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The Grinnell Public Schools
1855-1880

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The popular conception of schools in the Midwest during the 1800s is the one-room schoolhouse, with its attendant images of schoolmarms, birch-rods, slates, and simple, straightforward teaching. In our idealized notions, one-room schoolhouses have taken on a certain mystique: they symbolize a less complicated time, an era when one could still form a comprehensive world-view, — all the education anyone possibly needed could be had in a single room. The one-room schoolhouse seems a perfect analogue for the paradoxical mind-set that pervaded the last half of 19th century America: thousands of citizens who believed that, through a rational process of education, all of humanity was moving inexorably toward convergence. Yet they lived in "island communities," worlds that were, in effect, only a few miles square.¹ The public's yearning for a rational education combined with a sense of isolated self-sufficiency found its expression in the one-room school.

But just as there was no monolithic American belief in the 1800s, there is no monolithic "American school." The one-room schoolhouse may be representative of rural education of the day, but at the same time a much more sophisticated type of school system was evolving in the burgeoning towns of the Midwest. By 1880, many town districts had to deal with problems just as complex as those faced by modern-day school administrators. This study will focus on the public school system of Grinnell from its inception in 1855 to 1880, treating areas ranging from broad historical development to specific courses of study. Many of these areas overlap; all are interdependent. This interdependence illustrates the complex nature of one embryonic town system in the Midwest; while it cannot and should not completely dispel the popular conception of 19th century schooling, hopefully it will add a new perspective to our view of what schools were like in Iowa a century ago.

From the beginning, the community leaders of

Grinnell have placed a great deal of emphasis, at least rhetorically, on the quality of public education in the town. Public schools in tandem with the Congregational Church hierarchy were an integral part of founder Josiah Bushnell Grinnell's program from a temperance town.²

The early settlers of Grinnell were apparently well-known in the state for their affinity for books and learning; one man recalled "When I came to Iowa and settled in Oska-loosa they told me of a town thirty miles north across the prairie where they all read the New York Tribune and the Bible every morning before breakfast."³ This kind of word-of-mouth recommendation was a major method of attracting settlers to the new town. The kind of families Grinnell wanted to lure to his settlement could be enticed by an operating public school.

It was in this conducive atmosphere that the first schoolhouse in the village was built, approximately one year after its founding. Probably intended to be temporary, early in the spring of 1855 ten men pledged \$15 each for its construction; Grinnell himself was the contractor.⁴ The lumber was in the grove on a Monday, but by that Sunday a rudimentary building of 16x24 feet had been constructed. The green oak soon warped with the rain, and water often rushed in between the roof and floor boards.⁵ Built on a corner of the Congregational Church lot, this schoolhouse also served as the church itself and the town hall. It was replaced the next year by a building of two single-room storeys measuring 40x40, costing around \$5000. This school stood until 1871, and in the early years was also used for lectures, church meetings, caucuses, elections, courts, lyceums, and socials.⁶

Yet even with the town leadership's professed concern about creating a quality public school system, education during the first year of the town was nothing special. The first three teachers — Lucy Bixby, Louisa Bixby,

and Samuel F. Cooper — were not interested in education as a career. The school was ungraded and lessons stressed memorization rather than comprehension. Dissatisfaction with the teaching methods in the public school was possibly one of the reasons why the private school Darius Thomas held in his home during the winter of 1855-56 flourished. It did so well that the town leadership sought to co-opt him into the mainstream by offering him a professorship at the proposed Grinnell University, which they were pushing quite strongly; Thomas declined because he had no training in music. Fearing his own school would fail if the college would actually be built, Thomas moved to Newton in April 1856 and founded the Hazel Dell Academy (later Newton Normal College);⁷ there were no more immediate threats to the primacy of the public schools that the town leaders hoped would feed Grinnell University.

Perhaps sensing that other private schools might gain a strong foothold if the quality of the town's school did not improve, the founders of Grinnell began a search for a professional educator to conduct public instruction. In the summer of 1856 they found just such a person when Cooper persuaded one of his classmates at Oberlin, Leonard W. Parker, to come to Grinnell and become the first Superintendent of the public school.⁸ Joanna Harris Haines felt that Parker's arrival revolutionized the school; until 1856 it had been run efficiently but hardly innovatively. Instead of a treadmill of rote lessons, Parker imbued the students with "a sense of the wonder and adventure of learning. He related the lessons to life."⁹ Parker was indeed a devoted educator who brought to his work both a sense of duty and an active, inquiring mind. Although he only taught in the public school for four years, he did more than anyone else to lay a solid foundation for the public schools of the town. His primary innovation during his teaching tenure, one of lasting importance, was turning the Grinnell school

into a graded school; by 1857 a third grade had been added.¹⁰

The centerpiece of Grinnell's vision of a temperance town was always the building of a university or college. Toward this end, the town began building the physical plant of the proposed Grinnell University. Actually, Grinnell hoped if possible to draw the foundering Iowa College of Davenport to the new colony, but if this fell through, the town was fully prepared to create a university of its own.¹¹ While it would be unfair to say that the public school was a handmaiden to Grinnell University, immediately after Parker came it was made preparatory to the proposed institution. The public school had to meet criteria set forth by the Grinnell University trustees, which promoted the enrollment of foreign students (students from outside Grinnell township), no doubt to enhance the future student body of the University.¹² By 1859, when Iowa College did come to Grinnell, superseding the University, the public school had become something of a county academy, drawing pupils from all over central Iowa.¹³

The public school's connection with Iowa College was somewhat nebulous. Around 1859, Parker began advanced college-level classes for the best students in the highest grade of the public school.¹⁴ Some of these classes were actually held in the first building on the Iowa College campus. Also in that year, the District Township of Grinnell School Board voted to charge tuition to students who attended classes "in connexion with the college department."¹⁵ Lines between secondary school and college were further blurred during the 1859-60 school year when Parker taught half-time at the College.¹⁶ This arrangement was reciprocal: in 1860 the Board voted to pay Iowa College \$10 per month for teaching students from the District Township courses in Algebra, Philosophy, and American History.¹⁷ That same year the College asked the Superintendent of the public school, S.H. Herrick, and a Board

member of the District, Quincy A. Gilmore, to provide instruction on campus for these higher classes without expense to the College to help get it off the ground. They accepted, their only pay being the infinitesimally small surplus left from the tuition charge to foreign students (about \$4-5 per term) after maintenance expenses were paid. The next year, 1860-61, the trustees took over all instruction at Iowa College, and the Superintendent of the public school became principal of the Preparatory Department there.¹⁸ The Civil War and the creation of the Independent District of Grinnell in 1867 weakened the public school's ties with the College, and by the 1870s the two were entirely separate entities.

Foreign students did not always attend the public school merely as a preface to matriculation in Iowa College; pupils from outside the district attended both before and after the school's affiliation with the College.¹⁹ Since tuition from foreign students was an essential supplement to publicly-funded revenues, the school itself actively sought such students; in February 1859, a "notice" of the Grinnell public school was placed in the Montezuma Republican.²⁰ Foreign pupils were accommodated in private homes, rooming over woodsheds, in unplastered rooms where bedstead, chair, table, and stove were uncomfortable proximity"; they paid their way by chopping wood and gardening.²¹ On the surface it might appear that the issue of foreign students in the Grinnell public school would be fairly innocuous; in fact, it was the pretext for the most violent controversy in the early years of the entire town.

Grinnell was originally settled by a band of New England abolitionists, and was well-known as a stop on the underground railroad through Iowa. There was also a considerable portion of the population from Southern or pro-slavery backgrounds that arrived later. In 1860 there were five fugitive slaves attending the Grinnell public school,

most from Missouri. The oldest was a man of about 26 years of age, a husband and a father, who wished to learn to read so he could go back to Missouri and lead his family north by using the guideposts.²² The youngest was also the only girl of the group, 16-year-old Frances Overton. These young people desperately needed an education; not only were they illiterate in language, but illiterate in the culture of the people who controlled their lives. When Frances, who lived with the Amos Bixby family, was shown a picture of the Crucifixion, she asked "What are they doing to that man up there?"²³ But the fugitive slaves had a voracious appetite for learning: three months after being shown the Crucifixion, Frances won the Sunday school contest for knowing the greatest number of Scriptural verses from memory -- in the process offending some white settlers.²⁴

The first problems over the question of allowing blacks to attend the public school emerged at the annual open meeting in early March 1860. Although the fugitive slaves had been attending the school without incident for some time, there was apparently a strong undercurrent of anti-black sentiment in the town in those troubled months just prior to the Civil War, for there had been rumors in the air that something might happen at the meeting. Events did indeed come to a head when a young man rose and said "I move that hereafter no more foreign students shall be admitted to the public school." The motion was seconded.²⁵ Parker was still Superintendent of the school at that time and was running the meeting. He reminded those assembled of the school's position as preparatory department for the College, which the District Court had recognized as legal;²⁶ that most of the classes in school contained non-residents, some in a vast majority; and that foreign students brought in \$700 yearly in tuition. To pass the resolution would not only undermine Iowa College, but as Superintendent, he would be forced to suspend some of the classes in which the

majority were foreign students -- including the one that contained the son of the proposer (who has remained anonymous in all accounts of the controversy, but may have been Timothy B. Clark, a young farmer²⁷). Furthermore, the townspeople would have to make up the lost revenue. The vote was taken and the motion lost, with only the proposer voting in the affirmative.

"But we didn't say exactly what we wanted," said the proposer. "We want to exclude the niggers." A vote on this resolution was taken, with a majority of five voting to allow the black students to remain. But the minority were disgruntled, and further trouble was anticipated.²⁸

Parker arrived at the schoolhouse early the next morning with a heavy walking stick. Before long, two of the dissidents appeared at the building's door. By his own account, Parker made a stand at the schoolhouse door and defended the rights of all properly enrolled students, not specifically those of blacks.²⁹ After a short exchange, the two men withdrew since the black students had not arrived yet, having been intercepted nearby. In some accounts, Amos Bixby furnished the black men with arms and exhorted them to fight for their rights,³⁰ but this, along with Parker's exchange with the two dissidents, cannot be verified. A mob developed, but cooler heads on both sides of the issue prevailed upon the crowd to disperse. To avoid further turmoil, school was closed early for the summer and the fugitives were given temporary jobs in the town.

In effect, the slaves had been expelled from the public school. To help fill the void, Mrs. Sarah Bixby opened a free school to all the black people of Grinnell in her residence, showing great courage in the face of open antagonism.³¹ This school was short-lived, however, because the leaders of the pro-slavery faction alerted slave-hunters

through a St. Louis newspaper to the fact that there were fugitives in Grinnell. For their own safety, the slaves were removed to Quaker colonies farther north.³²

Immediately after the "incipient mob" the Board acted to ensure that the opportunity for such a controversy need never occur again. They resolved that³³

1. All students over 21 be considered foreign students.
2. All foreign students must apply for admission to the Board and pay half the tuition in advance, the balance due when the term is half through.
3. Tuition be raised to a new level, ranging from \$1 to \$1.25 per month, depending upon the grade.

By putting an age limit on free schooling and by delegating to themselves the power to screen out applicants, the Board could effectively eliminate all black adults or fugitive slaves from the public school if they so desired. Raising the tuition level was another barrier to families in Grinnell like the Bixbys who might be harboring fugitives and considering sending them to the school.

But such controversy was certainly the exception during the first five years of the Grinnell public schools. Parker characterized that time as one of stern physical economies; nevertheless, he found much personal satisfaction in his four years of teaching in the public school.³⁴ The hard times of 1857-60 were a reality in Grinnell: no credit and little money, with taxes unpaid for years, coffee giving way to sorghum-sweetened rye.³⁵ It was no different for the school Board, which had to resort to various ways to keep the system running, such as renting out rooms in the schoolhouse for private functions.³⁶ Perhaps the pinch was felt most acutely in the area of school equipment. The public school badly needed a library in those days, but the only "library" that could be mustered up was a warped bookcase half-filled with donated books,

which soon ended in failure.³⁷

It is somewhat difficult to discuss specific incidents in the early history of Grinnell's school without a knowledge of the organizational framework in which it took place. In Grinnell's first years, it was an unofficial "board" of town leaders who exerted most of the influence on its educational system. Until 1858, the public school was run on this informal basis, with the individual teacher and a few prominent concerned citizens making policy. This changed with the passage of the free-school law in March 1858; one month later the District Township of Grinnell was formed.³⁸ This law, one of the first steps toward establishing uniform standards of education in Iowa, will be discussed in more detail below.

This new school district, as the name suggests, was coextensive with Grinnell Township. The major duty of the Board of Directors was to manage the finances of the district. If one looks at the minutes of almost any regularly scheduled meeting of the Board during these years, one is struck by the amount of time spent auditing long lists of small bills for repairs or services rendered. Board members were by no means averse to contracting repair work to themselves: in one meeting the names of four members appear on the list of paid contract work.³⁹ They were also responsible for various other financial duties: purchasing insurance (in 1860 the schoolhouse was insured with the Peoria Insurance Company for \$2000 at a cost of \$23 per year⁴⁰), issuing bonds, and paying employees. The other major duty of the Board executed in regular session was the hiring and firing of personnel, mainly teachers.

Special meetings of the District Township Board dealt with the election of new members, which took place in a public vote held annually in early spring, and major disciplinary problems in the school. For example, Loyal

Phelps Jr. was expelled in 1861 for destroying school property.⁴¹ Finally, the Board called special meetings to formulate new school regulations, such as those passed after the near-mob of 1860. A more typical example of regulations can be found in the minutes of 1863:⁴²

1. Students shall not remain on the school grounds or in the school house after the close of classes.
2. Notes from parents will be required in explanation of absence or tardiness.
3. Unexcused absences will be expelled.
4. There shall be a public examination of students at the end of each term.
5. There shall be no unexcused absences from examinations.
6. Vandalism shall be cause for immediate expulsion.

Overseeing all the district townships in the county was the County Superintendent, an office created by the free-school law of 1858. His main job was to hold examinations for teacher certification and to visit all the schools in the county to make sure the state's standards were being adhered to.⁴³ The County Superintendent was also required to issue an annual report recounting the general financial situations of each of the districts under his jurisdiction as well as other statistics concerning attendance, number of teachers, and so on; in it he also made recommendations on how to solve problems of individual districts. Apparently there was a good working relationship between the County Superintendent and the local boards in Iowa County, for according to S.J. Buck, an eminent educator from Grinnell, during the three years he held that office, the districts usually followed the recommendations he made in the annual report.⁴⁴

The District Township of Grinnell functioned unchanged until 1865, when the Board was forced to split the township into two sub-districts; the next year the township was re-divided into five sub-districts (see chart 1).⁴⁵ The

reasons for this re-districting were not given explicitly; however, they possibly arose from administrative concerns -- the business of running schools was just too great to be handled from the township level. Another, greater impetus to the creation of smaller districts was an act the General Assembly passed in 1862 that allowed any incorporated settlement of over 300 inhabitants to form a separate school district; in 1866 the population requirement was lowered to 200.⁴⁶ This change in the law, combined with the fact that Grinnell incorporated as a town in 1865, is probably the major reason why the Independent District of Grinnell was formed in about March of 1867.⁴⁷ All indications are that the split between the two districts was amicable, although certain monetary claims were still awaiting settlement as late as 1873.⁴⁸

The new district encompassed the city limits of Grinnell, taking over the direction of the lone school, still operating near the center of town in the 1856 building. The Board of the Independent District carried out basically the same functions as the Board of the District Township; its structure was the same except for the creation of the Superintendent of the public school. The Independent District also introduced the full system of eleven grades, divided into four grades each of Primary and Grammar school and three years of High School.⁴⁹

The Superintendent, who was also the Principal of the High School, was expected to handle all disciplinary cases and to familiarize himself monthly with the progress of each class in the school.⁵⁰ It was his duty to issue the Annual Report, which took different forms. The 1869 report consisted of the names of all 342 students enrolled, with their grade and department averages, the number of times absent and total minutes tardy;⁵¹ later reports printed these types of statistics as well as complete Board

regulations and courses of study.⁵² The office of Superintendent was structured so as to allow a vigorous man to introduce innovations; the first Superintendent, of the Independent District, John Valentine, was such a man. During his four years in the post he originated attendance, punctuality, scholarship, and deportment reports, all of which did much to increase the accountability of the schools to the parents.⁵³ But it so happened that one of Valentine's innovations was to play a much more direct role in the lives of his students and their families.

Around noon on February 24, 1871, a fire was discovered in the furnace room of the schoolhouse. Valentine had instituted fire drills two years previously and they had been practiced regularly since that time. He was notified of the fire, and marched everyone out in good order and dismissed the classes early, never telling the students why. Many of the children were halfway home before they realized the building was on fire.⁵⁴ By 12:20 P.M. over 100 volunteers were fighting the blaze (there was no fire company in Grinnell at this time), but the situation was made hopeless by the thick black coal smoke and a strong northwest wind. The entire building and most of the furniture and books were lost.⁵⁵

The Board acted swiftly, meeting in emergency session two days later, and voted to rebuild a new schoolhouse on the old site; they also made provisions for school to continue in private homes. One month later the Board awarded a contract for a new wooden structure to Larrabee and Beaton for \$10,680.⁵⁶ This building was completed in time for the fall term. It was much more spacious than the old one, with five sixteen-foot-high rooms on the second floor; the halls were wider and it had a mansard roof and cupola. The editors of the Grinnell Herald declared that the enhanced beauty of the building would have a positive

effect on "educatory power."⁵⁷

But even this enlarged building was soon not sufficient to handle the numbers of students coming into the Grinnell school. In 1867 the town had 417 youngsters of school age out of a population of only 993; by 1875 the town had grown to 1480, but the number of school-age children remained almost exactly the same, rising to 419.⁵⁸ It seems a much higher percentage of the eligible children were taking advantage of free schooling in the mid-1870s, for in 1874 an extra teacher and room had to be secured to handle the overflow.⁵⁹ The overcrowding became so acute that in March 1877 Superintendent A.C. Hart wrote the Herald to report that seating was jammed to capacity and a new school would certainly have to be built.⁶⁰ In April of that year a bond issue to fund the building of a new school passed; one week later the classes went on split sessions until the new building was completed.⁶¹

The Board's two-member special committee selected a site in the southern section of Grinnell and bought four adjacent lots there for \$660.⁶² Construction started immediately under the direction of Benjamin Bartlett; by September of that year it was ready for classes, although there were some defects in the execution of the design because contractor and Board went to arbitration over some of the bills. The total cost was eventually settled at slightly over \$4500.⁶³ The old school was now referred to as Center School; the new, as South School. The boundary line between the two was originally the east-west railroad track through town, but by 1879 all Primary and Grammar students living south of Third Avenue attended the new school.⁶⁴ But the school population of Grinnell was growing so fast that by 1880 the first grade was forced to operate on split sessions.⁶⁵

Perhaps the biggest problem for the school Board of Grinnell during the early years was financing public

education. At the time of the establishment of the first school in Grinnell, Iowa had no uniform free-school law. All students from the town initially paid \$2.00 per term for tuition.⁶⁶ This, of course, did not nearly cover the cost of running the school; for the most part, this was accomplished through rate bills,⁶⁷ which were simply assessments on the families of schoolchildren in proportion to the amount they made use of the school.⁶⁸ There seems to have been no provision for indigent families in the rate bill system, as there was in the early Michigan territorial schools, in which the district was authorized to apportion the cost of schooling poor children among the other rate-payers.⁶⁹ Since the school Board was not created until 1858, there are no records extant on how much rate bills cost in Grinnell.

In January 1858 J.E. Grinnell introduced into the General Assembly the bill that established uniform free-school districts in Iowa. Passed in March of that year, the bill made the township the unit for a school district, while incorporated towns of at least 1000 people had the option of organizing independent school districts.⁷⁰ Under this law, the electors had the power to determine a tax levy for providing buildings, teacher's salaries, and school equipment; they also might authorize the school board to anticipate a tax and borrow money for a building and site.⁷¹ The tax could not exceed five mills on the dollar upon taxable property.⁷²

The Board of the District Township wasted no time in organizing, holding their first meeting only a month after the passage of the law. In May of 1858 the township voted \$900 to help pay for the schoolhouse;⁷³ apparently they also authorized the Board to borrow money, for in 1859 the district was over \$1400 in debt to Mr. Grinnell.⁷⁴ By 1860, the schools were heavily in debt, paying 25% interest on

some of their loans, but indebtedness was a financial condition fairly common in the Midwest in 1860.⁷⁵ In fact, by 1865 the loan on the schoolhouse was paid off,⁷⁶ and it appears the District Township was never in any dire financial straits.

The two primary means of financing the schools were the levying of taxes and the issuance of bonds. Although both methods were contingent upon the approval of the voters of the district, during the first quarter-century of the Grinnell public schools the funding of education was not a controversial issue: tax levies and bond issues were passed consistently in those years. Even after the 5-mill ceiling was raised and the total school taxes exceeded 30 mills on the dollar, few citizens shared the sentiments of "A Taxpayer" who wrote the Herald in 1870 to question the wisdom of paying so much tax for schools and how the money was being spent.⁷⁷ Judging from election results, most Grinnell voters were inclined to agree with a "Citizen" who replied to the above letter later that month. He didn't object to the school tax since he estimated that, paying on property valued at \$750, it cost him only \$13.50 per year to send his two children to school.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, taxes in 1871 were lowered from 33 mills to 25 mills on the dollar.⁷⁹ (see chart 2). School bond elections were equally successful. Although few bonds were issued in the first years of the District Township, the Independent District in 1867 received approval to issue \$6000 worth of bonds at 2% interest, redeemable within five years at the Board's pleasure.⁸⁰ Similar bonds were issued in 1869 and 1877.⁸¹ The 1877 election aroused little voter interest, and \$4000 worth of bonds to finance the South School were approved with only two dissenting votes.⁸²

The impact of finance on the nature of public education in Grinnell is also evident when one considers the salaries of teachers. At that time, teachers were often

not looked upon as professionals — indeed, many of them were not, in terms of teaching as a lifetime occupation — but as laborers for hire.⁸³ Low wages were justified by the argument that "teachers spend only six hours of each day in labor, and can afford to work cheap."⁸⁴ And so they did in Grinnell, especially compared to other Iowa towns (see chart 3). Although various formulas were used, both Grinnell districts paid their teachers on a graduated scale according to the grade taught, from first grade on the low end on up to High School instructors. In 1865, High School teachers were paid \$40 monthly; Intermediate, \$30; and Primary, \$28.⁸⁵ The effect of this system was to encourage teachers to move toward the secondary grades, leaving a potential vacuum of talent in the all-important first few grades. Such a wage scale could be interpreted as a reflection of a philosophy of education that emphasizes linear classroom achievement rather than depth of understanding.

Throughout this period the Grinnell districts suffered a high turnover rate in teachers; one of the reasons was the relative monetary insecurity of the job. Salaries could be raised or lowered at the whim of the Board; when wages fell sharply, as they did in 1878,⁸⁶ the instructor had no recourse except to quit or work another job on the side. Another restraint on a young person considering teaching as a long-term career was the chronic problem of late payment of wages. This occurred rather more frequently than it should have; in 1859, S.F. Cooper was paid a sum due him in 1857.⁸⁷ The abuses eased in later years, but were still prevalent enough in 1871 to compel the Herald to recount stories of young ladies who were not paid for two years because the district treasury was so depleted, and consequently were forced to take other jobs to pay their bills.⁸⁸

The one constant in the entire area of teacher's salaries in Grinnell's public schools was the pay bias

against women, which was always blatant and often striking. It was apparent from the earliest years: in 1859, Leonard Parker and William Beaton were paid \$50 and \$30 monthly, respectively, while Helen Tilton and Junielle Phelps made only \$20 and \$16 for the same period.⁸⁹ It was more pronounced in later years: in 1869, John Valentine was paid \$150 per month as Superintendent/Principal; Joanna Harris Haines earned \$60 monthly for a workload as Assistant Principal that certainly was not less than half that of Valentine's.⁹⁰ In that year, male teachers in Grinnell averaged \$11.30 per week in pay, while women made \$7.91 doing the same work.⁹¹ Although higher pay for men could be justified somewhat because of the higher positions they held, there was a strong prejudice against women for these positions. During the Civil War, when all the teaching staff were women, the Board resolved to secure a permanent male teacher for the highest grade.⁹² At any rate, since so few other occupations were available to women, it is doubtful whether this pay bias discouraged those seeking employment from becoming teachers. Since the inequality of the situation aroused no public attention, it was probably taken as the norm. Women instructors were at the mercy of male directors; not until 1876 were women elected to the board of a school district in Grinnell, and neither of them had been teachers.⁹³

Of course, this pay bias was one of the major causes of the high turnover rate that has already been noted; this in turn helped retard the growth of teaching as a profession, for there were no external factors to oblige a young woman to make education a career. Women made up the great majority of teachers, yet most saw their job as merely a steppingstone to marriage or, more rarely, to other work.⁹⁴ This is borne out in Grinnell: during the first two decades of the public schools, the longest consecutive stretch any female instructor taught was three years.

The prerequisite for those considering a teaching

job was certification. Technically, one only had to do two things to get certified in Iowa up to 1880:⁹⁵

1. Pass the teacher's examination which was administered on a regular basis by the County Superintendent.
2. From 1861-1874, attend a teacher's institute; after 1874, attend a normal institute.

The teacher's examination could be taken by anyone, but usually a knowledge of at least part of the High School course was necessary to pass. Poweshiek County acquired a reputation for its especially severe tests, receiving many complaints from Iowa College applicants who failed to pass.⁹⁶ Before the creation of independent districts, this test was always given by people from Grinnell, and they expected aspirants from the town to achieve a higher standard in order to win a certificate. This was a matter of pride to Grinnellians, who had "no desire to have poor specimens of scholarship from Grinnell in the schools around them."⁹⁷

From 1861 to 1874 would-be teachers from Grinnell fulfilled the second requirement by attending the Poweshiek County Teacher's Institute, which every summer held week-long meetings to improve the general level of teaching. At the 1866 meeting there were 38 members from Grinnell and the president of the association was Leonard F. Parker.⁹⁸ Instructional lectures ranging from "Penmanship" to "Manners and Morals" were given during the day; lighter lectures on peripherally academic topics were offered in the evening.⁹⁹ Aside from studying or reviewing various teaching skills, the Institute's main business was to pass resolutions and make them public, usually in order to express some of the teachers' problems and concerns. In a series of resolutions, the 1866 Institute declared that "the general diffusion of knowledge is the only safeguard of the peace, prosperity, and freedom of our country," and, although they were

determined to do what they could "by being better teachers and irrepressible agitators for the cause of popular education," they could not bear all the responsibility:¹⁰⁰

Unless the people second our efforts, by wise and liberal provision for the material support of our schools, by furnishing comfortable schoolhouses, necessary apparatus, uniform text books, and by remunerating teachers in proportion to the qualifications required of them, we can accomplish comparatively little.

This statement is a clue to how inadequately the schools of the day were equipped, and how poorly teachers were paid.

These teacher's institutes varied from county to county since the state exercised no control over their organization or agenda, leaving that up to the County Superintendent.¹⁰¹ In 1874, the General Assembly passed a law requiring the establishment of normal institutes in every county, eliminating teacher's institutes. The main difference between the two was the normal institutes were controlled from a state level, thus achieving more uniformity, and, as the name suggests, they stressed practical teaching methods.¹⁰² These new meetings also took place in the summer; in 1874 the Grinnell Board rented out the schoolhouse for the whole of August to the normal institute.¹⁰³ These became the formal training grounds for teachers for the duration of time covered by this study, supplemented by the State Normal School, founded at Cedar Falls in 1876.¹⁰⁴

Once certified, teachers gained employment in the Grinnell public schools by direct vote of the Board.¹⁰⁵ Usually these teachers were drawn from graduates of the Grinnell public schools themselves or from students at Iowa College. Rarely was someone from outside the immediate Grinnell area employed, simply because the Board would probably not have been well-enough acquainted with the applicant. The selection process itself was rather haphazard: the Board

seems to have elected people who, although well-qualified, had no knowledge of their possible election beforehand.¹⁰⁶ This sometimes led to a somewhat ludicrous series of elections followed by resignations; for example, from July to September in 1874, five people in succession were elected to teaching positions only to resign at the next Board meeting.¹⁰⁷

One cannot doubt the profound effect that individual elements, such as teachers, the Board, or the state, have had on the specifics of public education in Grinnell. But to understand the broader nature of the education offered in Grinnell's public schools, one must examine the institutional factors that both affected them and acted as a link to the society at large. Far and away the most important institutional impact on the Grinnell schools was religion. The basis for all the beliefs of the founders of Grinnell, — for their emphasis on education, their support for temperance, their fervent abolitionist sentiment — was their deep-rooted, ineradicable Congregationalist faith. The close ties between church and school went unquestioned in early Grinnell: for the first seven years one building served both purposes.¹⁰⁸ This relationship was best expressed by S.J. Buck in his speech at the 1874 Grinnell High School Commencement: "The free common schools of our land. . . are, next to the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the bulwark of our liberties and the glory of our civilization."¹⁰⁹

The Protestant tradition, as manifested through Congregationalism, was still strong in Grinnell even 25 years after its founding. While it would be difficult to measure the impact of Congregationalism on the nature and administration of education in Grinnell, one should not dismiss its possible influence lightly.¹¹⁰ At any rate, there was a definite Protestant tinge to the practice of

education in the town. Most schools in the Midwest began their day with prayer,¹¹¹ and Grinnell was little different; the Board mandated that "The morning exercises of each School shall commence with reading the Scriptures, without note or comment; and this may be followed by prayer and appropriate singing."¹¹² The Board's ban on commentary on the Scriptures echoed Parker's belief that the Bible should be nothing more than a reader text in the public schools.¹¹³ This passive position was challenged occasionally by people who felt the Bible should be taught vigorously;¹¹⁴ even so, to the impressionable minds of young pupils it must have been a very thin line between using the Bible as a book of object lessons and a source of illustration and advocating its contents as the literal truth.

Popular standards of morality also shaped the kind of education a Grinnell youngster received. The Board charged teachers with the impossible burden of upholding the moral rectitude of their students. An excerpt from the school regulations of 1876:¹¹⁵

Teachers are especially required to regard the moral and social culture of their pupils as not less important than their mental training. They shall not tolerate in them falsehood, profanity, cruelty, or any form of vice. By example, as well as precept, they shall endeavor to form in them habits of social refinement.

For their part, students were expected to "abstain from the use of tobacco, from profanity, and from rude, boisterous, or vulgar language, while in the school room or on the school grounds."¹¹⁶

Another broad force affecting education in the town was social status. The men who became involved in the administration of the public schools were of the middle to upper class, by prevailing Midwestern standards. Board members listed in the 1870 census, for example, included

artisans, merchants, and young professionals; except four, all were born in New England. By contrast, all the residents of the town who were listed as being unable to read or write or both worked either as day laborers, railroad workers, or in keeping house; they were born in Southern states, Ireland, or Prussia (see chart 4). The suggestion of a division along economic lines between the children of the two groups is strong. The probable polarization between New Englanders and Southerners has already been alluded to regarding the "incipient mob" of 1860; a similar cross-cultural clash arose in a much more innocuous form in the schools themselves. Joanna Harris Haines recalled that when she was attending the Grinnell public school, there was more than a little friction between the children from a New England heritage and those from the West and South which surfaced over the pronunciation of certain words.¹¹⁷ The problem was acute enough to reach Parker's attention when he was County Superintendent, for he advocated placing dictionaries in each room solely as an aid to pronunciation. He felt that dialects were divisive and "our Common schools should aid in producing and perpetuating a common English speech."¹¹⁸

Regardless of the town's professed support of a high-quality public education, one of the problems both the directors and boosters of the schools faced was drumming up parental interest in their children's schooling. Time after time the editors of the Herald urged parents to visit the school;¹¹⁹ even Parker in one of his County Superintendent's reports made a special plea for parents to come and see the classes.¹²⁰ But this was one problem that seemed to be unsolvable; in 1873 only twelve people outside of the Board visited the public school.¹²¹

The entire orientation of public education in Grinnell was toward an atmosphere of discipline and diligent scholarship; in fact, order seemed to be the primary

criterion for a first-rate school. A. O. Hart, Superintendent of the Independent District in the late 1870s, thought that "a thorough and successful school" was based upon "regular and punctual attendance, thorough discipline, neat and correct habits, and accurate, enthusiastic work."¹²²

While these were not necessarily listed in order of descending importance, there was a tendency among Grinnell administrators to stress adherence to the rules more than scholastic achievement. It was written into the regulations: teachers were expected to "give careful and constant attention to the conduct, manners, and habits of pupils, not only while in the school room, but also at recess and intermission, and, as far as possible, while coming to and returning from school."¹²³

This tendency was apparent in the Herald's account of the public school in 1875; they found¹²⁴

The whole school has been reduced to the most perfect order. In none of the rooms did we see anything like an approach to disorder. . . . At noon the whole school is formed in regular order outside the school house and marched to their rooms; and while in their rooms the classes are called and dismissed with the most perfect order.

The editors had no doubt that learning was the direct result of order: "Mrs. Parks has every child completely under her control, and of course he must learn rapidly under her teaching."¹²⁵ The emphasis on discipline was so pronounced that the honor roll for each semester did not list ~~the names~~ of those who had excelled in their studies, but of those who had neither been absent nor tardy during the term.¹²⁶ In 1876 the names of late students began to be published in the newspapers in order to shame them into compliance with the rules.¹²⁷

The general structure of the Grinnell schools — their division into four primary, four grammar, and three

high school grades — has already been noted. The first eight grades were subdivided into lower ("B") and upper ("A") classes.¹²⁸ Prior to the Independent District the number of grades varied between two and five; in those years whenever a graded school consisted of two or more rooms, the highest grade was considered the "high school." Grinnell's first real separate High School was founded in 1867, graduating its first class three years later.¹²⁹ The school calendar was very similar to those in use now: a nine-month school year with two weeks off at Christmas and in the spring.¹³⁰ The grading system was fairly stringent; in 1875 scholarship was evaluated by monthly examinations. Students who scored less than 85 out of 100 (5 points for Appearance of Manuscript; 15 for Grammatical and Rhetorical Character; 80 for Subject Matter) were subject to demotion to a lower class, while those who passed were candidates for promotion.¹³¹ Three years later the requirements were eased somewhat, with the passing score reduced to 75.¹³²

Teaching methods evolved from the early rote drills of Cooper to a sophisticated, well-planned course of study by 1880. Parker recalls the rudimentary techniques he used to teach the alphabet in the first years of the Grinnell school:¹³³

My four juveniles took 'O' for the first lesson, making it on their slates, on the blackboard and with their thumb and forefinger. They seemed to enjoy it and could tell of many an 'O' from that of the finger ring to the ring of an ox yoke. 'X' next taxed their mental powers, their digital skill and their discrimination. The two letters led them into fields of comment on bovines

Although Parker's lessons were rudimentary in technique, they were sophisticated in conception. Instead of stressing memorization, he tried to get the students to actually visualize letters in a different context more

familiar to them, such as an ox yoke.

Twenty years later the public school system had developed into a full 11-year program with a wide-ranging curriculum. The course of study for the Primary and Grammar schools covered nine major subject areas:

READING: First year emphasized pronouncing words on sight and without "unnatural tones"; drilling techniques used. By the end of the second year students were reading new material. In the fourth year, students brought their own selections to read, and were questioned by the teacher about the reasons for their choice. Also, memorization of passages was introduced in this year. At the end of the sixth year, teachers were told to "require pupils to memorize sketches of the lives of a few authors of repute for the purity, simplicity, and sweetness of their writings, including anecdotes of their experience and success." In the final two years students learned sketches of the lives Bryant, Longfellow, Dickens, Whittier, Louisa Mae Alcott, Lowell, Beecher, Irving, Cooper, and Hawthorne.

SPELLING was taught through a word primer; by the end of the course students were able to spell phonically, both orally and in writing, and knew diacritical marking.

LANGUAGE lessons stressed punctuation for the first three years; then the focus shifted to the study of syntax. In the fourth year pupils wrote their first compositions, always from outlines. By the end of the eighth year students were writing essays on their own, and also studied letter and business forms.

WRITING classes promoted a clear, bold style of handwriting, with the emphasis on neatness. In the second year, pupils were taught to write their name, the teacher's, and their place of residence. Two years later the

Spencer series of training books was introduced, and were continued through the rest of the course.

DRAWING was taught in every class, using a number of different texts.

ARITHMETIC: In the first year students were taught to count by ones to 100, by twos to 40, Arabic notation to 100, Roman notation to L. Various more complicated counting exercises were used in the second year. By the end of the next year students had learned rapid addition and subtraction of long columns of numbers. The fourth grade saw the introduction of multiplication tables to nine and elements of division and fractions. The last four years were devoted to oral drills while following French's text in elementary arithmetic.

VOCAL MUSIC was an integral part of the curriculum. Not only were the children expected to sing scales and learn songs by memory, they also were required to learn the full range of musical notation — rests, note values, dynamic markings, clefs, keys — and to write two- and four-part songs as dictated by the music teacher.

From the third through the seventh grade, GEOGRAPHY was taught. In succession, students drew maps of the school room, the school block and park, the township, the county, and the state. Drawing maps from memory dominated the sixth and seventh years of study.

AMERICAN HISTORY was given in the last year. The text used was Barnes' Brief American History. Pupils were expected to use all available material to become informed of current events. In their last semester students had to give short biographical sketches of principal American statesmen, inventors, and scholars, as well as "trace their influence upon material and mental development of the nation." All were expected to be able analyze the basic parts of the Constitution.

GENERAL LESSONS encompassed miscellaneous areas not covered elsewhere, such as the Human Body, plant life, globe lessons, Zoology, Physiology, and the American system of land survey.¹³⁴

The culmination of the Grinnell program was the 3-year course of the High School, which was equally rigorous (see chart 5). High school training was not far below that offered at the college level, because a significant number of students dropped out of the public High School without taking their diplomas in order to enroll at Iowa College.¹³⁵ Of the 39 who did graduate between 1870 and 1877, 34 went on to some sort of higher education.¹³⁶ The High School commencement exercises themselves were often elaborate affairs, beginning with music and prayer before moving on to edifying speeches by outstanding pupils ("We Never know the Worth of Water Until the Well Runs Dry"), miscellaneous awards (bread-making; improvement in writing), the awarding of diplomas, and a final speech by a member of the Board.¹³⁷ As it is today for many young people, the High School commencement of a century ago was a special moment, perhaps more so, because relatively few youngsters went to High School, let alone finished it.

The textbooks used in the Grinnell public schools were chosen by the school boards exclusively. Until 1861, the State Board of Education recommended a list of texts to township boards, but their advice appears to have carried little weight.¹³⁸ The books were paid for by the students and their families, for even by 1879 Iowa still had no free textbook law.¹³⁹ During the early days of the Grinnell schools, texts were likely to be changed frequently, but a statute passed in 1872 prohibited switching texts more than once in three years without a public vote,¹⁴⁰ so by the late 1870s the Independent District Board had settled on certain series of texts.

The nature of the texts used by Grinnell can be seen from two examples actually used in the schools. Calvin Cutter's First Book on Anatomy, Physiology, and Hygiene (1854), reflects a Victorian sensibility in its approach to the human body. The processes of reproduction and physical differences between men and women are simply omitted, as are genitalia in the anatomical drawings. The book is mostly devoted to discussions of the functions of skin, bones, and various glands. Each tenet put forth is followed by a practical illustration; for example, after stating that regular and moderate secretions from the body must be maintained, Cutter asserts that flax-spinners who frequently moisten their thread with saliva are often victims of a "debility of the salivary organs. . .producing, in a short time, disease of the digestive organs."¹⁴¹ The book also is uncompromising in its condemnation of alcohol and tobacco, implying that they lead to idleness and ruin.¹⁴²

Asa Gray's How Plants Grow (1874) was the botany text in the Grinnell High School in the last half of that decade. The book is fairly complete and comprehensive, heavily illustrated with fine drawings. Gray goes into great detail, describing the parts of the plant, how they reproduce, and characteristics of annuals, biennials, and perennials. He also includes an extensive generic catalogue of plants and a practical primer on how to study plants in a laboratory situation. The book is an excellent example of a purely physical approach to plant life which was probably characteristic of botany study of the period.¹⁴³

In a paper such as this, which covers a small institution over a fairly short period of time, it is difficult for the reader to get a feeling for the overarching aspects of the development of a school system. Grinnell administrators had so many concerns that called for an

immediate resolution that they no doubt found it hard to visualize anything in terms of long-range goals. Yet one should not come away from this **study** with the impression that the conception of public education in Grinnell did not reach beyond the end of the school year. In fact, both in the school hierarchy and the town examples can be found of innovative thinking about education that strike the reader a century later as remarkably contemporary.

Probably the greatest originator within the Grinnell schools during their development was Parker; some of his teaching and administrative innovations have already been touched upon. Parker was a great believer in person-to-person education and in softening the rough edges of Mid-western schooling; for example, he urged the purchase of trees for schoolyards because they "would be promotive of comfort and a valuable adjunct in humanizing education."¹⁴⁴ A.C. Hart was another early creative educator who advocated certain changes in the structure of the school system. He called for an ungraded school to be held in the winter months for the benefit of students, primarily those in the lumber trade, who could not attend all year and whose education would suffer in a closely graded school.¹⁴⁵ In the winter of 1878-79 the Board took Hart's advice and provided just such a school.¹⁴⁶ He also pushed unsuccessfully for the establishment of separate tracks in the High School course, one standard and one for students preparing for college.¹⁴⁷

In the town itself there was also significant support for certain innovations in education. For instance, Matilda Fletcher's lecture on the proposed introduction of industrial education into all public schools was received warmly when she spoke in Grinnell in 1874.¹⁴⁸ When a young deaf-mute boy was found wandering in the town in 1870, the townspeople clothed him, and, instead of keeping him at home,

sent him to the School for the Deaf in Council Bluffs.¹⁴⁹ The editors of the Poweshiek County Herald, which was published in Grinnell, placed their 1870 manifesto on "The Health of School Children" on the front page. A strikingly modern statement, this article advocated shortened attendance hours for the school; no homework except in high school; frequent rest and recess periods, especially in the primary grades; physical exercise, not to build muscles, but to relieve monotony; and lessons geared to the ability of each individual child with an emphasis on object teaching.¹⁵⁰

Thus, we are left with a conception of the public schools of Grinnell that is far removed from the popular myth of the one-room schoolhouse: they were a **complex** amalgam of social forces and individual personalities, ~~not so~~ different from the schools of today. The complexities inherent in the development of a free-school system in a new town suggest eventual conflict. It seems to me that one can see such conflict arising in Grinnell's schools from the tension between the stern God-centered beliefs that formed the core of the town's educational philosophy and the pragmatic policy-making that was necessary to build a school system capable of serving a fast-growing town. One can have the idealism of the one-room schoolhouse, or one can have the practical efficiency of a school system, but not both. The resolution of this tension characterizes the transition from 19th century education to modern education. At the end of its first 25 years, the Grinnell public schools stood on the threshold of the transitional process.

#1

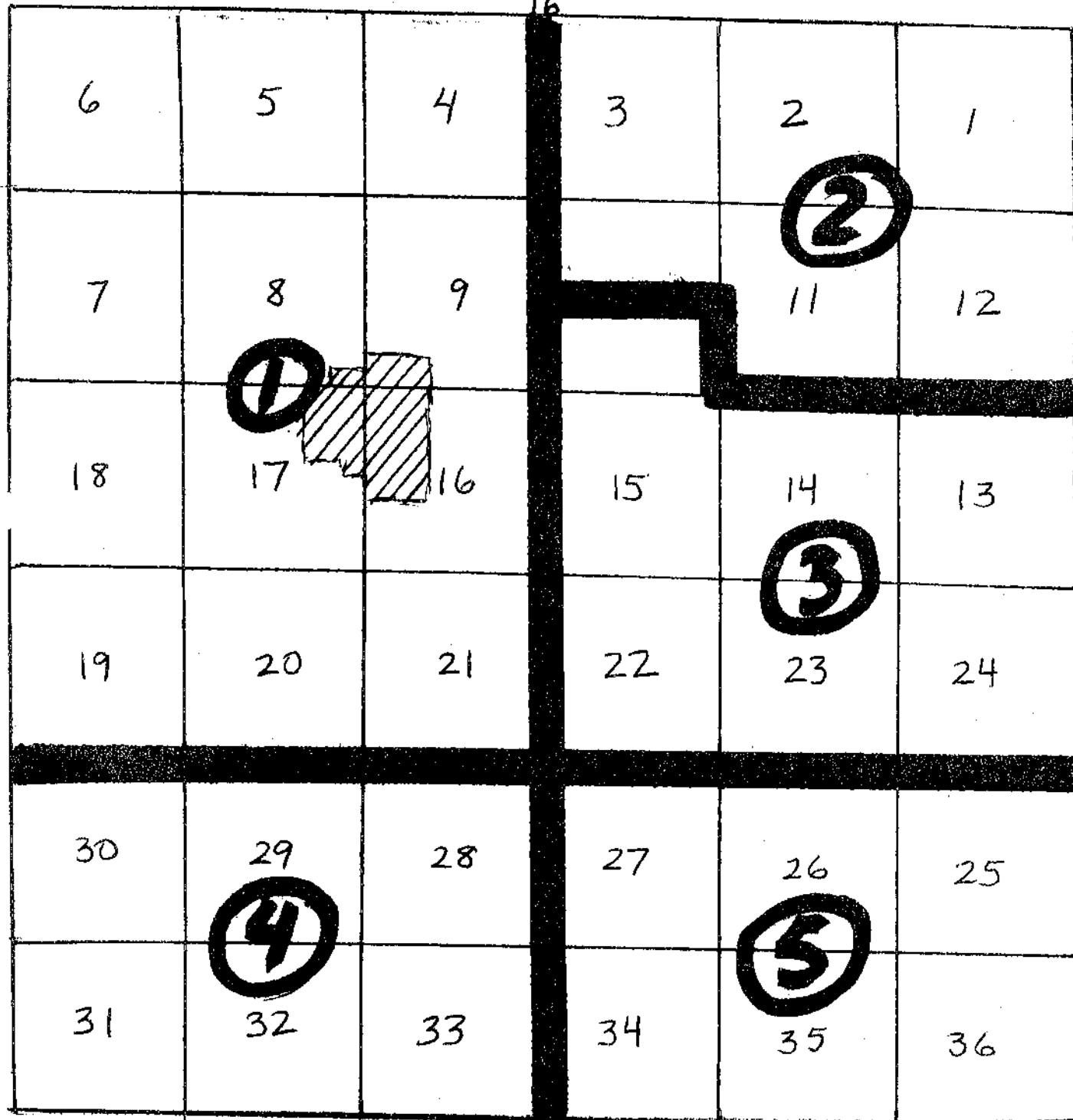
Grinnell Township, 1866

showing the five sub-districts of the District Township of
Grinnell before the creation of the Independent
District of Grinnell in 1867

shaded area: town limits of Grinnell

RANGE

16



RANGE

16

from the Minutes Book of the District Township of Grinnell, Volume 1
(no publisher, 1858-1867), 1 October 1866, p. 96.

#2

Comparative chart: school tax millage, before and after the
creation of the Independent District of Grinnell

	<u>BEFORE</u>		<u>AFTER</u>	
	1864 ^a	1866 ^b	1870 ^c	1871 ^d
school house fund	3	5	10	10
teacher's fund	4	4	18	12
contingency fund	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
TOTALS	10	13	33	25

^aMinutes, District Township, 18 April 1864, p. 27.

^bIbid., 16 April 1866, p. 89.

^cPoweshiek County Herald, 26 October 1870, p. 3.

^dGrinnell Herald, 20 September 1871, p. 3.

Comparative table, superintendent and teacher salaries -- annual
(number in parentheses is rank) Year of 1877

Town	Sup't salary	Avg salary primary teacher	Avg salary grammar teacher	Avg salary high school teacher
Iowa City	\$1200 (7)	\$450 (6)	\$443 (7)	\$508 (8)
Oskaloosa	\$1200 (5)	\$405 (9)	\$440 (8)	\$495 (10)
Marshalltown	\$1700 (1)	\$475 (5)	\$510 (2)	\$675 (4)
Independence	\$1500 (3)	\$417 (8)	\$468 (6)	\$500 (9)
Ottumwa	\$1500 (3)	\$489 (4)	\$481 (5)	\$785 (2)
West Des Moines	\$1600 (2)	\$575 (1)	\$698 (1)	\$933 (1)
Washington	\$ 880 (13)	\$271 (13)	\$356 (13)	\$370 (13)
Marion	\$1200 (5)	\$360 (11)	\$387 (12)	\$495 (10)
East Waterloo	\$1200 (5)	\$352 (12)	\$405 (11)	\$540 (7)
Atlantic	\$1200 (5)	\$500 (2)	\$500 (3)	\$700 (3)
Cedar Falls	\$1200 (5)	\$367 (10)	\$420 (10)	\$570 (6)
Creston	\$1200 (5)	\$500 (2)	\$500 (3)	\$600 (5)
<u>GRINNELL</u>	<u>\$ 975 (12)</u>	<u>\$438 (7)</u>	<u>\$438 (9)</u>	<u>\$487 (12)</u>

From the Annual Report of the Grinnell Public Schools for the
School Year 1877-8 (Grinnell: Grinnell Herald, 1878), p. 7.

Birthplaces and occupations of Grinnell school board members
and illiterates, 1870

<u>Board members</u>	<u>occupations</u>	<u>birthplace</u>
Thomas Hedges	physician	Pennsylvania
S.J. Buck	professor	New York
J.G. Carmichael	produce dealer	New York
C.F. Craver	lumber merchant	New Jersey*
A.E. Jenkins	harness maker	New Jersey*
Abraham Whitcomb	harness maker	Vermont
J.H. Herrick	hardware merchant	Vermont
Willis Davis	lumber merchant	Pennsylvania
A.M. Crosby	mill	Maine
Marshall Bliss	mercahnt / miller	Massachusetts
A.L. Haines	lawyer	Ohio*
Hiles Chafee	cabinet maker	New York
A.A. Eaton	railroad contractor	Massachusetts
A.M. Kellogg	builder	Vermont
Thomas Brande	Baptist clergyman	England*
H.G. Little	realtor	New Hampshire
S.C. Phelps	produce dealer	Vermont
Quincy A. Gilmore	lawyer	New Hampshire
Charles H. Spencer	banker	Connecticut

* = born outside New England

<u>Illiterates</u>	<u>occupations</u>	<u>birthplace</u>
Joseph Blackwell	day laborer	Kentucky
Fatsy Blackwell	keeping house	Missouri
Charles Blackwell	day laborer	Kentucky
Malinda Blackwell	-----	Missouri
A.R. Presser	keeping house	North Carolina
John Loughlin	railroad worker	Ireland
William Sullivan	railroad worker	Ireland
Margaret Sullivan	keeping house	Ireland
Michael Smith	railroad worker	Ireland
Patrick Smith	railraod worker	Ireland
Thomas Smith	railraod worker	Ireland
John Smith	retired	Ireland
Catherine Smith	retired	Ireland
E. Cherrystone	railroad worker	Prussia
Mary Cherrystone	keeping house	Prussia
Martin Binker	retired	Prussia
Louisa Thompson	keeping house	Kentucky
Ellen Slaughter	domestic servant	Missouri
Jane Austin	domestic servant	Missouri
Robert Baker	day laborer	Alabama
Doc Granville	day laborer	Missouri

from Population Schedules of the Ninth Census of the United States 1870. Microfilm: roll 417, vol. 24. National Archives and Record Service, 1965.

Course of study, Grinnell High School 1877

YEAR	FIRST SEMESTER	SECOND SEMESTER
1	Aritmetic (French) Analysis and Composition (Swinton) Physical Geography (Warren) American Authors (Cathcart)	Elementary Algebra (Olney) Analysis and Composition (Swinton) Botany (Gray) English Authors (Cathcart)
2	Elementary Algebra (Olney) Latin (Smith's <u>Principia</u>) Physiology (Cutter) English Authors (Cathcart)	Natural Philosphy (Rolph and Gillette) Latin (Smith's <u>Principia</u>) General History (Quackenbos) Shakespeare (Hudson)
3	Advanced Algebra (n/a) Caesar (Harkness) General History (Quackenbos)	Plane Geometry (Loomis) Virgil (Chase and Stewart) Politics (Nordhoff)

Name of author in parentheses

from Hart, Annual Report 1877-78, p. 29.

General / Financial Statistics
Independent School District of Grinnell, 1872-1877

n/a = not available

	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877
number of males aged 5-21 in district	211	248	256	288	285	n/a
number of females aged 5-21 in district	239	277	287	323	345	n/a
number males enrolled in public school(s)	172	190	199	236	n/a	n/a
number females enrolled in public school(s)	189	205	232	271	n/a	n/a
total number enrolled	361	395	431	507	542	611
number of schools	1	1	1	1	1	2
number of male teachers	1	1	1	2	2	3
number of female teachers	6	6	6	5	7	8
Avg number of days school in session	180	160	180	180	n/a	n/a
avg daily attendance	280	233	260	297	333	396
volumes in district library	26	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
cash value of all school houses	\$13000.00	\$13000.00	\$13000.00	\$13000.00	\$13000.00	\$20000.00
avg amount paid to male teachers per week	\$27.77	\$31.25	\$22.22	\$18.00	\$18.75	n/a
avg amount paid to female teachers per week	\$12.50	\$11.00	\$10.41	\$11.00	\$12.00	n/a
aggregate teacher salaries	\$3873.	\$2770.	\$3057.	\$3107.	n/a	n/a
avg cost of schooling one pupil per week	30¢	87¢	32¢	29¢	\$1.10	n/a
total value of school apparatus (maps, etc.)	\$25.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$225.00

figures taken from Minutes Book, Independent School District of Grinnell (no publisher); book 1: 1872-1875; and book 2: 1875-1879, unpaginated.

NOTES

¹Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order 1877-1920 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), pp. 44-71.

²D.S. Morrison, "Early Reminiscences of Grinnell," (Unpublished manuscript, 1914), p. 2.

³Ibid.

⁴Grinnell, Iowa, Centennial Committee, "Grinnell Schools," Grinnell: A Century of Progress (Grinnell: Grinnell Herald-Register, 1954), p. 10.

⁵E.S. Bartlett, Early Days in Grinnell (Unpublished booklet, ca. 1914), p. 10.

⁶Leonard F. Parker, "The Grinnell Public School and Its Superintendent 1856-1860," (Unpublished manuscript, ca. 1890s), unpaginated.

⁷"The Character of Grinnell at Its Birth," Grinnell Herald-Register, 16 April 1979, p. 1.

⁸Parker, "The Grinnell Public School," unpaginated.

⁹Joanna Harris Maines, "Seventy Years in Iowa," Annals of Iowa, October 1945, p. 110.

¹⁰Parker, "The Grinnell Public School," unpaginated.

¹¹Charles C. Payne, Josiah Bushnell Grinnell (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1938), p. 52.

¹²Parker, "The Grinnell Public School," unpaginated.

¹³Payne, p. 28.

¹⁴Grinnell Herald, 23 April 1874, p. 2.

¹⁵Minutes Book of the District Township of Grinnell, vol. 1 (Unpublished book, 1858-1867), 1 December 1859, p. 29.

¹⁶Ibid., 27 August 1859, p. 27

¹⁷Ibid., 1 September 1860, p. 33; and 11 December 1860, p. 35.

¹⁸Leonard F. Parker, "Professor Parker Before and in Early Grinnell," Proceedings of the Old Settler's Association of Grinnell, Iowa 1896-1901 (Unpublished booklet, n.d.), pp. 15-16.

¹⁹Minutes, District Township, 17 February 1859, p. 23; and Minutes Book of the Independent District of Grinnell, vol. 1 (Unpublished book, 1872-1875), 24 February 1873, unpaginated.

²⁰Minutes, District Township, 17 February 1859, p. 23.

²¹Parker, "The Grinnell Public School," unpaginated.

²²Leonard F. Parker, "Grinnell's Incipient Mob," (Unpublished manuscript, ca. 1903), p. 1.

²³Amos Bixby, personal letter to Leonard F. Parker, 16 May 1887, p. 1.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 1-2.

²⁵Parker, "Incipient Mob," p. 2.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Morrison, p. 2. Morrison does not identify the proposer, but recalls that Clark and Samuel "Scotch" Cooper (not Samuel C. Cooper) were anti-black leaders. Both were middle-aged farmers with wives and five children; however, Clark had a 13-year-old son while Cooper had only five daughters, so Clark's family fits Parker's account which mentions that the proposer's son would be affected by the exclusion of foreign students. The identification is pure speculation, nonetheless.

²⁸Parker, "Incipient Mob," pp. 1-3.

²⁹Ibid., p. 13.

³⁰Morrison, p. 2.

³¹Amos Bixby, personal letter to Leonard F. Parker, 23 May 1887, Sarah Bixby's school is also referred to in Morrison.

- ³²Parker, "Incipient mob," p. 14.
- ³³Minutes, District Township, 17 March 1860, pp. 30-31.
- ³⁴Parker, "The Grinnell Public School," unpaginated.
- ³⁵Josiah Bushnell Grinnell, Men and Events of Forty Years (Boston: D. Lothrop Co., 1891), p. 127.
- ³⁶Minutes, District Township, 14 June 1858, p. 18.
- ³⁷Parker, "The Grinnell Public School," unpaginated.
- ³⁸Minutes, District Township, 13 April 1858, p. 16.
- ³⁹Ibid., 7 March 1863, p. 58.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., 23 June 1860, p. 32.
- ⁴¹Ibid., 28 January 1861, p. 37. For an account of Phelps' wrongdoing, see Morrison, p. 3.
- ⁴²Ibid., 4 May 1863, pp. 61-62.
- ⁴³Payne, p. 79.
- ⁴⁴S.J. Buck, "Old Settlers of Grinnell," Iowa Historical Record, April 1898, p. 280.
- ⁴⁵Minutes, District Township, 25 November 1865, p. 83; 17 September 1866; 10 October 1866, p. 90.
- ⁴⁶Jacob A. Swisher, "A Century of School Legislation in Iowa," Iowa Journal of History and Politics, April 1946, p. 180.
- ⁴⁷Minutes, District Township, 30 March 1867, p. 102. The exact date and circumstances surrounding the founding of the Independent District cannot be ascertained because no minutes of the new district are available prior to 1872.
- ⁴⁸Minutes, Independent District, 11 March 1873.
- ⁴⁹A.C. Hart, Annual Report of the Grinnell Public Schools

for the School Year 1877-78 (Grinnell: Grinnell Herald, 1878), p. 17-27.

⁵⁰A.C. Hart, Annual Report of the Grinnell Public Schools for the School Year 1875-76 (Grinnell: Grinnell Herald, 1876), p. 16.

⁵¹John Valentine, Report of the Grinnell Public School: 1869 (Grinnell: Cooper and Chamberlain, 1870), unpaginated.

⁵²Hart, Annual Reports, passim.

⁵³Centennial Committee, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁴Jay Kelsey, letter to the Grinnell Herald, 16 January 1934.

⁵⁵Poweshiek County Herald, 1 March 1871, p. 3.

⁵⁶Ibid., 26 April 1871, p. 3.

⁵⁷Grinnell Herald, 30 August 1871, p. 2.

⁵⁸The Census of Iowa 1867 (Des Moines: F.M. Palmer, 1867), p. 50; The Census of Iowa 1875 (Des Moines: R.P. Clarkson, 1875), p. 56.

⁵⁹Grinnell Herald, 1 October 1874, p. 3.

⁶⁰Ibid., 1 March 1877, p. 3.

⁶¹Ibid., 12 April 1877, p. 3.

⁶²Minutes, Independent District, 11 May 1877, p. 34; 22 August 1877, p. 43.

⁶³Grinnell Herald, 4 October 1877, p. 3.; 20 September 1877, p. 3; 21 February 1878, p. 3.

⁶⁴Grinnell Herald, 19 July 1877, p. 3; Minutes, Independent District, 3 February 1879, p. 69.

⁶⁵Minutes, Independent District, 15 March 1880, unpaginated.

⁶⁶Centennial Committee, p. 10.

⁶⁷Parker, "The Grinnell Public School," unpaginated.

⁶⁸Clarence A. Ausner, History of Education in Iowa, vol. 1 (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1914), pp. 159-160.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 160.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 49.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 248.

⁷²Tayne, pp. 69-71.

⁷³Minutes, District Township, 9 May 1858, p. 17.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 24.

⁷⁵Erastus Snow, "Some Missing Links in the Early History of Grinnell," Proceedings of the Old Settler's Association of Grinnell, Iowa 1895-96 (Unpublished booklet, n.d.), p. 41.

⁷⁶Minutes, District Township, 14 April 1865, p. 75.

⁷⁷Poweshiek County Herald, 12 October 1870, p. 3.

⁷⁸Ibid., 26 October 1870, p. 3.

⁷⁹Grinnell Herald, 20 September 1871, p. 3.

⁸⁰Minutes, District Township, 18 March 1867, p. 101.

⁸¹Minutes, Independent District, 21 February 1873; 2 April 1877.

⁸²Grinnell Herald, 5 April 1877, p. 3.

⁸³Leonard F. Parker, Report of the Superintendent of the Common Schools of Poweshiek County, Iowa: 1872 (Montezuma: Montezuma Republican, 1872), p. 4.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 5.

⁸⁵Minutes, District Township, 8 July 1865, p. 83. All the teachers that year were women; a male Primary instructor would almost assuredly have made more than a female teacher of a higher grade.

⁸⁶Grinnell Herald, 29 March 1878, p. 3.

⁸⁷Minutes, District Township, 4 November 1859, p. 28; see also entry of 10 May 1861, p. 43.

⁸⁸Poweshiek County Herald, 22 March 1871, p. 2.

⁸⁹Minutes, District Township, 27 August 1859, p. 27.

⁹⁰Leonard W. Parker, Report of the Superintendent of the Common Schools of Poweshiek County, Iowa: 1869 (Grinnell: Cooper and Chamberlain, 1870), p. 17.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 20.

⁹²Minutes, District Township, 11 July 1863, p. 62.

⁹³Hart, Annual Report 1877-78, p. 3.

⁹⁴Lewis Atherton, Main Street on the Middle Border (New York: Quadrangle / The New York Times Book Co., 1966), p. 180.

⁹⁵Aurner, History of Education, vol. II, p. 159, p. 172.

⁹⁶Parker, Report of the Superintendent 1869, pp. 11-13.

⁹⁷Parker, "The Grinnell Public School," unpaginated.

⁹⁸Catalogue of the Poweshiek County Teacher's Institute, Tenth Annual Session (Grinnell: no publisher, 1866), pp. 2-6.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., pp. 10-11.

¹⁰¹Aurner, History of Education, vol. II, pp. 163-164.

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 171-172.

¹⁰³Minutes, Independent District, 11 July 1874, unpaginated.

¹⁰⁴Aurner, History of Education, vol. IV, p. 323.

¹⁰⁵Minutes, Independent District, 29 August 1872, unpaginated.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 13 May 1879, pp. 74-75.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., July-September 1874.

¹⁰⁸Payne, p. 48.

¹⁰⁹Grinnell Herald, 25 June 1874, p. 3.

¹¹⁰I have done a very informal and admittedly incomplete survey of the religious backgrounds of the three groups who had the most direct role in the administration of the Grinnell public schools: teachers, Board members, and the citizens who gave the final exams in the schools at the end of each term. Out of 140 names I have gathered in my research (which is a large percentage of the three groups above, but by no means all), 94, or 67.1%, appear in the 50-year record of the Congregational Church of Grinnell. The breakdown by group: teachers, 47 out of 78 (60.3%); Board members, 20 out of 28 (71.4%); examiners, 27 out of 34 (79.4%). Of course, many questions are raised by this data; for example, how do the percentages for each group weigh against one another: does a teacher's religious preference have more impact on a child's education than the examiner's religious preference? A host of subjective questions could be formulated, but they all boil down to the problem of establishing a correlation between Congregational beliefs and educational practice. Thus, while it is impossible to draw any firm conclusions from this data, I find it equally impossible not to infer that the Congregational Church has had more than a minor influence on education in Grinnell.

¹¹¹Atherton, p. 69.

¹¹²Hart, Annual Report 1875-76, p. 18.

¹¹³Parker, Report of the Superintendent 1872, p. 4.

¹¹⁴"An Inquirer," letter to Grinnell Herald, 20 December 1871, p. 1.

¹¹⁵Hart, Annual Report 1875-76, pp. 17-18.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 20.

¹¹⁷Joanna Harris Haines, "The First School House in Grinnell," Grinnell Herald, 18 October 1929.

¹¹⁸Parker, Report of the Superintendent 1872, p. 6.

¹¹⁹Poweshiek County Herald, 9 February 1870, p. 3;
4 November 1870, p. 3; Grinnell Herald, 18 June 1874, p. 3;
many other issues.

¹²⁰Parker, Report of the Superintendent 1872, p. 6.

¹²¹Grinnell Herald, 25 December 1873, p. 3.

¹²²Hart, Annual Report 1875-76, p. 3.

¹²³Ibid., pp. 17-18.

¹²⁴Grinnell Herald, 25 November 1875, p. 3.

¹²⁵Ibid., 18 June 1874, p. 3.

¹²⁶Ibid., 25 June 1874, p. 3.

¹²⁷Ibid., 5 October 1876, p. 3; many other examples.

¹²⁸Hart, Annual Report 1877-78, pp. 17-27.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 8.

¹³⁰Minutes, Independent District, 1 September 1879, pp. 77-78.

¹³¹Grinnell Herald, 25 November 1875, p. 3.

¹³²Hart, Annual Report 1875-76, p. 20.

¹³³Parker, "The Grinnell Public School," unpaginated.

¹³⁴Hart, Annual Report 1877-78, pp. 17-28.

¹³⁵Grinnell Herald, 22 June 1876, p. 5.

¹³⁶Hart, Annual Report 1877-78, p. 8.

¹³⁷Grinnell Herald, 24 June 1875, p. 3.

¹³⁸O.E. Klingaman, "Text-book Legislation in Iowa," Annals of Iowa, January 1915, p. 64.

¹³⁹Grinnell Herald, 10 December 1878, p. 3.

¹⁴⁰Klingaman, pp. 6-67.

¹⁴¹Calvin Cutter, First Book on Anatomy, Physiology, and Hygiene (Philadelphia: J.E. Lippincott, 1854), p.85.

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁴³Asa Gray, How Plants Grow (New York: Ivison, Blakeman, Taylor, & Co., 1874), passim.

¹⁴⁴Parker, Report of the Superintendent 1869, p. 6.

¹⁴⁵Hart, Annual Report 1877-78, p. 4.

¹⁴⁶Aurner, History of Education, vol. 1, p. 378.

¹⁴⁷Hart, Annual Report 1877-78, p. 8.

¹⁴⁸Grinnell Herald, 12 February 1874, p. 2.

¹⁴⁹Aurner, History of Education, vol. V, pp. 78-80.

¹⁵⁰Poweshiek County Herald, 12 January 1870, p. 1.

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25 November 1875; 1 March 1877; 5 April 1877; 12 April
1877; 20 September 1877; 4 October 1877; 21 February 1878;
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