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Ninety Years of Progress

Arthur C. Boyden

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ARTHUR C. BOYDEN
Principal, State Normal School

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On September 9, 1930, the Bridgewater school completed nine-tenths of the way to its centennial. The leap from 1840 to 1930 is a long one; it includes three generations of people and a revolution in educational standards.

Great changes in the schools have taken place—the "common schools" of the olden days have evolved into the public elementary and secondary schools of today; higher education has differentiated its various departments; vocational and technical schools have come into prominence; and new professions have added themselves to the three traditional ones.

Teaching has grown from an unappreciated job into a respected profession; normal schools are rapidly changing into normal colleges. Bridgewater has evolved from a humble, almost nondescript, school into an institution of wide influence.

Four principals have carried the professional policy of the school through the ninety years—

Nicholas Tillinghast, 1840-53.
Marshall Conant, 1853-60.
Albert G. Boyden, 1860-1906.
Arthur C. Boyden, 1906-.

Ten thousand one hundred eighty-eight students have attended the school, of whom 6,831 graduated, and 278 have received their degrees since 1921.
A CONTINUOUS GROWTH

It is a far reach from an old town hall—a one-story building, 40 feet by 50 feet, its interior including three rooms, one of which was a schoolroom with a sliding board partition, its pine board seats with straight backs attached to the desk behind—to a modern plant covering twenty-five acres with a valuation of $1,250,000. The difference between a budget of $2,171.90 for all expenses and $240,500 (including dormitories) presents the same picture of progress. This growth has not been spasmodic, but new needs called for new buildings and vice versa new buildings developed new needs.

The first forward step was the hardest. Pledges from the friends of Horace Mann, an equal appropriation from the state, gifts of land (1 1/4 acres) and money from local friends made possible the first State Normal School building in America, at a cost of about $5,800. At that time it was "one of the most attractive schoolhouses in the state". Facilities seemed ample—a large schoolroom, two recitation rooms, a chemical laboratory, a model schoolroom, and two anterooms, all with new furnishings. A state professional school had been launched, with an adequate building and a continuous one-year course.

Beginning with the addition of wings to this building in 1861, the growth in attendance required new additions, dormitories and smaller buildings, all of wooden construction, till in 1890 the new policy of modern brick buildings was undertaken by the state. The disastrous fire of December, 1924, opened the way for buildings adapted to the modern types of teaching. The generous gift of two acres of land and the Gates' residence by the will of Samuel P. Gates, Class of 1857, made possible the beautiful setting for the new buildings, a broad central quadrangle, and an example of the new type of cottage dormitory. In time the uncompleted restoration of the dormitories may continue this plan.

The main building was arranged to meet the needs of professionally grouped departments, with a beautiful auditorium adapted to the larger school activities; library facilities, demonstration room, laboratories and lecture room, music room, facilities for the fine and practical arts, and associated offices.
A separate training school building gave a new unity to this field. Limiting the campus practice teaching to the elementary grades led to an increased use of the supervised extensive training in large systems of schools in neighboring cities and towns.

The buildings were not planned for additions but to meet an established quota of selected students, sufficient to meet the public demand.

A recent appropriation will enable us to begin the work of a thorough improvement of the grounds, adapting them not only as a beautiful environment for the school, but also arranging for the fullest possible use for recreation, physical education exercises, and sports.

A TEACHING INSTITUTION

The foundation for this marked characteristic of the school was laid by the West Point efficiency of the first principal, Nicholas Tillinghast, to which was added an unusual personal power. He revealed the power of expert teaching, he inspired a group of pioneer spirits through a process of natural selection, he unconsciously developed a peculiar morale which has developed into that intangible thing called the “Bridgewater Spirit”. It is a unique history which has kept a line of principals and teachers in a continuous sequence for ninety years. The coeducational plan has given the school a great prestige from the first in the fields of educational leadership.

The special psychological trend to the teaching came with Albert G. Boyden (1860-1906), when Sir William Hamilton’s philosophy was at its high point of influence; this was followed by Mark Hopkins’ “Outline Study of Man” as the standard text for class use. All of the subjects were logically arranged and taught according to the “laws of the mind”.

An additional professional trend came with the establishment of the four-year course in 1870 for the preparation of principals and teachers in the higher grades. Advanced subject matter was organized and taught as a definite background for teaching. This plan of professionalizing cultural subjects as a preparation for teaching has always been continued. The
culmination of this development came with the degree-granting power in 1921.

The scientific trend had its beginning with the second principal, Marshall Conant (1853-60). The emphasis was placed on observational and mathematical astronomy. The next step included special experimental lectures on chemistry, and, as the extensions were made to the buildings, physical and chemical laboratories were fitted up.

The inspiration of the special work in the Normal Schools by Louis Agassiz, Asa Gray, and Arnold Guyot led to the establishment of courses in natural science and physical geography. In the new building in 1890 ample provision was made for the new type of laboratories. The Plymouth County movement for the introduction of nature study in the schools was organized by the teachers and graduates of this school, and it spread rapidly over the state through teachers' institutes, in which the faculty of the school were very active. School and home gardens flourished as one of the results of this widespread movement. In due time the gift of land (A. G. Boyden) and of a greenhouse (Mrs. Elizabeth C. Stevens) made possible the outdoor laboratory known as the Natural Science Garden.

The historic trend came as an aftermath of the Civil War, due to the far-reaching influence of John Fiske, and the emphasis placed on this subject by the Herbartian movement in the nineties. Two notable contributions were made by George H. Martin, Class of 1863, and teacher in the school—Martin's "Civil Government", and "The Evolution of the Massachusetts School System".

Drawing was expanded into a definite department under the supervision of the State Director of Art Education, Professor Walter Smith (1871). Manual training followed the introduction of Sloyd in the state in 1888.

Music as a regular school subject came into the curriculum early through the influence of Lowell Mason, "the father of public school music", who came often to the Normal Schools. As early as 1854 a special teacher of music visited the school each week. In 1869 this subject was taken over by one of the regular teachers.
PIONEER SPIRITS

During the first twenty years of the school many students were attracted to this new venture in teacher training. Among these were a few able men and women who caught the meaning of real teaching and went forth as leaders in the new types of schools that were developing. There were four new fields in which these graduates had a marked influence—state and city normal schools, from Maine to California; English high schools in the larger cities; consolidated grammar schools; and the new day and boarding private schools which were superseding academies. Into these schools they carried the new methods of teaching.

From this group there came new textbooks, such as—Colburn's Intellectual Arithmetic, Walton's and Seaver's Arithmetic Series, Edwards’ Readers, Hewett's Language and Reading Series, Metcalf’s Language Series.

To many of these graduates came the impetus to go on to higher institutions, and they became leaders not only as teachers and superintendents, but in the different professions. The influence of a few master minds opened the way to far-reaching results.

LEADERSHIP IN TEACHING

This leadership has been manifest in many fields from the early days to the present time.

(1) Graduates who served on the faculty and afterward filled positions of prominence. Only a brief list of earlier ones is appended—Dana P. Colburn and Joshua Kendall, principals of the Rhode Island Normal School; Richard Edwards, principal at Salem, St. Louis City Normal, president of Illinois Normal University, and later state superintendent; Edwin C. Hewett, teacher and president Illinois Normal; Albert G. Boyden; Benjamin F. Clarke, professor of Mathematics, Brown University; George H. Martin, agent of Board, supervisor of schools in Boston, and secretary of the Board of Education; Albert E. Winship, editor of the Journal of Education and well-known lecturer.
(2) Of the women graduates in the earlier years a few may be mentioned—Mary B. White (1847), first principal of the city training school in New Bedford; Sarah J. Baker (1852), first woman principal of a Boston grammar school; Eliza B. Woodward (1857), teacher for thirty years in this school; Julia A. Sears (1859), an honored professor of mathematics at Teachers’ College, Nashville, for a long period.

(3) At the close of the first half century of development (1890) a census of Bridgewater graduates showed that they had been engaged in all grades of educational work—as state superintendents, agents of the Board of Education, superintendents of public schools, principals and assistants in normal, high, grammar, and primary schools, and in some of the most prominent private schools. Eighteen had become principals and 62 others assistants in normal schools. In Boston, the superintendent, two of the supervisors, fourteen of the masters, and nine of the sub-masters of the grammar schools, and a large number of assistants through all the grades, were graduates of Bridgewater. Some of the graduates were found in nearly every state in the Union, and in England, France, India, Burmah, and Japan.

(4) A great impetus toward leadership in teaching came with the granting of scholarships to normal graduates by the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard in 1880. Later the college itself granted generous credit to the four-year graduates, and it soon became a common practice for some of the men of each graduating class to get their college degree in this manner, thus preparing themselves for positions as superintendents of schools, teachers in high schools, and principals of city grammar schools.

In the later years graduates continued to hold leading educational positions, especially the four-year graduates who had continued their courses in colleges. Such positions include the presidency of a university, the presidency of a polytechnic institute, professors in college; superintendents of school systems; supervisors of art, music, manual training, nature study, and physical education; principals and teachers in normal schools, in junior and senior high schools, and in large city grammar schools; and editors of leading newspapers.
The school has had on its roll over thirty principals of normal schools in seventeen different states from Maine to California, and in five foreign countries; also three state superintendents. The graduates have to their credit over 70,000 years of teaching.

(5) Foreign students. As early as 1875 students from Burmah and Japan graduated and returned to their own countries to lead the normal school movement. In 1885 a delegation was sent by the Chilian government to attend the school and upon graduation returned to normal school positions. From 1896-99 Mexican groups attended for the same purpose. Certain Armenian graduates also went home to be principals of normal schools.

DEGREE COURSES

For a short period (1917-21) the four-year course was dropped by the Department with the mistaken idea that three years were a sufficient preparation for teaching in the junior high schools. As this new type of school developed and as it began to tie up with the senior high school, two things became very evident—an enriched four-year course was indispensable, and it should be recognized by an appropriate professional degree (1921).

With the new courses and with the new buildings came the plan of selective admission by the establishment of a quota and by a plan of evaluating the scholarship and personality of high school applicants. After admission a series of standard intelligence and achievement tests were given the freshman class to assist in the classification of the work.

Following the definite organization of the new four-year curriculum with its required subjects, its major fields and minor electives, the next step was the lengthening of the course for elementary teachers to three years (1929) with the opportunity of adding a fourth year for the degree. The state has also established a co-operative plan of extension courses by which graduates of the three-year courses can gain their degree. A four years' course has been established to train libra-
rians for junior and senior high schools, and a training school library has been organized with the assistance of the library club.

TRAINING FACILITIES

When the school was first established the town provided a $500 Model School building as one of the conditions for locating the school in Bridgewater. When the new building was erected in 1846, this model school was transferred to a room on the first story. This room was well furnished, and the principals were able women who received the munificent salary of $250 paid as follows—the Board of Education paid $100, Principal Tillinghast $100, and the town $50. In 1846 a tuition fee was required.

Plans for practice teaching had not been well worked out at that period, and the normal students were not interested in this school. In 1850 all hands were willing to discontinue this school. Under Mr. Conant and Mr. A. G. Boyden, what was known as “teaching exercises” were introduced in the normal classes, in which leaders developed the points in the lesson by skilful questions and then organized the topics in logical form.

It was not till 1880 that the practice work was resumed, and then at first as a plan of directed observation in certain grades of the neighboring town school. When the new building was planned in 1890 it was possible to incorporate a graded practice school from the kindergarten through the nine grades, with a principal, and a critic teacher in each grade. In 1909 the graduating classes had grown so large that a new plan of apprentice teaching in the neighboring cities and towns was added to the intensive training of the campus training school. This plan has continued, and in 1926 the separate training school building was erected, with the kindergarten and six grades. The practice in junior high schools is carried on in the best schools in this part of the state.

The Campus Training School is the laboratory of the institution, providing opportunities for the directed observation of children, for demonstration of good teaching, for the initial practice, for the development of modern methods of
teaching, for the exemplification of a school organized as a social centre for developing good citizenship among children. Every year a closer connection is made with the normal departments. The apprentice teaching becomes more and more effective as a means of preparing the young graduates for actual school positions. The annual graduate conference has increased in numbers and in practical helpfulness. In many ways the school is becoming a professional center for educational conferences in this part of the state.

In the "modern problems" course during the senior year the manifold educational activities of the state are presented by speakers from the various state departments and by other representatives, thus giving a bird's-eye view of education as it is today. The history of education traces the development of certain principles of education in the growth of civilization. Visits of superintendents are frequent; much of the June placement of graduates each year is done at the school by the superintendents.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Lyceum. School life is an important factor in the education of a student. It began at Bridgewater in the form of a "lyceum", which was the outgrowth of an organization of the men of the old academy known as the "Bridgewater Speaking Club" (1839), in which declamation was emphasized. Soon debates and public lectures were added to the program. When the normal students were invited to join it took on the name "The Bridgewater Young Men's Lyceum", and regular meetings were held. In 1844 the organization was taken over by the normal students, a constitution was framed, and regular officers were chosen. At first the ladies were invited as guests and later as members. Meetings were held on Friday evenings. The exercises included debates, addresses, musical selections, and the reading of papers which developed into the first "Normal Offering".

The lyceum has continued its functions under different names, until at present it has resumed the debates under the old name for the men, and as a "Pro and Con" club for the women.
The “Normal Offering” at first was composed of written papers bound into a volume. The first printed issue was in 1871 under the active leadership of A. E. Winship, then a teacher in the school, but only one issue appeared. Later forms developed as school publications under different names, which today are represented by the monthly “Campus Comment” and the yearbook “Normal Offering”.

Music. Chorus and class singing were prominent from the early days when a music instructor came to the school once a week. In 1869 one of the regular teachers took on the subject. At the graduation exercises special singing by the school was a part of the program. The “Normal Club” for many years sponsored interesting evening entertainments which included musical recitals of a high order.

The Glee Club was organized by Miss C. C. Prince; at first it took part in the graduating exercises (1907). The next year concerts were given by the Glee Club and by the Orchestra. Since then both of these organizations have developed to a high order of efficiency. From the Glee Club are selected the members of the vested school choir that assists in the chapel exercises. Each year the concerts of these organizations are looked forward to with great interest.

Dramatics. The first dramatic performance was in December, 1870, when Dickens’ “Christmas Carol” was acted by a voluntary group of students at Christmas time; it was given in the gymnasium in the basement of old Normal Hall.

The early dramatic presentations were made as platform exercises under Miss Anna W. Brown, who came to the school in 1907. In June of 1908 the senior class gave the first Shakespearean play, “As You Like It”, as an evening entertainment. The cast was chosen by preliminary competition. The costumes were chosen with unusual care, the presentation was without scenery and without curtain. It was enacted before a large audience. Since that time dramatization has taken its place in the reading and literature courses, in elective courses, in regular dramatic club presentations on the auditorium stage, and in chapel programs.

Other Valuable Clubs. The enrichment of the curriculum aroused the interest of special groups of students, and clubs
were organized to meet these interests—French Club, which presents the Mardi Gras carnival; Library Club, with its interest in the best reading; Garden Club, with its wide range of nature work; Science Club, which studies the important scientific problems of the day; Girl Scouts, which develops leaders in this field; Camera Club, which has a practical hobby for its interest; Men’s Club, now located in its new rooms; and the active athletic associations.

Platform Exercises. For many years it was the custom of Principal A. G. Boyden to use the “general exercise” period for talks on a great variety of subjects which would be valuable to teachers. In the fall of 1906 another type of exercise was introduced which brought the students before the school. These exercises took the form of short debates, selections read by the members of the faculty and students, stereopticon talks, musical numbers, talks on current events, and occasional addresses by invited guests. This custom served as the beginning of new extra-curricular activities.

When the new auditorium was built these new activities had so increased that a fully organized chapel program was arranged by the student association.

Physical Education. This subject took a specific place under the instruction of Dr. Dio Lewis of Boston (1860), who developed a system of free gymnastics that could be carried on in the schoolroom. This plan was soon taken over by a member of the faculty. Bowling in the basement of old Normal Hall and exercises on parallel bars in the men’s anteroom, with seasonal outdoor sports, made up the program till a gymnasium was built in 1890. From that time a regular series of Swedish gymnastics was organized in a definite program. For some years military drill was required of the men.

The inauguration of a Field Day in 1891, and the purchase of South Field in 1894, prepared the way for organized athletic teams, which aroused a high degree of enthusiasm. The erection of the gymnasium building in 1905 opened the way for a thoroughly organized physical program, and for indoor sports.

In 1921 a state law was passed making indoor and outdoor games and athletics mandatory in the schools, a state department of physical education was organized, a syllabus of mini-
mum essentials was prepared covering physical examinations, a health program, and actual practice in school sports. Under the new regime a Women’s Athletic Association (W.A.A.) was formed, with a new system of membership and “points” of excellence. With the return of a larger number of men to the school, the N.A.A. restored the sports to a permanent position—basketball, baseball, volley ball, and soccer. Field days, meets, and play days were inaugurated. The making over of the campus into an outdoor gymnasium and the completion of an athletic field will add to the facilities for physical education. The transformation of South Field in the rear of the new training school building into a children’s playground, in addition to an indoor gymnasium, opens the way for courses in physical education for the children and gives practice opportunities for the students.

“Student Co-operative Association.” In the earlier days all higher institutions were under the direct control of the authorities, with more or less student participation. In more recent years different forms of student participation have developed. The present organization began to take form with the appointment of a dean of women (1914), and a dean of men (1924). The co-operation of the student organization with the faculty council has developed a fine type of social democracy.

This association in its various divisions assumes responsibility for a wide range of activities—dormitory and day student interests; socials and receptions; chapel programs; student budget for extra-curricular activities; student morale.

ALUMNI ACTIVITIES

From the earliest days the graduates organized their interest in tangible form. This is evidenced by the fact that at the first convention in 1842 ninety-nine of the past members were present. Year after year these conventions grew in enthusiasm and in practical help to the school. At times they were supplemented by such organizations as the Bridgewater Club of male graduates, which held regular meetings in Boston, and by other local clubs. The early graduates who came into positions of
prominence in teaching and other professions became a great source of enthusiasm to the younger graduates; these people have always been ready to speak for and to the student body.

Only a few of the contributions of the graduates can be mentioned, but they should include the long list of books, pictures, apparatus and specimens, the memorial tablets, the student loan fund, school songs, assistance in getting building appropriations, active efforts in gaining the degree privilege (1921), and the remarkable generosity in gifts after the fire of 1924. Especial mention should be made of the life-long assistance given the school in every possible way by Dr. A. E. Winship, and of the gifts of land and a greenhouse which made possible the unusual facilities for science study. The most recent gift is the bequest of Mrs. Elizabeth Case Stevens of the Class of 1872 of $15,000 as a fund in memory of Albert G. Boyden, for books in psychology and related subjects taught by her honored teacher.

TO THE ALUMNI

The school appreciates the generous gifts of the graduates which have made possible the unique murals in the auditorium and the new type of decorative pictures in the different rooms. Also, we are indebted to the sororities, the fraternity, Bridge-water clubs, and individuals for gifts which include scholarships, books for the library, and laboratory specimens.