

HES Presidential Address

Out-of-Class Project: American Teachers' Summertime Activities, 1880s–1930s

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In March 1887, Eva Moll wrote about the previous summer in her diary: “The season was full of rich things of course. Heard some fine violin and harp playing by two Italians. I never expect to hear ‘Nearer my God to Thee’ sweeter on this earth, than it was played by the violinist. We first

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went to Niagara, visiting all the points.”¹ Moll was not a wealthy person of leisure. She was a single Kansas schoolteacher in her late twenties who struggled to make ends meet, and yet had spent nine weeks at the quintessentially middle-class Chautauqua Institution in western New York State. A slice of my larger investigation of the history of teachers’ “summers off,” this essay will explore the social-class dimensions of their summertime activities during a distinctive period for both the middle class and the teaching force in the United States, the decades of the 1880s through the 1930s.

Moll personifies the liminality in American teachers’ social-class status with which education scholars and sociologists have long wrestled. In 1911, Lotus Coffman observed that “the classes that are supplying the most teachers are the ones whose incomes are the least,” and a century later David Labaree added gender and age to class on the list of “stigmatized associations” in teachers’ backgrounds. Coffman also commented, “The tastes of teachers might be those of people in refined economic leisure, but the salaries . . . prevent the enjoyment of these higher things,” and a 1913 study by the National Education Association (NEA) reported that teachers’ low salaries made it difficult to fulfill expectations that they “live as gentle folks.” In their 1929 Middletown study, Robert and Helen Lynd placed teachers in the “business” rather than the “working” class, yet noted their low pay and “bitter comments . . . upon their lack of status.” A few years later, Willard Waller observed, “Concerning the low social standing of teachers much has been written.” In the 1970s, Dan Lortie explained that “social ambiguity has stalked those who undertook the mission” of teaching, a “special but shadowed” occupation. Finally, in an explication of Bourdieu’s theories, David Schwartz remarked that teachers “have the greatest asymmetry between their cultural capital and economic wealth.” These commentators also discuss factors in teachers’ work that have contributed to the discrepancies between their backgrounds and salaries, on the one hand, and their high level of cultural capital on the other hand. While sociologists and education scholars also touch on teachers’ lives outside of work during the school year, they say curiously little about the role of summer vacation in shaping teachers’ liminal social-class position.²

¹Diary of Eva Moll, March 27, 1887, Diaries Related to Chautauqua, Oliver Archives Center, Chautauqua, NY.

²Lotus Delta Coffman, *The Social Composition of the Teaching Population* (New York: Teachers College, 1911), 77, 83; David F. Labaree, *The Trouble with Ed Schools* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 37; National Education Association, *Report of the Committee on Teachers’ Salaries and Cost of Living* (Ann Arbor, MI: National Education

The modern school year with its long summer break was one result of widespread school reform in the nineteenth-century United States. Before reform, fledgling rural public schools generally convened for two- to three-month terms: the winter term, usually taught by a man, and the summer term, increasingly taught by a woman. Meanwhile, many urban public schools met year-round with occasional two-week breaks. As a result of calendar standardization, by the 1880s or 1890s in most cities and rural areas, teachers taught from September through May. Historian of education Kenneth Gold explains that the summer vacation “was meant to achieve individual and social purposes.”³ Aside from Gold, historians of education have paid little attention to the quarter of the year in which teachers were not in the classroom, even as the social history of American teachers has expanded significantly. This growing body of work describes how nineteenth-century school reform brought increased requirements for teacher certification in addition to longer school years in rural areas, which turned away many men. The women who remained were subject to rules barring them from marrying through the early twentieth century and from being mothers through the mid-twentieth century. Although these rules varied and were not enforced consistently, between the 1880s and the 1930s the majority of teachers were unmarried and/or childless women, most of whom hailed from lower-middle or rural middle-class backgrounds. Thus, on the whole, teachers during this period approached summer break with a degree of flexibility, but limited financial resources. A close look at their summer activities will enhance historical understanding of teachers’ lives.⁴

Association, 1913), 240; Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929), 209; Willard Waller, *The Sociology of Teaching* (1932; reprinted, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1967), 58; Dan C. Lortie, *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 10; and David Swartz, *Culture & Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 178.

³David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, *Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Public Schools* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), chaps. 3–4; and Kenneth M. Gold, *School’s In: The History of Summer Education in American Public Schools* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), chaps. 1–2, 74.

⁴Jackie M. Blount, *Fit to Teach: Same-Sex Desire, Gender, and School Work in the Twentieth Century* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005); chap. 3; Geraldine J. Clifford, *Those Good Gertrudes: A Social History of Women Teachers in America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 52–53, chaps. 3–6; Herbert M. Kliebard, “The Feminization of Teaching on the American Frontier: Keeping School in Otsego, Wisconsin, 1867–1880,” *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 27, no. 5 (1995): 545–61; John Rury, “Who Became Teachers? The Social Characteristics of Teachers in American History,” in *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work*, ed. Donald Warren (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 9–48. Cordier’s history of women teachers in Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska between the 1860s and the 1920s, Rousmaniere’s account

Concurrently with the rise of the modern school year and the preponderance of single women in the teaching force, the middle class in the United States defined itself socially and culturally, establishing what it meant to “live as gentle folks.” Historian Burton Bledstein explains that by the late nineteenth century: “In cultural terms, being middle class referred to the kind of person one was” regarding level of education, professional pursuits, domestic life, and recreation. Daniel Rodgers notes that the new “gospel of relaxation” excluded the working class, and Cindy Aron adds that being able to travel on vacation helped to define the middle class between the 1850s and the expansion of vacationing to the lower classes in the 1930s.⁵ Examining the activities teachers chose to pursue in the summer—when they had a degree of flexibility but limited financial resources—during the period when the class-status system took shape will expose the roots of the disjuncture between teachers’ economic wealth and cultural capital.

of New York City’s women teachers in the 1920s, Hoffman’s broad overview and documentary history, and Clifford’s wide-ranging history of women teachers in the United States focus almost exclusively on the school year. In-depth accounts by Markowitz of the lives of Jewish women teachers in twentieth-century New York and Weiler of the lives of women teachers in rural California between 1850 and 1950 include the summer months, but just hint at the importance of summer in shaping teachers’ lives and careers. Pieroth’s history of interwar Seattle teachers includes more in-depth discussion of their summer activities, and Rousmaniere’s biography of teacher organizer and activist Margaret Haley includes detailed discussions of Haley’s attendance at various summer schools while she was a young teacher in the 1880s and 1890s. Mary Hurlbut Cordier, *Schoolwomen of the Prairies and Plains: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860s to 1920s* (Albuquerque, NM: The University of New Mexico Press, 1992); Kate Rousmaniere, *City Teachers: Teaching and School Reform in Historical Perspective* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997); Nancy Hoffman, *Woman’s “True” Profession: Voices From the History of Teaching*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2003); Clifford, *Those Good Gertrudes*; Ruth Jacknow Markowitz, *My Daughter, the Teacher: Jewish Teachers in the New York City Schools* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993); Kathleen Weiler, *Country Schoolwomen: Teaching in Rural California, 1850–1950* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); Doris Hinson Pieroth, *Seattle’s Women Teachers of the Interwar Years: Shapers of a Livable City* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004); Kate Rousmaniere, *Citizen Teacher: The Life and Leadership of Margaret Haley* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005).

⁵ Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1976), 30; Daniel T. Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America, 1850–1920* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1974/1978), chap. 4; Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Aron reflects teachers’ ambiguous status when she includes them in the middle class and in the working class in different parts of the book. On the formation of middle-class culture, see also Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Richard Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Verso, 1996).



THE VACATION PROBLEM.

The American Schoolmarm:—Can I go, or must I remain at home?

Image 1. The vacation problem. American School Board Journal 31, no. 1 (July 1905), cover. This cartoon illustrates the dilemma that many teachers faced: middle-class cultural expectations matched by insufficient funds.

Although historians, sociologists, and education scholars have written little about teachers' summer pursuits, a variety of primary sources sheds light on this quarter of the year. Education journals published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries regularly discussed the summer break and offered advice for teachers on how to spend it. "The true teacher will return to his school better equipped for his work than when he turned the key in his door in the early summer-time. He will enter upon the new year's work with recuperated powers," opined one journal in 1900. Education publishers' views on the best means of recuperation coalesced first around rest in pastoral and wilderness settings and then, by the 1890s, around a balance between relaxation, professional study, and tourism; advice in Iowa journals, for example, emphasized "rest both physical and intellectual" in 1878 and "a happy medium" among activities in 1911. In 1923, the school board of Hammond, Indiana, even adopted a policy of providing bonuses for teachers who rotated between summer school, "travel of educational value," and rest during successive summers. A piece on the Hammond plan in *School and Society* faulted it for being paternalistic, but other sources

suggest that teachers made their own choices, likely with help from education journals' reports on, and increasing numbers of advertisements for, possible activities and destinations.⁶ The archives of some of these destinations include accounts of teachers' experiences, and teachers' memoirs and diaries often cover the summer months. These sources reveal that teachers spent their summers resting in nature, working for wages in a variety of positions, pursuing professional development, and enriching themselves culturally through studies and travel. From the 1880s through at least the 1930s, teachers—often with the support of educational leaders and even community members—marshaled their limited finances to increase their social status through their summer activities.

Rest

Gold explains that nineteenth-century educators conceptualized summer vacation as a time of mental and physical restoration for schoolchildren, as “overstudy” would harm their health. At the same time, he also explains, medical professionals wrote about the importance of rest for teachers due to the dangers their occupation posed to good health, especially for women, who were susceptible to nervous strain. Even as alternative activities became more widespread with each passing decade, the notion of summer as “the teacher’s resting time” remained. When one Iowa educator remarked in an 1897 article promoting summer school “that teachers need rest is nonsense,” another answered by quoting a physician who argued that during the summer the teacher “should let his mind lie fallow, as the farmer does his field” and that the best way to lie fallow was breathe fresh air: the teacher “should bury himself in the backwoods, live on a farm, climb the mountain, or seek the lake, river or sea, where nothing can remind him of his work.” The 1913 NEA report stated that teachers needed adequate salaries not only to “live as gentle folks,” but also for summer vacations “to recuperate their exhausted strength” and thereby reduce “the size of the doctors’ bills.” The study quoted a thirty-seven-year-old female teacher in Denver who reported, “Owing to nervousness . . . It is necessary that I get out of this altitude during the summer season.”⁷

⁶*The Intelligence: A Journal of Education* 21 (September 1, 1900): 493; “What Shall We Do With the Long Vacation?” *The Iowa Normal Monthly* (Hereafter *INM*) 1, no. 12 (July 1878): 360; “Teachers’ Vacations,” *Midland Schools* 25, no. 10 (June 1911): 291; and W. C. Ruediger, “Baiting Teachers,” *School and Society* 17 (March 24, 1917): 330–32.

⁷Gold, *School’s In*, chap. 3, quotation on 97; W. F. Barr, “The Summer School,” *INM* 20, no. 10 (May 1897): 422; James Lawrey, “The Summer School,” *INM* 20, no. 11–12 (June–July 1897): 451, 450; and NEA, *Report*, 240–41.

While beneficial to one's health, being able to change one's altitude or to let one's mind lie fallow was a privilege of the higher social classes. It was "like a lawyer" that the teacher was to head to the backwoods, a farm, a mountain, or the sea. "Leisure, itself a by-product of money," observed Willard Elsbree in his 1931 study advocating higher teacher salaries, "is absolutely essential to mental and physical vigor." But even on meager salaries, teachers pursued rest in natural settings during the summer months. Remarking that her change in altitude "always takes the money I try to save," the Denver teacher claimed a privilege that was somewhat beyond her income level. Some teachers, and/or administrators acting on their behalf, formed associations with the intention of pooling their resources for restful vacations in alpine or rural areas. *The Iowa Normal Monthly* reported in 1889 on the incorporation of the Teachers' Vacation Association, which hoped to "establish a permanent house in the 'Rockies' where members can live at small expense while they drink in the pure mountain air and rest both body and mind," and in 1898 on plans for the Teachers' Country Club, a cooperative effort by Chicago teachers to establish a "rural retreat" and "model farm" in Wisconsin, where they could enjoy "the health and strength gained by rural life" during their vacations.⁸

Although these two efforts apparently did not advance beyond the proposal stage, other groups were more successful. "A number of well known school men," *The American School Board Journal* reported in 1900, formed the Teachers' Rest Association and secured land on Spooner Lake in Wisconsin in order to provide teachers "real recreation during the summer months amid the wilds of nature." Within a decade and a half, a score or so association members had, or planned to build, cottages on the lake. Beginning in the mid-1920s, the Stillaguamish Country Club in Washington State made it possible for single women to build rustic cabins in the woods. Historian Doris Pieroth explains that many Seattle teachers, especially faculty members at conservation-oriented John Muir Elementary, bought lots, built cabins, and then spent their vacations at Stillaguamish. Other Seattle teachers communed with nature through the city's Mountaineers club, which had a large number of teacher members from its 1907 formation on. Fourth-grade teacher Lulie Nettleton climbed to the top of Mount Si during the club's first year, after which she rarely missed club hikes. California teachers were equally active in the Sierra Club. In 1892, Berkeley teacher Helen Gompertz was one of the first women

⁸Lawrey, "The Summer School," 450; Willard S. Elsbree, *Teachers' Salaries* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1931), 4; NEA, *Report*, 241; "The Teachers' Vacation Association," *INM* 13, no. 5 (December 1889): 122; and "Country Retreat for Teachers," *INM* 22, no. 5 (December 1898): 190-93.

to climb Yosemite's Mount Lyell. She later wrote of the "sublimity" of reaching the peak on a "glorious summer day." By breathing the fresh air of western mountains, the Stillaguamish woods, or Spooner Lake, teachers implicitly asserted that they belonged culturally to the middle class.⁹

Work

The activity that violated the notion that summer was a time of rest for teachers most directly, and that had the greatest potential to undermine their precarious membership in the middle class, was working for wages. In most articles providing advice for teachers on how to spend the summer, the topic of work was distinctly absent. The piece that emphasized "rest both physical and intellectual," however, also exhorted women teachers specifically not to engage in one type of work, sewing, by telling them that it would "be just as confining, as exhausting and as trying to the nerves as your school room labors." The Seattle school board in the 1910s went so far as to forbid teachers to take on any outside employment. Nevertheless, schoolteachers did work during the summer. Kansas teacher Miranda Cather wrote to a friend in late June 1885 that she was staying on for a couple of weeks with the family with whom she had boarded during the school year. "My school closed last Sat. but I am still at Andover doing some sewing . . . the family still plan to keep me with them, by having me do my sewing," she explained. Three decades later, the NEA salary study quoted an Atlanta teacher, who reported, "I am compelled to spend my vacation period sewing to make summer expenses," and a New Haven teacher, who said, "I find it absolutely necessary to go out as waitress or something of the sort for the summer." According to historian Kathleen Weiler, rural California teachers occasionally worked in canneries or, in the case of her own mother in the late 1920s, in fruit-packing houses. While sewing, waitressing, and fruit-packing were distinctly working-class endeavors, teachers' summer work often had a middle-class patina that allowed them to engage in labor without severely threatening—and sometimes even enhancing—their class status.¹⁰

⁹"Recreation for Teachers," *The American School Board Journal* 21 (August 1900): n.p.; *The Historical Collections of Washburn County and the Surrounding Area* (1916?), 399, Washburn County Historical Society, Shell Lake, WI; Pieroth, *Seattle's Women Teachers*, 189, 183–85; Polly Welts Kaufman, *National Parks and the Woman's Voice: A History* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 21; and Helen M. Gompertz, "A Tramp to Mt. Lyell," *Sierra Club Bulletin* 1 (May 1894): 140.

¹⁰"What Shall We Do," 261; Pieroth, *Seattle's Women Teachers*, 161–62; Miranda Cather to Nellie Covert, June 25, 1885, Nellie Penelope Covert Papers, Special

“Schoolma’ams run reapers during vacation in Douglas county,” noted the *Minneapolis Tribune* in August 1878. Agricultural work was clearly manual labor, but it also involved breathing fresh air in a pastoral setting, a middle-class value. The NEA report acknowledged that some “outside occupations, especially those carried on out-of-doors in the summer, may be to the advantage of the teacher physically as well as financially.” For some teachers, summer farmwork on their own land was also a means of advancing their family’s class standing. As a young country-school teacher, Jas Turner lived on his parents’ Illinois farm and “assisted in the crops.” After he married in 1874, he maintained his own farm while teaching in rural districts. When he became head teacher in Stonefort, Illinois, in 1880, Turner rented out the farm, bought a house in town, and “during the summer months repaired it until it was a most beautiful and comfortable home.” Later in his long career as an educator, Turner reclaimed the farm in order to pass it along to his sons. As a wife and mother, long-serving California teacher Grace Canan Pogue helped on the family ranch, which she and her teenaged son continued to maintain after her husband died in 1932. When her son spent part of the summer of 1934 at scout camp, Pogue found that she “could stay alone and take care of the ranch,—after a fashion.” She later wrote, “The summer passed rapidly. We packed figs in six pound crates and shipped them to San Francisco early in the season when the price was good. The second crop made good feed for the pigs.”¹¹

Single country-school teacher Elizabeth Corey—who signed her letters “Bachelor Bess”—was likewise no stranger to hard farm labor. After her father died in 1905, she, at seventeen, began teaching and boarding around, spending summers on the family farm in western Iowa. She managed the farm while her mother was hospitalized during the summer of 1908. Then, in June 1909, she headed alone to South Dakota, where she spent the next decade and half as a rural teacher and a homesteader. Corey devoted the first summer to securing a tract of land and subsequent summers to improving it and her little house, as well as supporting a brother who had joined her. In June 1916, she wrote to her mother: “We’ve just scads of tomato and cabbage plants [and are] almost ready to put in the corn field . . . The hens are doing pretty well. We get five eggs most every night.” In July 1918, she wrote to her sister:

Collections and Archives, Emporia State University; NEA, *Report*, 233; and Weiler, *Country Schoolwomen*, 153, 298, note 83.

¹¹“State News,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, 19 August 1878, 3; NEA, *Report*, 232; Jas. W. Turner, *Half a Century in the School Room, or Personal Memoirs of Jas. W. Turner* (Carrier Mills, IL: Turner Publishing Company, 1920), 43, 60; Grace Canan Pogue, *The Swift Seasons* (Hollywood, CA: The Cloister Press, 1957), 75, 85–87; see also Weiler, *Country Schoolwomen*, chap. 4.

"This morning I heard a chicken squall out by the barn. I ran out there in by bed room slippers and there was a big rattler coiled up . . . Believe me! That snake was soon a deader." She continued: "The Tuesday before the Fourth one of the neighbors told me they'd be over in the morning to start to plow so I hurried home and moved the manure pile . . . The first load made me tired, the second made me ache, and the third made me numb, then it went better." Corey often boarded away from her homestead, both during school years when her position was too distant and during portions of summers that she spent working as live-in help for families in nearby Fort Pierre to pay homesteading bills. When Corey worked as a boarding-house cook in the summer of 1912, she wrote to her mother: "The boarders are so nice to me. They show me as much consideration as if I was one of them and they always call me Miss Corey tho they called the last cook 'Mary'[,] I don't know why unless it is because I'm a transplanted schoolmaam and they happen to like my cooking."¹²

While education leaders discouraged summer teaching because it was not restful, continuing to engage in their craft during the fallow months was an obvious way for teachers to earn additional money without joining the ranks of blue-collar workers; after all, a "schoolmaam" had higher status than a cook. Historian Ruth Markowitz writes that New York City's Jewish women teachers offered lessons in voice, musical instruments, and English. Schoolteachers had few opportunities, however, for summer teaching in public schools until the second decade of the twentieth century. After summer terms disappeared in the 1880s, vacation schools arose gradually in urban areas, primarily as a form of progressive innovation to help the poor. Gold explains that early vacation schools were run by reform organizations that hired people from a variety of backgrounds to teach in innovative ways. One of the few regular schoolteachers who worked in vacation schools was Beulah Douglas, who, historian William Reese explains, spent the school year teaching in Minneapolis and the summer as a beloved teacher in a Milwaukee vacation school. Reese and Gold describe how public school systems absorbed vacation schools and turned them into modern summer schools in the 1910s, opening more summer teaching jobs to public school teachers. By 1913, the NEA reported, teachers in Cincinnati and other cities used "employment in summer schools or playgrounds . . . to make both ends meet." Working in playgrounds allowed teachers to combine teaching with outdoor activity, as did camp counseling, which Markowitz lists as another popular job among New York

¹²Philip Gerber, ed., *Bachelor Bess: The Homesteading Letters of Elizabeth Corey, 1909–1919* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1990), 311–12, 355–56, 142, 190–91.

teachers. Working at a summer camp hardly allowed teachers to rest, but it did expose them to fresh air in a natural setting.¹³

Although articles in education journals discouraged teachers from working for wages during the summertime, beginning in the early twentieth century, the journals printed many advertisements recruiting teachers for summer work. Some ads were as simple and vague as “100 Teachers Wanted for vacation work. Straight salary of \$50 a month.” But most included a professional or teaching-related dimension to clarify that the work they offered was white-collar. The Educational Supplies Company advertised for summer salesmen, while F. E. Compton Company reached out specifically to women, offering “a short, free course in salesmanship” and the option of “summer work only.” A recurring ad in 1922 that listed only a Des Moines post office box boasted high salaries for “Educational Extension Work,” and multiple ads by the National Home and School Association and The World Book emphasized that their summer sales positions included travel, with an allowance for railroad fares. The mention of travel, which suggested the opportunity to gain cultural capital, enhanced the middle-class patina of these positions. An ad that focused on travel without mentioning the actual work to be done began, “Hundreds of other women teachers have done it,” and asked for teachers “between the ages of 25 and 40, willing to learn, ambitious to do big things, free to travel extensively,” and possessing some advanced education. “Good health is very essential,” the ad continued. “We will carefully train those selected, furnish them with everything needed, free of charge, and pay all railroad fare.”¹⁴

The latter advertisement may have been intended to recruit waitresses for the series of restaurants founded by Fred Harvey along the Santa Fe Railway beginning in 1883. Although waitressing was a working-class occupation, “Harvey Girls” had higher status because the Harvey House system hired educated women, enforced strict regulations of their behavior, and served worldly transcontinental railroad passengers. Harvey management established a system that allowed waitresses from farming families to return home for the summer, when schoolteachers on temporary contracts took their places. These teachers spent their summers not only as workers whose classy reputation

¹³Markowitz, *My Daughter*, 127; Gold, *School's In*, chap. 4–5; William J. Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform: Grassroots Movements During the Progressive Era*, rev. ed. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 133–44; and NEA, *Report*, 231.

¹⁴*The Intelligence* 22, no. 8 (April 15, 1902): 312; *Midland Schools* 35, no. 8 (April 1921): 288; 36, no. 9 (May 1922): 337; 36, no. 5 (January 1922): 160; 36, no. 8 (April 1922): 303, 307; 35, no. 7 (March 1921): 260; 35, no. 9 (May 1921): 325; 35, no. 6 (February 1921): 195; 36, no. 6 (Feb. 1922): 188.

overshadowed their blue-collar tasks, but also as western travelers; some may have even worked at the Grand Canyon's Harvey House.¹⁵

Summer work in vacation destinations enabled teachers to spend time in middle-class territory. One such place was Yellowstone National Park, where the short season was compatible with the nine-month school year. After railroad service and expanding accommodations opened the park to tourists in the early 1880s, it was a sought-after destination for tourists as well as summer workers. The legions of teachers who worked at Yellowstone included married couple Irene and Leon Evans, who, in the early 1930s, both taught school in Idaho and spent their summers at the Cooke City Entrance Station, where Leon worked as a seasonal ranger while Irene watched their children. From 1936 through 1939, Merle Janice Schroeder, a music teacher in North Dakota, spent her summers as a housekeeper at Yellowstone's Canyon Lodge. Coworkers who signed her memory album each summer praised her singing and referred to enjoyable social gatherings. In 1939, one coworker wrote, "I will remember us making beds together, dancing together and singing in the dorm," and others wished her success in her new teaching job in Alaska. Instructions that accompanied Schroeder's employment contract included under "General Suggestions": "TEACHERS!!! HAVE YOU MADE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS TO REMAIN TO THE CLOSE OF THE PARK SEASON AS YOUR CONTRACTS CALL FOR? THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT."¹⁶

The lodge where Schroeder worked descended from a series of camps first established by the Wylie Camping Company. As a teacher in Bozeman and, for a short time, Montana's superintendent of schools, William Wallace Wylie devoted his summers in the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s to guiding tourists around Yellowstone. He wrote a guidebook and developed a six-and-a-half-day stagecoach tour that provided accommodations, first in "moveable camps" and then in "permanent camps" made up of large canvas tents on platforms. Proud of the educational nature of his tours, Wylie hired many teachers to work on his staff. One of his guests noted, "the attendants are all people of refinement—many of the men being college fellows, and the girls being school teachers." Even in 1910, after Wylie had sold the company, a Wylie Permanent Camping Company brochure touted the "character of our lady employees—teachers, students and young ladies from private homes, all drawn into Yellowstone for a summer's

¹⁵Lesley Poling-Kempes, *The Harvey Girls: Women Who Opened the West* (New York: Paragon House, 1989).

¹⁶Kaufman, *National Parks*, 91; 1936–1939 Albums, Merle Janice Schroeder Papers, Boxes 1–2, Manuscript Collections, Yellowstone National Park Archives, Gardiner, MT.

outing.” In her history of vacation travel, Aron notes that for teachers and others employed in service positions in places such as national parks, “fresh air, lovely scenery, and fine weather”—elements of a middle-class vacation—offered some “compensation for the hard work.”¹⁷

Inspired in part by Wylie’s educational approach to Yellowstone tours, the National Park Service began to hire naturalists in 1920. Schoolteacher Mary Rolfe worked as a seasonal naturalist at Yellowstone in 1921. Park superintendent Horace Albright wrote that she was “a fine enthusiastic girl,” but that her lectures were overly “technical.” When J. M. Johnson, head of the biology department at a New York City high school, wrote to Albright to inquire about summer work as a “nature guide,” he said, “I want to get to the Rockies again and I feel that I must earn some money while doing so.” Johnson spent the summer of 1923 as a naturalist at Rocky Mountain National Park. Working as a seasonal park naturalist allowed teachers to remain engaged in their profession while also enjoying fresh air and lovely scenery. But their fellow teachers who contributed to the family farm or homestead, sold educational materials, and/or held service positions at tourist destinations also managed to maintain, or even enhance, their middle-class status through their summer work.¹⁸

Professional Development

Unlike wage work, professional development fell squarely in the middle-class sphere. Working as a professional ensured or elevated one’s position as a member of the middle class—particularly if one were male. Although teaching did not have the professional prestige of law, medicine, or theology—due at least in part to the large numbers of women practitioners—it increasingly incorporated professional

¹⁷Jane Galloway Demaray, *Yellowstone Summers: Touring with the Wylie Camping Company in America’s First National Park* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2015); W. W. Wylie, *Yellowstone National Park, or the Great American Wonderland* (Kansas City, MO: Ramsey, Millett & Hudson, 1882); Elizabeth Ann Watry, “More than Mere Camps and Coaches: The Wylie Camping Company and the Development of a Middle-Class Leisure Ethic in Yellowstone National Park, 1883–1916,” Master’s Thesis, Montana State University, 2010, guest quoted on 47–48; “Wylie Permanent Camping Co., Yellowstone National Park,” brochure (1910), Yellowstone National Park Research Library, Gardiner, MT; Aron, *Working at Play*, 233.

¹⁸Kaufman, *National Parks*, 66–67; Elizabeth A. Watry, *Women in Wonderland: Lives, Legends, and Legacies of Yellowstone National Park* (Helena, MT: Riverbend Publishing, 2012), 147, 155; Albright quoted in Memorandum of the History of Women in Uniform (NPS) in Yellowstone National Park by Aubrey L. Haines, October 1961, Employees, Vertical File Collection, Yellowstone Research Library; Correspondence between J. M. Johnson and Horace Albright, 1923, Interpretation and Education Records, series 2: Communications, Box 1, Yellowstone Archives.

elements, including specialized training and structured reflection on the wider field. As education journals' advice for teachers on how to spend the summer expanded beyond a focus on rest exclusively, they increasingly promoted these professional development activities, and summer opportunities for professional enhancement multiplied. Local teachers' institutes grew, the annual NEA meeting welcomed teacher attendees, national summer schools appeared in attractive locations, and colleges established and expanded summer offerings for teachers. By 1897, according to the Iowa educator who declared "that teachers need rest is nonsense": "The leading universities and the best normal schools are now conducting summer schools and they are being well patronized by the class of teachers that is furnishing the recruits for the highest ranks in the profession." The teachers who took advantage of summer opportunities for occupational enhancement demonstrated that they took a professional approach and thus belonged culturally in the middle class.¹⁹

Teachers' institutes had arisen in the mid-nineteenth century in order to provide further training for teachers who had little. Scheduled by the state or county superintendent, institutes met in local schools, courthouses, or other available facilities at various times, with summer sessions increasing in length and frequency with the rise of the nine-month school year. The institutes' programs included subject review, discussions of methods and the organization of schools, and public lectures on broader educational or social topics. The rigor of institute studies varied, but most instilled enthusiasm and a sense of calling among attendees. Summer institutes for white teachers in Knoxville, Tennessee, in the 1880s and 1890s met in university facilities and the town opera house. To facilitate attendance, organizers arranged for reduced railroad and boarding rates and provided free or inexpensive textbooks. Speakers included U.S. Commissioner of Education John Eaton. Knoxville newspapers reported on "spirited" discussions among teachers, who earned certificates for attendance or their performance on optional examinations. In Kansas in June 1885, Miranda Cather anticipated "more rigid" questions on board examinations as she finished her sewing and prepared to attend the institute in El Dorado. The following month, her friend Vallie Williams wrote to another friend from El Dorado: "Normal is lively and full . . . Miss Cather is here and a good many others . . . I like the change in certificates real well." Kate Wofford observed in a 1935 study that, through the first decade of the

¹⁹Gold, *School's In*, 99–100; Barr, "The Summer School," 421. On gender issues and the professional status of teaching, see Hoffman, *Woman's "True" Profession*; and Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "Man/Woman/Teacher: Gender, Family, and Career in American Educational History," in *American Teachers*, ed. Warren, 315–19.

twentieth century, the four- to six-week summer institute “was perhaps the institution that best served the rural teacher.”²⁰

Institutes continued to play a large role in professional development for teachers in remote areas and among marginalized groups into the 1930s. Historian James Fraser reports that in New Mexico, where school districts mandated attendance, nearly every teacher in the summer of 1910 enrolled in a two- or four-week county institute or an eight-week program at a state normal school. These teachers studied both pedagogy and academic subjects. South Dakota teacher and homesteader Bess Corey attended the institute in Fort Pierre nearly every summer. At the end of the 1912 institute, she wrote, “I didn’t study a lick during the two weeks and I surely had some fun.” She buckled down for the 1914 institute, at which, she explained to her brother, “We recite from 8:30 in the morning till 12 and from 1:15 till 4 in the afternoon and prepare our work outside. Am afraid I won’t have any time for cussedness this four weeks.” In the South, many states required African American teachers to attend summer institutes. Historian Adam Fairclough explains that, with financial support from the General Education Board, the numbers of black teachers attending institutes grew from 5,000 in 1916 to more than 23,000 in 1928. Although some leaders charged that the institutes were merely “‘cramming schools’ for a teachers’ exam,” the summer sessions also encouraged these teachers “to regard themselves as professionals.”²¹

While teachers’ institutes were local proceedings, education journals presented the annual summer meetings of the NEA—which was then a professional organization for administrators and teachers—as a sort of national institute. To encourage teachers to attend, journals printed meeting programs and speeches by prominent participants, listed discounted railroad fares and hotel rates in the host city, and explained how attending the meeting would foster professional development. *The Iowa Normal Monthly* told teachers in 1889 that they would benefit by attending the upcoming meeting in Nashville: “It gives us

²⁰Christine A. Ogren, *The American State Normal School: “An Instrument of Great Good”* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 20–22; Clinton B. Allison, *Teachers for the South: Pedagogy and Educationists in the University of Tennessee, 1844–1995* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 6–14; Miranda Cather to Nellie Covert, June 25, 1885, and Vallie P. Williams to Nellie Covert, July 12, 1885, Nellie Penelope Covert Papers; and Kate V. Wofford, *An History of the Status and Training of Elementary Rural Teachers of the United States, 1860–1930* (Pittsburgh: Thomas Siviter and Company, 1935). See also Mindy Spearman, “‘The Peripatetic Normal School’: Teachers Institutes in Five Southwestern Cities (1880–1920),” PhD Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2006.

²¹James W. Fraser, *Preparing America’s Teachers: A History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2007), 70–78; Gerber, ed., *Bachelor Bess*, 193–94, 259, 260; and Adam Fairclough, *A Class of Their Own: Black Teachers in the Segregated South* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 248, 319–20.

great heart when we learn that others are thinking our thoughts, are meeting our difficulties, are sharing our successes.” More than three decades later, *Midland Schools* promoted the upcoming NEA meeting in Des Moines as a “wonderful opportunity to see and hear most of the leading figures in our educational affairs . . . What congress and the departments are to national politics the N. E. A. is to national education.” At a meeting of the Michigan State Teachers’ Association, the superintendent of Grand Haven schools recommended the upcoming 1890 NEA meeting in St. Paul, stating: “Its discussions are upon the most advanced educational topics that are forcing themselves upon the attention of the world.” Published in the Association’s *Transactions*, his comments would have reached teachers throughout the state. Perhaps due to exhortations such as these, large numbers of teachers did travel to NEA meetings; from Iowa alone, upwards of 600 attended the 1896 meeting in Buffalo and 1,146 attended the 1897 meeting in Chicago. California teacher Grace Pogue drove with her son to Los Angeles to attend the 1931 NEA meeting.²²

Less peripatetic than NEA meetings or teachers’ institutes, new summer institutions devoted to professional enrichment for teachers also began to appear. Established in 1878, the Martha’s Vineyard Summer Institute’s seaside location and national-caliber faculty attracted teachers to its five-week course. And on the banks of scenic Chautauqua Lake, the Chautauqua Institution began in 1874 as a sort of summer camp meeting and lyceum to train Sunday school teachers. As the assembly grew to become a “national podium” for discussions of social and cultural issues, Chautauqua expanded its professional-development offerings to focus on methods and academic subjects for public school teachers in a program called the Teachers Retreat. In 1880, the retreat joined with the newly created School of Languages to offer a formal summer school in coordination with the larger Chautauqua Institution assembly each year. Future University of Chicago president William R. Harper oversaw the educational program at Chautauqua beginning in 1883, and would have been present when Eva Moll first attended the Teachers Retreat in 1884. Moll did not mention Harper in her diary, but she did note that she studied psychology with Professor J. W. Dickinson, and that she found his assistant Mr. Kendall “very pleasing.” When she returned for nine weeks in 1886, Moll studied academic subjects, and education with Arthur Boyden, principal of Bridgewater Normal in Massachusetts. Summing up her second summer at

²²“To the Teachers and Friends of Education of Iowa,” *INM* 12, no. 10 (May 1889): 575; “National Educational Association,” *Midland Schools* 35, no. 9 (May 1921): 304; *Transactions of the Michigan State Teachers’ Association 1889* (1889), 48; *INM* 20, no. 1 (August 1896): 9; 25, no. 9 (April 1902): 451; and Pogue, *The Swift Seasons*, 74.

Chautauqua, when her sister was also in attendance, Moll wrote: "Oh Chautauqua is doing a grand work for such as she and I. May the good work continue."²³

The "good work" did indeed continue, as the following decades saw the expansion of financial support and curricular choices for teachers at Chautauqua. Jewett House, donated in the late 1880s, ensured that generations of schoolteachers "might find a home free of expense." Other "student club houses," and, later, dormitories, also became available. By 1910, donations from "friends of the institution" provided "full" and "half" scholarships for public school teachers who qualified. *The Chautauquan Weekly* listed the recipients, clarifying that "a successful candidate must be actually engaged in public school teaching, at a salary not to exceed \$600" in order to "assure the bringing of a deserving and desirable class of persons who probably would not come at all otherwise." The curriculum by 1895 was organized into seven schools, including the School of Pedagogy with eleven instructors, five of whom were from Teachers College at Columbia University. Twenty years later, Chautauqua's summer schools included a full slate of academic departments, a department of Psychology and Pedagogy, and "Professional Courses," including Domestic Science and Physical Education. Offerings expanded further in the 1920s with growth in the new Summer School of Arts and Crafts.²⁴

Similar to Martha's Vineyard and Chautauqua, the Summer School of the South was an independent organization devoted to professional development for teachers. From 1902 through 1918, it attracted white teachers from every southern state, and beyond, to the campus of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville from mid-June through July. As superintendent of the Summer School, Philander P. Claxton—who was also on the faculty at Tennessee—went to great lengths to ensure that the school was affordable. Support from the General Education Board allowed for minimal fees for the first few years, and Claxton solicited textbook companies for donations and saw to it that railways offered

²³Willard S. Elsbree, *The American Teacher: Evolution of a Profession in a Democracy* (1939; reprinted, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1970), 370–73; Jeffrey Simpson, *Chautauqua: An American Utopia* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1999); Herbert B. Adams, "Higher Education of the People: The Work of Chautauqua," 1888, folder 2e, Historical Research Boxes, Oliver Archives Center; and Diary of Eva Moll, November 18, 1884, March 27, 1887.

²⁴Typed manuscript, 1951, and unsigned letter, Jewett House, folder 16i, Historical Research Boxes, Oliver Archives Center; Frank Chapin Bray, *A Reading Journey Through Chautauqua* (Chautauqua, NY, 1905), 28a–28b, Oliver Archives Center; "Full Scholarship Holders," *The Chautauquan Weekly* 4, no. 41 (June 2, 1910): 1, Oliver Archives Center; *Chautauqua Year-Book for 1895* (Chautauqua, NY, 1895), Box 123, Historical Research Boxes, Oliver Archives Center; "The Chautauqua Summer Schools," *The Chautauqua Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (March 1915): 3, Oliver Archives Center; and *The Chautauquan Weekly* 21, no. 32 (April 7, 1921): 1; 22, no. 31 (March 30, 1922): 45.

reduced fares for teachers traveling to Knoxville. Campus jobs also facilitated attendance. When C. V. Neuffer of Alabama wrote in early June 1903, "I would be glad to get some work that would not take up too much of my time or would distract from my reputation as a teacher," a school administrator suggested that he work as a publisher's representative or collector of meal tickets. By 1910, scholarships were available for teachers from each county in Tennessee and in subjects including agriculture and manual training. With such financial help, yearly enrollment was well above 2,000 through 1911—when Claxton departed to serve as U.S. Commissioner of Education—after which it declined gradually. During the seventeen years of its existence, 32,000 teachers enriched themselves professionally at the Summer School of the South.²⁵

The *Announcement* for the school's first session suggested the intended scope of the professional education it was to offer, with a list of academic subjects, including history, economics, nature study, and "physical sciences," as well as manual training and vocal music: "—subjects a knowledge of which is demanded of teachers in progressive schools but in which many teachers are more deficient than in subjects of longer standing." By 1914, the School offered thirty-seven courses of study, from Agriculture to Story Telling. School catalogs also published lists of instructors, usually numbering between sixty and eighty. Under Claxton's leadership, instructors included nationally known scholars: Liberty Hyde Bailey, Richard Ely, G. Stanley Hall, Paul Monroe, and Ellen Richards all served on the faculty for one or more summers. In 1903, Edward Thorndike taught two courses: Child Study and Educational Science. In June 1904, a Knoxville newspaper reported that John Dewey, in the first of his ten lectures on educational psychology, "defined the process of thinking as that of relating the known to the unknown." The paper later reported that Dewey closed another lecture "with an appeal to the teachers to interest their pupils in each other and not so much in the teacher." Looking back later in his career, Claxton captured the profoundness of the Summer School of the South's professionalization project: "Country school teachers who had never been

²⁵Allison, *Teachers for the South*, 69–82; Superintendent Correspondence, Summer School of the South Collection, Series 2, Box 8, Folder 6, Special Collections, University of Tennessee Libraries, Knoxville; C. V. Neuffer to Chas. E. Ferris, June ?, 1903 and Summer School of the South to Neuffer, June 5, 1903, copy, Student Employment Materials and Correspondence, Summer School of the South Collection, Series 2, Box 1, Folder 23; Summer School of the South Reports, Summer School of the South Collection, Series 5, Box 13; Catalogs of Summer School of the South in *University of Tennessee Record*, 1903–1918, Summer School of the South Collection.

to high school . . . listened to lecturers whose voice carried across the continent."²⁶

Beginning in 1912, the Summer School of the South functioned as the University of Tennessee's summer session, and in 1918 the school closed permanently while the university continued to offer summer classes. Beyond Knoxville, as universities offered summer instruction designed for teachers beginning in the late 1880s, institutes and many independent summer schools faded away. The Martha's Vineyard Summer Institute closed in 1905 and, concerned about rising competition, Chautauqua trustees by the early 1920s arranged an affiliation with New York University. Meanwhile, advertisements for summer programs at institutions of higher education abounded in education journals. After the turn of the century, *The Intelligence* clustered ads for university summer sessions; ads for Cornell, the universities of Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin, and Valparaiso College appeared on the same page. In *Midland Schools* in 1921, an ad for Valparaiso University promised an "exceptional opportunity . . . to combine the summer vacation with study at a most reasonable expense" and an ad for Coe College's summer session boasted an "atmosphere of serious professional improvement."²⁷

"In order to keep abreast of educational trends," Grace Pogue left the family ranch to attend summer school at a California state teachers college every third year from the 1920s into the 1940s, when she was in her forties and fifties. In 1933 at San Francisco State Teachers College, she received "practical help in teaching children who have speech difficulties." After a "profitable session" at San Jose in 1936, she returned in 1939 and attempted such a grueling schedule that she ended up in the hospital. About the six-week session at Fresno State in 1942, she wrote, "Miss Brewster's curriculum class and Miss Hamilton's reading course . . . made me glad I was there." Pogue especially "loved the story-book campus" at San Jose. Studying there must have been a reminder of her

²⁶ *Summer School of the South Announcement, University of Tennessee Index 5* (March 1902): 18; *Summer School of the South, Thirteenth Session, University of Tennessee Record 17* (March 1914): 5; Catalogs of Summer School of the South in *University of Tennessee Record, 1903–1918*; "Psychology and Child Study," Philander P. Claxton Papers, Box 19, Special Collections, University of Tennessee Libraries, Knoxville; "Third Session Opened of Big Summer School," newspaper clipping hand-dated June 29, 1904, and "Dr. Dewey Completes His Course at Summer School," newspaper clipping hand-dated July 3, 1904, Summer School of the South Collection, Series 5, Box 12; and P. P. Claxton, "Summer School of the South," *Teacher-Education Journal 3* (December 1941): 137.

²⁷ Allison, *Teachers for the South*, 81–82; Mowry, *Recollections of a New England Educator*, 243–44; *Chautauqua Institution: Proceedings of the Mid-Winter Meeting of the Trustees, 1910*, 6, Oliver Archives Center; *Chautauqua Institution: President's Reports, 1922 and 1923, 1923*, 6, Oliver Archives Center; *The Intelligence 22*, no. 8 (April 15, 1902): 312; Elsbree, *The American Teacher*, 373; and *Midland Schools 35*, no. 6 (February 1921): 200; 35, no. 7 (March 1921): 245.

desire as a teenager to attend Stanford University. She had fulfilled the entrance requirements, but her family lacked the means to send her to college. For Pogue and countless other teachers, then, attending summer school on a college campus meant not only enhancing their professional skills, but also stepping into otherwise inaccessible social-class territory. Programs for teachers at elite institutions—*The Iowa Normal Monthly* noted the large number of “western teachers” enrolled at Harvard summer school as early as 1897 and summer enrollment at Columbia’s Teachers College topped 5,000 by 1914—allowed teachers into especially rarefied territory (and in some cases allowed women into a male domain).²⁸

Pogue did not mention whether she earned college credits or a degree for her summer work, but after the turn of the century, summer programs commonly allowed teachers to do so—at a time when credentials, rather than simply being a learned person, played a growing role in defining professional and middle-class status. Future scholar of American education and university dean John Goodlad was not unusual in earning his bachelor’s and master’s degrees entirely through summer sessions and correspondence courses; he did so while teaching in British Columbia in the late 1930s and 1940s.²⁹ But regardless of whether they completed degrees, teachers’ summer sojourns on college campuses, at Chautauqua and other independent institutions, at national NEA meetings, and at local teachers’ institutes enhanced their standing as professionals and thus as members of the middle class.

Cultural Enrichment

While academic degrees played an increasingly important role as formal credentials, cultural capital—knowledge of and exposure to highbrow literature, art, drama, and music, as well as Western history, popular science, social issues, cultural sites, and natural wonders—continued to serve as an informal credential of middle-class status. Arguing in an 1886 journal article that teachers should not spend their summers engaged in professional studies, W. B. Harlow suggested that they should instead enrich themselves culturally in order to elevate the profession. He wrote, “we shall never impress the world with the dignity of our profession until nobility becomes apparent in our lives and characters.”

²⁸Pogue, *The Swift Seasons*, 81–82, 92, 104, 123, 29–30; “The Harvard Summer School,” *INM* 20, no. 10 (May 1897): 423; Lawrence A. Cremin, David A. Shannon, and Mary Evelyn Townsend, *A History of Teachers College, Columbia University* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), 69.

²⁹Elsbree, *The American Teacher*, 375; and John I. Goodlad, *Romances with Schools: A Life of Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 148.

And the route to nobility was culture: "If more than mere teachers we become men and women of wide culture and refinement; if we allow the broadening influences not only of books but of nature and humanity to enter our minds," he wrote, "not only our teaching but our whole lives will become inspired with new life, and the world will readily credit us."³⁰ Just as Harlow instructed, teachers in the 1880s and the following decades did immerse themselves in culture, albeit often alongside the professional education he decried. At teachers' institutes and summer schools as well as through wide-ranging travel, teachers used their summer vacation to amass the cultural capital of the middle class.

Culture was a regular feature of local summer teachers' institutes, usually as evening entertainment. Stereopticon exhibits allowed teachers at the institutes in Knoxville, Tennessee, to view mountain landscapes, and Vallie Williams reported from the El Dorado, Kansas, institute that she and her friends had enjoyed organ music. At yearly institutes in Fort Pierre, South Dakota, "Bachelor Bess" Corey viewed Saturn through a telescope, attended a lecture illustrated with lantern slides, and toured the state capitol building on the other side of the Missouri River in Pierre. Corey and the other teachers also enjoyed ice cream socials and a reception provided by the local Women's Club. Attending summer school at colleges and universities farther from home enabled teachers to experience the arts and other cultural events on campus as well as to visit nearby sites. *The American School Board Journal* noted that Harvard Summer School offered not only "six weeks of very thorough instruction," but also the opportunity "to visit the historic places which are within such easy reach of Cambridge."³¹

While institutes and university summer sessions provided cultural capital, the Summer School of the South and the Chautauqua Institution took cultural enrichment to an even higher level. The Summer School of the South's *Announcement* each year included directions for enrolling in instruction in voice, piano, and organ, and the school had a glee club and orchestra as well as a tennis club. The 1905 catalog stated, "A lecture of general interest will be given every morning . . . and each evening there will be a lecture, reading, or musical entertainment," which was "free to all students." Lecturers in various years spoke on the Metropolitan Art Gallery; literary subjects, including Tennyson and Browning; and historical subjects, including Robert E. Lee and Abraham Lincoln. A lecture on Paris was presented in French, and a

³⁰W. B. Harlow, "Summer Schools," *The Academy: A Journal of Secondary Education* 1, no. 4 (1886): 152.

³¹Allison, *Teachers for the South*, 7; Vallie P. Williams to Nellie Covert, July 12, 1885, Nellie Penelope Covert Papers; Gerber, ed., *Bachelor Bess*, 193, 88; and "Harvard Summer School," *The American School Board Journal* 14, no. 2 (February 1897): 18.

talk entitled “Civic Bacteriology” focused on intemperance. Speakers included William Jennings Bryan, explorer Ernest Henry Shackleton, and Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court Thomas Shackleford. A visitor to the school in 1909 observed that teachers “can receive here an inspiration and an outlook into a world they might otherwise never have seen, the world of the higher literature, art and science.” In residence for several summers, the Coburn Players presented plays in the open air; a review in *The Summer School Spectator* of one of their performances reflected on the “contrast between Euripides and Shakespeare.” Many nationally known musicians performed at the school as well; the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra presented five concerts one summer, and heralded violinist Maud Powell appeared regularly on the program. Philander Claxton later wrote, “Most of the teachers at the school had never heard music of this type but it was remembered that they had ‘feeling if not understanding of the best’ and that the best is much better for forming tastes and ideals.”³²

At Chautauqua, teacher education was embedded in a larger organization and summer community that was virtually unparalleled in its commitment to middle-class culture. In the 1880s, Eva Moll found “a lesson, lecture or concert for nearly every hour of the day.” By the 1900s, the program for each summer season listed dozens of nationally prominent speakers and performers who appeared in Chautauqua’s iconic amphitheater, the open-air “Hall of Philosophy,” and other venues. The 1908 program included lectures on Shakespeare, theater in Salzburg, chemistry, “Reconstruction in Germany,” and “The New Africa.” Educator John Erskine, suffragette Carrie Chapman Catt, reformer Maud Ballington Booth, past president of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs Mrs. Percy Pennybacker, and Eleanor Roosevelt delivered addresses, and institution president Arthur Bestor spoke on “Contemporary Problems in Ancient Capitals.” The New York Symphony Orchestra and John Philip Sousa with his band were headliners in the 1908 musical program. The Coburn Players appeared during multiple seasons at Chautauqua; in 1912, they presented *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Summer school enrollment included admission to all of these events as well as the waterfront and sports facilities.

³²Catalogs of Summer School of the South in *University of Tennessee Record*, 1903–1918; *Summer School of the South 1905*, *University of Tennessee Record* 8, no. 1 (1905): 4–5; *The Summer School Spectator* 1, no. 7 (July 27, 1909): 2; 2, no. 2 (June 24, 1910): 4; 2, no. 5 (July 5, 1910): 7; 2, no. 6 (July 8, 1910): 1; 2, no. 7 (July 12, 1910): 1; 2, no. 8 (July 15, 1910): 1; *Summer School News* 1, no. 6 (July 10, 1914): 1; 1, no. 9 (July 21, 1914): 1, Series 5, Box 13, Summer School of the South Collection; E. P. Lane, “Reveries of an Idler,” *The Summer School Spectator* 1 (July 13, 1909): 1, Series 1, Box 1, Summer School of the South Collection; Programs, Series 1, Box 1, Summer School of the South Collection; and Claxton, “Summer School of the South,” 137–38.

Teachers throughout the country also attended smaller “chautauqua” tent gatherings—Des Moines’ Midland Chautauqua advertised in *Midland Schools* and chautauquas for African Americans met throughout the South and in the Midwest—but these offered just a hint of the cultural capital of the Chautauqua Institution in New York State.³³

Eva Moll and many other teachers saw Niagara Falls on short excursions from Chautauqua, while the Summer School of the South offered day trips to Mammoth Cave. More than two hundred teachers from the school explored Asheville, North Carolina, in five “electric cars” in July 1909. They were disappointed not to be able to see the Biltmore due to the Vanderbilts being in residence, but, *The Summer School Spectator* reported, the postcard stand at the Battery Park Hotel “did a flourishing business for half an hour” because the teachers “wished to write to all their friends, ‘I am stopping at the Battery Park Hotel!’” even if they “didn’t add ‘just for a few minutes.’” These postcards documented the teachers’ growing cultural capital. Financing travel was a challenge. A cartoon on the cover of *The American School Board Journal* in 1905 entitled “The Vacation Problem” showed a teacher puzzling over a ledger book with her salary and expenses on one side and “cost of vacation trip” on the other, and the 1913 NEA salary study quoted a teacher’s complaint that “A teacher is seldom able to travel befitting her station because of lack of funds.” Nevertheless, teachers went far beyond day trips from summer school, traveling extensively to cultural sites and natural wonders throughout the United States and even Europe. “The teachers are the greatest traveling class now-a-days,” observed an education writer in 1901.³⁴

“A Talk to Teachers” in the April 15, 1899, issue of *The Intelligence* stated that the upcoming July meeting of the NEA in Los Angeles “affords an opportunity for travel to the most interesting part of our continent at a wonderfully low rate. It goes without saying that you ought to . . . SEE ALL THAT YOU CAN.” From the 1880s on, education journals promoted not only the professional benefits of attending the NEA meeting, but also the cultural knowledge to be gained by

³³Diary of Eva Moll, November 18, 1884; *The Chautauqua Program: Season of 1908*, Chautauqua Institution Circulars, Oliver Archives Center; “The Coburn Players,” *The Chautauquan Weekly* 6, no. 49 (July 25, 1912): 6; Aron, *Working at Play*, 116; and *Midland Schools* 15, no. 9 (May 1901): 376. Bestor’s son and namesake became a well-known critic of American education in the mid-twentieth century. Like many teachers, Moll studied the curriculum of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle throughout the year; at the Chautauqua Institution, she attended CLSC ceremonies.

³⁴Diary of Eva Moll, March 27, 1887; “Big Excursion to Asheville Tomorrow,” *The Summer School Spectator* 1, no. 2 (July 9, 1909): 1; “The Asheville Trip,” *The Summer School Spectator* 1, no. 4 (July 16, 1909): 2, 4; *The American School Board Journal* 31, no. 1 (July 1905), cover; NEA, *Report*, 225; and W. E. Watt, “Teachers as Travelers,” *The Intelligence* 21, no. 10 (May 15, 1901): 371.

touring the host city and region. In 1899, *The Intelligence* devoted more than forty pages to the upcoming meeting in Los Angeles; photographs and articles on “Life in the Sunshine City” and “Southern California Points of Interest” encouraged readers to explore the area. A few years later, an article noted that “a chief part of the mission of the N. E. A. [is] to provide teachers with a profitable outing at a greatly reduced rate” and promoted the upcoming meeting in Minneapolis: “It will be worth a good deal to every teacher to actually walk thru the streets of Minneapolis and of St. Paul, to see the greatest flour mills in the world, etc.”³⁵

In addition to publicizing the area hosting the NEA, journals promoted sightseeing along the way to and from the meeting as well as separate trips to cultural sites and natural wonders. In advance of the 1891 NEA meeting in Toronto, a piece in *The Iowa Normal Monthly* stated, “Many Iowa teachers have never been East. The Falls of Niagara, the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River are all worth a month’s salary to see.” The article also listed railroad and steamboat fares between Toronto and destinations including Montreal, Halifax, Boston, and New York. In 1900, *The Intelligence* publicized an organized eighteen-day round trip for teachers from Chicago to the July NEA meeting in Charleston, with stops at Louisville, Mammoth Cave, Atlanta, and other cities and sites. “A Talk to Teachers” suggested traveling to Yellowstone National Park, Puget Sound, and even Alaska on the way to and from the NEA meeting in Los Angeles; the preceding page contained an advertisement for Santa Fe Railway routes to LA. Education journals also promoted travel to world’s fairs and expositions, especially the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. *The Iowa Normal Monthly* published an invitation to “Fellow-Teachers of America” from Francis W. Parker: “Probably never again will be gathered together so many magnificent [*sic*] illustrations of science, art, history, manufactures, and commerce. It is an object lesson *par excellence*.” Parker listed prices for lodging and admission, and then emphasized, “Come,—If you can beg or borrow the money.” The journal also highlighted a special hotel for teachers that would enable “a lady” to “make the trip to and from the World’s Fair grounds, unattended, with perfect safety.”³⁶

³⁵“A Talk to Teachers,” *The Intelligence* 19, no. 8 (April 15, 1899): 312; *The Intelligence* 19, no. 10 (May 15, 1899): 19, no. 11 (June 1, 1899); and “All Work and No Play Makes Jack a Dull Boy,” *The Intelligence* 22, no. 10 (May 15, 1902): 362.

³⁶“The National Educational Association,” *INM* 14, no. 11–12 (June–July 1891): 483–84; “A Summer Outing Trip for Teachers and Their Friends,” *The Intelligence* 20, no. 9 (May 1, 1900): 357; “A Talk to Teachers,” 312; *The Intelligence* 19, no. 8 (April 15, 1899): 311; Francis W. Parker, “Teachers of America, Come to the World’s Columbian Exposition,” *INM* 17, no. 2 (September 1893): 72–73; and “A World’s Fair Hotel for Teachers,” *The INM* 16, no. 5 (December 1892): 237–38.

While Chicago was generally accessible, historian Cindy Aron emphasizes that tourism in the West remained largely inaccessible to all but wealthy tourists into the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, education journals encouraged travel to western attractions. Journals regularly included advertisements for western railroads; on the same page in a 1901 issue of *Midland Schools*, the Great Rock Island Route claimed to be “Cheaper Than Ever to Colorado and Utah” and the Burlington Route encouraged “people of moderate means to spend their vacations in the Colorado mountains.” Of special interest to tourists and teachers was Yellowstone National Park, which was accessible by rail, but required an investment of resources and time to explore. Photos of Yellowstone’s geysers appeared among the images on the cover of *The Intelligence*’s “Summer Outing and Convention Number” in both 1901 and 1902, and accounts by park staff and visitors indicate that teachers toured the park in large numbers. Superintendent Horace Albright wrote, “During the summer months, the school teachers and other feminine vacationists . . . are so numerous that they far outnumber the men,” and a report on a 1903 family trip through the park mentioned an encounter with “a large party of . . . very pleasant people, mostly schoolteachers.” It is not surprising that the party was of “Wylie tourists,” as teachers constituted a large proportion of the patrons of the Wylie Camping Company’s frugal and education-focused tours.³⁷

Teachers’ accounts of their tours of Yellowstone invariably conveyed awe and wonder, demonstrating their sense of privilege in witnessing remote yet iconic features of the American landscape. When fifty-eight-year-old Minneapolis teacher Margaret Cruikshank toured the Park in 1883, she was struck by the “fiercely boiling caldrons, paint pots and geysers little and big,” reflecting: “It is indeed wonderland and mortal language seems entirely inadequate.” Principal of a Minnesota academy, F. E. Stratton had traveled extensively during his teaching career, but his 1895 tour moved him to write about the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone: “This is Grand. This is beautiful. Its color! Its depth! The beautiful foaming water.” Stratton also composed poems in mortal language such as: “Never mind the rain spots/Don’t miss the Paint Pots/Hurrah for the Geysers/See them blow!” Three decades later, Detroit teacher Cecilia Engel wrote in her trip scrapbook: “Scenery is way too wonderful to describe.” Finally, in the summer of 1944, Grace

³⁷Aron, *Working at Play*, 142; *Midland Schools* 15, no. 9 (May 1901): 387; *The Intelligence* 21, no. 10 (May 15, 1901), cover; 22, no. 10 (May 15, 1902), cover; Horace M. Albright and Frank J. Taylor, “Ob, Ranger!” *A Book about the National Parks* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1928): 31; Eleanor Corthell, “A Family Trek To Yellowstone—1903,” in *Adventures in Yellowstone: Early Travelers Tell Their Tales*, ed. M. Mark Miller (Helena, MT: Twodot, 2009), 236; Galloway, *Yellowstone Summers*, 3, 88.

Pogue saw geysers and wildlife on her trip to Yellowstone with her son and his wife. Witnessing such wonders provided these teachers with cultural capital of a geographical nature.³⁸

Even more rarefied was the cultural capital gained through European travel. An advertisement for a “Teachers’ Excursion” to the Paris Exposition in 1900 claimed it would “be a great opportunity to witness in panoramic display the progress and achievements of the world in the nineteenth century, and a chance to see some interesting things in Europe besides,” and an article in *The Intelligence’s* “Tour and Travel” section in May 1901 noted the large number of teachers participating in summer tours of Europe and offered advice for packing. Ads for travel in Europe proliferated in education journals in the early 1910s and following the Great War. One in 1911 promised an “Ideal tour at a moderate price” to six countries and Paris. An ad for Intercollegiate Tours that appeared in *Midland Schools* repeatedly in 1921 even invited teachers to “Add to your cultural capital, to your enthusiasm and your teaching ability the first-hand contact with the great civilizations of Europe.”³⁹



Image 2. See Europe this summer. “See Europe This Summer,” Midland Schools 35, no. 6 (February 1921): 196. Note that this advertisement explicitly invited teachers to add to their “cultural capital” by traveling to Europe.

³⁸Margaret Andrews Cruikshank, ed. Lee H. Whittlesey, “A Lady’s Trip to Yellowstone, 1883,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 39 (Winter 1989): 2–15; Margaret Ann Cruikshank, “Notes on Yellowstone Park” (1883), Visitors, Vertical File Collection, Yellowstone Research Library; Diary: F. E. Stratton, 1895, F. E. Stratton Family Papers, Manuscript Collections, Yellowstone Archives; Cecilia Engel Scrapbook, 1924, Manuscript Collections, Yellowstone Archives; and Pogue, *The Swift Seasons*, 139–40.

³⁹*The Intelligence* 20, no. 5 (March 1, 1900): 192; W. E. Watt, “Touring in Europe,” *The Intelligence* 21, no. 9 (May 1, 1901): 353–54; *Midland Schools* 25, no. 8 (April 1911): 251; 35 (February 1921): 196; 35 (March 1921): 259. Cindy Aron claims: “Only very wealthy individuals could have afforded European travel during this period.” Aron, *Working at Play*, 10.

Frances Donovan reported in 1938, “The trip to Europe is the goal of practically every schoolma’am, and she will make almost any sacrifice to reach it.” Four years earlier, California teacher Anabel Read Scott—who had acquired “an itching foot” while teaching in the Philippines twenty years earlier—traveled with friends to several countries. They kissed the Blarney Stone, walked *Unter den Linden*, and made many other stops en route to Oberammergau, where they stayed in the home of an actor who had played the Savior in the Passion Play. In 1937, Seattle teacher Gladys Charles borrowed money for a European trip with a friend. They rode bicycles through Holland, Germany, and Switzerland, economizing by staying in hostels. Historian Doris Pieroth reports that Charles and other Seattle teachers enriched their classrooms with souvenirs from their travels. They, like the teachers who explored Yellowstone, traveled throughout the United States on their way to and from NEA meetings, and partook of the offerings at Chautauqua and the Summer School of the South, also enriched their store of cultural capital, enhancing their standing in the middle class.⁴⁰

Conclusion

American teachers pursued summer activities between the 1880s and the 1930s that belied their lack of economic wealth. As they rested in natural settings; engaged in wage work that skirted blue-collar status; pursued professional development through institutes, NEA meetings, or summer school; and amassed cultural capital through studies and travel, teachers used their summer “vacations” to secure their membership in the middle class. Although often overlooked by historians, the three summer months were crucial to establishing the disjuncture between teachers’ economic status and social standing. This disjuncture would of course continue to plague teachers in the decades following the 1930s. In his profile of a high school teacher named Horace in the early 1980s, Theodore Sizer outlined a summer dilemma that was a century old: “Teachers do have summer ‘vacation’ times, so they can supplement their salaries somewhat then. Often, however, the months of July and August are needed for study; almost always, some portion is needed for rest.”⁴¹ As in the 1880s, the majority of Horace’s fellow teachers were women, but their circumstances had changed; beginning in the

⁴⁰Frances R. Donovan, *The Schoolma’am* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1938): 246; Mabel E. O’Farrell and Anabel Read Scott, “She Has an Itching Foot,” in *Reminiscences of Some Early California Teachers: The Fourth Historical Year Book of the California Retired Teachers’ Association*, ed. Laura Esta Settle (California Retired Teachers Association, 1937), 115–16; and Pieroth, *Seattle’s Women Teachers*, 196, 174.

⁴¹Theodore R. Sizer, *Horace’s Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), 185.

1940s, the teaching force shifted toward married women who were mothers. This shift raises compelling questions for future research on teachers' summer activities. To what extent did raising children replace rest, work, professional studies, and travel during the summer? What were the ramifications of this shift not only for teachers' class status, but also for their careers and professional standing? Exploring the history of teachers' "summers off" will enhance historical understanding of the teaching profession.