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Preparing Pluribus for Unum: Historical Perspectives on Civic Education

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Earthworms and caterpillars and ants and bees and wild horses and primitives do not rationalize the advantages of aggregation, but they utilize them, though they say little.¹

-Charles Merriam

The true starting point of history is always some present situation with its problems.²

-John Dewey

Our editors begin with a problem: we've a "civics recession," i.e., troubling levels of disengagement in the polis, limited civic knowledge, poor civic dispositions, and a dysfunctional political landscape just at a time of pressing national challenges. With such urgent concerns Tweeting all around us, why turn to our history, beyond a polite nod as filler for policy report introductions?³

Because history expands our present imagination for solutions, taking into account the perspectives of those who faced related challenges in far different worlds. For example, many argue today that our educational policy overly emphasizes narrow school outcomes, to the detriment of civic goals. Yet education policy today usually equates also just to school policy and to a presumed ideal role of the school as educational service provider, responsive to parent market demand. Many of our forebears would find this a peculiarly private twist indeed when discussing civic education. For of course we educate ourselves to be citizens through a great many means— family, community agencies, public media, religious organizations, etc. Many have presumed for the public school, as our most democratic tool in the collective kit, a far more assertive role on behalf of the republic. Across our past, and continuing today, many have thought and acted creatively in crafting non-school organizations with explicitly civic educational goals.

Our prior colleagues wrestled with novel institutional roles in part because they wrestled continually with broader civic purposes – the meaning of citizenship, for whom, and so on.⁴

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Struggling with both ends and means, the expectations for schools, family, religious institutions, business, and voluntary organizations shifted and emerged, as they still do.⁵ With a vigilant eye to presentism's lures, this brief essay examines civic education within schools, schools as civic actors themselves, and some initial historical tracks left by a rapidly evolving ecology of civic educators.

Building “Republican Machines” in Schools

“The chief end is to make GOOD CITIZENS. Not to make precocious scholars ... not to impart the secret of acquiring wealth ... not to qualify directly for professional success ... but simply to make good citizens.”

-Superintendent of Public Instruction, Illinois, 1862⁶

“For a long time all boys were trained to be President. Then for a while we trained them all to be professional men. Now we are training boys to get jobs.”

-School Board President, Muncie, Indiana, 1929⁷

Raising upright and responsible youth has always challenged adults, including during the early days of the American colonies.⁸ “The jarring multiplicity, the raw economy, and the barren environment of America,” claims historian Bernard Bailyn, dramatically upended education in the colonies from its “half-instinctive workings of a homogeneous, integrated society,” transforming “the whole enterprise” into something “controversial, conscious, constructed: a matter of decision, will and effort.”⁹ Slowly the school would take on a more explicit role as a supplementary institution to family and community. The school should, as Benjamin Rush later put it, “convert men into republican machines,” fitting them “to each other by means of education” so that, as well-crafted civic gears, “they could “perform their parts properly . . . to produce regularity and unison in government.”¹⁰ At least since that point, Americans have

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fiercely contested the ends and means of civic education, particularly the school.

Recall that the contents of citizenship – what it means, who is included, and at what governance level – remained undefined in the new republic’s constitution. Further, “pervasive . . . forms of civic hierarchy,” argues Rogers Smith in his seminal study, have plagued the republic; most people in the world have been ineligible for full citizenship for 80 percent of U.S. history, owing to national origins, gender or race. Most U.S. adults have not had full citizenship for most of the nation’s existence.¹¹ Even among full citizens, of course, conflicts arose as we, a “difficult people,” sought to maximize conflicting values of civic virtue and personal liberty. “Americans want both,” Amy Gutmann contends, “although some people seem willing to settle for freedom for themselves and civic virtue for others.”¹² Schools’ efforts in civic education often became the hot putty of public debate and conflict.

School curricula, formal and informal, often reflected these evolving controversies, perhaps no more so than during the Progressive Era, a key period for civic education.¹³ As various social science disciplines began to organize themselves in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, as expansion of full citizenship for many accompanied restrictions for others, and as the challenges of industrialization, urbanization and immigration pressed themselves upon rapidly growing public schools, educators developed one curricular remedy via the “social studies,” a term reportedly coined from settlement house work in New York City. A series of national reports – from the National Education Association’s (NEA) Committee of Ten (1892), the American Historical Association’s Committee of Seven (1884), and the NEA’s Committee on Social Studies (1916) – traced some of the tensions within school approaches to civic education at this critical juncture.¹⁴ What was the content of study most needed by the republic? By its citizens? Who would decide? To what degree should school reflect “inquiry

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suited to problems arising from states of mind and inquiry suited to problems arising from states of affairs”¹⁵

Emblematic of a “progressive” shift, new approaches to civics entered the schools, both at elementary and secondary levels. For the third or fourth year of high school, the 1916 report produced a signature new civics course, “Problems of Democracy,” an effort to integrate history and the newer social sciences in understanding contemporary societal challenges. The NEA’s commission argued for reorganizing instruction “not on the basis of the formal social sciences but on the basis of concrete problems of vital importance to society and of immediate interest to the pupil.”¹⁶ Persisting for most of the 20th century, and remembered fondly by some, the course also came under critique as superficial, “denatured by external forces,” and/or un-American in its emphasis on national weaknesses.¹⁷ The reality in the classroom may have been more prosaic in its civic impact, as a high school teacher in East Orange, New Jersey shared in 1930:

At first, bigotry and prejudice will crop out in the discussions. The pupils will repeat parrot-like the information secured from the textbook. Conclusions obvious to the teacher will at times wholly escape the class. Only about 20 per cent of the pupils will really try to reason things out for themselves; the others will look around for a leader whom they can follow. A few will do most of the talking and say little. However, as the weeks go by, these difficulties will be less and less in evidence. The teacher will occasionally be startled by the maturity of thought of some of the pupils.¹⁸

During the same period, a “community civics” approach became popular in the elementary years, eventually endorsed by the NEA, U.S. Bureau of Education, and the American Political Science Association.¹⁹ Part of an effort by newly professionalizing educators to move beyond passive pedagogies and an emphasis on the machinery of government, the courses were organized instead around “community welfare,” including health, civic beauty, recreation, and communication. Children, without suffrage, would become good citizens through “proper social

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deportment,” learning “habits of cleanliness, neatness, obedience, regard for others ... self-control, honesty, truthfulness, kindness and fair play ... modesty, promptness, cooperation, punctuality, thrift, industry and accuracy.”²⁰ Citizenship broadened beyond political participation and collective activism, now encompassing correct human relations and neighborliness. “Upright behavior,” claims historian Julie Reuben, “not political participation, became the defining mark of a good citizen.”²¹ Further, given the complexity of social issues, community civics courses emphasized the need for expert-guided collective action, and in particular, deferent cooperation with the needed government programs of a more activist state.

In sum,

The new community civics course was designed as a radical departure from earlier forms of citizenship education. . . . The most striking change was its new political philosophy inherent in its apolitical definition of citizenship. . . . Despite their desire to prepare students for their political responsibilities, the educators who designed civics programs could not envision both an active citizenry and a strong, active state.²²

U.S. schools have struggled across the last two centuries with how to prepare citizens in their civic duties, across multiple definitions, shifting inclusions, and political ideology. School-based educators wrestled with the tools at hand: social studies curricula, civics classes, related school activities, and co-curricular experiences. On a continuum with personally responsible good neighbors on one end and actively engaged “public work” citizens on the other, U.S. schools have tended to the former.²³

Public School as Civic Agent – Three Cases

Yet equally evident in our history have been persistent efforts to position the school as a civic agent beyond the classroom walls, with schools playing diverse roles as civic educators within their wider communities. In our present “civics recession,” revisiting the full range of school roles may assist in our present imagination.²⁴

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On one end of a spectrum, many schools simply addressed the transmission of basic civic content, operating as an educational service center for their client students and neighborhood adults, with a sprinkle of community activities that might qualify vaguely as civic, or at least social. Civics was part of the course of study, citizen preparation classes included for adults, and the neighborhood used the school facility for community events, including occasional civic ones like voting.

Last century, particularly during the early Progressive Era through World War II, as the U.S. dramatically expanded its investment in school facilities, many endorsed a “wider use” of schools, positing them as convenient centers of community life.²⁵ Often this had little to do with civic engagement; they justified schools as community centers in order to use efficiently the hard-won public funds during a period of dramatically growing enrollments. Health care, recreation, and other community needs could be productively met by tapping existing public school facilities. As early as 1897, Superintendent Aaron Gove of Denver, Colorado, asked, “is it not reasonable and proper so to construct a schoolhouse, and with very little increased cost, as to afford to the people who pay for it, a literary home, an educational center for adults, including library where possible?”²⁶

Yet our history also features, and across a several century span, significant examples of schools acting more aggressively to *develop* local civic life, seeing such work – including research, inter-group relations, community development, public advocacy, etc. – as part and parcel of their role as the public’s educational utility, a means for enhancing their principal mission of the education of youth. Civic education was understood to encompass the school’s role as an *actor* within neighborhood life, indeed, as the “common gathering place, the head-and-heart quarters” of the community.

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Progressive reformers saw schools as centers for cultivating a common democratic life, facilitating political participation, and developing the common civic ties so strained by the advances of urbanization, immigration and industrialization. These proponents often drew upon the settlement movements in England (e.g., Toynbee Hall), and the U.S. (e.g., Hull House), and sought both solidarity and service in addressing social challenges. John Dewey, influenced by Addams and others, translated this strategy in proposing how public schools could advance democratic development more broadly. In his address to the National Council of Education in 1902, “The School as Social Centre,” Dewey argued that the school must shift from being “a place of instruction for children” to “a centre of life for all ages and classes,” an evolution “born of our entire democratic movement.” Just as concerns for our common life generated a call for enhanced civics instruction in classrooms, claimed Dewey, the present’s “rapidly changing environment” required that the school must now

interpret to [the individual] the intellectual and social meaning of the work in which he is engaged ... It must make up to him in part for the decay of dogmatic and fixed methods of social discipline ... supply him compensation for the loss of reverence and the influence of authority. And ... provide means for bringing people and their ideas and beliefs together, in such ways as will lessen friction and instability, and introduce deeper sympathy and wider understanding.²⁷

Schools, claimed reformers, comprised part of the “machinery” of democracy, often speaking of the need to engineer civic participation institutionally, as both means and motivation of civic education. Several examples from last century illuminate this historical thread, with schools playing distinctively active roles as civic agents in Rochester, NY; rural West Virginia; and East Harlem, NYC.

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Rochester Schools as Social Centers

One grassroots progressive, for example, inspired by Dewey's social center vision, sought to "connect the primary bonds of familial association to the entire neighborhood through the local schools" in Rochester, New York. Edward J. Ward helped develop self-governing adult centers and civic clubs, notable for active political discussion and exchange.²⁸ From a handful of centers in 1907, eighteen centers operated by 1910 for "the discussion and understanding of civic questions and the development of a good community spirit." Governor Charles Hughes praised them for "buttressing the foundations of democracy," as the civic clubs bridged across Rochester's many political, social and ethnic groups, tapping women's clubs, settlement workers, trade unionists, socialists, and even the Daughters of the American Revolution. Elites met their humbler neighbors in a public square; a Polish washwoman joined the President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union to debate a college professor and a house cleaner. Locally organized by club participants, observers noted a flurry of bottom-up civic participation at school sites.²⁹

Noting broadly the "urgent calls" for "citizenship organization" and the "imperative necessity of vitalizing the common bond of civic obligation," Ward argued on civic and pedagogical grounds for "making the schoolhouse the headquarters of the district voting body, self-organized into a deliberative body, and then the center of such community expression as the neighboring citizens may desire to focus there."³⁰ The "average man," claimed Ward, still bowed to authority, and understood political authority as "above" him. Ask him to name the headquarters of his government, and he will point to the state or national capital; his relation to the national entity is one still of "filial subordination" in a paternalistic hierarchical system "quite contrary to the democratic idea."

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In order to help citizens develop from a “unity of a family” with citizens as the fatherland’s children, to a “unity of fellowship” among equals required thinking through the mechanics of how this happens in daily life. This practice goes back to our founding, claimed Ward: “The colonies did not just try to like each other; they established a social center, wherein it would be possible to get together on common ground, to disagree agreeably under rules which guaranteed each an opportunity to be heard.”³¹ The school, argued reformers, is democracy’s social center for the wider community. In addition to its convenience and economy, no other building could “gather about itself the significance of common obligation for the future which is embodied in the schoolhouse.”³² Simply moving the voting booths to the school advanced the schools’ central mission of training citizens, as this would provide a concrete example to children. Since “the great difficulty is in the visualizing of the business of democracy,” bringing in voting booths, as well as community fora and local decision-making, would enhance the “meaning, dignity and significance” of school to students.

Further, the school as a civic center would allow occasional participation by citizens in actual governance, both organizing the public interest in the face of well-organized private interests, and elevating individuals locked in daily grinds of economic survival. Citing J.S. Mill, Ward argued that only through actual participation, when an individual was forced to “weigh interest not his own,” “guided in case of conflicting claims by another rule than his private partialities,” and made to apply “at every turn, principle and maxims which have for their reason of existence the common good” – only will “the private citizen” then “feel himself one of the public.”

Where this school of public spirit does not exist scarcely any sense is entertained that private persons ... own any duties to society, except to obey the laws and submit to the government. ... The man never thinks of any collective interests, of any objects to be purchased jointly with others, but only in competition with them, and in some measure at

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their expense. A neighbor not being an ally or any associate, since he is never engaged in any common undertaking for joint benefit, is, therefore, only a rival. Thus, even private morality suffers, while public is actually extinct.³³

In the end, schools as social centers advanced the core mission of educating children, facilitating the meeting of parents and teachers, supplementing resources from the community, opening up project work options, and so on. Most critically for civic education, the “magnified school” moves past the “so-called instruction . . . devoted to the mouthing of mere form of civic existence. Vital instruction in the civic virtues means contact with the real pulsating civic life.”³⁴

The citizenship of the future must be trained in the civic forums of to-day. And the civic forum contemplated in the organization of the social center gives more promise of contributing virility and strength to civic education than any effort has sought to bulwark political institutions since the days when the Athenian boy became a Greek through vitalizing contact with the life of his elders and the Roman boy was educated with and by Roman citizens.³⁵

The history of the “social center” movement also testifies to the bare-knuckled local battles often contesting the view of schools as fraternal centers of civic development. Existing political interests resisted the assertion of a more participatory democratic life. Even putting voting booths in schools aroused opposition. In New York City, despite an appeal by three national parties, a member of the Board of Education opposed a proposal to use schools “as polling places and as common pre-election meeting places,” since “schoolhouses were built for education, and they’ll not be used for politics.” A senior board colleague agreed that “schoolhouses were built for education – and *politics is education*, and the appropriate place for political expression is, therefore, the schoolhouse.”³⁶ Yet Ward lost the battle in Rochester. Precisely at their peak enrollments in 1910, the centers generated stiff opposition from several local interests, apparently threatened by the outpouring of participation by some 1,500 members of the Citywide Federation of Civic Clubs and several years of dramatic growth. After resistance from members of the business community, newspapers, local political “boss” Aldridge and

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others, City Hall suddenly slashed budgets and sent Ward packing. Soon the centers fell into line with other social centers across the nation, which “increasingly emphasized recreational programs to the virtual exclusion of adult civic participation.”³⁷ The civic education function of the Rochester public schools withdrew into narrower bounds, though Ward continued his efforts from the University of Wisconsin, eventually gaining recognition from national figures like Taft, Wilson, and Roosevelt, along with the National Education Association.³⁸

Seeding Social Capital in West Virginia

As Ward moved out to Wisconsin, West Virginian educational leaders embarked upon a wave of school improvement efforts under a new state superintendent, M.P. Shawkey. In the process, they developed the school’s role as a civic agent within declining rural communities.

Inspired by wider reform trends in the 1910s, West Virginia worked to consolidate rural schools, improve sanitation, enforce a state curriculum, organize schools into grades, and reduce teacher turnover. In a series of efforts foreshadowing more recent initiatives, Shawkey also established uniform student report cards, designed a standard “School Efficiency Report Card” for all schools (resulting in a public grade of A to E), published annual county test scores side-by-side in all basic subjects, and increased supervision of schools from district and state levels.³⁹

In 1910, most West Virginia students still attended rural schools, and rural communities were under considerable duress. President Theodore Roosevelt appointed the blue ribbon Commission of Country Life “seriously to consider the problems of farm life.”⁴⁰ The relative role of farming in the economy was declining, and farmers’ income did not seem to rise relative to many urban professions. Perhaps most visibly, the countryside was losing population to the cities, whether lured by their glittering attractions or pushed by poor rural conditions or both. As

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the nation expanded, the percentage employed in farming dropped precipitously, from roughly half in 1870 to under a quarter in the 1920s.⁴¹ As rural sociologist E.A. Ross worried, states like Michigan and Illinois were turning into “fished out ponds populated chiefly by bullheads and suckers.”⁴² “The work before us,” declared the Commission, “is nothing more or less than the gradual rebuilding of a new agriculture and new rural life.” The report’s “call for leadership” appealed to farmers, to a “new race of teachers,” to “a new rural clergy” – “the entire people need to be roused” in order to build a “new and permanent rural civilization.”

This new “distinctively rural civilization” would depend mightily upon “redirecting the rural schools”; “there is no such unanimity on any other subject,” claimed the Commission. Rural schools “are held largely responsible for ineffective farming, lack of ideals, and the drift to town.” While not declining per se, the schools “are in a state of arrested development and have not yet put themselves in consonance with all the recently changed conditions of life”.⁴³ As the Commission’s report arrived to Congress, back in West Virginia Superintendent Shawkey appointed his first Supervisor of Rural Schools, Lyda J. Hanifan, then principal of Charleston High School.

Charged to improve rural schools, he found many of them in desperate and declining states, at best static within the deteriorating communities the Commission described. Reality urged reconsideration of a school-centric approach to educational improvement, focused on pedagogy and curriculum. Insisting that teachers follow the state curriculum when young underprepared teachers often fled decrepit unsanitary one-room schoolhouses in unstable isolated poor communities mid-term – Hanifan’s experience suggested a different path was needed. So as to set the conditions by which school improvement could be sustained, the school would take on the civic role of leading community improvement. Here was a role for the school as civic

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educator, rebuilding social and civic ties torn by years of economic, social, and demographic tremors. In order to create the capacity for school improvement, Hanifan sought to address the deteriorating conditions of rural community life, to break the dull isolation of individuals and families, and to bring neighbors together in common cause.

Indicative of the creative role schools could play civically, Hanifan hailed the arrival of the “Hesperia Movement” in Marshall County, a movement he felt “should spread all over West Virginia.”⁴⁴ Years earlier, during the winter of 1885-86 in the small country village of Hesperia in western Michigan, teachers and farmers began to meet together, generally in the schoolhouse on Saturdays, and the effort grew into annual gatherings organized evenly around educational topics and farmers’ interests. The “big meeting,” as it came to be known, became a local yearly tradition running three evenings and two days, drawing standing-room crowds to hear “some of the best speakers in America.” In 1906, for example, in its fourteenth year, Michigan Governor Warner braved zero degree weather to join J.T. McCutcheon of the *Chicago Tribune*, noted “Dean of American Cartoonists” and future Pulitzer Prize winner, on the program. According to then state commissioner D.E. McClure, known as the “father of the movement,” this close working association of teachers and “patrons” would promote cooperation, “wholesome entertainment,” a “taste for good American literature ... and higher ideals of citizenship.” The community association’s “midwinter Chautauqua ... [in] a one-street village ... in a ramshackle building” would draw over 800 participants in a “great union of educational and farmer forces.”⁴⁵ In its overall impact on the community, according to its chief promoter, it served to

make the rural schools character builders, to rid the districts of surroundings which destroy character, such as unkept school yards, foul, nasty outhouses, poor unfit teachers. These reforms, you understand, come only through a healthy educational sentiment which is aroused by a sympathetic cooperation of farm, home, and school.⁴⁶

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The Hesperia Movement argued for a wider view of education, fervently egalitarian and democratic, with the school at the center of a community's cultural and civic life. McClure urged that

into the lives of the toilers on the farm, in the shop, kitchen, and factory, store, and schoolroom, or wherever employed, or of whatever employment, shall come the culture spirit of song, poem, oration and painting that their children, too, may stand upon the same level of educational advantages as the children of the rich.⁴⁷

Hanifan's enthusiasm for the Hesperia Movement signals the larger role many understood for the school, as a public agent for revitalizing a diminished community life through an expanded sense of democracy. Walter Page, editor of the *World's Work*, noted the need to expand from a notion of "political freedom and equality," the "democracy of our fathers," to a "new democracy" in which we also address a citizen's social conditions. "It is not enough that a man's vote shall count for as much as his neighbor's vote," argued Hanifan. "He must also have a chance to live comfortably and bring up his children decently."⁴⁸ The "parallel" in education was evident in the expansion of schooling as the privilege of a few to broadened access to an increasing level of education; the challenge for Hanifan was to equalize the quality of that education for the distressed communities he served.

Experiences in the cities pointed to a shift in approach consistent with this "new democracy." Instead of seeking to "improve their citizenship ... by punishing wrong doers," leading thinkers had learned to remove the causes of poverty and crime, i.e., not to "punish the victim of bad conditions." Applied to the rural school, this required treatment of the rural school within the context of "many related rural problems." In fitting metaphor, Hanifan argued that "we have merely scratched the surface, instead of plowing deep into the soil where the roots of the larger problems have their hold."⁴⁹ To do otherwise was to prescribe failure. Hanifan drew upon the recent work of rural sociologist Warren H. Wilson, who argued that the country

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churches depended upon the local economic conditions. If you want to improve rural churches, he argued, help the farmers grow better crops and get them to market. The local agricultural colleges must assist, better roads will need to be built, and schools will need to include agriculture within their studies. Otherwise, low income will drive down all the institutions of the community – school, church, Grange – moral and intellectual life will decline, superstitions will deepen, and all means of recreation will dry up.

In order to improve the schools, then, rural communities need the “wise co-operation of all the forces at work for rural betterment,” the establishment of some new center to community life.⁵⁰ If no other center was viable, schools needed to exercise the civic leadership necessary to stimulate community development, to create the social bonds upon which a collective and civic focus could be engendered. Improving the rural schools became an exercise in rural community building, and the “community center idea” became the guiding construct. Extending Ward’s social center premises, Hanifan’s efforts positioned the school as the public’s default utility player in community analysis and self-recovery, modeling civic leadership by stimulating civic leadership across the community. For Hanifan, this built out to the community itself the intention of the new “community civics” materials, including *Lessons in Community and National Life* produced by University of Chicago professors Charles H. Judd and Leon C. Marshall. “What these lessons aim to teach children in the schools, the community center aims to teach all the people as they assemble at their schoolhouses. This partially compensates those of a previous generation for the loss they sustained by the shortcomings of the schools of their day.”⁵¹

For Hanifan, the community center essentially sought to revive the means for social interactions and civic engagement that had been abandoned over the years. The industrializing economy’s impact on the rural economy and corresponding out-migration had devastated many

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community organizations, from families to churches to schools. Country social traditions often fell victim, abandoning events and rituals that wove isolated farmers together. Without the corn huskings, spelling bees, old time “literaries,” bean stringings and the like, rural life became monotonous and dull, less attractive daily for those who remained. The human need for recreation, amusement, and social life would continue to drive people away from country life unless something were done, felt Hanifan.

The school became a civic leader, at least until it could stimulate other local leadership for school and community improvement. In this it carried on a tradition “as old as democracy itself.”⁵² Chicago sociologist Charles Zeublin argued that

the larger use of the schoolhouse and the organization of school centers are not novelties. They are the twentieth-century revival and expression of that democratic spirit which has been vital at intervals for more than two thousand years.⁵³

Hanifan saw the need for the teacher to make the first move in most communities. First efforts would most likely be social or recreational, and likely not even school-related, so that the community might build the social bonds upon which local betterment might be built. Of the thirty programs outlined in his handbook, all but three concerned holidays, farm programs (e.g., “Alfalfa Evening”), or miscellaneous entertainment (e.g., “Bible Story Evening”).⁵⁴

Indeed, the source of the common interest or purpose was secondary to the need to accumulate what he coined “social capital,” the first modern use of the term.⁵⁵ Hanifan noted, for example, the work in New England of the YMCA, Boy Scouts, Grange, Chautauqua and others in “conceiving *recreation* as the basal factor in the community center movement and by correlating about recreation all the other phases of this general movement.”⁵⁶ The school would often be in a “strategic position” to provide initial local leadership in rural revitalization; it had the advantages of being “free from partisan and sectarian influences,” public, accessible to all, and with a paid employee “from whom the people may well expect a reasonable service in

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addition to his classroom work.”⁵⁷ Yet the intent must be to help the community “discover for themselves what ought to be done ... the more the people do for themselves the larger will community social capital become, and the greater will be the dividends upon the social investment.”⁵⁸

Hanifan then provided a good deal of guidance to the rural teacher in rebuilding local rural community life. Step one was to “teach a good school”; community cooperation would not be forthcoming if the teacher failed in this. But next steps involved a systematic approach to community organizing, starting with an inventory of community resources – “social, moral and intellectual.” This included identifying local organizations, community factions, local attitudes, past experiences, etc. A more formal survey or scientific approach might follow eventually. The teacher should also then begin to acquaint herself with local leadership, and call upon them to discuss ideas for local betterment. From there, the teacher should expand the circle further, meeting others in the community, and to the degree possible, visiting parents in their homes. In all this data collection, given the larger framework of country life concerns, the teacher is attempting to understand the “changing conditions” of the specific rural community she serves. The rural leader, much as a scientist, must thus “study carefully the new organism in order to determine what readjustments shall be made in its economic outlook and in its moral, religious, and social life, to make it once more a normal unit of society.”⁵⁹ In the exercises Hanifan provided at the end of each chapter in *The Community Center* – meant to assist teachers in implementing local community centers in their schools – he included making inventories of recreation facilities, summaries of leisure activities, maps of the community, and studies of local social habits.⁶⁰ Local teachers would become junior sociologists in their civic educational efforts.

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Under this expanded view of the school's role in the community's education and development, consistent with the larger trend for the wider use of school facilities, State Superintendent Shawkey officially launched in the summer of 1913 the "social center movement" in West Virginia, calling for a thousand volunteer teachers to hold several community meetings at their school houses over the next year. Shawkey was clear that this was a "summons to service and to opportunity" as "there is nothing in the law of West Virginia to require any teacher to undertake the service herein suggested." Over a thousand teachers responded, and Hanifan was asked to publish a handbook, which went through several editions and thousands of copies.⁶¹ In 1914, reportedly two thousand teachers held community meetings at their school houses.⁶² The work appears to have gained significant momentum prior to US involvement in World War I.⁶³

Social Living in East Harlem

A decade after Hanifan left the West Virginia statehouse, community activists in East Harlem, New York City, modeled a particularly assertive role for the school in the community's civic development. Positioning the public school as the community's "coordinating agency in all educational enterprises," Leonard Covello, principal of Benjamin Franklin High School, emphasized the school as a means for social problem solving and for training students in effective democratic citizenship. Covello, a southern Italian immigrant who believed in "education for social living," saw despair in East Harlem's diverse ethnic neighborhoods and worked to foster the community's social and democratic development.⁶⁴ The school had to lead the neighborhood's educational development because "the surging life of the community as a whole, its motion-picture houses, its dance halls, its streets, its gangs, its churches, its community

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houses, its community codes of behavior and morals—these will either promote or destroy the work of the school.”⁶⁵

Educated in the New York City schools and at Columbia University, a longtime teacher of Romance languages at Manhattan’s DeWitt Clinton High School, and a local community organizer, Covello was an ethnic “insider” in East Harlem. He was also a trained sociologist who, as Franklin’s principal, used “social base” maps of East Harlem’s neighborhoods that identified every apartment building (including the ethnicity of its residents), store, church, empty lot, park, school, social club, and so on, in order to understand the social geography in which Franklin students lived. He conceptualized community problem solving as a curricular and co-curricular means to prepare students to be active, publicly engaged citizens.⁶⁶ Here was civic education modeled at the institutional level, more comprehensive and explicit than the efforts of Ward and Hanifan. From a school site open continuously from 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. to several programs that operated off-site in street units, Covello and his allies strove to build school-community partnerships across East Harlem.⁶⁷

Covello spearheaded a community organizing strategy that contemporary democratic theorists label “public work”—activity that harnesses the cooperative efforts of diverse categories and groups of people, ones that are often in conflict, to accomplish shared social and civic goals.⁶⁸ Covello and his allies recognized that for East Harlem to effectively press its claims on the city and state for housing reform, health care, education, and economic development, diverse ethnic and racial groups would have to speak with one voice.⁶⁹ To build a shared democratic vision (and the means to attain it) among East Harlem’s thirty-four ethnic and racial groups, students and teachers at Franklin mobilized citizen action (public work) campaigns around education, health and sanitation, citizenship/naturalization, and housing. Students

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participated as researchers, essayists, peer teachers, demonstrators, and lobbyists (even arguing one case to Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia).

The four-year housing campaign (1937–41), the school’s most notable activity, brought the first low-income housing to East Harlem: the East River Houses. Covello recognized that the often squalid, congested, and dilapidated housing of East Harlem reduced the impact the school could have in the lives of its students. He also knew from personal experience the toll it could take on families; as a youth, he had watched his chronically depressed mother wither away amid the dark squalor of an East Harlem tenement, and had dropped out of school to help the family cover mounting bills. Coordinated by the school’s housing committee—one of six school-community committees involving students, teachers, and community leaders—Franklin High School sponsored public exhibits and films of housing models; discussions in civics, economics, and history classes; essay contests through the English department; studies of local land values and use; public rallies; radio broadcasts; scale modeling of housing options through the art department; forums with local experts; and translations in Italian and Spanish through the modern languages department.⁷⁰

Coordinated through the school, students learned civics by playing key roles in the campaigns targeting community problems. In 1948, a student group, reacting to a flurry of negative press accounts of East Harlem, took to the streets to determine the state of the community. They did not like what they saw: “frightful” sanitation levels (as described by the mayor) that only exacerbated high rates of illness in the neighborhood, diminishing student development in school and out. East Harlem “airmail delivery”— garbage sent flying from windows—was one infamous culprit. In the summer, complained one resident, “the flies are everywhere. They breed in the garbage in the gutters and backyards.” “The truth is the truth,”

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one student responded, “and instead of complaining about the press, we should see if we can do something to clean up our neighborhood.” In conjunction with local agencies and community groups, the students organized a sanitation parade (complete with a fifty-piece band and five thousand leaflets), a conference led by the local congressional representative, a cleanup contest sponsored by *The Daily News*, an educational campaign complete with roving sound-truck broadcasts, a science and social science lesson plan for the school, and a successful effort to change the City Sanitary Code to enforce more frequent and effective garbage collection.⁷¹

Covello’s approach to community problem solving tapped a multimethod urban sociological research tradition—inspired by early urban sociology from Chicago, translated via NYU—a more comprehensive antecedent to present-day “data-based decision making.” He, staff, and students carried out surveys, case studies, home visits, interviews, photographs, and observations, all in an effort to understand the underlying dynamics of the community in which his students lived. They also used social-base maps that displayed rich local data, one of which adorned Covello’s office, to provide a detailed picture of the environment in which these educational initiatives operated, and of the factors supporting or frustrating success. Every institution, from residence to deli, was labeled; the dominant ethnicity of each block identified; and every student residence represented by a pushpin indicating ethnicity and whether the student was a first-generation immigrant or not. Covello knew that such details mattered; when fights broke out along Third Avenue between Puerto Rican and Italian youth, with bricks tossed from rooftops, he not only knew which students lived where, but with whom he could work on those blocks to resolve tensions. The school serves as “diagnostician,” claimed Covello, and must “penetrate . . . into the ‘sphere of intimacy’ of community life and . . . follow, as far as possible, changes in the emotional life, as well as changes of a more material nature.” He knew

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this depended upon deep respectful relationships with the community; such analysis, he claimed, “depends upon sincere friendliness in the approach, rather than upon sheer technical skill in making a physical or sociological survey.”⁷²

Covello’s community-centered approach developed a distinctive civic engagement tactic, the “street unit, . . . a unit that functions literally in the street.” Directly challenging and bridging the spatial distinction between school and community, the street units (which were often in storefronts) housed recreation, research, and educational activities that encouraged community members, business owners, parents, teachers, and students (including dropouts) to work together to improve the quality of neighborhood life. Covello tapped the off-site units to address issues embedded within the fabric of the community, and to do so in a manner that recognized that many in the immigrant community would never set foot in the school building. Informal leaders could be cultivated, and the relatively neutral ground allowed the school to establish a “sphere of intimacy” with the community it sought to understand and serve. One unit, the Association of Parents, Teachers, and Friends, had 240 members the fall the school opened (in 1934), and supported the growth of other units, such as the Friends and Neighbors Club. The latter was open to any reputable community organization, and held meetings of the housing committee, school social clubs, and adult education classes, which were part of an extensive Works Progress Administration adult school program enrolling over 1,700 adults by early 1938. Another street unit housed the Old Friendship Club, an association of Franklin students and dropouts, part of the community web Covello wove to support youth development within and beyond school walls. A third street unit, the Friends and Neighbors Library, staffed by community volunteers, experienced strong demand despite its original set of only four hundred books.⁷³

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Two other street units helped Covello organize local social research efforts while providing services to Italian- and Spanish speaking community members—the Italo-American Educational Bureau and Hispano-American Educational Bureau. Over twenty-five research projects were carried out in the first eight years of the school. They included a block-by-block study of ethnic distribution, a study of motion pictures in the life of the school’s students, a study of the home backgrounds of “problem” students, and a study of leisure-time patterns of high school students. As the research and services of the street units grew, Covello integrated them under an umbrella nonprofit, the East Harlem Educational and Research Bureau, also initiating the *East Harlem News*, a school-based local newspaper, staffed with faculty, community members, and students, as were all of the street units. Across research, support services, community outreach, and advocacy, the street units reflected Covello’s effort to address the various factors affecting the education of the boys under his charge at Benjamin Franklin.⁷⁴ The public school both studied and affected the mix of educating agencies in the community, in order to advance its core mission of the civic education of its charges.

From 1934 to 1956, Covello’s community school project focused on addressing community and civic educational needs. He drew from a wellspring of social, cultural and political capital built up over years of involvement in neighborhood affairs. As part of the engagement process, he recognized that the curriculum could play a role in solving community problems. Unlike other reformers, Covello created a participatory mechanism—community advisory committees—for jointly involving community organizations, teachers, parents, students, and at-large community members in community problem-solving initiatives. At times, the work of these committees penetrated the academic curriculum, especially at crisis points in the life of East Harlem. Covello struggled with balancing disciplinary studies with his

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community problem-solving approach, which is a perennial tension in community schools.

Ultimately, World War II and the social forces it unleashed were major factors in diminishing the East Harlem community school. In the 1950s, ethnic conflict in East Harlem and a staunchly conservative political climate combined to undermine Covello's experiment in civic education.⁷⁵

Beyond Schools – The Civic Education Ecology

Historian Lawrence Cremin, writing some thirty-six years ago, argued for the need to move past “the Deweyan polarity of all life being broadly educative and overwhelmingly powerful and the school being intentionally educative but not very powerful at all.”⁷⁶ Yet we still may be stuck in a crude separation of school and society in civic education, owing in part to Dewey. He may have slipped on his own duality, as it were, in an effort to get beyond it.

While recognizing that “education in its broadest sense” encompasses “incidental” influences in daily living, Dewey noted that civilized humans also create “intentional” education, via schools and other organizations. Yet the “other organizations” tend to fade away in Dewey's writings, and the battle ensued as to the role of schools in society, especially when facing dramatic political and economic challenges.⁷⁷ If “in 1933 Dewey was still trying to reconcile the dualism between school and society,” claimed Cremin, “that polarity persists right down to the present time.”⁷⁸

Yet we do develop citizens intentionally through multiple institutions, and have throughout our history, many of which appear more powerful in civic outcomes than schools, and each of which also mediates the influence of other educating agencies. What you learn in a webinar gets mediated by peers online and adults at home which gets mediated by what is learned in church which is mediated by what is learned in school, and so on. “To be concerned

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solely with schools in the kind of educational world we are living in today is to have a kind of fortress mentality in contending with a very fluid and dynamic situation,” claimed Cremin, over a dozen years before Google or MoveOn.org existed.⁷⁹ In order to educate citizens well across the myriad of public and private educating agencies, educational policy must look across its citizens’ lives “so that wise choices can be made as to *where* to invest *what* effort to achieve *which* goals with respect to *which* clientele.”⁸⁰ Ward sought to understand and link these via social center school sites, with an eye to political discussion. Hanifan guided rural teachers in the study of local educational influences, with the intent of forming the bonds needed for development. Covello developed active school-community committees, assisted by local research entities staffed by WPA workers, and trained students through active participation in public problem-solving, all in order to build and inform the neighborhood’s next set of civic leaders, student and adult. Each sought to build relational trust and a sense of collective efficacy across the configuration of civic educators, conscious of the mix of educating agents in their communities.⁸¹

In 1931, Charles Merriam, in *The Making of Citizens*, part of the Depression era’s heightened interest in civic education, took on an ambitious eight-nation comparative effort, examining the development of citizens across their multiple “techniques of civic training.” Merriam modeled a comprehensive, characteristically “Chicago School” approach, moving well beyond schools to include military service, political parties, “special patriotic organizations,” traditions, “ceremonials and symbolisms,” language and literature, press, radio and movies, and the “love of locality.” In prescient diagnosis prior to WWII, Merriam found trends toward an increasingly conscious and systematic approach by some nations to civic preparation, across the

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ecology of their educating agencies.⁸² History is not without strong cautions about centrally controlled “ecological” educational approaches.

If we look to more recent U.S. history, what shifts in the overall civic education ecology are notable, and are likely to help us understand the present “civic recession”? Beyond Cremin’s masterful three-volume opus, few have attempted such a comprehensive approach.⁸³ Yet suggestive work arises from several fields. For example, Theda Skocpol and colleagues point to the decline of translocal federated voluntary associations (e.g., Knights of Columbus) since the 1960s, and the rise of professionally managed advocacy associations run out of D.C. or New York.⁸⁴ Spanning across U.S. history, part of what Schlesinger called “the greatest school of self-government,” these voluntary groups served as “nationally ramified networks of membership organizers recruiting other membership organizers,” reinforcing local ties while allowing participants a voice in broader movements. Within each, members could practice skills of deliberation and collective decision-making, learn the ropes of federated governance, and assimilate norms of participatory discussion. At Sons of Temperance meetings across five thousand divisions in the mid-nineteenth century, some 250,000 men gained a civic education through this self-described “school for popular debate and eloquence,” a “self-education of citizens” not limited to the elite or well-heeled. Members quickly learned “collectedness, promptness, and that enviable faculty of the right debater and orator ... the power of ‘thinking whilst on their feet,’ and speaking their thoughts firmly whilst looking in the eyes of their audience.”⁸⁵

Voluntary organizations promulgated “the art of associating together,” which, claimed DeTocqueville, “must grow and improve in the same ratio in which the equality of conditions is increased.”⁸⁶ As individualists favoring limited government, explained historian Arthur

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Schlesinger in a seminal essay tracing the history of Americans as “joiners,” Americans “actually created the necessity for self-constituted associations to do things beyond the capacity of a single person, and by reverse effect the success of such endeavors proved a continuing argument against the growth of stronger government.”⁸⁷ If, as Skocpol’s evidence suggests, there has been a sharp decline in these cross-class civic workshops, have we lost a critical place for building participatory skills for a democratic republic?⁸⁸

Perhaps the best aspects of America’s past are not being perpetuated or replaced in today’s civic world, where market models are displacing representative arrangements, and where civic leadership no longer entails popular mobilization or the organization of interactive associations. ... Americans who better understand their civic past may need to reimagine their democratic future and look to revitalize shared and representative institutions not just in national politics but in associational life as well.⁸⁹

That non-school entities provide critical citizenship education becomes evident in the complex history of Americanization efforts for the waves of immigrants arriving in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ethnic voluntary associations provided a vehicle for resisting and shaping those efforts. In challenging the “monolithic and culturally imperialistic” perceptions of such efforts, historian Jeffrey Mirel describes how Americanization on the ground resulted not in a narrow civic nationalism nor balkanized ethnic loyalty, but rather in a “patriotic pluralism.”⁹⁰ Immigrants balanced U.S. political allegiance with maintenance of their own cultural identity in an emerging American composite. Key to this “negotiated exchange” were various ethnic community-based organizations that stepped in to educate the new Americans.⁹¹

Historian Maxine Seller argues that

Immigrant communities succeeded where American educators failed because they provided education planned and executed by immigrants themselves. ... the single most influential educational force in the immigrant community, more influential than the Church, the labor movement, or any single organization was the foreign language press.⁹²

A young Slovenian immigrant girl, seven years in the U.S., understood the mix of educators in her new world. She likely read *Ameriska Domovina* or *Enakopravnost* newspaper at home, with

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articles supporting both Americanization and ethnic pride. For her, America meant “schools where you are given every opportunity for self-expression and self-government,” [public libraries where you could] actually choose a book on any subject,” and newspapers of differing political views. State and ethnic organizations interacted to educate immigrants about the U.S., “in ways that broadened inclusiveness and enriched the culture of this country.”⁹³ Remarkably enough, as Skocpol notes, U.S. voluntary associations achieved this synthesis of representative governance and moral purpose without becoming captives of either church or state.”⁹⁴

Space only allows mention of other suggestive historical work on the civic ecology. Recent work describes the powerful role community organizing groups have played in educating youth and adults in civic engagement, from underserved Texan communities to Chicago barrios.⁹⁵ Women’s associations, such as the General Federation of Women’s Clubs and the National Congress of Mothers, not only provided a civic education to their members prior to suffrage, but enabled them to influence early directions in the social studies.⁹⁶ Stretching out to “incidental” educators suggests a wealth of work with implications for our civic ecology, from suburban sprawl’s prioritization of “privatism and consumerism over engaged political participation” to the divisive “clustering of the like-minded” within our “caffeinated federalism” to the public space-shrinking impact of personalized search engines within a commercially-dominant mass media to the unknown civic impact of shifts in transitions to adulthood.⁹⁷ Needless to say, the last decades have also seen an explosion of innovative new organizations, many leveraging online tools, and several seeking a blended strategy.⁹⁸ As civic education’s ecology continues to evolve rapidly, its contested means and ends persist.

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Making U.S. Citizens

If 50 percent of a school district's graduates could not read, we'd fire the superintendent. Yet regularly less than half our graduates vote.⁹⁹ In our "accountability era," no superintendent has been fired for failing in this core mission of our "guardian of democracy."¹⁰⁰

Amidst the Great Depression, George Counts dared progressive educators to "build a new social order" through schools; most educators apparently, including Dewey, demurred, while some like Ward, Hanifan and Covello tried to manage a more assertive community-integrated role for our most-public institution.¹⁰¹ Each understood well the dangers of appearing too "activist" in their development of civic leadership, student and adult. Over time, while Edward Thorndike may have trumped Dewey in influencing the daily "grammar" of schools, Dewey's demurral trumped Counts, who hardly arises in conversation of the wider political ambitions for public schools, outside a handful of graduate seminars.¹⁰² Education became understood largely as schooling, limiting our approaches to civic development, and schools generally adopted an apolitical, "good neighbor" approach that Reuben uncovered in community civics.¹⁰³ With one arrow in the quiver and a weak bow at that, schools have had a well-bounded impact on civic engagement goals.

The musty air of archives can intoxicate, but pity the historian who professes the present. Rather, our civic educational history should provoke our present imagination, recalling the broad and untidy array of approaches through which our predecessors struggled with and did battle over our contested goals of civic education.

¹ Charles Edward Merriam, *The Making of Citizens: A Comparative Study of Methods of Civic Training*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931; New York: Columbia University Teachers College Press, 1966), 36-37. Citations are to the Teachers College Press edition.

² John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1916), chap. 17, sec. 3.

³ Or, as Carl Kaestle asks, does anyone really want “a skeptical, slow complexifier at the table when you’re trying to sort through important policy dilemmas?” (293), quoted in Paul Theobald, *Education Now : How Rethinking America's Past Can Change Its Future* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2009); Kenneth K. Wong and Robert Rothman, eds., *CLIO at the Table: Using History to Inform and Improve Education Policy* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009)

⁴ R. Freeman Butts, *The Civic Mission in Educational Reform* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1989); M. Schudson, "The Informed Citizen in Historical Context," *Research in the Teaching of English* 30, no. 3 (1996): 361-369; David F. Labaree, "Public Goods, Private Goods: The American Struggle over Educational Goals," *American Educational Research Journal* 34, no. 1 (1997): 39-81; M. Schudson, *The Good Citizen - A History of American Civic Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1998).

⁵ For a wonderful recent history examining civic engagement in the early days of the republic, see Nancy Beadie, *Education and the Creation of Capital in the Early American Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁶ Cited in Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997).

⁷ Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1929); Marvin Lazerson, *American Education in the Twentieth Century: A Documentary History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1987).

⁸ For quote in section heading, see Benjamin Rush, *Of the Mode of Education Proper in A Republic. Essays, Literary, Moral & Philosophical* (Philadelphia: Thomas and Samuel F. Bradford, 1798).

⁹ Bernard Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1960).

¹⁰ Regarding Rush’s rhetoric, Professor Terrell cautions an ahistorical reading of the rhetoric, from an era in which the human body was understood as a machine, and “connoted illimitable beauty and wonder, revealing, like the universe itself, a divine master craftsmanship.” C.E. Terrell, "Republican Machines' Franklin, Rush, and the Manufacture of Civic Virtue in the Early Republic," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 1, no. 2 (2003): 100-132.

¹¹ Smith, *Civic Ideals*; Julie A. Reuben, "Patriotic Purposes: Public Schools and the Education of Citizens" in *The Public Schools*, eds. Susan Fuhrman and Marvin Lazerson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1-24.

¹² Amy Gutmann, "Democratic Education in Difficult Times," *Teachers College Record* 92, no. 1 (1990): 7-20.

¹³ Hazel W. Hertzberg, *Social Studies Reform 1880-1980* (Boulder, CO: Social Science Education Consortium, Inc., 1981); David Warren Saxe, *Social Studies in Schools : A History of the Early Years* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991); George W. Chilcoat and Jerry A. Ligon, "Developing Democratic Citizens: The Mississippi Freedom Schools as a Model for Social Studies Instruction," *Theory and Research in Social Education* 22, no. 2 (1994): 128-175; Michael Whelan, "Albert Bushnell Hart and the Origins of Social Studies Education," *Theory and Research in Social Education* 22, no. 4 (1994): 423-440; Christine Woysner, Joseph Watras, and Margaret Smith Crocco, eds., *Social Education in the Twentieth Century: Curriculum and Context for Citizenship* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004).

¹⁴ Dennis Shirley, "A Brief History of Public Engagement in American Public Education," in *Public Engagement for Public Education*, eds. Marion Orr and John Rogers (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

¹⁵ Cited in Chara Haeussler Bohan, "Early Vanguard of Progressive Education: The Committee of Ten, The Committee of Seven, and Social Education," in *Social Education in the Twentieth Century: Curriculum and Context for Citizenship*, eds. Christine Woysner, Joseph Watras, and Margaret Smith Crocco (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 10.

¹⁶ *Report of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education: Cardinal Principals of Secondary Education – 1918* (U.S. Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 35, Washington, DC, National Education Association, 1918).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 21; Ronald W. Evans, (1987). "Problems of Democracy: A Case Study in Curricular Change." Annual Meeting of the New England Educational Research Organization. Stratton Mountain, VT: 37; Andra Makler, "Problems of Democracy" and the Social Studies Curriculum During the Long Armistice," in *Social Education in the Twentieth Century: Curriculum and Context for Citizenship*, eds. Woysner, Watras, and Crocco (New York:

Peter Lang, 2004), 20-41; Linda Greenhouse, "Problems of Democracy," *The New York Times*, January 12, 2011, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/12/problems-of-democracy/?scp=4&sq=Greenhouse&st=nyt>.

¹⁸ John T. Greenan, "The Case Method in the Teaching of Problems of Democracy," *The School Review* 38, no. 3 (1930): 200-205.

¹⁹ By 1923, 23 states mandated US Constitution courses; many also required state constitution and history as well. Texts generally communicated a triumphal history of the US republic. Frances FitzGerald, *America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 27; Makler, "Problems of Democracy."

²⁰ In the process, claims Reuben, the curriculum accommodated culturally the legal reality of a recently broadened citizenship still accompanied by restricted suffrage in an era of state expansion into social welfare. "The new curriculum confirmed that voting and political rights were not the defining features of citizenship. It also extended the inclusive view of citizenship to encompass not only African Americans and women, but also a new group, children. Citizenship no longer required independence, but it also no longer entailed political rights. All could be citizens; only some would fulfill their citizenship responsibilities in the public sphere." J. A. Reuben, "Beyond Politics: Community Civics and the Redefinition of Citizenship in the Progressive Era," *History of Education Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (1997): 413, 410.

²¹ Ibid. Community civics was generally targeted to elementary years, though at times 9th grade as well.

²² Ibid., 399-400, 420.

²³ Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne, "What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy," *American Educational Research Journal* 41, no. 2 (2004): 237-269; Michael C. Johanek and John Puckett, "The State of Civic Education: Preparing Citizens in an Era of Accountability," in *The Public Schools*, eds. Susan Fuhrman and Marvin Lazerson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 130-159. See esp. p. 154, n. 19; the continuum adapts a typology of Westheimer and Kahne.

²⁴ Positioning the school to coordinate with other community-serving agencies also makes sense for current school improvement: Michael C. Johanek, "School Reform that Matters," *Penn GSE: A Review of Research* (Fall 2009).

²⁵ By 1913, 71 cities in 21 states reported having schools that functioning as social centers by 1913, and by the following year, 17 states had passed laws allowing school facilities to be used for other purposes by the community. Edward W. Stevens, Jr., "Social Centers, Politics, and Social Efficiency in the Progressive Era," *History of Education Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (1972): 16-33.

²⁶ A. Gove, "The Proper Use of Schoolhouses," *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the NEA* (1897), 253-257.

²⁷ John Dewey, *The School as Social Centre* (Carbondale & Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1902).

²⁸ Edward J. Ward, *The Social Center* (New York and London: D. Appleton and Company, 1913 and 1915).

²⁹ Michael C. Johanek and John L. Puckett, *Leonard Covello and the Making of Benjamin Franklin High School: Education as if Citizenship Mattered* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007); William J. Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform: Grassroots Movements During the Progressive Era* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986); Kevin Mattson, *Creating a Democratic Public - The Struggle for Urban Participatory Democracy During the Progressive Era* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

³⁰ Ward, *The Social Center*.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ward attributes the term to his colleague at University of Wisconsin, Edward Elliott.

³⁵ Ward, *The Social Center*.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform: Grassroots Movements During the Progressive Era*.

³⁸ Ward suggested that aligning local political boundaries to school district boundaries would further enhance the vitality of schools as social centers. In addition to citizenship training and participation in civic issues, an active local citizenry would also counter what was a recurring danger to education: the influence of "general ideas" about schooling, applied "blindly and extravagantly." "That there is a great need for a more careful study of the details of the public schools by our citizenship, especially the citizenship that is composed of parents, is pressing, if not apparent." Ward, *The Social Center*, 331.

³⁹ Efforts to address dramatic inequities in school finance, however, did not succeed.

⁴⁰ United States Commission on Country Life, *Report of the Commission on Country Life* (New York: Sturgis & Walton Co, 1911).

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- ⁴¹ William L. Bowers, *The Country Life Movement in America, 1900-1920* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1974).
- ⁴² William L. Sherman and Paul Theobald, "Progressive Era Rural Reform: Creating Standard Schools in the Midwest," *Journal of Research in Rural Education* 17, no. 2 (2001): 84-91.
- ⁴³ United States Commission on Country Life, *Report of the Commission on Country Life*.
- ⁴⁴ L. J. Hanifan, "The 'Hesperia Movement' in West Virginia," *The West Virginia School Journal* XXXIX, no. 5-6 (1910): 23-24.
- ⁴⁵ A. E. Winship, "The Hesperia Movement," *Journal of Education* (1906): 686-687.
- ⁴⁶ D. E. McClure quoted in Kenyon L. Butterfield, "The Hesperia Movement," in *Social Aspects of Education*, ed. Irving King (New York: Macmillan Company, 1912), 36, 31; see also Irving King, *Education for Social Efficiency; a Study in the Social Relations of Education* (New York and Chicago: D. Appleton and Company, 1913), 36-38; Kenyon L. Butterfield, "Neighborhood Cooperation in School Life -- The 'Hesperia Movement,'" *The American Monthly Review of Reviews* 23 (April 1901): 443-46.
- ⁴⁷ D. E. McClure, "The Hesperia Plan," *Educational Foundations* XVI (1904): 284-285.
- ⁴⁸ L. J. Hanifan, "The Rural School and Rural Life," *West Virginia School Journal* 4 (1912): 204-207.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ L. J. Hanifan, *The Community Center* (Boston: Silver, Burdett & Company, 1920), 5. See also Howard C. Hill, "Recent Literature on Civics and Other Social Studies," *The School Review* 26, no. 9 (1918): 705-714;
- ⁵² Hanifan, *The Community Center*.
- ⁵³ Edward J. Ward, "Summary of the Report of the School Extension Committee" (presented at the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, Eighteenth National Conference for Good City Government, Buffalo, New York, 1910).
- ⁵⁴ L. J. Hanifan, *A Handbook Containing Suggestions and Programs for Community Social Gatherings at Rural School Houses*, 3rd revision, 6th ed. (Charleston, WV: Department of Free Schools, State of West Virginia, 1916).
- ⁵⁵ Robert D. Putnam, "Community-Based Social Capital and Educational Performance," in *Making Good Citizens: Education and Civil Society*, eds. Diane Ravitch and Joseph P. Viteritti (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), chap. 3.
- ⁵⁶ Hanifan, *The Community Center*.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁸ L. J. Hanifan, "The Rural School Community Center," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 67 (1916): 130-138. Political philosopher James Farr, in his insightful conceptual history of the term "social capital," locates Hanifan squarely in the critical pragmatism of his day, in kinship with Dewey, Ward, Carney and others. Farr even makes an intriguing speculation regarding Hanifan's possible debt to Dewey for the invention of the term. See James Farr, "Social Capital: A Conceptual History," *Political Theory* 32, no. 1 (2004): 6-33. Kevin Mattson locates Hanifan among the "localist" democratic progressives of the period, along side Edward Ward, John Collier and Charles Zeublin, all of whom Mattson cites in his work *Creating a Democratic Public*.
- ⁵⁹ Hanifan, "The Rural School Community Center."
- ⁶⁰ One suspects the influence of such figures as W. I. Thomas of Chicago, as well as other early sociologists.
- ⁶¹ See L. J. Hanifan and West Virginia State Department of Education, *A Handbook Containing Suggestions and Programs for Community Social Gatherings at Rural School Houses* (Charleston, WV: Tribune Print. Co., 1913); L. J. Hanifan, *A Handbook Containing Suggestions and Programs for Community Social Gatherings at Rural School Houses*, revised ed. (Charleston, WV: Department of Free Schools, State of West Virginia, 1914); L. J. Hanifan, *A Handbook Containing Suggestions and Programs for Community Social Gatherings at Rural School Houses*, 2nd revision, 5th ed. (Charleston, WV: Department of Free Schools, State of West Virginia, 1915); and L. J. Hanifan, *A Handbook Containing Suggestions and Programs for Community Social Gatherings at Rural School Houses*, 3rd revision, 6th ed. (Charleston, WV: Department of Free Schools, State of West Virginia, 1916).
- ⁶² L. J. Hanifan, L. J. and Department of Free Schools F. Schools *District Supervision -- Bulletin No. 7 -- Containing Information and Suggestions on Supervision of Rural Schools* (Charleston, WV: State of West Virginia, 1915).
- ⁶³ Mattson, *Creating a Democratic Public*.
- ⁶⁴ The schools' largest constituency was East Harlem's Italian population. The problems of these poor immigrants played a defining role in the high school's developing phase. See Johaneck and Puckett, *Leonard Covello and the Making of Benjamin Franklin High School*, chap. 2.
- ⁶⁵ Leonard Covello, "A High School and Its Immigrant Community - A Challenge and an Opportunity." *Journal of Educational Sociology* 9, no. 6 (1936): 331-346.

⁶⁶ Johaneck and Puckett, *Leonard Covello and the Making of Benjamin Franklin High School*.

⁶⁷ In a 1938 article for the journal *Progressive Education*, Covello wrote that the school aimed to provide:

1. Adequate service to the community along educational civic, social, and welfare lines.
2. Restoration of communal living, as far as may be possible, in a congested city neighborhood.
3. Creation of more harmonious relationships between Americans of foreign stock and older Americans.
4. Training of local leaders qualified to guide and serve within the community itself in creating the finest background possible for the life of the community as a whole.
5. Development of a complete neighborhood program.

Leonard Covello, "Neighborhood growth through the school," *Progressive Education* 15 (1938): 126-139.

⁶⁸ For more on public work, see Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 109-142; Harry Chatten Boyte and Nancy N. Kari, *Building America: The Democratic Promise of Public Work* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996); Benjamin R. Barber, *A Place for Us: How to Make Civil Society and Democracy Strong* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); and Harry Chatten Boyte, *Everyday Politics: Reconnecting Citizens and Public Life* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

⁶⁹ Johaneck and Puckett, *Leonard Covello and the Making of Benjamin Franklin High School*, chap. 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Johaneck and Puckett, *Leonard Covello and the Making of Benjamin Franklin High School*, chap. 7, pp. 213-14.

⁷² Johaneck and Puckett, *Leonard Covello and the Making of Benjamin Franklin High School*, chap. 3.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 125, 170.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, chs. 3-5.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, chs. 5-7. Sections adapted from L. Benson, I. Harkavy, and others, "The Enduring Appeal of Community Schools," *American Educator* (Summer 2009): 22-29; 47.

⁷⁶ Lawrence A. Cremin, "Public Education and the Education of the Public," *Teachers College Record* 77, no. 1 (1975): 1-12.

⁷⁷ Dewey's colleague, George Counts, saw clear danger in the equation of schooling and education:

A very genuine evil which flows from this narrow conception of education is a false notion with regard to equality of opportunity. ... Clearly to the extent that education is not the whole of opportunity, and schooling not the whole of education, such a belief is dangerous and calculated to blind the eyes to social injustice. [p.18-19]

George S. Counts, *The American Road to Culture* (1930, repr., New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971), 18-19.

⁷⁸ Cremin, "Public Education and the Education of the Public"; George S. Counts, *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978).

⁷⁹ In the fall of 1998, Google filed for incorporation and MoveOn.org formed as a political action committee. See <http://www.google.com/about/corporate/company/history.html> and <http://moveon.org/about.html>.

⁸⁰ Making an explicit link across the historical and political science worlds regarding civic education, Amy Gutmann notes that "Since the democratic ideal of education is that of conscious social reproduction, a democratic theory focuses on practices of deliberate instruction by individuals and on the educative influences of institutions designed at least partly for educational purposes." Democratic education can not be subsumed under political socialization or it will "lose sight of the distinctive virtue of a democratic society, that it authorizes citizens to influence how their society reproduces itself." In turn, we can also "appreciate the centrality of schooling to democratic education and still recognize that there is much more to democratic education than schooling." Amy Gutmann, *Democratic Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987): 14-15.

⁸⁰ Theda Skocpol, Marshall Ganz, and Ziad Munson, "A Nation of Organizers: The Institutional Origins of Civic Voluntarism in the United States," *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 3 (2000): 527-546; Theda Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy - From Membership to Management in American Civic Life* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003); Theda Skocpol, Rachael V. Cobb, and Casey Andrew Klofstad, "Disconnection and Reorganization: The Transformation of Civic Life in Late-Twentieth-Century America," *Studies in American Political Development* 19(Fall 2005): 137-156.

⁸¹ The terms, apparently, being of much more recent usage.

⁸² Merriam, *The Making of Citizens* .

⁸³ The history of civic education requires interweaving the histories of voluntary organizations, the press, religious organizations, families and so on. A notable effort to synthesize across these educating histories was Cremin's masterful three-volume history of American education. See Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education, the Colonial Experience, 1607-1783* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970); Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education, the National Experience, 1783-1876* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980); and Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education, the Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

⁸⁴ Skocpol, Ganz, and Munson, "A Nation of Organizers"; Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy*; Skocpol, Cobb, and Klostad, "Disconnection and Reorganization."

⁸⁵ Frederick A. Fickardt, "The Order of the Sons of Temperance of North America, as a School for Popular Debate and Eloquence," in *The National Temperance Offering, and Sons and Daughters of Temperance Gift*, ed. Samuel Fenton Cary (New York: R. Vandien, 1850), as cited in Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy*.

⁸⁶ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. 2, 3rd ed., trans. Henry Reeve (Cambridge, MA: Sever and Francis, 1863), 134.

⁸⁷ Arthur M. Schlesinger, "Biography of a Nation of Joiners," *The American Historical Review* 50, no. 1 (1944): 1-25.

⁸⁸ Skocpol, Ganz, and others, "A Nation of Organizers"; Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy*; Skocpol, Cobb, and Klostad, "Disconnection and Reorganization."

⁸⁹ Skocpol, Ganz, and Munson, "A Nation of Organizers," 542. The social capital v. civic reorganization debates force consideration of historical and current drivers, whether generational, governmental, media, or institutional. For current civic educators, finding places for youth and adult experience in public deliberative processes remains the immediate challenge, in whatever form that organization may need to take today. For more, see Robert D. Putnam, "The Strange Disappearance of Civic America," *The American Prospect* (Winter 1996); Theda Skocpol, "Unravelling From Above," *The American Prospect* 25(March-April 1996): 20-25; Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone : The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000); Skocpol, Ganz, and Munson, "A Nation of Organizers"; Putnam, "Community-Based Social Capital"; Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Together: The United State of America," *American Prospect* 13, no. 3 (2002): 20-22; Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy*; Robert D. Putnam, *Education, Diversity, Social Cohesion and "Social Capital"* (paper delivered at "Raising the Quality of Education for All" meeting of OECD Education Ministers, Dublin, Ireland, 2004); and Skocpol, Cobb, and Klostad, "Disconnection and Reorganization."

⁹⁰ Jeffrey E. Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism - Americanization Education and European Immigrants* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Skocpol, Ganz, and Munson, "A Nation of Organizers," 541.

⁹⁵ Robert Fisher, *Grass Roots Organizing in the Community Center Movement, 1907-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); Mark R. Warren, *Dry Bones Rattling -- Community Building to Revitalize American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Jeannie Oakes and John Rogers, *Learning Power: Organizing for Education and Justice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006); Kavitha Mediratta, Seema Shah, and Sara McAlister, *Community Organizing for Stronger Schools: Strategies and Successes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2009); Celina Su, *Streetwise for Book Smarts: Grassroots Organizing and Education Reform in the Bronx* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009). Mark Warren, "Community Organizing for School Reform," in *Public Engagement for Public Education*, eds. Marion Orr and John Rogers (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 139-172.

⁹⁶ Jonathan Zimmerman, "Storm over the Schoolhouse: Exploring Popular Influences upon the American Curriculum, 1890-1941," *Teachers College Record* 100, no. 3 (1999): 602-626; Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Christine A. Woyshner, "Women's Associations and the Origins of the Social Studies: Volunteers, Professionals, and the Community Civics Curriculum, 1890-1920," *International Journal of Social Education* 18, no. 2 (2004): 15-26; Anne Meis Knupfer and Christine A. Woyshner, *The Educational Work of Women's Organizations, 1890-1960* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Christine A. Woyshner, *The National PTA, Race, and Civic Engagement, 1897-1970* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2009).

⁹⁷ Robert W. McChesney, "Media and Democracy: The Emergence of Commercial Broadcasting in the United States, 1927-1935," *OAH Magazine of History* 6, no. 4 (1992): 34-40; Robert W. McChesney, "The Internet and U.S. Communication Policy-Making in Historical and Critical Perspective," *Journal of Communication* 46, no. 1 (1996): 98-124; Jordan Stanger-Ross, Christina Collins, and Mark J. Stern, "Falling Far from the Tree: Transitions to Adulthood and the Social History of Twentieth-Century America," *Social Science History* 29 (2005): 625-648; Bill Bishop, with Robert G. Cushing, *The Big Sort - Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America Is Tearing Us Apart* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008); Thad Williamson, *Sprawl, Justice and Citizenship: The Civic Costs of the American Way of Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Eli Pariser, *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is Hiding from You* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011).

⁹⁸ The focus of other chapters in this volume.

⁹⁹ Summary data, author's calculation, of federal voting average 1960-2010; see source table at <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0781453.html>.

¹⁰⁰ For the latest in a string of reports, see *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* (Philadelphia, PA: The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, University of Pennsylvania; Silver Spring, MD: The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, 2011).

¹⁰¹ Counts, *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?*

¹⁰² Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *An Elusive Science: The Troubling History of Education Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

¹⁰³ Clearly there have been counter-examples throughout our history, and persisting to the present, particularly evident in youth leadership, community organizing, community schools, place-based reform efforts, etc.