school operators have implemented more than one

⁸ Cuban, *Teachers and Machines*, 73.

⁹ The Innosight Institute is a research institute renamed in 2013 to the Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation.

¹⁰ Michael B. Horn and Heather Staker. "The rise of K-12 blended learning." *Innosight Institute*. (2011), 5.

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blended-learning model for their students.”¹¹ Given the increasing willingness of educational institutions to experiment with a variety of blended models of learning at all educational levels, this may signal a return to interpretive flexibility – an opening up of possibilities.

A new technology, even if it is demonstrably in existence prior to its inventor’s modification of it as was the case with Lancasterianism, suggests possible configurations of resources. This experimentation is clearly at work in the time period that the Lancasterians were most prominent in the United States. While efforts in the early republican period to promote the idea of publicly funded education were starting to gain momentum, the Lancasterian monitorial system provided a possible configuration of resources and rhetoric that appealed to policy makers and philanthropists. This was true, in part, because it allowed these actors to frame these schools as sufficiently different from previous schools to enable them to move the ideas forward. However, outcomes from these technology adoption negotiations and decisions also, eventually and inevitably, constrains the systems making them in ways which deserve greater consideration.

By far the greatest latitude of choice exists the very first time a particular instrument, system, or technique is introduced. Because choices tend to become strongly fixed in material equipment, economic investment, and social habit, the original flexibility vanishes for all practical purposes once the initial commitments are made. In that sense technological innovations are similar to legislative acts or political foundings that establish a framework for public order that will endure over many generations.¹²

¹¹ Heather Staker and Michael B. Horn. "Classifying K-12 blended learning." *Innosight Institute* (2012), 4.

¹² Langdon Winner, *The whale and the reactor: A search for limits in an age of high technology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 29.

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The teacher, whether in a monitorial school or in a contemporary school, as part of what made schools possible in the first place, is part of the “technology” of the school and the classroom. How the teachers in the schools embraced, negotiated with or rejected the role forms an important part of the story, as it would for any technology, because the “founding” of the framework shapes the work for a long period after the original negotiations may be forgotten.

There was room for these extraordinary roles for teachers early in the adoption phase, but this pattern would diminish as the school systems moved towards closure with the Common School movement in the later nineteenth century. The work of teachers in the monitorial schools represented one technological possibility that had some influence upon subsequent educational models, but the possibilities inherent in teachers being closely aligned with technology as trainers, inventors, and full participants in the creation of the technology of schools was ultimately forgone, to be viewed today as a problem to be solved by a small army of technology specialists, sadly separate from the work of teachers in the schools.

CHAPTER 7: A DISCUSSION AS EPILOGUE

An early educational technology called the Lancasterian monitorial system suggests many possible parallels to contemporary practice with regards to analyzing how ideas about technology's possibilities have fed the drive for massive, replicable education systems. During this system's adoption in the United States during the early 19th century, patterns of interaction between teachers, school organizers, communities and policy makers were established that would shape the work of teachers in classrooms for years to come, most notably in the relationship between teachers and technology.

Today, for many advocates of implementing more educational technologies into schools, teachers are either a mystery to contend with or an obstacle to be navigated. With yearly expenditures on educational technology currently near or over three billion dollars in the American K-12 sector alone, the need to justify adoption decisions is increasing. With the efficacy of the present cohort of teachers already questioned and politicized, it is relatively easy to take the position that the problem is with the instruction currently being performed. Teachers' unwillingness or inability to adjust their practices to incorporate technology is considered a good reason for the relative lack of positive results these expenditures have produced so far, and perhaps teacher intransigence does have some power to explain the "productivity paradox" in education.¹

However, for a brief time at the beginning of the 19th century, one group of teachers' work was intimately associated with the implementation of new technology,

¹ For U.S. expenditures on educational technology, see Council of Economic Advisors, "Unleashing the Potential of Educational Technology" report dated September 16, 2011, retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cea/factsheets-reports/educational-technology>. This report cites the figure at 2.9 billion in 2010 from the .

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specifically the monitorial system. Today, administrators and policy makers are trying to increase the amount of computer and network technology teachers use in their instructional efforts because it promises greater efficacy for less expense and, for some, a greater emphasis on computers ties into larger aspirations they hold for students in their future. Both districts and schools of education at the graduate level struggle to find a meaningful way to integrate this knowledge into the training and professional development programs for their existing staff. Broadening our understanding of the adoption of the Lancastrian monitorial system and how it relates to the creation of teachers and schools can aid in formulating new approaches to these professional development efforts.

Lancasterianism, when first implemented, brought new teachers into schools, individuals who were tightly coupled in the public's understanding with technological innovation. Examining the patterns of its uptake and rejection will provide a new understanding of how ideas about technology provided the possibility of radical change to the teaching workforce in classrooms. Further examination of this case may also suggest possibilities for the next generation of teachers and their profession's relationship with technology.

To provide a backdrop for the parallels and distinctions from today's teachers and educational institutions, it's helpful to discuss the initial creation and promulgation of the system. The Lancasterian monitorial system flourished worldwide during the first thirty years of the nineteenth century. During this time period schools employing this set of apparatuses and practices were established on every continent of the world but one and it is widely considered to be the first world-wide educational movement, if not educational

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fad. The name ‘Lancasterian’ comes from Joseph Lancaster, the system’s creator and, more importantly, its promoter. Lancaster, born in London in 1778, opened his first school in London in 1798. Borrowing from the ideas of Rev Andrew Bell and his own experiences as an assistant teacher, Lancaster developed a set of classroom practices whereby one teacher could manage a group of as many as a thousand children through the use of older or more experienced students as monitors to guide the other students in small groups. He then wrote a “manual” which codified this set of practices along with detailed descriptions of the apparatuses necessary to run such a school. Different individuals rapidly disseminated the ideas contained in this manual, with Lancaster himself riding a wave of accolades and worldwide celebrity for his invention.

Schools, particularly in the United States, prior to the advent of the Lancastrian monitorial school were wildly heterogenous in their funding, their oversight structures, and teacher staffing. Communities in the United States were intrigued by the potential of a different approach to education that promised to be effective and cheap. Part of the challenge in getting cities and towns to move ahead with these schools was to convince them to spend taxpayer money or devote limited charitable donations to unproven techniques in the hands of feckless individuals.

Because monitorial schools touted their size as a selling point of their technology, the public understanding of their operation was that monitorial schools almost necessarily had much bigger enrollments. Teachers were clearly central to the successful operation of a monitorial school, but to get a school to be at all functional you had to have the right individual operating the machine.

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This was the pressing problem for boards: public perception of the occupation of school teaching as, at best, a way station for capable individuals on route to a higher calling or, at worst, charity for people who could not be expected to support themselves. The public's opinion of the effectiveness and rectitude of teachers was not uniform, but largely it was not favorable. The prolonged and strenuous efforts that boards engaged in to find and retain qualified individuals suggests that there were concerns about entrusting a large scale effort to individuals already working as teachers. When Lancasterian schools began to be created, they needed to be staffed with individuals who were dramatically and visibly different than the teachers that had come before them.

The payoff for the qualified individual however, could be substantial. The economies of scale in a monitorial school enabled boards to pay their teachers larger salaries and employ them consistently throughout the year. Many monitorial teachers knew that they were among a small class of specialists and they enjoyed social mobility and security that they would not have expected or, probably, gotten in other teaching situations.

Part of the reason for the preferential treatment was that Lancasterian schools were specific in their operation and curricula in ways that earlier schools were not. Because they were specific, the schools and their teachers could be vouched for as "true Lancasterian" and subsequently be held to an external standard, however fluctuating. This offered organizational challenges but also possibilities that the schools' organizing boards had to consider.

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Many approaches to solving the staffing problem were tried, and many were discarded. Most significantly the initial alignment of teaching with the implementation of a technical system was gradually abandoned. However, since the system was in use in many of the early schools enjoying financial support from the community, including some of the most influential systems such as New York City and Philadelphia, some of the ideas of what constituted the work of the teacher in the monitorial classroom were established throughout the start of the U.S. educational system.

Some of the patterns revolving around teachers and their work are examined as part of this study. These patterns include:

- A great emphasis on the training of teachers to operate the classroom. Teachers were to receive, and claim, special treatment for their uncommon knowledge. Model schools were set up, teachers publicized their Lancasterian lineage, and public debates erupted over the veracity of individual's claim to purity of implementation. While the historical evidence suggests that the actual training was inconsistent at best, it still represented a departure from the status quo at the start of the nineteenth century.
- Invention was another pattern of teacher interaction with the system and, ultimately, part of the problems that may have led to its demise. Many teachers saw the potential for the students, the system, and them selves if they pushed beyond the initial tools and curriculum defined by Lancaster to create new exercises and communication patterns in the classroom. Monitorial schools were initiated to provide a very small amount of learning, but the untapped

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capacity of other subjects to be adapted to their approach inspired many teachers to experiment with additions to the practices and devices in use. Of course, given the lack of a central authority in the United States to oversee such experimentation, this inevitably diluted the Lancasterian “vision” of how schools should operate.

- Closely associated with the impulse to invent, monitorial teachers also had incentives to become authors whose writing worked to publicize both the schools’ new possibilities as well as their own prowess as educators.

It is important to note that in the creation of a large number of teachers attempting to comply with an external standard also lay the creation of new ways for teachers to fail. During this period of the development of new forms of schooling, teachers sometimes failed to conform to expected behaviors and techniques both within the schools and without. These new kinds of “failures” included:

- Failing to adhere to practices advocated in their own manuals when working in the classroom. This is perhaps most notable in W. B. Fowle’s report of the conditions on the ground in the New York City Free Schools in 1821, just one year after the publication of the New York Free School Society’s manual, noting several marked departures from stated practice including the use of corporal punishment as well as alterations in the prize and signaling systems, departures from some of the hallmarks of the monitorial system.

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- Failing to sufficiently differentiate monitorial teachers' work as educators from previous patterns of educational practice. Some teachers simply could not seem to move away from established ideas of valid curricula, notably the classical curriculum of Latin and Greek. Teachers such as Mann Butler in the Louisville Free School who ultimately resigned over these issues had to work against the norms of the only teachers whose practices were applauded.
- Although knowledge of the specifics of the monitorial system was valued, in the case of the African Free School, one teacher's technical knowledge of the system's practices was insufficient to overcome the overseeing board's more deeply held beliefs of what constituted an employable teacher. In the case of John Teasman, it appears that his political activities in the free black community outside of his work as the school teacher contributed to his abrupt dismissal.

This is an interesting set of patterns to describe for in the current discussion surrounding teachers' use of technology, teachers are often seen as resistant to technology and resistant to change in their roles. The question of applying technology is seen as an intervention in their work, not integral to the work itself.

After consideration of this historical case, I think that the emphasis on fixing the problems with classroom use of technology as an external intervention is a misunderstanding of the role of technology in the schools. The schools were, at their inception, always a technology in the way that the policy makers funding and supporting them construed them. Several scholars, most notably Mishra and Koehler in 2006, have

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suggested that the most effective uses of technology in schools comes from a deep integration between content, pedagogical knowledge, and technology.² This is a model closer to the Lancasterian system's model of teaching, despite the monitorial system's many flaws.

The history of the monitorial teachers represents a picture, sometimes a cautionary tale, of what the teacher's work could be if implementation of technology was seen as a integral part of their job. And, if schools are interpreted at least in part as being machines to more efficiently impart specific knowledge to individuals than the non-school alternatives, then they remain technological systems with teachers still at the center of their operation. Whether this is what the United States wants for its schools is a separate question.

This country's educational system will continue to experiment with different arrangements of teachers, physical spaces, organizational configurations and curricula to achieve the educational outcomes expected. Understanding how these earlier pioneers both succeeded and failed to implement their goals, and how ideas about the possibilities of new technology interacted with existing systems and policies to produce unintended outcomes would be helpful knowledge to possess.

² Punya Mishra and Matthew Koehler. "Technological pedagogical content knowledge: A framework for teacher knowledge." *The Teachers College Record* 108, no. 6 (2006): 1017-1054.

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