

## INTRODUCTION

Through formal and informal education, a cultural group attempts to pass on its values, knowledge, skills, and a range of shared behaviors to the next generation. For 19th century immigrant families, often involved in building homogenous German communities, this called for continuing educational practices from the fatherland, both in the home and the school.

In the absence of a functioning Indiana public school system in the first half of the 19th century, school masters taught “subscription schools” (classes for fees paid by parents) and immigrant churches of various denominations provided basic education in reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion, many in the native tongue of the immigrants. English was a subject rather than the language of instruction. In a way, this was as it was in Germany where the public elementary school (*Volksschule*) was either *katholisch* [Catholic] or *evangelisch* [Lutheran]. So were the leaders of parochial education in Indiana. The Catholics, notably the Franciscan and Benedictine sisters, were centered in Oldenburg in Franklin County and Ferdinand in Dubois County; the Lutherans were centered in Fort Wayne, the location of their theological seminary.

The first and most comprehensive educational system in Indiana was that established by German pietist Johann Georg Rapp in New Harmony. Father Rapp believed that “proper education of Youth, is of the greatest importance.”

From 1815 to 1825 the Harmonist school offered universal education in the Bible, catechism, history, literature, and music with classes taught alternately in English and German.

Beginning in 1839, many states began to mandate German language instruction in public schools wherever there was substantial demand. Ohio and Pennsylvania were the first, followed by other states including Wisconsin and Indiana. Cities with large German populations, such as Cincinnati, Cleveland, Baltimore, and Indianapolis, went one step further by offering bilingual education. This pedagogically sound concept survived into the 20th century but abruptly became a casualty of World War I and the strong anti-German sentiment that swept the United States.

Increasing demand for qualified teachers in both parochial and public schools prompted the German-American Teachers Association (organized 1870) to start a seminary in 1878 in Milwaukee, which has been settled by Germans during the 1840s. Milwaukee already had its German-English Academy and the Normal School for Gymnastics of the Nord-Amerikanische Turnerbund. The latter, which offered well-rounded academic training, moved to Das Deutsche Haus [the present-day Athenaeum] in Indianapolis in 1907. Indiana University assumed control of the school in 1941 and it became the center for the university’s School of Physical Education.

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One group that has maintained German as a part of its culture and education has been the Amish. German-speaking Amish first settled in northern Indiana in the 1840s; other groups have settled in the southern part of the state. They seek to maintain *ordnung* [order] through their faith, culture, and schools where German and English are taught.

By the late 19th century, German instruction in Indiana schools was widespread. *Der Deutsche Pionier*, a “monthly magazine for memories of the German pioneer life in the United States” published in Cincinnati, reported on the state of German-American instruction in the U.S. Figures for the year 1886 showed that 231 schools in Indiana provided German language instruction. Overall, 30,038 students were being taught in German; 12,505 of them were enrolled in Catholic schools; 7,448 in Protestant schools; 9,776 in public schools; and 210 in private schools. Nationally, Indiana ranked 7th in German instruction. The neighboring state of Ohio had the largest number with 76,723 students; Illinois was 2nd with 61,028.

“Free thought” education was characteristic for both the Turners and the elite German-English School of Indianapolis (1860-1882). Influenced by the Indianapolis Friedenker-Verein and led by urban professionals such as Clemens Vonnegut, Herman Lieber, and Philip Rappaport, the “free thinking” approach sought to instill progressive, modern ideas in students without the

religious/denominational influences found in Protestant and Catholic schools.

Germans in Indiana also established normal schools and theological seminaries in order to train future teachers and clergy. Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne and Valparaiso University in Valparaiso have their roots in early denominational theological education, particularly the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Americans generally recognized the superior methodological preparation of German-trained students. However, Joseph M. Rice, the editor of *Forum* magazine who had studied pedagogy in Germany, interestingly noted in 1910: “To exchange our spirit for the German’s technique would, I think, be taking a backward step. We must not be content until we have both.”

Toward the end of the 19th century, increased German language instruction in public schools and a drop in German immigration brought about a predictable decline in enrollments of urban parochial schools. The advent of World War I and the resulting anti-German sentiments, however, led to the end of German-language instruction and the ethnic-German orientation of parochial schools in Indiana.

Historians have credited German-Americans with many significant contributions in the field of American education. Margarethe Schurz, wife of Carl Schurz, is credited with founding the first *kindergarten* in the U.S. Opened in

Watertown, Wisconsin in 1856, the school, taught in German, reflected the ideas of German educator Friedrich Wilhelm Fröbel who encouraged singing, dancing, and self-directed play for young children. Caroline Louise Frankenburg, another student of Fröbel, began a kindergarten in Columbus, Ohio, in 1858. Kindergartens were founded in connection with German-English academies that were established in cities such as Louisville, Detroit, Milwaukee, and New York.

The influence of German education and scholarship in all spheres of learning had a significant impact upon the development of many academic disciplines in the U.S. German universities served as models for graduate school education in the U.S. Johns Hopkins University (established 1876) was the first to offer advanced degrees through graduate school education; Harvard University followed thereafter.

Music, gymnastics, and physical education in American schools and communities had no stronger supporters than the Germans. Similarly, the German concept of technical education [*Gewerebeschule*] influenced the creation of the technical/vocational high school in the U.S. In Indianapolis, Charles Emil Emmerich, a native of Koblenz, served as principal of the Industrial Training School (later Manual High School) where he integrated manual and industrial education into the Indianapolis public school curriculum, thus establishing a national model.

In the northwest corner of Indiana, the city of Gary, new home to Indiana's emerging heavy industries, became the location of another innovation influenced by German education. School superintendent William Albert Wirt, a native of Markle, Indiana, radically redefined the school's functions by introducing his tripartite platoon or "work-study-play" plan where students alternated each half day between applied and academic education, with designated recreational time.

Equally innovative was Dr. Edward A. Rumely who established a school in LaPorte, Indiana, in 1907. Rumely, who received his medical education in Germany, organized the Interlaken School for Boys, which incorporated agricultural and industrial work into an academic program. The school, whose motto was "to teach boys to live," closed c.1918 due in part to anti-German sentiment associated with World War I.

In 1911, the Indianapolis Schools dedicated School No. 9 posthumously to local merchant and civic leader Clemens Vonnegut Sr., a native of Münster, Germany. During the celebration, local attorney and reformer Lucius B. Swift paid tribute to the German immigrant who passionately dedicated his life to education by serving on the city's school board for 28 years.

Germans in Indiana clearly shaped the state's educational system. From the kindergarten to graduate education, from manual education to bilingual studies, from music education to physical education, the German influence in Hoosier education has been unmistakably

## 1. THE GERMAN-AMERICAN SCHOOLS

**La Vern J. Rippley**

Until the close of the 18th century, virtually all German-language schools were parochial. At that time, however, the religious denominations were not as solicitous about maintaining the German language as they were about fulfilling the age-old duty of the church to educate children. Naturally the German language was used in these schools (most of which were in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas), frequently to the exclusion of English. Practically every sect had its own schools.

The attitude of the Anglo-Americans toward these schools was by and large neutral. However, in Pennsylvania, Benjamin Franklin expressed concern that his fellow citizens of German descent should also learn some English. In 1753 he wrote to Peter Collinson, an English botanist:

*I am perfectly of your mind, that measures of great temper are necessary touching the Germans....They begin of late, to make all their bonds and other legal instruments in their own language (though I think it ought not to be), are allowed good in courts, where the German business so increases, that there is continued need of interpreters, and I suppose in a few years, they will also be necessary in the Assembly, to tell one-half of the legislators what the other half says.*

The statesman's fears were never realized because German-language instruction was seldom available at levels

higher than grade and high schools in the New World.

The chief reason why German-language colleges did not develop in pre-Revolutionary America was that sectarian leaders in colonial times emphasized the simple life, not intellectual growth. To them, advanced learning was synonymous with rationalism, which they branded as atheism. Therefore higher education was at best suspect, at worst a sure pathway to the loss of faith. By the time German intellectual leaders arrived after the 1830 and 1848 revolutions, they were too late to make significant inroads on behalf of German-language instruction at institutions of higher learning in the U.S. Exceptions to the rule were the many theological seminaries that conducted classes in German.

This does not mean that the Forty-Eighters and other German intellectuals were not concerned about education in America. Many were arrogant about the German as compared to the American educational system. Some even believed that German culture would be the savior of American social institutions, especially the schools. Expressing their hope of founding a German educational pattern on American soil, they reiterated the slogan "*Am deutschen Wesen wird dereinst die Welt genesen*" [At the hand of the German system, the world will one day recover].

Many of the sectarian German language

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schools founded during the colonial period were still operating during the 19th century. Lutheran and some Catholic parochial schools also sprang up in the first half of the 1900s, becoming in the latter part of the 1900s the mainstay of German-language education in the U.S. Extant also were secular German schools supported by nonreligious, German-American organizations, e.g. the radical freethinker societies. Broadly speaking, however, all of these fell into the category of parochial schools.

In addition to these “religious” schools, German intellectuals sometimes prodded German-American communities to organize a *Schulverein*, what might be called a community school system. Though private, the society functioned as any other school board, hiring German-speaking instructors to teach their children. In areas where the German element was not numerically strong enough to initiate its own “public” school system, German teachers could be found to serve as private tutors in the home.

German educational practices reached America. One was the report of Horace Mann who traveled widely in Germany to study the educational system and subsequently advocated that some German principles of pedagogy be adopted in American schools. There was also Cornell University, where its president Andrew D. White (later an ambassador to Germany) tried to combine in one institution the dual German system, which prescribed that

the humanistic and the technical universities should remain separate. Also significant was the founding in 1876 of Johns Hopkins University, where an effort was made to transplant the German university system to America. This model of research-oriented, graduate and professional schools which could be attended only after attainment of the bachelor's degree, was immediately adopted by Harvard and subsequently by all American universities.

The U.S. also inherited the kindergarten system from Germany. Usually this contribution is credited to the wife of Carl Schurz, who founded the first one in Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1856. The concept of kindergarten education had been initiated by Friedrich W. Fröbel, who in 1837 established the first one in Blankenburg, Germany. Some reports indicate that one of his students, Caroline Louisa Frankenburg, started a kindergarten in Columbus, Ohio, as early as 1838.

During the latter half of the 19th century, the private German school in America waned as public schools developed rapidly. Thus, the insistence on German-language education switched from maintaining independent German-language schools to insisting that German be taught in the public schools and that academic subjects be taught in German.

Toward the end of the 19th century, opposition to teaching in German gained momentum. Various states passed laws restricting the use of German in one way

or another. The two most famous were the Edwards Law in Illinois, which was passed in 1889, and the Bennett Law, which was introduced into the Wisconsin Legislature in 1890. A requirement of the law was that English be taught in the schools of Wisconsin for at least 16 weeks during the school year. Furthermore, the law provided that no educational institution in the state could be regarded as a school unless the subjects of reading, writing, arithmetic, and U.S. history were taught in English.

The impetus for the Bennett Law did not arise out of opposition to German in the public schools. It became a public issue only because William Dempster Hoard, who was elected governor in 1888, learned that in 129 German Lutheran schools of the state, pupils were receiving no instruction whatever in English. Nor were they learning English as a special subject. What the governor discovered in the Lutheran schools existed in the Catholic schools as well.

By coincidence, Catholics at the time were embroiled in the Cahensly controversy and thus the Bennett Law took on intra-Catholic ramifications. Irish clergymen were only too willing to nourish the Bennett Law as a device by which to re-establish their influence over the German clergy in Wisconsin. Bishops Heiss, Katzer, and Flasch of Wisconsin strongly opposed the bill, but it was warmly endorsed by Irish clergymen. Either by intention or by coincidence, Archbishop Ireland went one step further

in aiding the Bennett Law. He devised a scheme known as the Faribault Plan, according to which the Catholic Church divested itself of the administration of its parochial schools by leasing them to local school boards in cooperation with the state. Implicit in the plan as the German clergy viewed it, was a treacherous plot for doing away with German-language education in the U.S.

Naturally the German Catholic press attacked the Bennett school bill and Ireland's Faribault Plan with equal vigor, one paper going so far as to claim that Archbishop Ireland was a Freemason. The secular press assailed both the Catholics and the Lutherans for injecting the specter of alien preponderance into Anglo-American Society.

In their heyday, the German schools enjoyed a high reputation for scholarship and pedagogical competence. The German teachers usually prided themselves on the good English they spoke and taught their pupils. Often German teachers were brought in directly from abroad. But there were also institutions of higher learning for training German-speaking teachers. There was a national German Teachers Association with administrative offices in Philadelphia. German normal schools operated in Cincinnati; St. Francis, Wisconsin; Addison, Illinois; Seward, Nebraska; Elmhurst, Illinois; and, last but not least, there was the National German-American Normal Seminary in Milwaukee.

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The National German-American Normal Seminary had considerable influence on German-language instruction. It was promoted and in part funded by the German Teachers Association. Opened on September 1, 1878, the institution provided a curriculum for the techniques of teaching kindergarten and primary school in the German language. By the time it disappeared in 1919, it had trained a total of 335 German-speaking teachers. All of the German teachers had the benefit of athletic training at the Milwaukee-based school of the *Nord-Amerikanischer Turnerbund*.

Perhaps the German normal schools outlived their need. By 1900 German was used less and less as a vehicle of instruction. As a subject studied by the general school population, however, German steadily increased until 1915 when fully 25% of all high school pupils were enrolled in German. As a result of World War I, however, this percentage plummeted virtually to zero.

As a result of the American entry into the war, laws were passed not only forbidding the use of German for instruction but also the teaching of German. Most were phrased to prohibit all non-English languages.

Although the war ended in 1918, the hysteria did not. Caught up in the mood of the times, state legislatures carried the ban on German further. Eventually, all states required the exclusive use of English in all schools. Oklahoma, South

Dakota, and West Virginia, for example, passed laws making it unlawful to teach in any other than the English language in any public, parochial, denominational, or private school or institution.

Many new anti-German laws were passed under the guise of patriotism and merchandised under the name of "Americanization." States had to drop their former practice of publishing legal notices in German papers. Oklahoma established an Americanization committee. Flag laws prohibiting the German and the Communist flags were passed.

Although anti-German activities continued on a wide scale after the armistice, it was once again the state of Nebraska where the issue of German in the schools was most sharply contested.

Priests and ministers, particularly of the [Lutheran Church] Missouri Synod, testified that their people could not receive proper religious training unless it was in German. But in the legislature, the mood prevailed that English was the only conceivable language for a patriotic American. One representative typified the majority when he said: "If these people are Americans, let them speak our language. If they don't know it, let them learn it. If they don't like it, let them move... I would be ashamed to face my boy when he returns from France... [if I] had to tell him that I had done nothing to crush Kaiserism in this country."

It is difficult to assess what ill-effects Americans of German descent endured

because of laws against the German language. One statistic from January 1921, indicates that, up to then, a total of 17,903 individuals had been arrested on charges of pro-Germanism because of the inadmissible use of German in public. Of these, 5,720 were convicted and sentenced, whereas 2,924 were released without sufficient evidence. The remaining cases, as of January 1, 1921, had not yet come to trial.

During the 1920s some parochial schools, particularly those of the Missouri Synod, retained German instruction in their curriculums in states where it was allowed. In 1927, the Synod operated 1,368 grade schools with over 80,000 pupils. Of these, 555 schools having 35,000 pupils still offered German-language pro-grams. In the subsequent years, however, the use of German in these schools declined rapidly, esp. in states such as Nebraska, Iowa, Indiana, and Ohio, where German had been suppressed between the years 1917 and 1923. By 1936, Missouri Synod programs in German had shrunk to 281 schools and only 17,800 pupils. After 1940, German-language parochial schools amounted to a mere handful.

German continued to be the language of religious instruction in many Sunday schools well into the 1940s. Such schools were possible only where a specific church retained the use of German in religious services. Studies show that as late as the 1950s, a considerable number of parishes using German in their

services kept it in Sunday schools, but that the number of these parishes had diminished in an "in-gathering fashion." That is to say, where German-speaking populations still existed, churches catering to them continued securely in their use of German, whereas the peripheral parishes were forced to drop German-language worship by 1940. The parochial schools always followed suit. German-language schools survived after World War I only where language islands existed. These were isolated enclaves where German was the principal tongue used in daily conversations by at least four-fifths of the population. The larger the island the greater was its ability to resist assimilation. But soon mass communication, aided by improved transportation, caused a break-down of the rural community, rendering German-language islands obsolete.

The parochial German schools were of paramount importance in maintaining the language. By the middle of the 20th century the Catholics and Lutherans had abandoned German completely. Only the community-conscious sectarians such as the Amish and Hutterites have succeeded in maintaining German schools, and then only because German is a tenet of their faith. Importantly, the latter use German beyond the level of primary school, for thinking, for diversified occupations, and for ideas.

The xenophobic monster unleashed by World War I has finally been chained. In 1910 there were about 9 million German-

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speaking Americans. All had been reared in homes where German was natively spoken and a large percentage had been educated in schools where German was the medium of instruction. Very few descendants of those German speakers can speak the language today. Nor do the 800,000 German-born living in the U.S. (as reported by the 1970 Census) significantly affect the status of German, because the new immigrants no longer form language islands.

Without question some 9 million German-speakers were linguistically eliminated within a mere 50 years, and perhaps they benefited economically in the process. It seems unlikely that any other nationality group of equal numerical strength has ever before been so completely and so quickly absorbed in any country on the globe.

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Source: La Vern J. Rippley, *The German-Americans*. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), Chap. 9, "The German-American Schools," 116-128. [abr.]



*The German-American Teachers Seminary in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, housed the normal school of the Nordamerikanische Turner before its move to Indianapolis in 1907. Photo from Rudolf Cronau, Drei Jahrhunderte deutschen Lebens in Amerika, Berlin, 1909.*

## 2. EDUCATION IN NEW HARMONY, INDIANA (1814-1824)

**Donald E. Pitzer**

Communal societies, by attempting to initiate within small, voluntary groups the perfect social orders that they hope ultimately will be adopted worldwide, have been precursors of pedagogical waves of the future. The Harmonists and Owenites, using Lutheran, Andreaean, and Pestalozzian models in addition to their own innovative teaching methods, pioneered systems to educate all children within the community regardless of socio-economic status or sex. Schools in the Harmony of Rapp's time and the later New Harmony anticipated tax-supported public schools in Indiana by nearly half a century....

The educational imperatives for Rapp, Owen, and Maclure derived from their utopian visions. Rapp's dream of the good society was thoroughly religious, Owen's and Maclure's secular. Biblical prophecy coupled with current world events suggested to Rapp the imminent Second Advent of Christ.... Confident that his Lutheran dissenters were analogous to the beloved Church of Philadelphia and the Sunwoman in chapters 3 and 12 of the Revelation of St. John and therefore were predestined to establish a righteous community to assist in the new world order, Rapp emigrated in 1803 with more than 1,000 of his disciples from the religious intolerance of Württemberg to the religious freedom of America. Rapp's Harmony Society, formed in 1805 at their first Harmony in

Pennsylvania, thirty miles north of Pittsburgh, would itself be a "paradise" in which to await Christ's coming, for, as Rapp's favorite Württemberg theologian, Jakob Boehme (1575-1624), had written, "Paradise is still in the world, but man is not in paradise unless he is born again..." Education for the members of this "born again" society had to be broadly conceived, eminently practical, vocationally-oriented, charged with religious content, and directed to adults as well as to children.

George Rapp best stated his concept of the relation of education to the achievement of the perfect society in the conclusion to his only book, *Gedanken über die Bestimmung des Menschen...* [*Thoughts on the Destiny of Man*]. This book, the first religious philosophy published in Indiana, was printed in German and English on the Harmonists' own press at Harmony, Indiana, in 1824. Rapp wrote:

"It follows that the proper education of Youth, is of the greatest importance to the prosperity of any plan, for the melioration of mankind..., for the restoration of the golden age, the dignity of the human character, and the happiness of man"....

[C]ontrary to their popular image, the members of the Harmony Society were progressives. Religiously they were radical, millennial Separatists, even adopting celibacy which they regarded as

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the model for the future. In town planning they used the most modern, efficient rectilinear design. In industry they bought steam engines for the Harmony flour and cotton mills. In architecture they brought the best German techniques along to America, including pugging (Dutch biscuits) for insulation and fireproofing, and rapid construction with standardized, pre-cut timbers. And once here they did not hesitate to adopt new architectural styles....

They were progressive in education also. George Rapp and his chief school administrator, university-trained Dr. Christopher Mueller, drew upon the most advanced pedagogical ideas and practices from Württemberg and implemented a thoroughly modern educational system in frontier Harmony between 1814 and 1824. The educational philosophy of Martin Luther and Philipp Melancthon, the free public school system of Württemberg, and the utopian program of instruction outlined by Johann Andreae in *Christianopolis* were the major sources of inspiration. The Harmonist emphasis upon the moral purpose of education and need for vocational training derived from these influences....

Martin Luther was vitally concerned with the establishment of vernacular schools.... [He wrote]: "there is no other outward offense that in the sight of God so heavily burdens the world, and deserves such heavy chastisement as the neglect to educate children." When

Luther's educational aide, Philipp Melancthon, drafted the School Code of Württemberg in 1559, vernacular schools were set up in each village to teach religion, reading, writing, arithmetic, and music. Two centuries later such schools were attended by George Rapp, his disciples, and their children until they separated from the established Lutheran church late in the 18th century. Significantly, Rappites withdrew their children from the schools because they quarreled with the religious indoctrination taking place in classrooms controlled by the state church, not with the methodology or basic academic content of the education itself.

Therefore, when the Harmonists formed their own parochial schools in America, they followed the Württemberg vernacular school model and Luther's own educational directives. Their system at Harmony included compulsory attendance for girls as well as boys from ages 6 through 14. The Bible, catechism, and vocal and instrumental music held important places in the curriculum. The teacher was considered central to the learning process. Teaching methods were simple, mostly rote memorization and repetition.... Vocational training in Harmony, as in Württemberg, automatically followed completion of formal schooling. A library was dear to Luther's heart, and the Harmonists' was an extensive and diversified collection that rivaled any in early Indiana. It buttressed the school

program and also offered opportunities for adult education. Perhaps the peasant backgrounds of most Harmonists, the communal purposes of their education, and their fixation on the imminent Second Advent of Christ prevented them from imitating the classical secondary school (gymnasium) phase of the Württemberg Lutheran system....

*Christianopolis* provided the utopian dimension for Harmonist education. Written in Latin by Württemberg Lutheran clergyman and social reformer Johann Andreae in 1619 and available... in a 1741 German translation, *Christianopolis* appealed to George Rapp because it combined communal Christianity with Utopian idealism. Andreae described in detail the economic, social, and political workings of a perfect Christian republic. The most recurrent theme in his book, however, is the necessity of properly educating all the boys and girls of the community, and they are taken from their parents and placed in state schools at age six. . . . "I saw a school, roomy and beautiful beyond expectation," mused Andreae....

The Harmonist system of education paralleled that of *Christianopolis* in the universal education of both sexes, careful selection of teachers, broad curricular content, apprenticeship in trades, the development of a library, museum, and laboratories, and the operation of a press.... Christoph Mueller was one of the most highly respected members of the Society. He served not only as

schoolmaster, but also as music director, botanist, physician, and printer. In 1816 Mueller began to compose songs, some of which became favorites of the community. In 1817 he started gathering the materials that made up the Harmonists' museum. [The collection can be seen at Old Economy Village, Ambridge, Pennsylvania.]... Mueller later became disenchanted with George Rapp... and left the community at Economy during the schism of 1832.

Other qualified individuals also gave instruction, either as teachers in the academic school or as master craftsmen in the vocational program.... Frederick Eckensperger, the hotelkeeper and a musician and composer, taught at Harmony. Frederick Rapp, George's adopted son and capable business manager of the Society,... may have done some teaching. His broad interests in literature, science, art, design, drafting, and politics are reflected in the books purchased for the school and the town store....

Education was guaranteed to every Harmonist by the Society's Articles of Association of 1805 as "the necessary instruction in church and school which is needful and requisite for temporal and eternal felicity."....

The curriculum of the daily school included reading, writing, arithmetic, singing, German, English, Latin and French grammar, spelling, geography, drawing, history, and natural history. Classes were conducted in German the

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first three days of the week and in English the last three to help students attain facility in both languages. Books used included the Bible, *New England Primer*, Webster's spellers, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Murray's grammar, Goldsmith's geography, music books, ancient and modern histories, and biographies, especially of George Washington. Teachers used study periods, rote memorization, recitation, oral questions and answers, practice on slates, writing exercises in blank books, spelling bees, handicrafts, choral performances, and physical activities. Competition was encouraged, and the best exercises each week were put on display before the entire congregation during the 9 A.M. Sunday service. Father Rapp divided the whole membership into five groups (old men, old women, young men, young women, and children of both sexes) for competition in prose and poetry. This literary effort resulted in the selection of 361 original works which were printed on the Harmonist press in 1826 as *Feurige Kohlen der aufsteigenden Liebesfiammen im Lustspiel der Weisheit* [Fiery Coals of the Ascending Flames of Love in the Happiness of Wisdom]. This collection, offering an intimate perspective of Harmonist attitudes about religion, devotion, virtue, labor, unselfishness, and daily living, still awaits an English translation.

...Music instruction was available to young and old alike. It was taught in the

school and, along with gardening, was the preferred avocation of the Harmonists. Richard Wetzel's research has shown that "students were given a music book containing exercises elected from printed sources or devised by the instructor. The lessons proceeded from the study of scale degree names and intervals to writing and singing in two, then three, and four parts." Choral music was popular for performance in small groups and as a congregation. In Indiana the Harmonists created hundreds of manuscript manuals of both well-loved standard hymns and some of their own compositions. They were fascinated by the musical tradition of the 18<sup>th</sup> century communal Baptists at the Ephrata Cloister in Pennsylvania and attempted to perpetuate their songs and style. The first volume published on the Harmonist press in 1824, and probably the first music book printed in Indiana, was titled *Eine kleine Sammlung Harmonischer Lieder...* [A Small Collection of Harmonist Songs...]. Well-known method books by August E. Mueller, Frederick Kauer, C.P.E. Bach, and Leopold Mozart were used to teach instrumental music. Wetzel concludes that 1815 to 1822 was a period of "intensive ... musical study" at Harmony which resulted in the proficiency of the Harmonist orchestra reaching its peak in the late 1820s. The Harmonist band, possibly the first organized town band in Indiana, played for religious services, entertained from the balcony of the

church on Saturday evenings, and sometimes led workers to the fields.

Vocational training was considered an essential part of the Harmonist system of education. Andreae had counseled that, beyond academics, students' time should be "devoted to manual training and domestic art and science, as each one's occupation is assigned according to his natural inclination." Neither letters nor a trade is so demanding, according to Andreae, "that one man, if given enough time, cannot master both." All during their school years, Harmonist boys and girls spent their afternoons doing chores that would prepare them to take their adult places in the community. Boys learned farming...Girls became acquainted with the duties of housekeeping and gardening. At age fourteen, with formal schooling complete, youths...were apprenticed to learn a trade which would contribute to the economy of the Society.

Skilled craftsmen in almost every important 19<sup>th</sup> century trade stood ready to instruct the apprentices....Sewing, weaving, and spinning were trades usually reserved for the girls....

As they awaited the second coming of Christ, the Harmonists' education became a lifelong process. Instrumental and choral music, regular religious meetings and discussion sessions, reading, gardening, and night classes for the study of English were the bases of their continuing education. No one ever needed to become bored or intellectually

inert. The town store was well stocked with music books, Bibles, almanacs, dictionaries, grammars, geographies, biographies, and histories of Rome, the Inquisition, England, Mexico, and the American Revolution. The Society also subscribed to a wide variety of newspapers that between 1815 and 1819 included the Vincennes *Western Sun & General Advertiser*, Corydon *Indiana Herald*, Vincennes *Indiana Sentinel*, Pittsburgh *Mercury*, Harrisburg *Morgenroethe*, Allentown *Friedensbothe*, Philadelphia *Aurora*, Louisville *Western Courier*, Frankfort (Ky.) *Argus of Western America*, and Lancaster *Ohio Adler*.

Contemporary assessments of intellectual development within the Harmony Society that suggested an industrious but ignorant and unenlightened people, even if admittedly advanced a hundred years beyond their solitary Indiana neighbors, now can be critiqued in the light of the effectiveness of their educational system...[A] few students...rose to prominence in the Society. George Rapp noticed Romelius L. Baker's penchant for economics and business affairs...and chose him to assist Frederick Rapp. When the latter died in 1834, Baker assisted the aging Father Rapp, and from 1847, after Rapp's death, Baker led the Society until his own in 1868.

Gertrude Rapp, George's granddaughter, sang soprano in a girls' quartet, played pianoforte in the orchestra,

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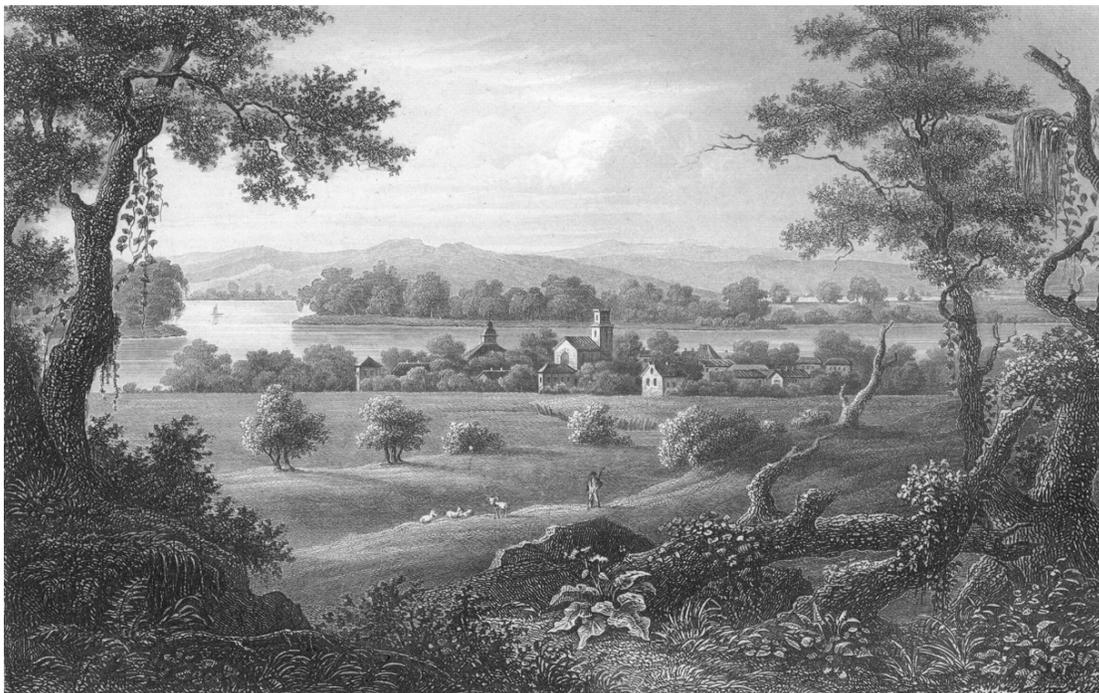
studied English with the Shakers at West Union, managed the silk factory at Economy, and painted several ink and water color wildlife pictures.... (Gottfried) Wallrath Weingärtner, whose parents brought him to Harmony, Pennsylvania at age ten in 1805, became the most important Harmonist artist. He sketched three-dimensional town maps....[His] masterpiece was a collection of paintings of 67 birds done in watercolors for his unpublished “Ornithology or the Natural History of the Birds of the United States” in 1829....

The Harmonist program of education, most nearly comparable to that of the Hutterite communities of today, served the needs of this self-contained communal group for the century of its existence... If the success of this phase is

doubted, one only need point to the Harmonist products of superb quality that gained national and international reputations and markets, the ultimate financial wealth of the Society, and the fine craftsmanship still evident in the buildings that survive. Nonetheless, the religious faith and utopian dream that brought the Harmonists to America and inspired their Association and its educational system also contained the seeds of their destruction.

When Frederick Rapp deeded Harmony, Indiana to Robert Owen on January 3, 1825, the town came under a new utopian philosophy. Working-class Americans, scientists, and teachers intent on creating a secular “Community of Equality” replaced the Württemberg millennialists...

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*View of New Harmony, Indiana, by Karl Bodmer, c. 1832-1833, from United States Illustrated (1855)*

### 3. EARLY SCHOOLS IN FRANKLIN COUNTY: THE CHECKER-BOARD SYSTEM vs. THE DORF (VILLAGE) PLAN

Michael Bossert

In the 1830s a new factor entered the educational field of Franklin County and has since then exerted considerable influence. The Kentucky-Carolina waves of settlers had followed the Whitewater River and its main tributaries, and had taken only part of the clay, oak and hickory uplands of Highland, Butler, Ray and Salt Creek Townships. Into these gaps swarmed Germans of many types.... These had not been partly assimilated to American life as had the Pennsylvania Dutch. They began to introduce a new system of locating school houses, the *dorf* or village system. In their church communities, usually near the church, they started schools, parochial or semi-parochial as the case might demand. They introduced better church buildings and better school buildings also. Frequently stone or brick was the material used for their farm houses....

In the late 1830s or 1840s, the School Townships were made to coincide with Civil Townships, and the real era of building public schoolhouses began... This has been called the "stone age" because of the little square stone buildings then erected in most of the southern and western parts of the County. Elsewhere in the County, the new structures were of brick or frame.

The checker-board plan of placing school houses is here exemplified. Whether those who planned them thought

that human beings would forever remain evenly distributed over a territory, or whether they wished to follow Whittier's dictum, "A school house plant on every hill," or Horace Mann's, "The public school houses are the Republic's most important line of fortifications," is not known. The "forts" were built at intervals of two miles. The County map of 1858 shows that the "checker board system" was well under way; by 1865 it was as nearly complete as it ever became....

The *dorf* or village plan soon came into conflict with the checker-board system. Evidently considering what had been done before their arrival as "mere scraps of paper," the Teutons immediately built village or parish schools and asked their church members to send their children to these schools. Schools with two and three rooms thus appeared.... Oldenburg absorbed much adjacent territory. Enochsburg, Huntersville and Hamburg immediately established *dorf* schools. Other towns, not parish centers, saw the advantages and adopted the system. Buena Vista, Andersonville, Blooming Grove, Fairfield, and New Trenton became village school centers. If this system could have been followed through without regard to township lines, it would have been an ideal one. Consolidation by townships came later, and the emphasis was again placed on the township....

An example of the *dorf* type of teacher was Dr. Thomas. A student at some German University, during the stormy 1840s, an ungrateful country kicked him out for his too loud demands for "*Gleichheit und Freiheit*,"— equality and liberty. Dr. Thomas was a physician, a minister, and also a teacher. He brought his love of liberty with him to America and also his liking for beer. School or church over for the day, he lined up at the village inn and held his own with the best of them. He was eloquent, jovial, energetic, with something of the spirit of

Carl Schurz. His regular term of school over, he took subscription pupils, teaching English in the forenoon and German in the afternoon. Pupils came for miles to attend his schools. Like great certain teachers of today there was an element of uncertainty about his meeting his classes — he might be called away to a sick-bed, or to preach a funeral sermon, or as sometimes happened, be indisposed on account of too much "*Saus und Braus*" the night before.

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Source: "Early Schools of Franklin County," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 26 (September 1930), 218-236 [abr.].



### The Flag

High in the air waves the flag. This is the symbol of our country and is the most beautiful flag in the world.

(Translation by Eberhard Reichmann)

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Source: *An intermediate text book of the Evangelische Gemeinschaft in Cleveland. In German-language schools ethnic heritage maintenance and American patriotism went hand in hand.*

#### 4. THE GERMAN SCHOOLS IN RICHMOND

**Fred J. Bartel (1904)**

When the early Germans came there were no schools here except the denominational schools of the Quakers. In these schools the Quaker beliefs and customs prevailed, and of course the English language was used. For various reasons, then, it seemed best to the Germans that they should establish their own school. Accordingly, as early as 1843 or '44, a young German teacher by the name of John Stammeyer appeared, collected a few students and held school ...in a small brick structure located where the city building now stands. This was the first German school in Richmond. It was maintained by the parents of the school children, and naturally we find that here religious teaching was the main feature, and reading, writing and arithmetic were placed secondary. A little later different German churches were organized and church buildings erected, and since there was no legal provision for religious education as there had been in Germany, and since they desired that the instruction should be essentially religious, the most natural thing happened, which was that gradually all the German schools fell into the hands of the German churches. The schools were held in the church buildings, and many of the early pastors also served in the capacity of school teachers.

In those parochial schools the German language was taught exclusively for probably twenty years, and the

instruction was almost identical with that which had prevailed in Germany. Religious instruction was uppermost in both the Catholic and Protestant German schools, and when the child came to the age of thirteen or fourteen he was taken into the church and out of the school.

The public school system did not afford much that commended itself to the Germans in the earlier days, and consequently the German children continued to attend the parochial school, which unfortunately made very little improvement or change during the first twenty years. At last, however, public taxation was resorted to for the support of schools, and soon after the close of the Civil War the public began to rely fully upon this fund. The Lutheran churches which were established since this time have never had parochial schools and, owing largely also to this development of the public school system, St. Paul's Lutheran Church gave up its school about 1875. At present, then, the German people have only two parochial schools. The enrollment of St. John's Lutheran School is at present 144 students, with three instructors, and the enrollment of St. Andrew's Catholic School is 259 students, with five instructors. These two churches retain their schools for the sole purpose of giving the children instruction in the respective religious doctrines.

At present only religious teaching in these schools is given in the German

language, and, while the religious work still receives attention, it is far from being the main feature of the course. It is probably not more than thirty years since the English language first crept into these German parochial schools, and the results of this one simple change have been remarkable. The old methods have been improved and displaced until at present the course has been so arranged that a student at the age of thirteen can at once enter the 8th grade in the public schools, and besides the required secular knowledge he also understands the German language, and furthermore has received the desired religious training. These people firmly believe that the child

should receive religious teaching, and it should not be thought that they therefore oppose public education.

Germans, then, from an educational standpoint, have not played a bad part in Richmond's progress, and while the early Germans had many wrong ideas as to education, ...Germany has never sent us any illiterates, but people who have always supported education and have accepted and adapted themselves to the educational opportunities....

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Source: Fred J. Bartel, *The Institutional Influence of the German Element of the Population in Richmond, Indiana* (Wayne County Historical Society, 1904), 20-24. [abr.].

Das  
**Anfangs = Buch,**  
oder  
Einleitung zu größeren Schulbüchern,  
zum  
Gebrauch für kleine Kinder.

-----  
Vermehrte, verbesserte und illustrierte Auflage.  
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Lauer & Mattill,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

*One of many beginners books in German language programs.*

## 5. GERMAN INFLUENCE IN THE SCHOOLS OF DUBOIS COUNTY

### Elfrieda Lang

The first schools in Dubois County were subscription schools. A number of people in a neighborhood would organize a school of from eighteen to twenty-four pupils and then hire a teacher for a term of sixty days with a remuneration of \$1.50 to \$2.50 per pupil. The men who lived in that particular district built these schools of logs near a spring so the pupils might have access to water. At one end of the structure was a large fireplace, and at the other end a shelf which served as a writing desk. The seats in the schoolroom were made by splitting small trees into halves and supporting them by 4 or 6 wooden pins. A window was made by cutting a log out of one side of the building. During the winter months, greased paper was used to cover the long window. Since every pupil was apt to have a different book, they would recite one at a time and in order of arrival at school on that particular day. Apparently, it did not matter what book they had so long as they had a book. The sessions of the school were comparatively long since they lasted from sunup to sundown. There was no regular hour for opening the school, but when a pupil arrived, he was expected to take his seat and begin the study of his lessons. There must have been considerable confusion since the pupils had the privilege of studying out loud in whatever tone of voice pleased them most, while at the same time, the teacher was making an attempt to explain

multiplication or long division to another group. Many people were of the opinion that the more noise the pupils made in studying their lessons, the better qualified they would be to recite. Goose quills served as pens, and the ink used was made by boiling red oak bark and sumac berries and then adding a little copperas. Since there were no blotters, sand was used.

The Treasurer of Dubois County was authorized by an act approved by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana on January 13, 1845, to perform the duties of School Commissioner. Another act approved on May 5, 1869, stipulated the subjects to be taught and also indicated that if the parents of a certain area wished the introduction of the German language as a branch of learning, their request should be granted, provided that there were at least 25 children in the school, and the request was made before the teacher for the said district had been employed.

The German immigrants brought with them from the Old World the ideal of parochial schools, in which children of local congregations were instructed in the elementary branches of general education, and provision was also made for their religious instruction. Because there was a shortage of teachers, the pastors became the first school teachers of the parochial schools.

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The German Evangelical Lutheran and Reformed Church in Huntingburg conducted a parochial school;...it was discontinued in 1881. The pastor was responsible for teaching in the school until 1865. The school term began with the first of September and ended on Easter. Children of school age were expected to attend the parochial school, and even though they did not go, their parents were expected to pay the assessed fee. The fee for the first and second child was \$2.00 each and if there was a third child, no fee needed to be paid for the latter. Six years later the fee was changed to 50¢ a month for each child of members and 75¢ for each child of non-members. By 1870 those who lived in town were expected to pay \$6.00 and those living on the farm \$4.00 for each child for the term. The assessment had to be increased in order to pay the salary of the teacher, since after 1863, the pastor no longer taught the school, but a teacher was hired for that duty. Some teachers had introduced new books on their own initiative. It was, therefore, carefully recorded in the minutes that in the future no teacher had the authority to change the textbook or introduce new books since that was a matter to be left to the discretion of the Church Council.

The German Catholics at Ferdinand felt that the school term of the county school was too short and, therefore, made provision to hold school for another three or four months, and each parent was expected to contribute 50¢ at first and

later 62 1/2¢ a month for each child in school. Since the money obtained in this fashion was not sufficient to pay a living salary to the teacher, he also was given the position of sacristan...[S]ome of his duties were to attend the priest in church, sing, ring the bell, and clean the church. The remuneration for this work was 50¢ from each citizen...[N]ot all citizens paid their obligations since in 1849, the trustees stipulated in the contract that they would not be responsible for the payment of the citizen's school money or the sacristan's salary. The curriculum and educational methods in use in those early Catholic parochial schools differ considerably from those in use today. In the forenoon all lessons were in German, and in the afternoon they were in English. There were, however, some teachers who did not know English and then the entire day was devoted to instruction in German. The course of study for two days may be of interest: Monday morning, catechism, writing, and arithmetic; Monday afternoon, English reading and writing; Tuesday morning, memory work in Bible stories, arithmetic, and singing; Tuesday afternoon, reading and Bible stories....

The methods employed by some teachers give one an idea of the temper they possessed. A little girl whose name was Anna, not yet six years of age, had to accompany her brother to school because he had been whipped so much that he lost all interest in schoolwork. Anna was given a copybook and required to write

with ink in this book. She had the misfortune of getting an ink blot on her book, and the teacher deemed it necessary to punish her. She was made to stand on a high stump into which notches had been cut to make it possible for the girls to climb it. On this stump she had to stand and with an outstretched arm hold the book up for the benefit of the entire school. In another district school girls and boys were disciplined by being made to kneel on the edge of a piece of stove wood. Some teachers must have delighted in the use of the stick and struck across the hand of a child until the skin began to burst open. A rough Swiss teacher seemed to be of the opinion that the proper way to begin the day was to slap or whip the first boy he could lay his hand upon. A man now living in Ferdinand claims that his defective hearing may be attributed to a slap this teacher gave him upon his ear. After the teacher was satisfied that he had established his authority, he began in a very reverent way, "in the name of the Father...."

The Convent of the Immaculate Conception is located on Mount Tabor. The impressive building of this convent may be seen for miles before entering Ferdinand. It was accredited in 1914 as St. Benedict's Normal for Teachers....

As early as 1842, Father Kundek had hopes of establishing a Girls' Boarding School at Jasper. The Sisters of Providence were to be in charge and teach in the English, French, and German

languages. The course of study was to include all the branches that were being taught in any American institution....

[T]he Catholics were indifferent toward the project, and the non-Catholics mistrusted and opposed the venture. The boarding school, therefore, developed into an ordinary grade school under the jurisdiction of the county. The contract which Mother Theodore submitted to Father Kundek on July 28, 1844, for the management of this school stipulated that the church pay the Sisters \$100.00 a year, provide them with flour, meat, sugar, and coffee, and that they have the use of the house, furniture, and garden. On these conditions the Sisters would receive gratis the children of the county. Two Sisters would be responsible for the languages—one for German and the other for English.

The inhabitants of Jasper, like those of Ferdinand, felt that the school term was too short and after the county school closed, the parish school would open. Each child was expected to pay one cent for each school day or 20 cents a month during the period that the parish school was in session.

The Benedictines founded Jasper College on September 12, 1889; and in 1928 the name was changed to Jasper Academy. Since Jasper was somewhat remote from the metropolitan areas, it was deemed advisable in the summer of 1933 to transfer the Academy to Aurora, Illinois, where it operates as Marmion Military Academy.

Although many early German settlers in the West were not affiliated with any church, those who settled in Dubois County were religious-minded and met in private homes until a church could be built....The churches in the various communities of the county influenced the lives of the inhabitants. The Germans continued to carry out many of the customs of their homeland which made life so colorful in this county, and although their institutional life was highly developed, they did not readily shed that trait of individualism so

characteristic of Germans. The first schools in the county were subscription schools, but the Germans brought with them the ideal of parochial schools. To them the religious instruction was as important as instruction in the elementary branches of general education. They wrote a chapter in the religious and educational history of the county which stands out as an important phase in the development of churches and other institutions....

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Source: Elfrieda Lang, "German Influence in the Churches and Schools of Dubois County, Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History* 42 (June 1946), 151-172



Source: Witter's *Deutsche-Englische Schreib- und Lese-Fibel* [German-English Primer] (St. Louis: Witter, 1881). Old Handwriting alphabet between traditional gothic and contemporary print, plus consonant groups (ch, sch, sz, tz).

## 6. SCHOOLS FOUNDED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS

### Franciscan and Benedictine Archives

#### 6.1 Indiana Schools of the Franciscan Sisters of Oldenburg (1851-1917)

**1851:** Oldenburg (Holy Family); **1855:** Dover (St. John Baptist); St. Leon (St. Joseph); Brookville (St. Michael); **1856:** Wolf Creek (St. Philomena); Blue Creek (St. Peter); Pipe Creek (St. Mary of the Rocks); **1858:** New Alsace (SS. Peter and Paul); **1860:** Morris (St. Anthony); St. Nicholas (St. Nicholas); Yorkville (St. Martin); Prescott (St. Vincent); **1864:** Indianapolis (St. Mary); Richmond (St. Andrew); **1865:** Lanesville (St. Mary); **1867:** Lawrenceburg (St. Lawrence); Scottsville (St. John); **1868:** New Albany (St. Mary); **1869:** Evansville (St. Mary); Cannelton (St. Michael); **1870:** St. Joseph's Hill (St. Joseph); Enochsburg (St. John the Evangelist); Millhousen (Immaculate Conception); **1872:** Batesville (St. Louis); North Vernon (Nativity B.V.M.); Edinburgh (Holy Trinity); Shelbyville (St. Joseph); **1875:** St. Joseph's, Vanderburgh County (St. Joseph); **1876:** Greensburg (St. Mary); St. Wendel (St. Wendelin); **1879:** Tell City (St. Paul); **1880:** Aurora (St. Mary); Hamburg (St. Ann); Napoleon (St. Maurice); St. Maurice (St. Maurice); **1881:** Rushville (Immaculate Conception); Indianapolis (St. Bridget); Mount Vernon (St. Matthew); **1882:** Brazil (Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary); **1886:** Cedar Grove

(Guardian Angels); **1888:** Evansville (St. Anthony); **1892:** Indianapolis (St. Ann, "colored"); **1898:** Princeton (St. Joseph); **1906:** Indianapolis (St. Francis de Sales); **1907:** Clinton (Sacred Heart); **1910:** Evansville (St. Agnes); **1911:** Indianapolis (Our Lady of Lourdes); **1917:** Fort Branch (St. Bernard).

During this same period (1851-1917), the Oldenburg Sisters also had thirty mission schools in Missouri, Kentucky, Ohio, Iowa, Illinois, and Kansas.

#### 6.2 Indiana Schools of the Benedictine Sisters of Ferdinand. The First Fifty Years: 1867-1917

**1867:** Ferdinand (St. Ferdinand); **1870:** Ferdinand (Academy of the Immaculate Conception); **1876:** St. Meinrad (St. Meinrad); **1877:** Rockport (St. Bernard); **1879:** St. Anthony (St. Anthony); **1879:** Fulda (St. Boniface); **1881:** St. Henry (St. Henry); **1884:** Mariah Hill (Mary, Help of Christians); Schnellville (Sacred Heart of Jesus); **1885:** Mt. Vernon (St. Matthew); **1886:** Celestine (St. Celestine); Huntingburg (St. Mary's); Cannelton (St. Michael's); **1888:** Elberfeld (St. John's); **1889:** Napoleon (St. Maurice); Tell City (St. Paul's);

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**1890:** Haubstadt (St. James); **1891:** Floyd Knobs (St. Mary's); Bradford (St. Michael's); **1892:** Haubstadt (SS. Peter and Paul); **1894:** Troy (St. Pius V); **1895:** Indianapolis (Assumption); **1896:** Mt. Vernon (St. Philip's); **1898:** Leopold (St. Leopold); **1899:** Ireland (Annunciation); **1900:** Starlight (St. John Baptist); **1903:** Poseyville (St. Francis Xavier); **1904:** Madison (St. Michael); **1907:** Evansville (St. Joseph); **1909:** Sellersburg (St. Joseph); Vincennes (Sacred Heart of Jesus); **1914:** Ferdinand (St. Benedict College); **1916:** Siberia (St. Martin); **1917:** Tell City (St. Mark).

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Source: Archives of the Franciscan Sisters (Oldenburg); the Benedictine Sisters (Ferdinand); and Mary Salesia Godecker, *A Brief Historical Sketch of the Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Indiana, 1867-1937* (Ferdinand: Abbey Press, 1938).



*The convent and academy of the sisters of St. Francis at Oldenburg, Franklin County, a center of Catholic education in Indiana.*

## 7. THE GERMAN-ENGLISH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL OF INDIANAPOLIS (1860-1882)

### 7.1 “Our Old School”

Theodore Stein (1914)

The establishment of our old school was primarily due to a desire on the part of certain citizens of German birth, of the early part of the last half of the nineteenth century, to have the German language taught their children, alongside the official tongue of our country, without any religious embellishment to detract; something which was impossible in our city schools of that period.

This desire did not assert itself until some time after another effort along more conservative lines had culminated in an action of the City Council of our city, when, on December 1, 1856, it was resolved,

*That German children should have instruction in their own language and that a part of the city school fund be appropriated to employ a German teacher.*

An editorial in the *Freie Presse* of December 11, 1856, after complimenting the City Council for its action, closed by saying, “May the public schools and public education prosper forever.”

This language would indicate that the Germans of that day were not narrow or even particularistic; they wanted their children to have the widest possible scope of learning along elementary lines;

they wanted German taught their offspring alongside the English language, and were overjoyed when the City Council favored action looking to an accomplishment of their wishes in this regard.

Their joy was, however, destined to be short-lived, for the resolution was referred by the Council to the city’s School Trustees for inquiry into the feasibility of the plan, and these wise men...declared against the same for the following reasons:

1. Insufficient room.
2. Lack of money.
3. It would not be right to favor German, for in that event the French living here (a mere handful) would demand similar recognition.
4. Fear of sectarian influence to divide the school fund.
5. The public schools are for all children, and a great many children of Germans are attending the same.
6. Two languages can not be taught at the same time in the beginning.

How ridiculous the last objection sounds at the present day, in the light of experience, and the results attained in the German-English Independent School of Indianapolis!

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As a result of the action of the city School Trustees no German was taught in the public schools for several years to come, the burden remaining with individual efforts of citizens of German extraction, and of German teachers who had been and were thereafter coming to the city..., and also with German Lutheran and Reformed Church schools.

### **7.2 Louis J. Metzger's Reflections on the "Old School"**

What this school stood for is plain enough. It accomplished its object and when the public schools grew in importance, it ceased its activities as there was no longer any need for it....

I can always conjure up the old school with its precious memories and dearly love it — not only for what it accomplished, but for what it tried so hard to do and with such hearty, even pathetic good will, which breeds good will forever and ever down the ages eternally.

When I was a boy this school was also called the German-American, the free thinkers, the Dutch, from the word Deutsche, school. If we had a correct history of the pioneer Germans of Indianapolis, it would prove very interesting and enlightening. Germany stood then as now at the head of nations in many ways, and amongst the German emigrants were very many of culture, purpose and character. Mr. Vonnegut, for instance, was well educated, and was

especially well versed in German literature. Around him as a nucleus this school grew to such goodly proportions that it attracted attention from all parts of the United States, and many pupils not only of German, but of American, English and French parentage, received their education at this well-equipped school. Its influence on the public schools of Indianapolis was unmistakable, and they were later recognized as among the best in this country. Mr. Vonnegut had been elected a public school commissioner and he was soon recognized as one of the greatest moral forces in the city....

Many others too numerous to mention here helped, but for nearly half a century Mr. Vonnegut bore the brunt of it all. It is not detracting from the good work of many others to speak here mainly of the most prominent moral force in our public school system of that early date. My object here is to call attention to the early German influence in Indianapolis schools and to trace it mainly back to the old German-English school which in its flowering was the best school for children in this city. As necessity is the mother of invention, one of its fruits was this school, which was considered absolutely necessary. In the days of its birth, the Germans were ridiculed as hyphenated Americans and broadly designated as "the dutch." This sort of treatment was dictated variously by jealousy, by ignorance, by humor, etc. But it was plainly evident to the early

Germans that such culture as they had brought with them from the fatherland had not only to be preserved, but enlarged and made general, and a proper school was the first necessity to insure both. Whatever it may have been at its inception, it became later on better and broader than the public schools of that day. The schoolmarm of 1860 to 1869 was all there was in the public school as then constituted below the grade of high school, but later on they improved rapidly and soon attained a high standard of efficiency. Scholars were withdrawn from this private school and then it was closed permanently. It was in its way a pioneer and a successful school at a time when good schools were rare. It had a grand total of over 2,000 scholars, and 30 teachers at a time when Indianapolis was still a town of only about 40,000 inhabitants. Under the circumstances it was a great achievement and a fortunate one.

The old German-English school has been criticized because it did not teach religion, but such criticism was entirely unjust. It did not nor could it have taught anyone of the 101 Christian, or anyone of the 101 non-Christian sects, simply because the school was as non-sectarian as our public schools, and it was compelled to avoid sectarianism, as a rock upon which it would have been shattered, or reduced to very small proportions. It all depends finally upon a definition of religion to decide whether an individual or an institution is religious,

irreligious, or non-religious. There is, however, no doubt about some very strict sectarians being irreligious, as they do not respect the eternal verities, are indifferent in promoting all things that are good, true and beautiful, are intolerant and cannot even think of a universal brotherhood until the universe accepts their creed and is bound by their ritual and ceremonies. The German-English school taught music, drawing, poetry and literature of only the best kind, encouraged its pupils to create and not destroy, and thus taught him how he may be related to the Creator no matter how imperfect his own creations may be, and thus, too, are pupils taught the difference between religion and sectarianism.



The Old School as it appeared from 1861 on.

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Source: Theodore Stein, *Historical Sketch of the German-English Independent School of Indianapolis*, (1913), 96.

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## 8. BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF INDIANAPOLIS [1886]

### *Der Deutsche Pionier*

Under the circumspect direction of the German teacher at the city's high school, Herr G. E. Emmerich, German instruction at the municipal schools is developing more and more into a most thriving and outstanding part of the curriculum. The arrangement, worthy of imitation, alternately provides half a day of instruction in both the German and the English language for grades 6, 7 and 8. In addition to the specific German-language matters (grammar, reading, etc.), geography and American history are also being taught in German. Suitable textbooks have been developed for this purpose. Two year's ago, "Reyot's

Geography" was translated into German and published; and recently a history book, commissioned by the school superintendent and written by Herr Emmerich, appeared in print. In the grade schools of Indianapolis, instruction in geography and history through the medium of the German language follows precisely the syllabus prescribed for the English-language classes. This kind of nurture and treatment of German deserves the attention of all German teachers and superintendents.

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Source: "Deutsch in den öffentlichen Schulen zu Indianapolis, Indiana," in *Der Deutsche Pionier*, XVII (1886), 272; translated by Eberhard Reichmann.

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*The IGHS reprint of Witter (1987) enjoys popularity with genealogists.*

## 9. THE GERMAN-AMERICAN SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES STATISTICS FOR 1886

Carl E. Wolffradt

Listing of states and territories in which, as far as the statistical committee was able to ascertain by July 24, 1886, there are German schools (*Schulen*); the number of towns (*Ortschaften*) in which German instruction is given; the total numbers of German schools; German teachers (*Lehrkräfte*), and German students (*Schüler*); *Einwohnerzahl* = population according to the 1880 Census); *Öffentliche* = public; *Kirchen* = churches.

Names of State and Territories	Population according to the 1880 Census	Public Schools			Private Schools			Protestant Church Schools			Catholic Church Schools			Total			
		Schools	Teachers	Students	Schools	Teachers	Students	Schools	Teachers	Students	Schools	Teachers	Students	Places	Schools	Teachers	Students
Alabama	1,262,505	.....	.....	.....	1	6	197	3	3	123	5	12	386	5	9	21	706
Arizona	40,440	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	1	25	1	1	1	25
Arkansas	802,252	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	3	147	9	19	674	11	12	22	821
California	864,694	1	20	2062	.....	.....	.....	4	6	215	3	6	980	6	8	32	3,257
Colorado	194,324	1	20	3000	.....	.....	.....	1	1	25	1	1	15	2	3	22	3,010
Connecticut	622,700	1	1	115	1	1	75	3	5	225	2	17	660	6	7	24	1,075
Dakota	135,177	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	7	7	188	1	2	70	8	8	9	258
Delaware	146,608	.....	.....	.....	1	1	60	.....	.....	.....	1	3	75	1	2	4	135
District Columbia	177,624	1	1	220	1	5	226	1	1	58	1	10	150	1	4	17	654
Florida	209,493	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	9	356	2	2	9	356
Georgia	1,542,180	.....	.....	.....	1	2	80	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	1	2	80
Illinois	3,077,871	16	171	25,060	6	15	745	223	407	22,944	93	215	15,279	275	388	808	64,028
Indiana	1,978,301	50	132	9,776	3	6	219	86	132	7,448	92	262	12,595	153	231	532	30,038
Iowa	1,624,615	3	4	257	3	4	215	71	74	2,596	46	121	5,439	109	123	203	8,507
Kansas	996,096	1	1	100	1	1	102	28	30	1,288	20	37	1,516	42	50	69	3,006
Kentucky	1,648,615	3	34	4,046	2	2	105	2	3	213	20	134	7,553	22	27	173	11,917
Louisiana	939,946	.....	.....	.....	5	5	665	3	21	1,009	3	37	1,903	4	11	63	3,577
Maryland	934,943	6	61	6,820	11	16	1,290	10	22	1,121	4	56	3,620	6	31	153	12,851
Massachusetts	1,783,085	.....	.....	.....	4	7	282	1	1	70	1	11	420	2	6	19	772
Michigan	1,636,937	3	15	1,493	2	6	254	105	149	8,342	18	59	2,799	98	128	229	12,888
Minnesota	780,733	19	60	3,205	3	8	246	82	113	5,165	55	61	7,583	119	159	242	16,199
Mississippi	1,131,597	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4	13	501	4	4	13	501
Missouri	2,186,380	13	216	25,570	2	6	235	110	176	8,945	53	200	10,541	140	178	598	45,291
Nebraska	452,402	3	4	210	1	2	86	56	56	1,970	11	25	767	58	71	87	3,033
New Hampshire	346,991	1	1	90	1	1	70	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	2	2	160
New Jersey	1,131,116	6	21	1,319	10	52	2,356	12	20	1,057	17	78	3,824	25	45	171	8,556
New Mexico	119,565	.....	.....	.....	2	2	8	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	2	2	8
New York	5,082,871	3	24	3,228	10	55	2,680	67	150	7,216	46	447	22,682	72	126	676	35,806
Ohio	3,198,062	79	473	40,943	4	10	224	43	72	4,721	130	521	30,835	198	256	1,076	76,723
Oregon	174,768	.....	.....	.....	1	1	32	1	1	15	1	1	270	2	3	3	317
Pennsylvania	4,282,891	14	64	6,802	19	108	2,336	37	129	8,059	65	407	18,688	90	135	708	35,975
South Carolina	995,577	1	1	15	1	3	123	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	2	4	138
Tennessee	1,542,359	1	1	63	.....	.....	.....	2	3	111	4	11	390	5	7	15	564
Texas	1,591,749	58	80	4,464	14	30	1,204	22	26	1,214	3	24	500	76	97	157	7,472
Virginia	1,512,565	1	1	100	.....	.....	.....	3	5	126	1	3	218	2	5	9	444
West Virginia	618,457	1	4	292	.....	.....	.....	2	3	110	1	5	240	1	4	12	642
Wisconsin	1,315,497	15	67	11,145	9	33	1,307	131	223	14,600	111	293	13,593	208	266	615	40,645
Sum.....		301	1,477	150,485	119	388	15,812	1,119	1,832	99,321	825	3,082	164,847	1,760	2,364	6,772	480,465

Source: *Der Deutsche Pionier*, XVIII (1886), 54-55.

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## 10. THE NORMAL COLLEGE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN TURNERBUND Robert Nix (1908)

Ever since its founding in 1850, the North American Turnerbund [Gymnastics Union] has been striving not only to cultivate German Turnen at its clubs' facilities, but also to introduce it in the public schools. To achieve these goals the training of professional physical education teachers was absolutely necessary. In 1860 it was decided to found a physical education seminary. But the Civil War interrupted it. More than 60% of its members were ready to give their blood to save the Union. In 1868 the Seminary could begin. The first courses were offered in New York. In 1871 the institution was moved to Chicago, but returned to New York after the Chicago fire. From 1875 to 1888 the Seminary was continued in Milwaukee; then, from 1889 to 1891 it was under the auspices of the Sozialer Turnverein in Indianapolis. In 1892 it returned to Milwaukee where the Turnerbund had finished an addition to the building of the Deutsch-Englische Akademie. The Turners' Seminary continued there until 1907 in cooperation with the German-American Teacher Seminary, located in the Akademie building.

Due in great measure to the physical education teachers trained at the Seminary, the efforts of the Turnerbund to introduce German Turnen in public schools were richly rewarded. As regular part of the school program it has been introduced in elementary and high schools of

those cities that are first mentioned when significant progress in education is cited, among them Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, Kansas City, St. Paul, Denver, Columbus, Atlanta, Evansville, Peoria, Ft. Wayne, and Davenport.

The academic qualifications of the Seminary-trained teachers have made them leaders in physical education.... Since the Akademie in Milwaukee could not provide...larger facilities, the Sozialer Turnverein of Indianapolis made the best offer for moving the institution to the Deutsche Haus [September 1907]. There it had a great gymnasium and 12 rooms, from lecture halls to library and laboratories. Physiological chemistry and anatomy are taught at the Indiana Medical College, physics at Shortridge High School.

The Seminary has 30 faculty members, mostly from Indiana Medical College and Shortridge High School, and under the direction of Karl J. Kroh, formerly chair of Theory and Practice of Turnen, University of Chicago, School of Education.

The Seminary has these entrance requirements: Moral character; healthy, well-built body; not much below average height; basic background in Turnen; high school diploma or equivalent.

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Source: *32nd National Saengerfest, Indianapolis, 17-20 Juni 1908*, 44-45 (abr.). Translated by Eberhard Reichmann. Robert Nix (1854-1910) succeeded Hermann Lieber (1832-1907) as president of the North American Turners.

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## 11. REFORMING EDUCATION AT GARY, LAKE COUNTY

### 11.1 William A. Wirt--Torch Bearer of the New Education at Gary Charity Dye (1917)

An engineer stands by the water's edge. As he looks over Lake Michigan, he sees in his imagination great barges coming in laden with coal and ore from the Superior region; he sees, as in a dream, ten miles of steel plant with tower-like chimneys belching forth columns of smoke, and coke ovens all aglow. Thousands of men go in and out, each working at an appointed task. The engineer turns his back upon the lake, and looks over the ground about him. He sees cottages springing up and banks and business buildings and schools and libraries, all of which are part of his work.

Later, another man appears. He is to be the mayor of the future town of Gary. As he ponders, the school man, William A. Wirt, arrives. Mr. Wirt's imagination, like that of the engineer, is also constructive. He sees little children that can be made into good citizens. He sees the great possibility in an untrammelled situation where new theories and practices can be worked out. He has already come to the conclusion that education is dynamic and not static, that the beginning has scarcely been made. His theories, like those of the engineer, are based on scientific principles in obedience to the laws of waste and economy and efficiency. He has reached the point where he can see the defects in

the present educational system without being a pessimist. The educational future is full of hope and triumph to him.

As he recites his views to the future mayor of Gary, the two men become deeply interested in each other, and the mayor sees the whole school system from a new point of view.

Mr. Wirt was not seeking employment that day, but what he said lodged in the heart of the future mayor, and later, one of the first things this mayor did, after he had taken the oath of office, was to tender the superintendency of the Gary schools to this man, William A. Wirt.

The offer was accepted. When Mr. Wirt reached Gary, to enter upon his new duties, he was proudly shown the recently built school house, and told that it was constructed on the most modern American plan. "Exactly, that's just what's the matter with it," said Mr. Wirt. He began the transforming process, and today, at the end of eleven years, the Wirt system of education is known over the world.

The life of the child is to him too sacred to be cast into set molds before an opportunity for growth has been given. One of the strong points of the system is that the children can make try-outs along several lines, in order to find out what appeals to them. After making a choice,

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the pupil is encouraged to put forth effort in that particular line until some sort of satisfactory results are shown. This does not mean, of course, that a student can not drop a line of work after he has done something in it, but he must stand by his choice long enough to foster steadiness of purpose. Having made his tryouts and fixed, upon a line of work, he pursues it with the principles of strictest business. If he is working on material for the home, he determines costs and measurements. If he is working on foods, he studies prices and values. If he is engaged in gardening, he begins with the preparation of the soil and follows the seed from its planting, through its growth and fruitage, from which he gathers the seed for next year. In this process he has done more than fill in his time. He has become acquainted with the on-going processes of nature.

His application lessons are games, giving outward expression to the studies. Through these games the foreigners make wonderful strides in the use of English and are able to communicate with their classmates.

The atmosphere of freedom and joy prevails in these schools. Consequently, there is very little absence and even on vacation days the children come flocking back for work. The play impulse is developed through all manner of games, gymnastics, and swimming.

One of the most important things in connection with the Gary schools is the making of American citizens out of foreigners. The children are made

acquainted with the naturalization papers, learn the oath of citizenship, study the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of Indiana. On this account, Gary has been called the "Melting Pot."

The home is brought in touch with the school through its registration by neighborhoods instead by grades. This method has a great advantage in that each child in a neighborhood group knows all the children in his group and is able to keep the school informed and is himself socialized.

The school is the social center for its patrons who gather there for recreation. Its night schools number 1700 adults, who receive instruction free of charge, except for material.

The music is an element of joy to all, in that the national airs of the different Fatherlands are sung, and a feeling for the past is respected. Nor is art forgotten, especially clay work, where the children love the potter's wheel.

In point of economy, William Wirt makes one school plant do the work done by two heretofore, with no added expense. Before he came to Gary, he advocated the all-year-round school, and here, he said to the citizens, "Would your steel plant pay if it were idle half the time? No less can a school plant be efficient where children stay away half the time." He has won a reputation because of his plans for the education of delinquents. He lays great stress on the value of the senses as avenues for reaching the mind.

Because he speaks of educational theories in terms of business, Mr. Wirt has been called the schoolmaster engineer. He applies business theories of waste, economy and efficiency to education, and uses the steel mills as an example to show that there must be returns from expenditures of money and energy involved; and that the machinery of the school, like the machinery of the steel plant, must make the largest possible yield from raw material.

Mr. Wirt is so absorbed in his school system that he himself is in the background. He was born on a farm in Markle, Indiana, in 1874. He was educated at DePauw and Chicago Universities. He had studied the school systems of England, Belgium, France and Germany, taking unto himself what was best in each. He has for two years divided his time between Gary and New York, where he has tried, in a cosmopolitan population, the methods of Gary, which is an industrial center.

Gary has just passed the first decade and her school experiment harks back to the Owen experiment in southern Indiana a hundred years ago, where Judge David B. Banta says, "There was carried on in New Harmony in 1828 an unchartered, unendowed university."

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Source: Charity Dye, *Some Torch Bearers in Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1917), 41-46.

## 11.2 The "Work-Study-Play"

### Concept

**William Albert Wirt (1916)**

During the past fifteen years I have tried approximately fifty different programs for "work-study-and-play schools." The several factors in such a school program can be combined in countless ways. I have not tried to design a system or type of school program as a set form that would constitute a universal ideal school for all children. Rather, I have tried to develop a system of school administration that would make possible the providing of a great variety of school types, so that all cities and all of the children in the several parts of a city may have the kind of school they need.

I have had only two fixed principles since I began establishing work-study-and-play schools at Bluffton, Indiana, in the year 1900.

First: All children should be busy all day long at work, study, and play under right conditions.

Second: Cities can finance an adequate work-study-and-play program only when all the facilities of the entire community for the work, study, and play of children are properly coordinated with the school, the coordinating agent, so that all facilities supplement one another and "peak-loads" are avoided by keeping all facilities of the school plant in use all of the time.

At what children work, study, and play; how they work, study, and play; when

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and where they work, study, and play; what facilities are provided for work, study, and play; and the total and relative amount of time given to work, study, and play;--these may vary with every city and with every school in a city. No set system can possibly meet the needs of all children, nor could a set system be uniformly provided with the existing child-welfare facilities.

It is not desirable or possible uniformly to establish one particular scheme of departmentalizing work between teachers

or of rotating classes between different types of facilities. The only important thing is so to departmentalize teaching and so to rotate classes that the teachers may render the greatest service with the least expenditure of energy, and that the maximum use may be secured from the school plant and other child-welfare facilities.

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Source: William A. Wirt, "Introduction," Randolph S. Bourne, *The Gary Schools* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916), xvii-xix.



**William Albert Wirt**

Source: [www.wirtalumni.com](http://www.wirtalumni.com)

## 12. INDIANAPOLIS PIONEERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

### Jacob Piatt Dunn (1910)

Manual training was introduced in Indianapolis by the Germans in their *Gewerbeschule* [Vocational School], which was held in the German-English School building on East Maryland Street. It was originated and supported by the *Gewerbeschulverein*, among whose members were D.A. Bohlen, the architect, H. Lauter, Otto Stechhan, Clemens Vonnegut, and other business men. The teachers were Bernard Vonnegut and Arthur Bohn, who taught descriptive geometry, architectural drawing, and design work; T.R. Bell, who taught machine draughting; and A. Lindenberg, who taught free hand and ornamental drawing and ornamental modeling. The school performed a valuable service in helping young workmen to higher service and fitting boys for intelligent work. Among its products was Ernest Werner, a poor boy, who was inspired by his schooling there with a desire for more education, became an architect, and later was assistant building-inspector of the city; from which position he went to West Point as superintendent of construction. The school had about 75 pupils but grew so that the quarters were inadequate and the teaching force also. The *schulverein* applied to the school board for an appropriation for the school, which could not legally be made, but the board assigned William H. Bass as a teacher there for a year.

Then the school board decided to take up manual training, and opened a department in Shortridge High School, in charge of Mr. Bass, in 1888....

...[I]n 1891 an act of the legislature was obtained authorizing a tax of 5 cents on \$100 for the erection and maintenance of a manual training school. As it would be slow work waiting for money to come in, a scheme was devised of anticipating the revenue by notes, and the site was bought and building erected, being opened in 1894, with Charles E. Emmerich as principal. He was the right man in the right place, and has been there ever since.

The school was unlike any other in the country at the start. There were a number of persons interested in the movement who wanted to make it a trade school, but it was held to the plan of joint academic and manual training, and has become very popular. When started, people derided the idea that 600 pupils would be found who wanted that sort of education; the average attendance in 1907-8 was 1,399. The popularity of its work has caused an extension of most branches of it into the graded schools....

The Indianapolis public schools have received many compliments, and certainly none more frank and sincere than those of Dr. Joseph M. Rice, the editor of the *Forum*. He says:

“The Indianapolis schools, though upon a rather high level, and, in my opinion,

among our best, are not perfect. A perfect school means a perfect teacher, a teacher who possesses a beautiful character, education, culture, and great professional strength. The Indianapolis teacher is not perfect. Her spirit is beautiful, but her professional strength, though it compares favorably with the strength of the best of our teachers, is not yet great. The first steps toward the ideal have been made.... When our teachers combine the beautiful spirit of the Indianapolis teachers with

the technique of the German schoolmaster, America will have the best schools in the world. To exchange our spirit for the German's technique would, I think, be taking a backward step. We must not be content until we have both.”

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Source: Jacob Piatt Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis: The History, the Industries, the Institutions, and the People of a City of Homes* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1910), I: 276-280 [abr.].



*Combining academic and vocational education, the Charles E. Emmerich Manual Training High School (completed 1895) was located at Meridian and Merrill Streets (c. 1906). Source: Indiana Historical Society, P O130 P Box 55, Folder 1\_6434*

### 13. EDUCATION--THE PASSION OF EDWARD A. RUMELY (1882-1964) ABOUT AND FROM HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY Philip Morehouse McGarr, Editor

*Edward A. Rumely, born in La Porte, Indiana in 1882, was an American industrialist, educator, and editor in the early 20th century.*

[In the early chapters of his autobiography] Rumely noted his forebears' south German heritage; the immigration of his grandparents, the Rumelys, Schweitzers, and Fierstosses, from their homes in the Black Forest and Alsace-Lorraine following Carl Schurz' abortive democratic revolution in Germany in 1848; the successful establishment of an agricultural implement business by grandfather Meinrad Rumely in La Porte in the 1850s; and the wholesome and positive atmosphere, conducive to learning, in the Rumley home....

While in Europe Rumley took every opportunity to travel and attended three universities. His first year was spent at Ruskin Hall in Oxford, England; a second year at Heidelberg University; and the last four and one half years at Freiburg University, Freiburg, Baden, Germany. On May 2, 1906, Rumely received an M.D. degree *magna cum laude* and completed the requirements for a degree in economics in 1906.

....After a successful year of study in England he decided to continue his education in Germany. Fluent in German, his grandparents' native tongue,

Rumely experienced an ease of communication which made it possible for him to be both understood and appreciated by his fellow students and faculty members at Heidelberg and Freiburg universities,

While a student at Heidelberg University Rumely was fortunate to meet the inventor Rudolph Diesel. Rumely describes their conversation about the internal combustion engine, which used crude oil instead of gasoline, and the exhilaration he felt at the possibility that Diesel's invention might revolutionize mechanized farming.

Rumely's student days at Freiburg University were particularly valuable for the lifelong friends he made. Gerhart von Schulze-Gaevernitz, professor of economics and government, recognized the student's ability and often invited him to his home for supper and long philosophical discussions. The professor made Rumely his graduate assistant and took him to London for an eight week research trip where he had the opportunity to eat supper with Joseph Chamberlain, Sidney Goldmann, and Sir Arthur Jones.

The Freiburg environment stimulated Rumely to write several articles on conservation and forestry practices in the Black Forest, Freiburg's city government, and the merits of health insurance. These articles were published in the American

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magazine, *The Pilgrim*. Rumely's desire to improve society, even as a student abroad, was in tune with the progressive movement in the United States. President Theodore Roosevelt read the young man's articles on Black Forest conservation practices and corresponded with him. The President invited Rumely, upon his return, to join the progressive drive for the preservation of natural resources. Rumely took advantage of Roosevelt's invitation and became close friends with both the President and Gifford Pinchot, the ardent conservationist.

Rumely as a student abroad accomplished much between 1900-1906. Upon his return he was soon able to apply much of what he had learned. His dream of being headmaster of his own school became a reality when he founded Interlaken, a college preparatory school for boys. As headmaster of Interlaken he experimented with progressive educational ideas which he had formulated in Europe. To earn capital to expand Interlaken he entered his family's agricultural implement business, the M. Rumely Company.

## **Ch. 12. My New School Idea Takes Shape**

It was while I was studying medicine at Freiburg...that my ideas about the school I would found began to take expressive shape. Its basic policy centered around my own educational experience, "hand and muscle work as well as brain work

and development of the mind." Naturally I was not alone in revolt against traditional education. Many others were aware of the failures of the school to equip the rising generation to meet the problems of its environment. The growth of the industrial system, modern transportation and crowded cities created entirely new environments and wholly unsuited to fulfill entirely the needs of healthy child growth. The existing public school system of the latter half of the 19th century was shaped to meet the needs of another and earlier civilization, when industry was centered in the home where they used to grow their own food, spin and weave their own cloth, make their soap, dip their candles. The majority of the population was agricultural. Father, if he happened to be a cabinet maker or blacksmith, shaped his wood and forged his metal near his home within sight of his children and each child was called upon while still young to share the parents' activity. It gave not only insight into industrial processes of that day but the child also acquired habits of work, discipline and moral training for its future occupation, and the school was properly a place to which children were sent for a few hours each day to pick up the essentials of reading, writing, spelling, and figuring and a little information about geography and history.

The traditional school became out of date, chalk and blackboard and books, even when supplemented by so-called manual training were no longer enough.

Our civilization had its own needs. One attempt to meet the problem of changed environment was the so-called progressive school movement. At that time it was as yet unborn, for its great prophet John Dewey was just then beginning to write. But the school I had in mind was not an outgrowth of this movement.

It was the outgrowth of a long experience of my own in schools previously. At the parochial school in La Porte all grades of students were in a single room with Barney J. Kohn, the teacher. Older students recited and younger students could hear recitations. This enabled me to follow the work of two or three grades ahead of me and then when I went to grammar school I was able in the first year to pass through three grades—or 3 1/2 grades—and a year later to enter high school. Now the one-room school house is anathema to modern education but what it supplied in the way of being able to advance a pupil is something that is still a problem for modern education. As much as school and college did help me, it was my grandfather who had been one of my greatest teachers for he allowed me to do every kind of physical work in the plant. He let me work in the foundry, the machine shop, and the woodworking department, and I had experience such as few young men ever had of seeing all the processes of a manufacturing plant. I knew how much that had given me and then the viewpoint that was afterwards

formulated by John Dewey was in my mind and I knew that kind of experience was very valuable to me. So I wanted a school where the things I had received from practical work would be part of the course, and at Oxford I had discovered that famous sentence of Tolstoy which put into words what I had only before had in thought:

*Do these things for your children; ...Let them do all they can for themselves; carry their own water, fill their own jugs, wash up, arrange their own rooms, clean their boots and clothes, lay the table. These things train the children to simplicity, to work, and to self-dependence. If you can add work on the land, if it be but a kitchen garden, that will be well.*

At Freiburg I wrote in a letter to Father [John B.] Scheier, my Latin teacher at Notre Dame, “My intention is to become a teacher, but I feel that I should be forced by antagonism to the routine in established institutions to begin anew on an independent footing. One idea which I shall certainly strive to put into practice may on account of its nature be accepted by a college in which the sons of mostly wealthy parents are trained; namely, I believe that the separation, in any period of life, of mental from manual labor is a serious mistake. Growing boys should be brought into contact with nature and with work and with manual work several hours each day.”

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#### **Ch. 14. I Found Interlaken School**

Of all my varied occupations and endeavors none has been closer to my heart than Interlaken School. In the ten years of its life we received and taught some 1200 boys, and after that experience I have often thought that the world might be a better place if it was run for a time by schoolboys of between 8 and 16. Then ideals are the cleanest. Then loyalties are the deepest. Then enthusiasms are the strongest. And then impressions are the clearest.

One of the great joys of my life has been to witness the development of young men from their studies to achievement in life. Generally I was able to recognize among the boys the ten percent destined for real leadership. I studied the students. I knew their backgrounds and in many cases their family histories, and I bought books for many a student in order to stimulate his interest in [a] direction in which I felt he was fitted to go. Many a former Interlaken boy told me in later life that these books had headed him on the road to success.

Most of our boys did well. One is the head of a great mercantile establishment in Chicago. Another is in charge of a great railway operation. A third manages a huge industrial organization. A fourth is one of Japan's foremost architects. A fifth is one of the world's leading and most interesting sculptors.

The school was a great stimulus to me. It needed \$25,000 to \$35,000 a year more

than expenses and I had to hustle to earn that amount of money to make up the difference. In all, between my 26th and my 36th year I put into the school more than a quarter of a million dollars of my first earnings. Several times when the school was in need I turned to business deals which made larger amounts than were required at that time for the school.

From the time it started until the summer of 1918, I was never free from thought of the school. All my financial and business plans, all my vacations and travel were regulated in its interest. The school gave me breadth and contact, a motive and satisfaction in life. I have never cared for money and its possession, but the school gave me something to spend my money for, something to make the money worth the trouble of earning it, and this was a great spur to my business activities....

I had little difficulty in writing out the catalogue because by that time my ideas had been well formulated and almost daily talked out with anyone who would listen. I was certain that once the catalogue stated the idea those ideas would attract people and I would be able in one way or another to earn enough money to get the school going. We issued the catalogue in late May of 1907, inserted an advertisement in the *Chicago Tribune*, and then began to get inquiries.

In September 1907 when we opened with 13 students, three of them I took on scholarship, ten of them paid the regular tuition of \$600 per year. During the first

year the number increased to 27. The second year we opened with about 40 boys. The third year with 65 and the fourth year our number had increased to 120.

Interlaken differed from other boarding schools in that work, purposeful work was an essential part of the course of study. Each boy devoted several hours a day to work in the shop—wood shop, copper shop of the school....

One of my problems was to get teachers willing to combine practical manual work of craftsmanship with schoolroom work. Many a teacher who was good in the classroom like a boy disliked manual work. So I had written into the contract of every teacher that he had to participate in all practical work of the school and I had all applicants read the catalogue so that they would have clearly in mind what confronted them. But one of our early Latin teachers abhorred garden work. He couldn't get over the notion that there was something wrong in manual work. And one day I happened to watch from the window. He had a group of boys digging up sweet potatoes that we had planted. A little chap from Chicago said "my aunt didn't send me down here to work in the garden. She sent me down here to learn something." And the Latin teacher felt just as the boy did, as I watched his feeble effort in digging along with a work detail of boys....

Such enthusiasm developed among the boys for their new school that the

majority of them remained with us throughout their summer vacation and camped out at Rolling Prairie where they started construction of the main building. What the Interlaken boys did in building a new plant during that summer is, I believe, a unique chapter in the history of schools. They lived in tents, got up at 5 in the morning, worked through the day and many times when a roof of some definite project had to be completed a volunteer group labored through the whole night by lantern light....

Meanwhile, the school enrollment shot up more than expected. By the end of June in the year which we acquired the Rolling Prairie site we saw that we'd have fifty boys more than we had provided space for, whereupon we wired that we had room for 50 more boys to be in tents. Those who had their parents consent and who applied first would be given the opportunity. We had more applications for tent accommodations than for the dormitories.

When the students arrived we had a carload of cypress lumber and blueprint plans for floors and walls running up to three feet to be covered by a tent about 20 feet long and 12 and 14 feet wide. The top of the tent had an extra flap to keep snow away from the warm inner canvas. Each tent had a stove and a metal insulation where the stove pipe passed up through the canvas.

For nearly three years about 60 boys preferred to sleep winter and summer in

the tent camp at Interlaken School. Sometimes the snow lay three feet deep outside. There was one central log building containing showers. The boys hustled with bare feet in pajamas or in nightgowns through snow in winter each morning. Each tent...had a wood floor and the boys gathered their own firewood from the wind fallen timber across the lake when coal was not supplied.

There were two boys to each tent. For the second time we ordered another load of cypress lumber and told all that wished to substitute lumber for the tents that they might do so. So when the boys returned after summer vacation, some of the more expert ones pitched in and built cypress cabins. That encouraged others and soon, within two weeks, all the tents had been transformed into cabins....If there had been greater exhibit of school spirit, or greater

manual accomplishment by school boys most of whose families were prosperous and wealthy, I have yet to hear of it. Nor have I yet to hear of where more fundamental democracy was practiced. It made no difference from where the boy came. Some of the wealthiest ones had the hardest row to hoe. My greatest satisfaction is that such a large proportion of them made good in after life.

*Ed. Note: Rumely's Interlaken School in La Porte closed in 1918 due to anti-German sentiments associated with World War I.*

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Source: Philip Morehouse McGarr, "The Autobiography of Edward A. Rumely," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXVI (1970), 1-39, 197-237; LXVII (1971), 1-44. [abr.]

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## 14. DEDICATION OF INDIANAPOLIS SCHOOL NO.9 TO CLEMENS VONNEGUT, SR., AN ADDRESS, APRIL 4, 1911

**Lucius Boris Swift, Attorney**

In honor of Clemens Vonnegut, we are christening with his name a building devoted to education. It is a dignified building, and is located where it can be used to do the greatest good to the greatest number. Its surroundings are not the homes of those who are more than able to pay for what their children need, and who would look upon this building as of doubtful use to them, but it is surrounded by the homes of those who fill our factories and shops in peace and a large place in our armies in war; and to them this school building is a welcome doorway to the development of sterling character, high citizenship and material prosperity for their children. No surroundings for a school to be called by his name would have been more pleasing to Clemens Vonnegut.

His father was a Prussian soldier who served under Bluecher against Napoleon, and later was all his life a civil officer; and we should expect the leaning of the family to be toward the official and conservative class, and it was. I mention this fact because in youth and in maturity no man was freer from class bias than Mr. Vonnegut. He was not robust and, on that account, left school at 15. Then followed a four-years apprenticeship in a general merchandise and banking business. This was his practical preparation for work, and in this

apprenticeship he saw in actual operation those principles of honor and square dealing which all his life were dearer to him than great riches. This apprenticeship was followed by employment which finally took him to New York. From there he visited a friend in Indianapolis, and this city became his home.

This was in 1851. In the old world he had left behind a social and civic development centuries old; here was almost the beginning of a community, growing and destined to grow by additions from all parts of the world, and representing every variety of civilization. All this must be made American. If he had been a narrow man, he would have said that the experience of Germany was the only experience worth anything to the world, and would have taken his place with a division of our population in constant strife with other divisions. Nothing was further from him than that. He recognized every good quality of every people. He was a German who loved his fatherland, but he sifted the good of his fatherland from the bad, and that he would have us take, casting out the bad, as he would have us take the good from any people. And by this stand he became an American.

As an American, he believed in the utmost individual liberty consistent with public order; he believed in absolute

freedom of conscience and with his whole heart he believed that, in all relations of life, great and small, people should be brought to do the right thing because it was the right thing to do, rather than because the law required it. And all his life Clemens Vonnegut lived by these principles, and urged them upon others. He knew that they were right; he believed that they could be made to prevail; and so he was tranquil. A disappointment today caused him to awaken bright and early tomorrow to renew his insistence, more by actions than words, that doing right was the only foundation of a satisfying life.

He recognized at once that the school was and must be the great means of American assimilation and development; and for 28 years he was a member of the Indianapolis School Board, giving his whole heart to it and never missing a board or committee meeting. It was a labor of love with him to watch the schools as they molded the inhabitants of this city for a generation.

I do not suppose that everything went as fast as he desired, but when we place our Indianapolis schools of 40 years ago besides our schools of today, we see that a revolution has taken place. We see it in the plant, the buildings, the sanitary accommodations and the equipment, and in the compulsory attendance, in methods of instruction and in the gradual change in the weight given to the subjects taught, and the addition of new subjects in keeping with the advance of the times.

But the greatest change is in the teachers. The pedagogue has disappeared, and in his place we have a teacher without professional distinguishing marks, yet on the average more highly educated and cultivated.

Another revolution, destined to increase comfort and happiness to an extent hardly to be measured, and for which we must thank Germany, began long ago, and is even now little more than under headway. Early Indiana education was founded upon New York and New England academies and common schools which for a long time were pay schools. Their education consisted in the three R's, some higher mathematics, a little geography, physiology, Latin, Greek, French and Butler's Analogy. That education was pounded in, and was not to be despised in its day and age. But the factories came and the farm lands became less productive, and somehow that education ceased to fit into the cogs of life. Long before us Germany found out that the hand and head could be developed together; and Mr. Vonnegut knew this. Many years ago he joined with others in establishing a private, pay school where drawing was taught. Then, aided by his efforts, drawing passed into the public schools. This was the beginning of industrial education in Indianapolis, and this beginning has grown into partly instituted manual training whose latest triumph is the Trade School. This was planted by Mr. Vonnegut and a few others a generation ago, and it has taken

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all this time to get fairly started. In the meantime the desire for industrial education has taken possession of the country, and is destined to cover a great variety of trades, and other occupations, and even now reaches not only the farmer's son, but the farmer himself. One of our largest manufacturers said to me last year, "We have to look to Germany for skilled workmen." Thanks to men like Mr. Vonnegut, this will not always be true.

As a citizen, he was not a partisan. He could not understand why honesty should be practiced in private business and dishonesty in public business. He could not understand, for instance, why a man should even desire to make money by loaning the public funds, and he entered upon a long struggle to correct this abuse of the school fund, and the result has been a complete triumph of the effort begun by him; but the greatest triumph is the advance in public sentiment, for it now would not be tolerated that a man should take interest upon public funds and put it into his own pocket; and while Mr. Vonnegut always tried to baffle the grafter by his vote yet his chief hope was in this advance in public sentiment. The fear of the charge of teaching "politics" has prevented the schools from doing their duty in aiding this advance...

Clemens Vonnegut for 28 years applied his clear and even mind always seeking the good of the greatest number, and always trying to keep the schools even with the advance of the country which

was developing with such amazing rapidity. I think he mostly had his way, and was satisfied; but he obtained this by his knowledge of the lines along which education ought to proceed. And he tried to direct it along these lines, but always with a gentleness of manner which is our pleasantest recollection of him. In christening this school with his name, we only in part render the honor which is due to his memory.

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CLEMENS VONNEGUT

Born in Münster, Westphalen, Prussia, Germany,  
Nov. 20, 1824. Landed in Indianapolis January 11,  
1852.

Died December 13, 1906.

Source: Theodore Stein, *"Our Old School" Historical Sketch of the German-English Independent School of Indianapolis*, (1914), pg. 16.