

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 225 974

SP 021 750

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 TITLE A Case Study in the Professionalization of Nineteenth Century Teaching. Nathaniel T. Allen, 1823-1872. Final Report.  
 SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.  
 PUB DATE 83  
 GRANT NIE-G-80-0150  
 NOTE 146p.  
 PUB TYPE Historical Materials (060) -- Creative Works (Literature, Drama, Fine Arts) (030) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS \*Educational History; Educational Practices; Educational Theories; Elementary Secondary Education; Schools of Education; Social Values; Student Rights; Teacher Associations; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Behavior; \*Teacher Characteristics; \*Teacher Education; \*Teacher Responsibility  
 IDENTIFIERS \*Allen (Nathaniel T); \*Nineteenth Century

ABSTRACT

This biography of an influential nineteenth century New England educator, Nathaniel T. Allen (1823-1903), provides a profile of teaching and teacher education at a time when non-clerics emerged as teachers and educational leaders, and is based on a vast new collection of primary source materials in educational history. Allen's career, as it paralleled and manifested the early professionalization of teaching in this country, is studied in four major phases: (1) 1823-1844, covering family background and economic factors that led to his career choice; (2) 1845-1847, describing early training at the Bridgewater Normal School and the subsequent teaching experiences of Bridgewater students; (3) 1848-1853, highlighting Allen's work at the Model School of the West Newton Normal School and his political development; and (4) 1854-1872, following Allen's further professional development in the West Newton English and Classical School. Throughout the biography, Allen's educational theories, philosophies, and practices are described. Materials available in the Allen manuscript collection reveal how one group of teachers, like Allen, from Massachusetts, viewed their work as they moved from unpredictable positions in district schools through normal school training to an increased professional commitment to education. Also noted is the fact that, during the mid-19th century, the occupation of teaching gradually shows growth toward becoming a profession; society's belief develops, too, in the importance of schooling. (JD)

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ED225974

Final Report:

A Case Study in the Professionalization of Nineteenth Century Teaching

Nathaniel T. Allen, 1823 - 1872

(NIE Grant # G-80-0150)

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/ Lynn J. Cadwallader

(An expanded version of this report will be available as an Ed.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1983.)

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PART I  
INTRODUCTION

The chief purpose of this report is to set forth the educational theories and practice of a significant educator whose career paralleled and manifested the early professionalization of teaching in this country. Nathaniel Allen (1823-1903) was one of the best known and most influential teachers of his time in New England, but educational historians have almost entirely ignored him. Allen's importance becomes clear through research in manuscript papers only recently discovered in his nineteenth century home and previously inaccessible to scholars. This study makes public this vast new collection of primary source materials in educational history and applies a conceptual framework to a portion of these documents.

A second major purpose of this study is to extend current knowledge about the early professionalization of education in this country. Leaders of American teachers have long been concerned with achieving professional status. This study examines teachers' perceptions of their emerging profession from approximately 1840 to 1870, a period when Normal Schools blossomed and a large group of non-clerics emerged as teachers and educational leaders. Materials available in the Allen manuscript collection reveal how one group of Massachusetts teachers viewed their work

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as they moved from unpredictable positions in district schools through normal school training to an increased professional commitment to education.

In examining the professionalization of teaching, I have used the characteristics of a profession as defined by Myron Lieberman in Education as a Profession (1956) and Burton Bledstein in The Culture of Professionalism (1976). A profession should be a full-time occupation providing an essential social service. Those entering a profession must go through a period of specialized training--primarily intellectual--in a specific body of knowledge. They have autonomy in their work, assume responsibility for their judgements, and adhere to a generally agreed upon code of ethics. They emphasize service over economic gain. Finally, occupational groups achieve professional status when they form organizations to govern themselves.

All of these characteristics just began to apply to teaching during the mid-nineteenth century. The occupation of teaching gradually showed the embryonic signs of a profession. The first compulsory schooling laws during this time indicated society's belief in the importance of schooling. There was a gradual shift from seasonal, part-time teachers to those who made a full-time commitment to the work. Teachers' institutes and the new normal schools aimed to provide training in a specific body of knowledge and to establish minimum qualifications for teachers. Professional organizations such as the American Institute of Instruction and the Massachusetts Teachers Association were formed and new journals began to disperse information and define standards of practice.

Summary of Nathaniel Allen's Life and Work

Nathaniel Topliff Allen began his teaching career in Massachusetts district schools before working with Cyrus Peirce in the first public Normal School for teacher training in America. During this time, Allen board<sup>ed the</sup> with<sup>family,</sup> Horace Mann. Later, he founded the West Newton English and Classical School with Peirce and ran it for fifty years, attracting over 4000 students from greater Boston, nearly every state, and more than twenty foreign countries. He pioneered or supported numerous pedagogical innovations: physical education, nature studies, kindergartens, object lessons, and vocational training. The Massachusetts Schoolmasters Club referred to this school as "the best in New England . . . a pioneer in the working out of every new idea that a sane pedagogy advanced during its existence."

Many well-known educators supported Allen's work in the most direct way possible: they entrusted him with their children. Allen's students included the progeny of Horace Mann, school reformer Samuel J. May, Pestalozzian teacher and writer William A. Alcott, Boston School Superintendent Edwin Seaver, Cornell University founder Andrew Dickson White, and physical education pioneer Dudley Sargent. Among other supporters was Charles Eliot, Harvard President and activist for secondary school reform, who gave his name as a reference in Allen's school catalog for many years. Textbook publishers in turn

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printed Allen's endorsements of their products along with those of Kindergarten advocate Elizabeth Peabody and George Emerson. Emerson was once the best-paid teacher in the country, an early editor of Mann's Common School Journal, and a frequent lecturer at teachers' institutes and association meetings.

Allen became an important figure for shaping the teaching profession and disseminating teaching methods. Approximately one thousand teachers trained under him in the Model School and later in the West Newton English and Classical School, where he continuously tested the latest educational practices. Allen's efforts contributed to the growing network of educational professionals seeking an improved pedagogy.

Allen was often embroiled in controversy. He hated injustice and kept a life-long interest in the reforms of his era. His thorough belief in abolitionism and women's rights led him to risk the financial security of his school by enrolling blacks and young women students from its inception. He moved blacks north to Canada through his home as part of the Underground Slave Railroad, and he advocated the Peace movement. Allen led a successful fight before the state legislature to prevent mandatory military drill in public schools shortly after the Civil War. Later, when one of his students died, rumors that Allen had severely disciplined him led to a charge of assault and battery against Allen. In the highly publicized trial that followed, Allen was acquitted, but his long professional commitment to humane classroom discipline seemed to be compromised. Because of his curriculum

innovations, his contributions to the early professionalization of education, his longevity as a teacher, and his political activism, Allen is one of the most interesting American educators of the nineteenth century.

Major Areas to be Examined

The study concentrates on four major phases in Allen's career. Each of these phases also illuminates a broader aspect of the teaching profession. The first phase, from 1823 to 1844, covers Allen's family background and the regional economic factors that led to his choice of work in district schools. It includes an overall view of that work from teachers' perspectives. The second phase, from 1845 to 1847, describes early training at the Bridgewater Normal School and the subsequent teaching experiences of Bridgewater students. The third phase, from 1848 to 1853, highlights Allen's work at the Model School of the West Newton Normal School and his political development while living in Horace Mann's household. The fourth phase, from 1854 to 1872, follows Allen's further professional development in the West Newton English and Classical School. Here, he maintained a successful institution in the face of crises and political changes. Coverage of Allen's career essentially stops after his European tour from 1869-71. He continued to run the school successfully until he sold it in 1901, but his most innovative work occurred during his first twenty-five years there. Because this study is concerned with professionalization, the most interesting aspect of Allen's work after this period is his longevity as a teacher, indeed a lifetime commitment.

## Methodology

I began research for this work with primary sources in the Allen manuscript collection. Allen's work and papers came to light during a recent community effort to save his home, a stately Greek Revival building in West Newton, Massachusetts where he had boarded about twenty students each year and had entertained many guests, such as William Lloyd Garrison, Bronson Alcott, Lydia Maria Child, Lucy Stone, and Booker T. Washington. After Allen's death in 1903, his daughters added rooms to the house and converted the barn <sup>to classrooms and a gymnasium</sup> in order to run a girls school until the 1940s. The thirty-four room building with attached schoolhouse was inhabited almost solely by an elderly woman during the past thirty-five years, leaving many rooms and their contents untouched, resulting in a near "time capsule" interior.

Scattered throughout the building were manuscript records of Allen and his family. The collection as a whole is about fifty linear feet and represents a continuum of 100 years of American educational history, stretching from Horace Mann's common school reforms in the 1840s through the progressive era when Allen's daughters ran <sup>their</sup> school. Records include correspondence between antebellum teachers about their work, diaries of school activities kept by both students and teachers, personal Allen family diaries,

correspondence, and financial records, and an extensive correspondence to Allen from leading activists, literary figures, and educators of the time. These include Charles Sumner, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Horace Mann, Lucy Stone, Angelina Grimke Weld, and Wendell Phillips. A recently awarded grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission will provide for complete organization and microfilming of the papers to make them available for research. (See Preliminary Inventory of the collection in Appendix.)

Geraldine Joncich Clifford, in the History of Education Quarterly (1975), has asked historians to consider the "neglected constituents" in education, the consumers as well as the providers, in their historiography. This study draws as much as possible on sources from students, parents, and practice teachers.

Although Allen is not listed in Phillip Hamer's Guide to Archives and Manuscripts in the United States or in the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections, I found additional Allen papers in the following repositories:

- American Antiquarian Society
- Booker T. Washington Collection, Library of Congress
- City of Newton Archives
- Garrison Collection, Smith College
- Henry Barnard Collection, New York University
- Historical Society of Wisconsin
- Horace Mann and Caroline Dall Collections, Massachusetts Historical Society
- Jackson Homestead, Newton
- Rhode Island Historical Society
- U.S. Department of Education Records, National Archives
- Private family collections

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Collections at the Allen House, the Jackson Homestead, and in private families contained many new clippings which allowed the use of some newspaper sources that otherwise would not have been available..

Other manuscript records and papers which refer to Allen or related topics are in the following repositories:

Antioch College  
Boston Public Library  
Bridgewater State College, Massachusetts  
University of California, Berkeley Archives  
Florence Historical Society, Massachusetts  
Peter Foulger Museum, Nantucket, Massachusetts  
Framingham State College, Massachusetts  
Newton Public Library  
Pasadena Public Library  
U.S. Census Records

Another productive source for this work was interviews with Allen family descendants and local Newton residents, including one elderly woman who spent her summers with Allen's family in Maine.

A final source was Nathaniel T. Allen, Teacher, Reformer, Philanthropist, a biography published in 1906 by Mary A. Greene, a former student. Better classified as hagiography, this book describes only what is generous, noble, and courageous about Allen, omitting many periods of public and private conflict. It provides, however, important source material on Allen's attitude toward students and his classroom activities.

Two other researchers offered helpful discussion related to certain aspects of Allen's career. Judith Strong Albert studied Allen's uncle, Joseph Allen of Northboro, and recently described his early nineteenth century home school in the Harvard Educational Review article, "There is No Place Like Home". (1981). Sharlene Voogd

Cochrane is a graduate student at Boston College and currently writing a dissertation on the ~~West~~ Newton English and Classical School. She and I coded data on over 3000 of Allen's students to compile descriptive statistics.

With all aspects of the research, I have attempted to use as many different sources as possible to verify information. When quoting from primary sources, I have retained original spelling and punctuation.

PART II  
FROM FARM TO DISTRICT SCHOOL

"Keeping school these times is no sport."

Cyrus Peirce<sup>1</sup>

Nathaniel Allen rode along nervously in an open wagon, headed for Mansfield, Massachusetts, and the examination to qualify for his first teaching job. On this fall day in 1842, he must have wondered what the School Committee might ask. Committees throughout the state had no predetermined qualifications for granting certificates and sometimes they asked questions they themselves could not answer. Barely nineteen, Allen had never taught before and his only special preparation for the examination was a few weeks' tutoring under his uncle, Joseph Allen, a Unitarian minister and respected schoolkeeper in Northboro.<sup>2</sup>

Riding next to Allen in the wagon was his cousin, Charles Adams, who had taught in Mansfield the previous year and arranged the examination for Allen. An introduction from his cousin was one of the best recommendations Allen could have in his favor for the job. Just a few months before, the School Committee Annual Report had praised Adams's work, noting his "good moral and literary qualifications" and his ability to command respect from students and parents. The only other teacher praised the previous year in Mansfield was Rebecca Pennell,

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one of the handful of graduates from the new normal schools in Massachusetts and, coincidentally, Horace Mann's niece. In her charge, Pennell's school had improved more than the Committee expected, and it concluded that the best teaching candidates would be "found most easily at the Normal Schools."<sup>3</sup>

The miniscule number of normal graduates could not begin, however, to meet the demand for qualified teachers in 1842. Many communities had taken an increased interest in finding better teachers since Horace Mann's active tenure as the first Secretary to the Massachusetts Board of Education and the 1838 law requiring annual school committee reports. But they had to depend on recommendations or strangers who offered to teach. In the same report that praised Adams and Pennell, the committee warned of a threat "worse than the Egyptian plagues" — commission merchants from New Hampshire, agents who promoted teaching candidates for profit. These candidates too often turned out to have no more ability than most of their students. When a teacher as qualified as Adams recommended a candidate, the committee was more relieved than the candidate could know.

Although Allen had never taught, he understood the politics and etiquette of a teaching interview. After an exchange of greetings with the two ministers and one physician who were to examine him, Allen chatted long enough to learn that one of the ministers was a distant relative of his father and the other was a fellow Unitarian. The committee members must also have been impressed by Allen's sheer size. In a time when discipline in schools often involved the use of force, Allen's six-foot height was reassuring; his upright posture

made him seem even taller. He was naturally ruddy and probably still somewhat dark-skinned from working on his family's farm during the summer and fall harvest. Allen's energetic gait and alert eyes could have suggested that he would be quick and capable with students.<sup>4</sup>

The actual examination began with questions about reading, geography, and arithmetic, which Allen answered well enough. Then came technical questions in grammar, followed by a parsing exercise from an especially obscure passage from John Milton. The committee asked Allen to explain its significance. Having barely a passing acquaintance with Milton, Allen gamely suggested that there was a difference of opinion about that passage. One of the clergymen immediately agreed, and was quick to give his view in the matter. Another disagreed, and they proceeded to discuss Milton in high spirits among themselves. When the committee finally turned back to Allen for an opinion, he judiciously chose to repeat the majority view. With these tests passed, Allen had only to demonstrate that he could point a pen from a quill.

This test was even more difficult than parsing Milton. Most young men in the nineteenth century knew very little about pointing pens. Even the popular nineteenth century essayist, Warren Burton, admitted to never really learning how to make pens from quills. What little time Allen had spent preparing for a teaching job focused on learning facts drawn from school books rather than the fine art of carving quills, but teachers were still expected to prepare their students' pens. In his fear of being denied the job, Allen insured that he would pass this final test in one quick move that he would



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recall with shame fifty years later. When a committee member passed a plate of quills, Allen took a previously carved one and pretended to work on it with his knife. He presented it to the committee as his own work and was immediately hired.<sup>5</sup>

This simple examination was typical of the times, and all that should be expected given most prospective teachers' lack of specialized training and the uneven quality of learning found among the laymen who employed teachers. With his examination, Allen joined a growing group of teachers, those drawn increasingly from young men and young men not planning to become ministers. This growing group of teachers would play a major role in the professionalization of teaching during the nineteenth century. Allen himself would become an important figure in shaping the teaching profession, and his own career would stretch over sixty years. Paradoxically, Allen had not originally planned to teach. His first ambition grew from deep in his family experience: he had hoped instead to become a farmer.

#### Family Background

Allen had spent most of his nineteen years on the family homestead in Medfield, Massachusetts, about twenty miles southeast of Boston. He was born on September 29, 1823, the fifth child and fourth son of Ellis and Lucy Allen. His upbringing reflected the changes taking place in America at that time. Especially in the Northeast, people were moving away from the centuries-old structures based on family or religious ties into larger associations and institutions for both business and social purposes.

Allen was a member of the seventh generation of Allens who had proudly farmed the same modest homestead. They were never wealthy, but took pride in their physical strength, hard work, and stability. Allen himself would later describe his family as "neither too rich to tempt dissipation, idleness or luxurious living, or so poor as to deprive its children of needful food for physical, mental or moral wants."<sup>6</sup>

Many Allens grew taller and stronger and lived longer than most of their neighbors. They liked to tell stories of Allen's great-grandfather, Noah Allen (1719-1804), a large man with a formidable reputation as a wrestler, who once got into a tug of war with two farm horses attached to a new cart rope. He pulled and leaned until finally the rope broke, and the contest was declared a draw. When he was past the age of eighty, Noah Allen could still jump over a cow. Even the Allen home itself was known for longevity. It was one of few in the area that was not burned during King Philip's Indian War of the 1670s. Shavings set afire on the floor burned through a trap door into the basement and eventually died out.<sup>7</sup>

The Medfield homestead provided young Allen with a strong sense of family history and a secure place in which to grow up. Grandparents, aunts, and uncles shared the house with his family, and as soon as Allen was old enough to toddle, he began visiting other relatives nearby. One of Allen's earliest memories was of sitting on a young uncle's lap, listening to him sing "Betsy Baker," a song that glorified farmers' work:

From noise and bustle far away, hard work my time employing,  
How happily I passed each day, content and health enjoying,  
The birds did sing and so did I, as I trudged o'er each acre,  
I never knew what 'twas to sigh, till I saw Betsy Baker.<sup>8</sup>

Songs might have described an ideal farmer's life, but for several years before Allen's birth, farmers in New England had less and less reason to be content with their lot. Generation after generation had farmed the same land, dividing acreage within families when possible. By the early nineteenth century, aspiring farmers confronted poorer and smaller tracts of land. Fewer sons or daughters in each succeeding generation could expect to remain in or near their parents' homes. Even solid farm families, like the Allens, realized that a centuries-old reliance on farming would not suffice, and they began to look for other employment.<sup>9</sup>

Of the five sons in Allen's father's generation, one was apprenticed to a relative in the larger community of Waltham, and four became ministers or teachers; only Allen's father, Ellis, remained on the farm. Allen's Uncle Phineas, the first of these brothers to take up teaching, belonged to what was probably a small group of early nineteenth century teachers with a natural inclination for the task. In contrast to the peripatetic and unevenly qualified people who never taught two consecutive sessions in the same school, he had both a natural love of learning and an ability to impart it to many of his students. These students included Henry David Thoreau. Phineas Allen's success at teaching encouraged his brothers to try it as well.<sup>10</sup>

While teaching in Sudbury, Massachusetts, one year, Phineas met a young assistant teacher named Lucy Lane. She earned only one dollar



per week, and Phineas recommended her for a better position in Medfield. She boarded with the Allen family and before long, Phineas's brother, Ellis, began to realize what a good wife she would make. Intelligent, hard-working, and vivacious, Lucy also seemed to have a natural talent for teaching. It would be too much to say this was inherited from her ancestor, Elder William Brewster of the Plymouth Colony, once a professor at the University of Leyden, but her family took pride in this connection. The daughter of a cabinet builder, Lucy Lane was the first person in her town of Sudbury to learn straw braiding for extra income. Braiding and selling the product to hat factories was an important source of spending money for many young women. While living with the Allens, Lucy sewed for the family to pay her board. In 1814, Lucy and Ellis were married. They continued to live at the homestead as they raised their own family of eight children.<sup>11</sup>

After her marriage, Lucy Allen continued her love of reading and communicated it to her children. She recited poetry to them, taught them the names of foreign countries and their capitals, and how to count in an American Indian language. She teased and talked to her children to make them obey. If they stayed in bed too long, she would say, "Arise Jupiter and snuff the moon." She insisted that they not squabble, with "Birds in their little nests agree." She loved singing and lively music and taught the children special dance steps.<sup>12</sup>

Nathaniel Allen's father, Ellis, was a careful and vigorous farmer who often experimented with new farming methods, adopting what worked, but he received only three acres as an outright gift when he married. Ellis also worked on his father's land, but he did not or

could not ever become a prosperous farmer. One possible reason may be that he devoted too many hours to political activities. Earliest Medfield town records showed Allens as selectmen, town officers, and church officials nearly every year. Allen's grandfather, Phineas, was a church deacon when his congregation followed Ghaning's surge of Unitarianism with its loving, anthropomorphic God and its involvement in an array of reform movements.

In the 1830s, Ellis Allen took a strong interest in peace, temperance, and anti-slavery causes, and the family home became a station on the underground slave railroad. Regular reading material in the house included the abolitionist newspapers, the Liberator and the Anti-Slavery Standard, William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the Liberator and a close friend of Ellis Allen, referred to him as "one of the tried and true of the old Guard of Freedom." Frederick Douglass, the eminent young black abolitionist, would visit the Allen home in the early 1840s and later wrote, "The world, good and bad, was then opening upon me with vigor. I shall never forget the kindness shown me by the dear Allen family." He included them among "the dear people who were not ashamed to own me as a brother in Massachusetts."<sup>13</sup>

Public service in the Allen household was a family affair. Children learned that one should "cheerfully sacrifice" oneself "for the good of others and all." This philosophy applied to the somewhat crowded living conditions on the homestead and extended into the larger world and reform movements. The Allens attended political conventions and meetings as a family. They entertained peace, temperance, or women's rights groups with rousing versions of the songs they all sang



together at home, somewhat like the more professional Hutchinson Family Singers of New Hampshire.<sup>14</sup>

As the fourth son, Allen had only light chores on the farm, such as helping his mother with her butter, churning twenty-four pounds per week. While she worked it into pound lumps and marked it with fluted wooden clappers, he washed the pans first with cold water that would be given to the pigs, and then with hot soap suds, then scalded them, and left them glistening in the sun to dry.

Grandfather Phineas favored young Nathaniel and often took him along on trips to the town mill, regaling him with stories of his service in the Continental Army at age sixteen — he had walked home 300 miles on foot at the war's close. With his grandfather, Allen came to know most of Medfield's nearly 800 residents, mostly farmers and a few who worked at small industries — copperworks, boat building, brush making, and straw braiding.<sup>15</sup>

On these trips, he might have met Hannah Adams or Lowell Mason, Medfield's two residents whose fame extended beyond the town boundaries. Hannah Adams was the first American woman to earn a living by writing, (she published four editions of her Dictionary of Religions), and Mason popularized music in schools through methods based on the work of the Swiss educator, Johann Pestalozzi. Mason was a close family friend who once offered a thorough music education to Allen's sister, Abbey, because of her excellent voice. His influence probably prompted the town to appropriate \$50 for a singing school as early as 1823, and he often wrote special anthems for events such as temperance celebrations in Medfield.<sup>16</sup>



No one shielded Allen from the more unpleasant sights in Medfield. He commonly saw drunkards in town. Nearby lived a family who kept an insane uncle chained to the floor. Allen witnessed a less severe insanity in his own family. His Uncle Silas trained for the ministry at Harvard, preached once or twice, and shortly became mad. Since his case was less serious, he was able to live at the homestead and help out with farmwork.

Like many New England families in the early nineteenth century with little land or money, the Allens found that their modest farm could support fewer and fewer of their children. By 1832, when Nathaniel Allen was nine, his father sold his share of the farm to a brother and moved his wife and eight children to nearby Waltham, where a new cotton mill promised them year-round work. Here, Nathaniel Allen and his brothers and sisters alternated mill work in carding, spinning, and weaving with school work at short sessions of district schools. After three years, the family moved back to the Medfield farm because Allen's grandfather was ailing. They worked together to buy back their share. Allen grew taller and stronger and proved himself an able helper on the farm as his older brothers left for apprenticeships and teaching jobs. During winter months, he attended district school sessions.<sup>17</sup>

Allen's Early Education

Allen's early schooling was haphazard and typical of that received in early nineteenth century rural communities. Most schools were closed nine months of the year. Some teachers were happy to have short terms



because it allowed them to combine teaching and farming, housework, or study for a profession. Less qualified teachers scrambled for whatever income they could find during the remaining months and rarely stayed in the same community past one season. For the little time that teachers were in school, they often resorted to heavy-handed discipline to make their young charges successful at the unlikely task of sitting motionless and concentrating on books. As often as not, older students teased teachers, and some left their posts as a consequence. In later years, Allen would only vaguely remember his teachers: one was club-footed; another was cross-eyed, with a penchant for hurling rulers at students. Still another, finally forced to leave as a result of pranks perpetrated by young Allen and his friends, seemed to delight in making students undergo a variety of punishments: bending at the waist to "hold down" nail heads on the floor for as long as twenty minutes; holding books at arm's length; crouching under desks for an extended time; and picking tiny bits of paper off the floor.

Allen recalled one or two teachers who seemed to know something about literature or were able to inspire youngsters to read, but for the most part, they were rare. One who did manage to win the respect of parents and community spent all his time drilling students repeatedly on the same material and then presented it as if impromptu at examination time. Allen did not respect the man. He found much better teachers in his own family.

In 1840, at age sixteen, Allen had a very different school experience under his older brother, Joseph, then only twenty years old and keeping school in Northboro. Allen recognized Joseph as a genius at



teaching who could inspire the desire to learn in his seventy pupils without any evident need to use fear of punishment. Andrew Dickson White (later founder of Cornell University), studied under Joseph Allen and referred to him as the best teacher he had ever known. According to White, Joseph Allen's "rule was to have no rules, and his system was to have no system. To most teachers this would have been fatal; but he had genius." He treated each student individually according to personality and need. He had his students read aloud from the best authors and took spelling lists only from what they had read. He taught arithmetic and geometry through puzzles and practical applications. To teach natural science, Allen had the village surgeon dissect the eye, ear, or heart of an ox. Allen encouraged daily physical exercise outside and often joined his students on the playground. He also led the students in singing each day. White also remembered Joseph Allen's liberalizing effect on students: "He was a disciple of Channing and an abolitionist, and, though he never made the slightest attempt to proselyte any of his scholars, the very atmosphere of the school made sectarian bigotry impossible." With his brother Joseph's example before him, Nathaniel Allen considered teaching as future work for himself. During this time, both young men lived with their uncle, Rev. Joseph Allen, who provided yet another model of effective teaching.<sup>18</sup>

Rev. Joseph Allen's Home School

Since 1836, when Rev. Joseph Allen and his wife Lucy opened a "home school"; they had presided over a lively household of twenty to thirty people, including their own seven children and up to nineteen students. Rev. Allen had no difficulty attracting students to his school. He



had always loved to study and was the first person from Medfield to attend Harvard, where he graduated with honors. His only classmate to receive higher honors was his friend, Edward Everett (later Governor of Massachusetts, Harvard President, United States Secretary of State, and United States Senator). Rev. Allen still kept his diary in Latin. In addition to his academic qualifications, he was warm and affectionate in his approach to young people.<sup>19</sup>

Nathaniel Allen had often visited his uncle's Northboro parsonage while growing up. As a child, he had enjoyed winter activities with his cousins there. They built elaborate snow huts shaped like ovens with snow benches and even fireplaces inside, they went out early in the morning to skate, their pockets bulging with doughnuts and apples while they looked for juicy cranberries embedded in the ice. In summer they hunted for whortleberries or blueberries and played "I Spy." Uncle Joseph had initially taken in a few young pupils to supplement his income, and as his school grew, the parsonage bustled with the projects of even more young people: rabbit pens, a water wheel in the stream, and the woodpile laid out in wigwams.

The main difference between Rev. Allen's school and the district schools Allen had known was that students lived in the family home. Their concerns and needs were attended to throughout the day, and one could not have asked for kinder substitute parents. According to one description by an assistant teacher in the school, Joseph and Lucy Ware Allen were the kind of people whom strangers "love at first sight without knowing how or why, so gentle and affable, so attentive and warm-

hearted, that the moment they open their lips you are a stranger no longer."<sup>20</sup>

Uncle Joseph's approach to discipline emphasized cooperation with students to work out a mutually agreed upon system of punishments. Aunt Lucy, in particular, took on the role of a substitute parent, as her husband was often busy with ministerial responsibilities. Light-hearted and with a great love for her temporary "children," she took responsibility for entertaining them during the long winter evenings. She organized a family post office for exchanging notes within the household, and soon found that the post office served a more important purpose than sheer entertainment. She often received notes asking for advice and she stayed up late at night to answer each note individually. She wrote to her sister, "It appears to me that we have seen deeper into the boys' hearts from these little notes they send us than we should in a good many weeks of common intercourse, for you may suppose it is next to impossible to find an opportunity of speaking to any of them without witness."<sup>21</sup>

In the evenings, the household members, including Nathaniel Allen and his own brother, Joseph, kept busy at many activities: some studied or listened to Uncle Joseph read aloud; others played chess, checkers or other games in the dining room; and others might have accompanied on the piano or flute while Aunt Lucy played the guitar and sang.

Rev. Allen supported the same reforms as Allen's father, and he shared his opinions with the students. Indeed, they took part in a school Lyceum, and debated such issues as the anti-slavery question. They wrote their anti-slavery opinions in a student newspaper, the

Meteor. It was published from June 1836 to March 1837, and had subscribers in all the New England states as well as in Illinois, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Washington. Lucy Allen stated their obvious political purpose in encouraging the newspaper: "We do not wish it to be a money-making business; we want profit of another sort. You see we are thorough abolitionists. We have heard that there are some in Boston very much displeased at these poor, innocent little children's songs. Really, it is quite a feather in our cap. We did not dream of being so much honored as to be feared."<sup>22</sup>

Rev. Allen's interest in education extended to the whole community. He often invited all the young children in town to come to the Town Hall or to his home on Saturday afternoons to look at blossoms through magnifying glasses or microscopes. As a school committee member for several years, he strongly supported Horace Mann's reforms to improve schools, although he declined when Mann asked him to start a normal school at Barre for training teachers.<sup>23</sup>

Others also admired Rev. Allen's work. Among them was the Unitarian clergyman and writer, Edward Everett Hale, who praised Joseph Allen for making the Northboro schools superior. Allen's example reportedly encouraged many Northboro young people to become teachers. In 1850, Hale brought an unnamed Frenchman to visit Joseph Allen and the Northboro schools. The Frenchman asked Allen how many young people from Northboro left the town to become teachers. Allen was surprised at the question because he thought Hale would have known the answer and told his guest. Allen replied, "Why, all of them."<sup>24</sup>

Nathaniel Allen's stay in Northboro affected his attitudes toward schooling. From his brother, he learned that classroom teachers could be effective and even inspiring. From his aunt and uncle, Allen came to understand the characteristics of a superior "home" or "family" school — one that went beyond academic needs to attend to individual students' emotional needs as well.

After his schooling in Northboro, Allen returned to Medfield and worked in the fields. Neighboring farmers heard of his prowess as a farm hand and hired him for harvesting and haying. But that work was available only a few months of the year, and Allen needed other work because the family's small profits were used to pay off the debts on his father's share of the farm. Allen had a strong sense of family loyalty and wanted to be near home while he was still under twenty-one and turning his earnings over to his father. Just as his father had gone to Waltham to find mill work when the farm could not support him and his uncles had become ministers or teachers, Allen too would have to find work off the farm.

Before long, someone in his family must have recommended that Allen try teaching, a natural choice for extra income because school sessions fell between peak farming seasons. Allen would later say that he was foreordained to be a teacher because both his grandmothers, his mother, two aunts, and four uncles had been teachers. In his own generation, two of his older brothers, his older sister, and numerous cousins led the way into teaching for him. All of these relatives had been successful at the occupation, and there was every indication that Allen would also be a good teacher. He was quick and good-natured, he

liked people, and his size and strength promised that he could discipline unruly changes.<sup>25</sup>

The prospect of teaching held another attraction for Allen beyond a salary. Many Unitarians, including the Allens, had recently taken an increased interest in school conditions along with their interest in other reforms. Horace Mann's indefatigable work of lectures, writings, and lobbying aroused his supporters. As the most vocal proponent of improving schools, Mann claimed that better buildings, better teaching materials, and better teachers would give all citizens more opportunities and result in an egalitarian social order. Different members of Allen's family had always been good teachers, but now the profession took on more meaning. Work as a teacher, if one subscribed to the ideas of Horace Mann, could contribute to social reforms.

In 1841, Allen's cousin, Charles Adams, who had taught successfully at Mansfield, Massachusetts, offered to recommend Allen for a job in that town. To prepare, Allen studied briefly with his Uncle Joseph. With only this and his sketchy district school education, Allen successfully passed the examination for a teaching certificate in Mansfield. He packed a few belongings and set out for his new job. He brought along two items particularly symbolic of his move from farmer to teacher — a borrowed gold watch to keep time properly in school, and his first set of thin underwear, sewn especially by his mother for the occasion. Before this, he had only worn underwear during the winter months.<sup>26</sup>

### District School Teaching

When Allen began teaching at Mansfield in 1841, common school teachers in Massachusetts had better opportunities to consider and improve their work than ever before. Massachusetts had a long tradition of commitment to education: its citizens founded Harvard College as a quasi-public institution a full sixty years before any other colony founded a college, and New England-trained teachers had little trouble finding positions in other parts of the country. By the 1820s and 1830s, James G. Carter and the founders of the American Institute of Instruction began to talk of an improved educational system that would serve all citizens. Horace Mann became Secretary of the new Massachusetts Board of Education in 1837. He urged local communities to improve school buildings and allot more funds for apparatus and teachers' salaries. Mann claimed that a cadre of teachers, trained at state-sponsored institutes and normal schools, would do the most to improve schools. His Common School Journal and Henry Barnard's American Journal of Education provided continuing discussions of teaching issues.<sup>27</sup>

The reforms began to draw attention. One of many teachers' institutes attracted 130 people, with others turned away. Even some teachers outside the state followed Massachusetts educational reform. For example, a Northern woman who taught in the South traveled back north around 1840 to buy apparatus for her school. She tried to shop in Philadelphia, but was told to go to Boston because people there were "fifty years in advance" of everyone else in educational matters.<sup>28</sup>

While Horace Mann and others exalted the role of teachers in a new reform movement, the realities of most teachers' lives remained little changed from previous years. Teachers never knew quite what to expect upon taking a new school. Students might range in age from three to twenty-three in an ungraded classroom. Often pupils' only books were those handed down in families for years. In addition, there might be a wide range in student abilities, no standard or recommended curriculum, poor buildings, and ritualistic attempts to "turn out the teacher."<sup>29</sup>

Allen's experience illuminates an important transitional period in the history of teaching — that time, beginning in the early 1840s, when teachers, especially in Massachusetts, began to move toward professionalism in their work. His life as a teacher combined the new ideals with the old realities of district schools.

Allen knew that student behavior might be a problem in Mansfield because this school had been closed early the previous year for lack of order. His uncle, Joseph Allen, in Northboro counseled him against adopting the stern threats and corporal punishment used by most teachers. Joseph himself had once punished two boys severely and always regretted it. He said later he believed he could have disciplined them without a blow. He told beginning teachers, "You must not expect too much from your scholars at first. Seek to gain their good will, and show them that you wish and intend to do them all the good you can. Allen had also come to respect Horace Mann's maxim as learned from newspapers and his uncle: "Other things being equal, the minimum of punishment is the maximum of excellence."<sup>30</sup>

Barely nineteen years of age on the first day of school, Allen entered the plain building by pulling the string of a whittled latch. On opposite sides of the room, boys and girls faced each other in rows of unpainted but well whittled plank benches and desks. A few students of both sexes were older than their new teacher. Conscious that humor gave students pleasure and increased their trust in him, Allen joked with them. He knew that among other pranks the previous year, some students had drawn an exaggerated cartoon of their teacher's large boots on the blackboard. Allen allowed to his new charges that this act was "unpleasant and disrespectful," but with mock seriousness, he challenged the students to imagine the possibility of drawing his nose — surely the blackboard was not large enough. Allen's friendly attitude convinced students that he was sympathetic to them and the severest disciplinary action he took in the school during the term was to shake a boy on one occasion.

Allen tried a handwriting lesson, most likely borrowed from one of his own teachers. He ordered printed copy slips to teach correct form and spent an evening awkwardly fashioning pens from quills for each student. Before beginning the writing exercise, he explained that if a student's pen needed pointing, he or she should raise a hand. At the count of "One!" each student dipped a pen into ink; at the count of "Two!" each took the position for writing; and at "Three!" they began. Nearly all the students raised hands immediately. Allen quickly suggested that legibility was more important than the grace of line which resulted from perfect points, but he also enlisted two students as assistants for sharpening pens, and may have increased their interest in

the school's success. For a while, Allen tried rewards to encourage good schoolwork. He gave a penny or two to the best speller each week, but soon found that intense rivalry over this prize actually distracted students. Consequently, he never used a reward system again.

Allen's musical talent helped win parental and community support. He led a church choir, he played his violin, and using Lowell Mason's method, he taught a singing school for the general public which brought him an extra \$1 per week. On the whole, Allen's approach to discipline, his ability to involve students in school activities, and his service to the community at large set him apart as a successful teacher. The Mansfield School Committee invited him to teach the following year, but he preferred to teach in Northboro where he could be near friends. During the next few years, like generations of other male teachers, Allen worked at two jobs in alternating seasons. During the summers he tilled the land and during the winters he tilled minds.<sup>31</sup>

Teachers' Perceptions of Their Work

While at his first school in Mansfield, Allen began corresponding regularly with other teachers — both family members and friends. Their correspondence continued throughout the 1840s as they moved about in district school jobs. Allen and his correspondents experienced all the frustrations of early nineteenth century teaching described in existing literary and historical sources. Their letters, however, present a different perspective on such issues as working conditions, relations with students, and interaction with school committees. They were teachers

writing to each other, sharing experiences with others in the same situation, and often assisting each other.

The letters are important evidence for modern scholars that teachers created their own informal ways to assist one another and pass along information about the developing profession. They visited each other's schools between towns and within towns. They made plans to visit each other at the end of sessions to discuss their experiences and reactions to their schools. Unlike most teachers in the past, they also had the new teachers' institutes and conventions to attend. One teacher described "much valuable information" gained at an institute. Those running institutes kept close to the task of discussing teaching methods.<sup>32</sup>

Teachers' institutes and conventions only occurred a few times each year, but the letters provided teachers with continuing access to other teachers and to information. The letters help reveal teachers' perspectives and attitudes toward their positions, their interactions with communities, and a sense of the reciprocal communication that developed between them for professional advancement and job referrals.

Many of these teachers came from backgrounds similar to Allen's. Most had active political and intellectual lives outside the schoolroom. Almost every letter included some reference to lyceums, political meetings, anti-slavery and temperance meetings, and Whig gatherings. One gave his first public lyceum address on the day he turned twenty; others planned concerts or temperance festivals, and attended scientific lectures. These teachers' letters constitute an intelligent, highly literate, and sometimes humorous record of experiences. Allen's fellow teachers had a wide range of reactions to their work. Some were

optimistic, some had a droll acceptance of their vocation, and others were frankly nervous about certain aspects of their work as teachers.<sup>33</sup>

### Working and Living Conditions

In their letters, teachers frequently reported on conditions over which they had no control. This seemed to serve as a way to air frustrations and to build camaraderie. School buildings were so poor in one town that a school committee asked, "How can a pupil learn grammar enough to tell the relation of one word to another when his greatest concern is to learn the relation he sustains to the stove?" Another claimed that the sooner a building "falls to the ground, the better, provided it doesn't fall on school time." One of Allen's correspondents complained that students never arrived early enough because they were afraid of getting there while the building was still cold. When a ventilator in another's building accidentally closed, one of his students could not get enough air and fainted.

Teachers had no control over the numbers or qualifications of students. One worked in a room that would seat 170 students, although he had 90 to begin with. Allen's friend, Augustus Whipple, found among his pupils a 23-year-old Dutchman who had already "taken one degree at the Country-house and one at the state prison." One teacher was relieved to find he had no students under the age of five.<sup>34</sup>

Rural towns often paid their teachers partly with room and board, and teachers usually had little choice of where they lived. They seemed to take these situations for granted — not actually complaining, but entertaining each other with descriptions of their temporary homes.

Allen's brother, James, had a six foot square room with a window that never closed completely. He hung his coat over the window to keep warm and had to wash in an iron kettle. Another teacher had a room without a door that was large enough only for a bed and one person to stand beside it; at night he could hear rats gamboling above him. Augustus Whipple constantly fended off the attentions of a daughter where he boarded, much like the fictional Ralph Hartsook in Eggleston's The Hoosier Schoolmaster. He had given her a modern steel pen which made her think he knew everything, but he wanted little to do with "such a piece of nature's works half put together."<sup>35</sup>

Teachers or Disciplinarians?

Among these relatively inexperienced teachers, few made any reference to the subjects they taught, probably because the curriculum was so simple and did not vary much except as some advanced pupils might want more "exotic" subjects. Only Allen's cousin William, who grew up in the successful Northboro home school, feared that the work was uninteresting and wondered how to improve it. He also asked Allen to write out the rule for cube root. Other letters show that these teachers loaned each other copies of the Common School Journal, shared recommendations of what to study for self improvement, exchanged solutions to complicated geometry problems, and donated samples to each other's mineral collections.<sup>36</sup>

Allen's teacher friends reserved their strongest reactions for discipline problems. Parents as well as students sometimes brutally attacked teachers. Allen's cousin, William, devoted almost an entire letter to



stories and questions related to discipline. When he arrived in Fitchburg to take over a school, local citizens could only welcome him with pity. The previous year, when a teacher began to whip one of two brothers who misbehaved, an older brother asked to take the beating instead. Their sister ran home to tell their father, who dashed to school and beat the teacher with a club. The father was heavily fined, and apparently the family then behaved well in school because they had behaved so poorly the previous year. Another student challenged Allen's cousin by declaring that he would be "damned if he'd stay in at recess," but finally backed down when the teacher held firm. Three times in this same letter, he asked Allen what he could do about whispering in class, and complained that he was "constantly withdrawing attention from teaching to preserving order." He admitted discouragement and wondered that he might be throwing away his time by teaching. Allen's younger brother, James, was disturbed to find students continuously whispering in class and finally felt he should do something "to astonish them." He shook one boy "tremendously" for the desired effect.<sup>38</sup>

Even those teachers who mastered discipline in their schools wrote about this topic as a measure of their success. One more experienced teacher used some unspecified methods to maintain a "perfectly still" school. In a later letter, he bragged that his school would possibly be the best in town, "certainly the best ordered." One fortunate teacher in a small school had no problems and professed himself firmly against corporal punishment. He signed his letters, "Yours for Moral-suasion," but joked, "I still maintain my sway with despotic power over eighteen precious souls."<sup>38</sup>

Both teachers and school committees debated whether to end the use of corporal punishment in schools. One of Allen's friends attended an evening teachers' meeting to discuss the prearranged question, "Should corporal punishment be abolished from our schools?" He answered "yes," and gave practical examples like pulling hair to emphasize his point about the regrettable methods that teachers used. Committees generally held that teachers should try using other methods of discipline, but be ready to resort to physical punishment when necessary. When hiring for difficult schools, committees still considered physical strength. One committee hired Allen for a large, unruly school because of his reputation as a wrestler. Hearing this, an older bully returned to school expressly to challenge the new teacher at this skill, but Allen managed to limit his wrestling to controlled periods on the play yard. In the schoolroom, he developed almost playful methods of punishment, such as piling boys on the floor.<sup>39</sup>

Interaction with School Committees  
and Communities

None of the teachers had anything good to say about their employers, the local school committees, perhaps because they found little consistency from community to community. One teacher, en route to teach in Provincetown on Cape Cod, was delayed by sailing schedules. When he arrived late, the committee chose to put off opening school a whole week rather than begin mid-week. The teacher lost the first week's pay. Another arrived for a required examination only to find that the committee gave him a certificate without any questions, a move he suspected



was illegal. Committee members, almost invariably ministers and doctors, were sometimes the butt of teachers' jokes. One young teacher always referred to committee members as "black coats and pill vendors," and joked about simply agreeing with their views during his examination in order to pass.<sup>40</sup>

In one town where Allen worked, the school committee complained that some schools met irregularly and others closed without their knowledge. Conscientious committees were not totally to blame if they could not keep up with all their schools. They sometimes had dozens of small district schools to look after. One committee calculated that if it were to follow the state mandate for visiting all schools regularly, it would have to make more than 400 visits per year.<sup>41</sup>

Some committees looked to parents to help them watch over schools and suggest improvements. They admonished parents to visit schools often, and to insist that students read and spell each day at home. But many parents were not sympathetic toward the schools. Cyrus Peirce remembered that when public schools first opened in Nantucket in 1827, many citizens regarded them as charity schools and some poor but proud parents refused this "charity" and kept their children home. By 1850, the Groton, Massachusetts School Committee claimed that popular prejudice against common schools still existed and was much worse than generally admitted. It went so far as to suggest that Groton would be better off "if no such institution as the Academy existed." The private Groton School lowered the local schools' prestige. One of Allen's friends found that some of his students felt ashamed to speak or read when in the same class as former academy students.<sup>42</sup>

Lack of school supervision and lack of support at the local level mirrored mixed opinions about common schools and about Horace Mann at the state level. Detractors, viewed by some as "suspicious and jealous" of the Board of Education, referred to the Board as "a Real Engine of Unitarianism." Cyrus Peirce, Principal of the first public normal school at Lexington, repeatedly complained to Mann that the Board of Examiners almost never visited his school. Peirce wanted guidance, but no one was willing to give it to him on a regular basis. Like the common school teachers, he was usually left to function on his own.<sup>43</sup>

While some communities did not respect teachers fully, others wanted more from them than classroom teaching. They saw teachers as outsiders who could provide a form of community entertainment. One teacher described examination time at the end of the term, when students dressed in their best clothes and actually came early to school, eager to show off to townspeople. Some teachers were expected to set up "spelling schools," or spelling bees for the town as a whole. After nearly the whole town turned out for one such evening, one of Allen's friends referred to such as "scholars' jubilees and teachers' dreads."<sup>44</sup>

As these teachers became more experienced, they sought out better places to teach, those that might offer higher salaries, more social activities, or better conditions, such as separate departments for older and younger students. The more they taught, the more they advised each other and assisted others just beginning.<sup>45</sup>

Some of Allen's fellow teachers left the profession, but many stayed, improved their practice, and built lives around it, often supplementing seasonal income by giving music lessons or teaching in

private schools. Some, like Allen and his cousin, Charles Adams, who stayed in teaching, viewed their work as a task of moral responsibility extending beyond the schoolroom, part of a socially responsible life. Adams wrote Allen, "There is a vast amount of good to be done in the world — many kind acts to perform — many widows' tears to be dried up, many orphans to be cared for — many oppressed to be set free — and alas, there are only a few to do all this — you and I know what is to be done. We have no excuse for not doing it."<sup>46</sup>

#### Decision to Enter the Normal School

By 1845, Allen had successfully taught in several communities, alternating district school jobs with work as a farmhand. He had taught well, but never received the high praise reserved for normal school graduates in committee reports. He had many opportunities to teach in the same places he had taught before, but he seemed to be at a crossroads in his career. He weighed his opportunities against the possibility of attending a normal school.

His brother, Joseph, and his cousin, Charles Adams, were succeeding in Syracuse. In addition to teaching, Joseph opened a music store, and Adams gave private music lessons to augment his teaching salary. Adams wanted Allen to join them, and suggested that if Allen practiced his music, he was sure to earn as much as \$300 to \$400 per year, with teaching wages and private music lesson fees. He also tried to lure Allen with descriptions of the cultural and political activities to be found in Syracuse. The city had twelve newspapers, including two

dailies, one religious, one anti-slavery, and one devoted solely to education. In one day alone, the town hosted a circus, a state "Colored men's" convention, and a temperance theater.<sup>47</sup>

Allen seriously considered attending a normal school instead. Shortly after Horace Mann's election as Secretary of the Board of Education, he took up the work of James G. Carter and Charles Brooks who had promoted normal schools in America for several years. Mann's dream grew not from educational theory alone, but centered on public normal schools to better the public schools. From the beginning, Mann faced severe opposition to the normal school idea. Such colleges as Harvard, Williams, and Amherst feared losing financial grants from the state, and many teachers believed that the call for better training meant that they were considered inadequate teachers. In addition, the general public often did not understand the idea or the name of such a school. One etymologist traced the name, normal, back to the Latin, Norma, a carpenter's square, meaning a rule or a pattern, indicating that the rules of practice and the principles of education were to be taught in the normal schools. Mann enjoyed telling the story of a slightly deaf old deacon whose response to the idea of normal schools was, "A Mormon School! What do we want of a Mormon School?"<sup>48</sup>

Mann emphasized and probably exaggerated the desirable qualities of the normal schools he had seen in Prussia to convince the state legislature that they were the single most important factor that would improve schools. The legislature voted in Mann's favor after he persuaded private citizens to donate most of the money needed to establish the schools.



By the mid-1840s, three normal schools were training teachers in Massachusetts. The school at Lexington, under Cyrus Peirce, had moved to West Newton, and only enrolled young women — an indication of the growing role of women in teaching. Schools at Barre and Bridgewater trained both men and women. Nicholas Tillinghast's leadership at Bridgewater stressed practical and scientific training that attracted more students than any other normal school in Massachusetts, and more men than any other in the country. The scientific training especially attracted Allen, and he had already realized that more and more school committees described the importance of normal school training in their reports. One committee went so far as to suggest that a normal school-trained teacher could "teach as much in six months as anyone else in double the time."<sup>49</sup>

A few friends tried to dissuade Allen from attending the normal school because it was still a new, relatively unknown institution, but he finally relied on family advice. His brother, Joseph, who had originally inspired Allen to try teaching, strongly urged him to attend: "Don't be too anxious to get money, but become a first rate teacher and positions will come."<sup>50</sup>

## PART III

## TRAINING AT THE BRIDGEWATER NORMAL SCHOOL

"I envy you."

Horace Mann to Bridgewater students<sup>51</sup>

In late July, 1845, after a busy summer of farm work, Allen set out for Bridgewater Normal School on a stagecoach. He chatted with fellow travelers on top of the coach. One returning student, Daniel Walton, the son of an academy instructor, decided to amuse himself when he saw Allen's sun-toughened complexion, the face of a newcomer. He baited Allen: "The school is full, you won't be admitted." Allen asked if he expected to be accepted, and retorted, "If you can enter, there will be no trouble with me." This brief exchange echoed some existing teachers' doubts about Horace Mann's favorite educational undertaking, the normal schools, and their prejudice against farmers who were entering the profession.<sup>52</sup>

Teachers who were academy graduates opposed the large number of young men and women with a normal school education who were securing teaching positions. They complained that the sort of fundamental and thorough liberal education they had received at academies prepared teachers better. But Mann steadfastly responded that academies had not produced enough good teachers for the past fifty years and he did not want to give them another fifty to try.<sup>53</sup>

In spite of critics, the normal schools — especially Bridgewater — did attract many students. The schools provided education beyond the common school branches at no tuition to students who could not afford other schools. One Bridgewater student described his classmates as "a body of working students from the middle ranks who knew the value of time and money." For some, Bridgewater would serve as a rite of passage, for others, a meal ticket, and for still others — probably the majority — a brief stop before they went on to some other field. Allen himself hoped eventually to go back to farming. But for the time being, he found a new world at the normal school.<sup>54</sup>

Allen arrived at Bridgewater as a member of the largest class in the six-year history of the school. Of his 38 fellow students, approximately half were men. Two-thirds were themselves experienced teachers and, according to Allen, most had grown up in politically "progressive" families. The chief attraction for this group and hundreds who followed in later years was Principal Nicholas Tillinghast. His practical training method would eventually attract more students than any other normal school method in the country.

New students first met Tillinghast when they filed into two rooms then allotted to the normal school in the Bridgewater Town Hall. Here, Tillinghast or his assistant, Christopher Greene, examined each one. From first glance, most students found Tillinghast the sort of forceful character they would never forget. He was carefully groomed; he combed his hair straight back, and he wore small, square, wire-rimmed glasses. His steady gaze carried a power over students that one described as "almost mysterious." He was clean-shaven, except for a tidy

fringe of beard underneath his chin, which accented his strong jaw and serious expression.

Tillinghast considered himself, by training and disposition, a man of science. He graduated from West Point in 1824, when applied science and engineering studies there were more extensive than at most American colleges. He served as a military officer, and taught at West Point and private schools until 1839, when Horace Mann asked him to be the founding principal at Bridgewater. Tillinghast observed the Barre Normal School for a few months and then worked day and night to establish the most advanced normal school possible.

Teachers, he believed, should ideally have a full four years of training, and he developed his program to this end. Allen found that Tillinghast had filled the Bridgewater library with books giving a heavy emphasis to mathematics and science, as well as general works in history, biography, and literature. He also found a wide range of books on pedagogy whose titles represented new and popular trends: Prussian Instruction, Monitorial System, and even Progressive Education. Allen and other students had extensive equipment and materials for scientific and chemical experiments. Although Tillinghast lamented his lack of Latin and Greek, his love for other branches of learning was infectious to such aspiring teachers as Allen who did not have classical training.<sup>55</sup>

Allen was also drawn to Tillinghast's political commitments. He considered Tillinghast a "broad souled, liberal minded reformer." Tillinghast, like the Allen family, supported the anti-slavery movement, and this drew Allen immediately. His commitment went beyond mere parlor discussions. He donated to the radical Boston Vigilance Committee,

which in turn bought bread, meat, clothing, and even false arms or legs for fugitive slaves. Allen soon grew, however, to respect Tillinghast's philosophy of education as well as his abolitionism.<sup>56</sup>

#### Educational Theory and Curriculum at Bridgewater

Bridgewater classes met six days a week, usually on a Monday-Wednesday-Friday or Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday schedule for Arithmetic, Geometry, Reading, Natural Philosophy, and Geography. Other classes, which met only once or twice per week, included Intellectual Philosophy, Schoolkeeping, Chemistry, Bookkeeping, Astronomy, Enunciation, and Drawing. After a short time at the school, Allen himself taught singing to fellow students.

The overall curriculum fit into Pestalozzian educational theory. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's work represented a significant break in nineteenth century educational practice. At his successful school in Switzerland, Pestalozzi demonstrated that learning should begin with the child's experience of the world, based on the senses and physical objects, and then proceed to abstract ideas. He also believed that education should be keyed to the individual development of a child.<sup>57</sup>

Allen was already generally familiar with such methods. Both his brother, Joseph, and his uncle in Northboro had used real objects from nature and practical problems in teaching. Each had also tried to teach students according to their individual needs. Allen read education journals and attended teachers institutes that reflected more and more of the European educational ideas. The organized and consistent

presentation of Pestalozzian ideas at Bridgewater legitimized a theory and teaching style about which Allen already knew: first, that children learn best when they study what they prefer; second, that teachers should strive to keep children's curiosity alive by answering their questions; and third, that children should be trained initially through perception and observation, and then through memory, reason, and taste.

Other theories taught at Bridgewater demonstrated concern for students as individuals. Tillinghast said that what benefitted one student could easily be harmful to another. To keep students from being discouraged, he recommended that Allen and his classmates never correct individual students during recitations, but discuss problems with a whole class. Further, they should not overwork children indoors, but take them occasionally outdoors to study botany and mineralogy. And they should be straightforward with students. Tillinghast advised: "Never give a catching question to your scholars for the purpose of confusing them by the phraseology. A teacher who does merely does it to show his superiority to his scholars."<sup>58</sup>

These same attitudes held true for Bridgewater students. Tillinghast expected Allen and his classmates to develop a critical outlook, to discover their own answers to problems, and even to criticize his methods. They tried out their own teaching techniques by presenting sample lessons to the whole school for evaluation by their peers.<sup>59</sup>

In some Bridgewater classes, Allen learned how to teach subjects, and in others he expanded his own knowledge. Some classes particularly reflected Pestalozzian influences then beginning to be felt in American education. Three days per week, Allen had an Arithmetic class in which

he especially found they proceeded "differently from the old method." He used Colburn's new Pestalozzian textbook, Intellectual Arithmetic. This began with the simplest of questions for a child — "How many fingers have you?" Allen learned that colored balls on a wooden frame would help students master unit values. He practiced numerous problems using yards, shillings, farthings, and bolts of cloth, and he determined that students could learn practical mathematics from newspapers.<sup>60</sup>

On mornings when he did not have arithmetic, Allen began with geometry class. Compared to the concrete, practical problems assigned in arithmetic, some of the geometry definitions Allen recorded bordered on metaphysics: "An infinite number of nothings make something," and "A point is merely an idea." He worked on elaborate theorems that filled page after page of his notebooks.<sup>61</sup>

Science classes in the late morning included the latest discoveries in different fields. In natural philosophy, Allen heard that some men in Boston could, only by looking at one scale from a fish, determine both the kind of fish and the scale's location on the fish's body. Some of his astronomy lessons were quite accurate when judged by later standards. They measured the speed of light at 200,000 miles per second and the distance between the earth and sun as 95 million miles. Some lessons, however, combined science with superstition or beliefs that would later be discounted. While studying weather, Allen learned of "dark days" to come in England. And he learned that sleeping in a room with growing plants could be dangerous to his health.<sup>62</sup>

In the afternoons, Allen attended classes in parsing and reading. Here he heard that trying to learn from the commonly used grammar textbooks was like trying to get nourishment from eating sawdust. Instead of parsing, children should learn grammar by composition and patient correction. Tillinghast told Allen and his Bridgewater companions, "Grammar can be taught mostly by composition. When we examine the first composition of a child, we ~~should not~~ speak of but a few of the faults, but only of the capital letters and periods perhaps." In later compositions, he would work on commas and semicolons, and eventually grammatical construction. Allen learned that teaching children to read should also involve gentle encouragement. He should not correct them too often, but ask questions to be sure they understand what they read.<sup>63</sup>

After reading classes, Allen went to geography lectures which sometimes reflected the prevailing ethnocentrism and racism of the time. Allen had never traveled further than a 100 mile radius of his home and took notes dutifully. For instance, he recorded that American Indians had no concept of a number above twenty. They had large legs, and their arms, although smooth and finely made, were not as large as white men's arms. The Spanish nobility were a "mere race of monkeys," although 300 years before, they had been "the finest specimens on earth." South Americans "could not be expected to attain that perfection of civilization in some countries such as Europe," because the mountains, rivers, and jungles prevented interactions between regions. Finally, Allen could learn little about the interior of Africa because, "no one ever returned from there."<sup>64</sup>

### Training in Schoolkeeping

Both Allen and his Bridgewater instructors devoted less time to specific issues in schoolkeeping than to academic subjects. George Emerson's popular book, The School and Schoolmaster, provided a structure for some normal school lectures under this heading. Emerson's advice to teachers covered everything from teaching techniques to health habits and social life in a community. Allen made particular note of comments on daily bathing and exercise.<sup>65</sup>

Other schoolkeeping lectures broadened Allen's concept of schools and gave him a wide ranging sense of the profession. He heard about a Deaf and Dumb Asylum, where students made noise at recess, as in any other school, but where the mere tap of a teacher's foot brought silence because students felt reverberations. He heard too of some German schools where young people pursued studies longer and were therefore more advanced than Americans. A scientific theory supported this method: young people were still growing and developing up to age twenty-four and should not perform severe mental or physical labor during puberty and this final growing stage.<sup>66</sup>

Compared to what concerned working teachers and parental and community expectations, discipline and other practical aspects of schoolkeeping appear to have been neglected at Bridgewater. Allen made only two references to discipline in his otherwise detailed Bridgewater journals. Tillinghast clearly rejected standard physical punishment. To have students "hold down nails" or sit in one position for long periods of time were "miserable" practices, he said. Returning to his scientific background, he explained the physiological basis for the pain

in these punishments through constant nerve-related contractions and relaxation in the muscles. Given his physiological understandings, he humanely suggested that students should rest for a day or two before an important examination. But Tillinghast also believed that fear was sometimes positively related to study. He admitted that fear would seldom lead directly to the love of study, but could be useful. He said about students, "Instead of suffering pain, many will study and get an insight into science, learn to love it and study for study's sake." Records show no other statements by Tillinghast related to classroom discipline and teacher authority.<sup>67</sup>

Tillinghast likely said little about discipline because he seldom had such problems. His remarkable force of character combined with his military experience resulted in high expectations of proper behavior. He was rarely disappointed. He approached any instance of delinquency in a straightforward, frank manner. Students thus spoken to immediately became so remorseful that persisting discipline problems never developed. Even students who respected and witnessed Tillinghast's classroom manner knew that most teachers could not use his system, and he, in turn, had little understanding of teachers' disciplinary difficulties.<sup>68</sup>

The one feature of normal schools which originally held the promise of practical training in discipline and other areas of schoolkeeping was the model school. From the beginning, the Board of Education recognized the importance of a model school where "normalites" could apply theory to practice. Cyrus Peirce, Principal of the first normal school at Lexington, determined that the success of the school depended on

having a model school. Unfortunately, the model school at Bridgewater had not fulfilled its promise.<sup>69</sup>

During the first year, Bridgewater students taught the model school by rotations, but Tillinghast had no assistants then and little time to supervise the school. From 1842 to 1846, a qualified teacher took charge of the school, but had several interruptions due to illness. Given this situation when Allen attended Bridgewater, he and most other students profited little from practice teaching in the model school. According to one report, those who had taught school before did not feel they benefited. Those fewer who had not previously taught "did not become sufficiently interested to appreciate the work." In addition, local parents complained that their children were "experimented with." Tillinghast would eventually close the model school in 1850 with no real regrets and not open it again. Those who followed Tillinghast would not reopen the school for more than twenty-five years. Most teachers continued to acquire whatever schoolkeeping skills they learned on the job.<sup>70</sup>

#### Student Life

Most students at Bridgewater boarded with families in town, but Allen and some friends created an apartment atmosphere in two rented rooms. He, his cousin Edward, and three other men called their rooms "the Old Bachelor Hall," or O.B.H. They referred to each other as "brother Bach." Allen was honorary president of the group, and his cousin, secretary.

They used the front room for study, discussions, and music. Allen brought his violin, and Edward had his violin and flute. For sleeping arrangements in the back room, they pushed together two wide beds and sewed up three sheets to fit them. Then, all five slept in a row. Allen and his friends had a limited diet, consisting mostly of hasty pudding and baked beans. A typical shopping list included crackers, molasses, bread, whortleberries, butter, sweet potatoes, brown bread, and pork. The five "old bachelors" shared chores: two acted as cooks, two as chambermaids, and one ran errands. Each week they rotated duties.

Allen spent his spare time in exercising and visiting with friends. Each morning at 5:30, he and his cousin ran one half mile to Carver's Pond to take a cold swim. Faithful to this practice until Thanksgiving, they often found ice forming in their locks on the return run. Allen also wrestled, played football, and took long walks, sometimes over twenty miles a day.<sup>72</sup>

Occasionally he invited friends over to share a meal of oysters or baked goods sent from home. They would sit in the front room and discuss politics and conventions held in Bridgewater — especially those of the anti-slavery Liberty Party and the Swedenborgians. One friend notified Allen when the Brook Farm Association disbanded, sure that this experiment did not survive because it began in debt and because none of the members really understood business and farming; a mutual friend of theirs had lived there. And they often discussed the problems of slavery.<sup>73</sup>

In these years, it was obvious to all that women were entering the teaching profession in ever increasing numbers, and some of Allen's good friends at Bridgewater were women. For those who wished or needed to be employed, teaching was their only major job possibility outside of factory, farm, or domestic work. Communities that had once hired only men teachers for winter schools concluded that women could teach as well as men, and at cheaper salaries. In 1846, for example, 48 out of 57 teachers in Salem were women. The first normal school at Lexington opened specifically to train women. As more women entered teaching, more sought admission to all the normal schools.<sup>74</sup>

Young men and women at Bridgewater were in the same courses together and each freely associated with the other outside class. In fact, Allen himself became briefly engaged to one of his classmates. The women students passed the same entrance examination as the men, and many had already successfully taught while living away from home. But they did not receive equal treatment from Tillinghast. When he became Principal at Bridgewater, Tillinghast immediately dismissed the idea of a woman assistant, claiming that he had never seen a woman who could live up to his standards of logical thinking or who would be able enough to teach men. Allen recorded an incident when Tillinghast singled out the "girls" to recite and "scowled" at their errors.<sup>75</sup>

Allen and other students, in contrast, spent time with these women every day and grew to appreciate their talents and intellectual abilities. They studied together and exchanged jokes about Bridgewater life. Three women once mimicked Tillinghast's approach to physiology in a note to Allen when he moved to a seat in the normal school nearer them. They

described how Allen would better accommodate his long legs and "consequently obey more closely the laws of organization." Another woman, Lucy Maria Ware, wrote a Shakespearean parody of life at Bridgewater featuring Allen and two other students. When Allen joined the Bridgewater Normal Association, he and his cousin, Edward, took issue with the inequality between men and women in the organization. Edward lamented not being able to include women in the program for meetings or at least have a woman write a speech for the orator: "Why couldn't some lady write one and have it read by proxy? The poor females seem utterly cast out in our accounts of Associationism. I know it is not customary. 'But do right, let others say whate'r they will.' At any rate I wish and hope that the songs will be furnished by them."<sup>76</sup>

The friendships Allen made with fellow students enriched his professional training at Bridgewater. Those who had already taught shared their knowledge. From one classmate, Joshua Nickerson, Allen learned to make a microscope by putting a small hole in a piece of lead and adding a drop of water and to make a magnet from two twisted wires pointed north. Another friend told Allen how some German students kept an abstract of the day's activities to be read and corrected later by their teacher.<sup>77</sup>

Students also had contact with those teachers and public figures who attended Bridgewater teachers' conventions. For one annual convention, Allen and his classmates were excused from classes. They decorated the schoolroom with plaited oak leaves and arranged furniture and refreshments. Former students filled the hall and a brass band played lively tunes. Here, Allen met two highly qualified assistants from the

West Newton Normal School, Caroline Tilden and Electa Lincoln. He listened carefully as the Bridgewater Normal Association discussed educational issues.

Charles Brooks spoke at this convention. He had enthusiastically supported normal schools for more than twenty years and described European schools in his speech. Some teachers in Prussia, he said, could read and write in four languages. Another speaker at the convention was Horace Mann — a tall, striking figure, and by this time one of the most experienced speakers in Massachusetts. Allen once remarked that Mann had a way of speaking that made one always remember what he said. At this gathering, he encouraged students and gave them advice laden with the religious fervor he felt for school reform. He admitted that teachers had to face discouragements. But he exhorted them to have faith: "If you only have faith you will remove all obstacles from your path." He also reminded them that because they were half as old as he, they could perform twice as much good in the world.<sup>78</sup>

#### External Problems

Mann made continuing visits to Bridgewater. He wanted to infuse the normal school with his enthusiasm, spirit, and sense of purpose. His visits signaled larger political problems which plagued the normal schools and kept them vulnerable as the state legislature battled over appropriations. Two particular crises nearly prevented Allen from finishing his studies and taught him still another professional lesson — the close relationship between education and external expectations.

The first problem grew out of Tillinghast's frustrations. His dream of a four-year institution seemed absurd when compared to the irregular attendance at the normal school. Many students never stayed more than one term; the others rarely took consecutive terms. Allen himself was a case in point. He entered in August, 1845, found a teaching job during the next term, and returned in Spring, 1846. Many of Allen's classmates from the first term never returned. In frustration over this issue, Tillinghast wrote a letter of resignation to the state Board of Education in 1845. Tillinghast was tremendously respected by students, other educators, and community people. Allen vowed not to return to Bridgewater if Tillinghast left. The Board refused Tillinghast's resignation and instead passed an order requiring students to attend three consecutive terms of fourteen weeks.<sup>79</sup>

As Allen prepared to return to Bridgewater for his second term, he learned of another problem at the normal school, this one caused not by conservative detractors, but by radicals. Tillinghast got word of four black applicants to the school. He suspected a Garrisonian scheme aimed at integration. Although Tillinghast was an abolitionist, he knew that admitting black students might be a more controversial move than the politically fragile normal school could bear. He agreed to admit the blacks with approval from the State Board. Allen decided not to reenter the school if the blacks were refused, but they never formally applied. Allen was becoming more familiar with the link between education and politics that Horace Mann had known so well for years.<sup>80</sup>

### Teaching Jobs after Bridgewater Training

After any amount of training at Bridgewater, Allen and his classmates had better opportunities for work. When they presented letters of recommendation from Tillinghast, some communities overlooked the required examination and automatically hired them. They often helped each other find placements. Because Allen had taught in many communities, he could be especially helpful to friends. Several respected him and urged him to take jobs in the communities where they worked.<sup>81</sup>

In the fall of 1845, after Allen completed his first term, the Northfield School Committee asked him to return to his teaching job. He accepted and there began to incorporate new methods into many aspects of his work. He drilled all the students together in the forty elementary sounds of the alphabet and used Russell's method in "varied styles of reading" to awaken interest in his students. He taught arithmetic through Tillinghast's analytical method, taught singing, and convinced citizens to buy a school clock. Visitors from Vermont came to watch his classroom methods. He organized equally successful singing schools. One in Northfield center attracted 100 singers, and he ferried, rowed, or walked across the Connecticut River to teach another singing school.<sup>82</sup>

The following year, Allen's reputation at Northfield and completion of his second Bridgewater term made him an excellent candidate for a difficult school in Shrewsbury. This particular school was in a district with many tanneries and currier shops. For the previous eight years, rough, rowdy apprentices from these shops had rushed

teachers and thrown them through the upstairs schoolroom door, thereby closing the school. In applying for this job, Allen found that, even with his successful teaching experience and his training at Bridgewater, the salary offered was only slightly more than the salary from his first teaching job four years before. Sure of his ability, Allen bargained for higher wages and offered to teach for free if he could not control the students through the winter.

Allen wanted to avoid giving the rowdy students a chance to assess his strength. He went to town briefly one evening for his examination and then left. On the day school began, he rode in with a local school committeeman. Students had already broken into the school and the committeeman asked Allen to thrash them. Allen refused, saying that he could not punish students for what happened when he was not present. His welcoming speech to students on that first day warned them that, although the committee had not examined him physically, he was "vigorous, strong, able in a knock down drag out contest." He readied himself for the test he knew would come.

On the third day of school, six or eight large boys gathered noisily around the stove near Allen's desk. They guffawed when he reminded them that they should be whispering. He tried again, but they only laughed louder. Suddenly, after a quick move from Allen, their leader whirled through the air and lay sprawling over a desk. Allen tossed him up the aisle again. He then turned for the others who scrambled to their seats instead of jumping Allen as planned. He boasted to a 180 pounder, "I can thrash an acre of you the hottest day in July without getting into a perspiration!" Soon all of Shrewsbury

buzzed with the story and school committee members, who had previously been pelted with apple cores on trips to the school, began to visit again.<sup>83</sup>

With his authority established, Allen turned to another problem at the Shrewsbury School. A primary teacher in the room under Allen's called attention one day to a puddle of spittle on the floor of her classroom. Allen's boys, tobacco chewers, spit onto the floor and their saliva dripped through the ceiling onto her floor. Allen temporarily solved the problem by designing boxes filled with sawdust as spittoons, but they eventually proved too tempting to playful students. After Allen found the boxes and contents thrown all over the room one day, he prohibited tobacco and never saw or smelled it in the room again.<sup>84</sup>

In its annual school report, the Shrewsbury school committee publicly acknowledged Allen's abilities in various aspects of school-keeping. In contrast to committee reports on his work in previous years that included just a few words, the Shrewsbury committee devoted pages to his praises. They also approved of his disciplinary methods in their 1846-47 Report.

Mr. Nathaniel T. Allen . . . proved himself a faithful and accomplished teacher by his success in this school. The school is presented by the Committee as a Model School. The order was perfect in the early part of the term tho it had formerly had the reputation of being an ungovernable and bad school to manage. A good understanding and reciprocity of feeling seemed to have been early established between the teacher and his pupils, but not without some few examples of corporeal punishment which were sufficient to produce the desired effect of establishing good order, submission, love and respect by the pupils towards their teacher. This was what the school-boy called a



"striking example," and the result plainly shows the good effects of corporal punishment discreetly applied, which your committee do unanimously recommend. The teacher has had the advantages of a Normal School instruction. He evidently belongs to that number who is apt to teach, and had clearly made it a study to get the good will of his scholars, and at the same time to cultivate a thirst for knowledge which rapidly increased as the school continued.<sup>85</sup>

Regarding his negotiated salary, the committee continued, "The high price to be paid this teacher, at the beginning of school was thought to be by some very extravagant, but at the close, it was observed, that he had been faithful, well earned his money and was a cheap master." Later in the report, they urged prudential committees to be extremely careful in selecting teachers, "and not always employ the ones who ask the least."<sup>86</sup>

Although he was busy teaching, Allen kept up a large correspondence with former Bridgewater students. These letters filled the need for a professional exchange and demonstrate how their training in new educational methods transferred back to district schools. They succeeded at using new methods of teaching arithmetic and exchanged information about the best texts and exercises. One friend tried to give an elocution lesson, but his students only giggled. He knew that if he neglected reading classes for enunciation, he would be considered a fool.<sup>87</sup>

Allen described his Shrewsbury problems to friends as an "ordeal." He soon learned that others had similar problems. Again and again, teachers spoke openly about discipline problems. Allen's cousin admitted that he had actually bloodied students' hands while using a ferule in his large school. A little shocked at himself, he wrote Allen, "Did you think I would be guilty of such cruelty?" Allen learned some

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of the more subtle nuances of discipline when visiting a fellow teacher who asked all his students who had not whispered to raise their hands. Allen became indignant and could not resist becoming involved when he saw one habitual whisperer raise his hand. Allen called him on his dishonesty and learned that the same boy had caused a great deal of trouble in the school. From this experience, Allen realized that the best teachers understand their students as individuals, and he determined a disciplinary philosophy for himself: "Temptation . . . within the ability to successfully resist strengthens, if beyond, it weakens." Repeated disciplinary problems call into question whether the education reform embodied in the normal schools had much connection to the public it served.<sup>88</sup>

Even if normal schools had managed to train teachers for every classroom situation, community conditions often complicated their work. Two of Allen's Bridgewater classmates applied for jobs in Provincetown, ready to show off their new knowledge. They found the school committee's overriding concern did not, however, center on their teaching ability. The previous schoolmaster had spent too much time courting young women in town, and the committee initially asked only about the marital status of all teaching applicants. One of the two candidates thought quickly and offered to swear that his friend was engaged. The other did the same. Both were hired for a five-month session, but were out of work after three months when the town ran out of funds. The teachers quickly organized a private school to maintain an income.<sup>89</sup>

Religion could be as much of a problem for teachers as town funding. In one community, for example, an old man threatened to make

trouble for Edward Allen because he did not begin each school day by praying aloud.

Allen could travel almost any direction in the state and find a Bridgewater friend teaching school. Often these former classmates traveled specifically to visit each other in their schools, and these visits provided another form of professional association. They paid close attention to teaching conditions. One young woman had a recitation room all to herself. Some classrooms had new, painted cast iron seats in variegated patterns; some had pianos, and outline maps, and even thermometers. In 1847, one community boasted that all its schools were equipped with blackboards.

Alert teachers knew the advantages or disadvantages of working in certain communities. As they became experienced, they began actively to choose where to teach. They looked not only for a stable position and a congenial environment, but they also assessed the organization of a school. One teacher, for example, chose to teach in Lancaster because schools there were under the "Union" system, separated into divisions of students above and below age twelve.

Even in the best of district schools, qualified and ambitious teachers were likely to be frustrated with poor conditions or low salaries. Schools were still seasonal institutions, and a teacher who needed a year-round income had to find other work or open a private school during the off seasons simply to make a living wage. Private schools, however, rarely provided a stable source of income in small communities where crop yields varied from year to year. Many bright

young teachers found repeatedly training new groups of unprepared students tedious and left the profession.<sup>92</sup>

Many of Allen's friends soon found the vagaries of schoolkeeping too unstable. Some went into the ministry, some law, some business, and one even left for the California gold fields. Another friend, Augustus Whipple, found he could make almost as much money as a Harvard student than as a schoolteacher. He received \$50 per term for tutoring the son of Harvard President Edward Everett and an additional \$27.50 for monitoring the freshman class.<sup>93</sup>

While at Bridgewater, Allen himself had considered teaching only a part-time activity until he could return to a farm. But since he did not stand to inherit any land immediately and had no resources to buy his own land, his plans had to change. In 1847, after six years of teaching, Allen considered becoming an engineer. He organized a group of fellow teachers to go with him to Troy, New York to enroll at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

The Rensselaer curriculum made the school one of the foremost scientific training institutes of the time. Students heard lectures and delivered papers in chemistry, weather studies, geology, astronomy, botany, and natural philosophy. Allen was especially impressed with their method of studying botany and natural philosophy. Students went outside to study the plants where they grew. They hiked through woods and over cliffs with large wooden boxes tied to their backs for collecting specimens. But on one of these jaunts, Allen aggravated an old leg injury and had to withdraw from Rensselaer to recuperate at home in Medfield. He spent three months on crutches. When he

recovered, he finished the school year by teaching in district and private schools.<sup>94</sup>

In the spring of 1848, Allen had turned twenty-five. He was anxious to have a more stable career. Of his friends who were still teaching, many had managed to find year-round jobs. His cousin Edward taught year-long at a German school in Baltimore. Another Bridgewater friend had a "yearly" in New Haven for a salary of \$500 per year. Although his friends assured Allen that he had talent and proven experience, he had no immediate job prospects for the first time since he had begun teaching six years before. He waited a month without any offers and was both worried and discouraged. He remarked to his aunt, "I can dig potatoes for a living." She echoed the Allen family perception of teaching as a noble profession in her reply: "Yes, Nathaniel, but you can do some higher and more useful work."<sup>95</sup>

Finally, in April, 1848, two offers for permanent jobs came in the same mail. One came from a nearby academy and the other from the model school of the normal school at West Newton. Allen had visited that normal school many times. He had great respect for Principal Cyrus Peirce. In addition, Horace Mann had just built a home in West Newton to watch over the development of the normal school more closely. To run the model school and supervise normal school students while they trained in it was a full-time, year-round job. It paid \$500 a year. This was more money than Allen had ever seen. Although he was a little in awe of "coming under the critical gaze of the highest ideals of the new education," Allen seized the opportunity to work near Horace Mann at West Newton.<sup>96</sup>

PART IV

THE MODEL SCHOOL

"You will be between two fires"<sup>97</sup>

David Atwood to Nathaniel Allen

Allen confronted a major problem in West Newton. The model school was both part of the normal school for teacher training and a district school for the local community. Allen was responsible to both Cyrus Peirce, who ran the normal school, and to the local school committee, but he encountered conflicts because Peirce and the school committee had differing educational philosophies.

To date, no one in charge of the model school had been able to please both the townspeople and Peirce. West Newton parents found fault with the school because the previous teacher, George Walton, couldn't keep order. They wanted him to use physical punishment if necessary, but Peirce insisted that the model school teacher use no corporal punishment. As one of Allen's friends warned him about the community, "They would have the 'corporal' called in, but father Peirce says no. So you will be between two fires, I hope neither will scorch you."<sup>98</sup>

Although parents had legitimate complaints that George Walton could not control students, their attitudes were exacerbated by their long-standing opposition to Cyrus Peirce's political and religious



beliefs. Located ten miles west of Boston, West Newton was a small hamlet of about 500 people with a single, conservative orthodox Congregational church. Peirce was a Harvard trained Unitarian minister who supported Theodore Parker and was also known as an anti-slavery activist. From the beginning of his stay in West Newton, citizens had asked Peirce what religion would be taught in this nonsectarian normal school.<sup>99</sup>

At this point, Horace Mann very much wanted the normal school at West Newton to be a success. He had invested much of his own time and money in it. The year (1848) brought a new wave of opposition to normal schools from legislators and existing teachers. Mann knew that the future of his educational plans was in jeopardy; he knew the legislature could withdraw support. Because the West Newton normal school was the closest to Boston and therefore the most accessible to the legislature, he was particularly anxious for its success. He built a home in West Newton to be near the school.<sup>100</sup>

One of Mann's detractors who opposed the nonsectarian nature of normal schools was Reverend Matthew Hale Smith. He claimed Peirce encouraged his students to take physical exercise rather than attend church on Sundays. Smith also charged that normal school students had "immorally" bared their feet, arms, and breasts in a tableau staged for their own entertainment. Although a Congregational newspaper eventually declared both claims false, Peirce was so angered that he made public complaints in newspapers about the conservative attitudes in West Newton.

The West Newton minister, Mr. Gilbert, followed Smith's lead by attacking the normal school locally. Gilbert confronted Allen almost immediately on his arrival and re-stated Smith's accusations. Mrs. Gilbert meanwhile was actively campaigning to close the model school with what Peirce described as her "viperous tongue."<sup>101</sup>

As a Unitarian and an abolitionist, Allen aligned himself philosophically with Mann and Peirce. As a practical man, he knew he needed the approval of the community and the parents if they were to trust him with their children. Further, citizens could never be expected to support the normal school if its model school failed. Allen felt a responsibility to run an extremely good school.

#### Allen's Teaching Methods at the Model School

West Newton citizens were at first wary of Allen. He was yet another teacher from outside their community. Only eighteen students enrolled on the first day of his term. It was a rather inauspicious beginning for what would eventually prove to be the most profitable period of his professional development. Within weeks, however, Allen's leadership proved so successful that enrollment jumped to sixty-five students. Even parents from outside the district paid tuition so their children could attend.<sup>102</sup>

Citizens of the 1840s seemed most often to base judgment of whether a school was well run on student discipline. The model school at West Newton was no exception. Allen complained to his family that he had never seen so many discipline problems in a single school. His commanding presence helped solve this problem. "Students even passed

along the rumor that the new teacher was so strong he could lift 1,150 pounds. In the beginning, Allen had to give one boy a sound shaking, but he preferred, as he had in earlier schools, to use humor, patience, and persistence as instruments of student control. He often took students aside before school, during a recess, or after school to quietly discuss behavior problems. The work so taxed Allen that he lost ten pounds in his first fifteen weeks at the model school. Students responded positively to him. They knew he liked them and worked to make the school different from any they had attended before.<sup>103</sup>

In instruction, Allen incorporated physical exercises, sports, and singing into the school with lessons in geography and reading. He bought extra schoolbooks and a piano with his own earnings. He consulted with teachers at Bridgewater Normal School to determine the best texts and methods. Many of the model school courses were the same courses then taught to Bridgewater Normal School students: Geography, Arithmetic, English Grammar, Astronomy (also called Geography of the Heavens), Natural Philosophy, Surveying, Declaiming (or Rhetoric), and Bookkeeping.<sup>104</sup>

In teaching methods, Allen wished to go beyond the simple recitations popular at the time. He hoped to teach students to reason for themselves. One student favorably compared the model school to a more typical school: "The ways are very different here from what I have been accustomed to. We were only to get what was in the book . . . never to stop and think why anything was so." His method for teaching English grammar was to have students write compositions on topics of

their choice. Some students initially complained that they did not know what to write about and wished he would supply them topics.<sup>105</sup>

For Natural Philosophy and Botany instruction, Allen used his successful method from Rensselaer the year before. He took students into nearby fields and assigned older students to help instruct the younger ones. Allen drew on his long interest in natural history, his membership in Natural History Societies, and his frequent attendance at lectures by Louis Agassiz, then regularly at the West Newton Normal School, to enrich his instruction.<sup>106</sup>

In teaching history, he invited Elizabeth Peabody to help out. The sister-in-law of Horace Mann had been assistant to Bronson Alcott in his Temple School experiment. She ran a bookshop popular with Boston intellectuals and had edited the transcendentalist journal, The Dial. She was extremely well read and had built a reputation for herself as a lecturer on history for adults. She visited the Manns often in West Newton and eventually moved there. She took an interest in the model school, and Allen welcomed her efforts. She demonstrated to the students her colorful charts which depicted historical events, and students responded well to her enthusiasm. They often worked on their own charts after school.<sup>107</sup>

In his attitude toward instruction of young women, Allen set himself apart from other teachers. In a time when most girls did not learn advanced arithmetic and women teachers were often not even expected to teach the subject, Allen carefully taught mathematics to girls as well as boys. Letters from students indicate that many girls enjoyed arithmetic more than other subjects and asked Allen for more difficult problems.

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One girl claimed that she learned a considerable amount of arithmetic because Allen explained lessons fully and because he took extra time to write explanations on paper for her.<sup>108</sup>

In almost all activities Allen encouraged students to be active rather than passive participants in the school. He scheduled fewer examinations than did most teachers. Instead, he gave them daily responsibilities. In addition to letting students choose their own composition topics or teach science lessons to each other, they distributed ink and chalk, regularly helped younger students, or fed the pet goldfish. All took turns in "supervising," Allen's term for staying after school to help sweep and tidy the schoolroom. Some students brought in their own books to add to the school library. The Newton School Committee publicly remarked on Allen's success "in making his scholars feel that the school belongs to them, is for their benefit, and everyone has an interest in doing all he can to promote its best interest."<sup>109</sup>

If one attitude characterized Allen's teaching and his relationship to students, it was that of gentle encouragement. Whether a student had difficulty with arithmetic or was too embarrassed to sing along with others, he usually encouraged them with, "Try again," or "There's nothing like trying." He told them they could learn by patient persevering. One student said she loved to hear him talk because he spoke so kindly. Even when remonstrating students, Allen could be loving. A note he wrote to a student during class was preserved on the back of an envelope: "Perhaps, my dear Ellen you had better be seated at your desk now." Rather than demand certain standards of behavior, he asked students to

think about their actions. He suggested that after a student had failed or been tardy once, it was easier to do it another time. He also said that he didn't think it was any easier to do wrong than right.<sup>110</sup>

Allen was careful to give students as much individual attention as he could. He often stayed after school to help students work on assignments they had not finished or did not understand. If a student were absent, he might write a note to alert him or her to an upcoming test. He lent books to students and allowed them to practice on his piano.

Students came to feel that Allen cared about them, and they loved to joke with him and spend time with him. During class breaks or after school, Allen joined both girls and boys in games. They played "catch," they took walks. A favorite game was a lively version of "Puss, Puss in the Corner." The players stood at fixed points and beckoned to "Puss" in the middle who tried to take one of their places when a player called out "Change!"

Students expressed their affection for Allen in many ways. One child so wanted to have a good school record that even when ill, she had her brother carry her to the model school where she stayed long enough not to be marked absent. One student addressed him as "my unequalled teacher." Another signed a letter, "Your affectionate rogue." Many students knew that he often visited students and their parents at home, and they begged him to visit them as well. One vowed to invite him every week until he came. A young man so respected Allen that when applying to Bridgewater Normal School, he preferred a moral character

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reference from Allen rather than from a minister, as was customary. Sometimes student affection for Allen turned into sheer exuberance. A student declared, "If there is a Christian in the world, I believe you to be."<sup>111</sup>

### Letters to the Teacher

Allen initiated an unusual method of encouraging writing practice that made students reflect on their experience and evaluate their performance. Each student wrote him a letter every other week discussing whatever he or she wished — joys, sorrows, problems in school, personal aspirations, sometimes even jokes or stories about their experiences outside of school. They could drop a note into Allen's brown letter box whenever they wished. As the model school grew larger, this practice gave students constant access to their teacher. If they could not always find him with time to talk, they knew he would read their notes. Further, many could put into writing what they might be afraid to say aloud. Allen seems to have borrowed this practice from his Uncle Joseph's Northboro school where students benefited from writing letters.

Allen usually returned letters with a short response in the margin, but some letters either came at the end of a term and were never returned or were extra notes that particular students wrote. Approximately 300 surviving student letters provide a fresh and immediate view of the day-to-day workings of the model school. These letters appear to have been randomly saved.

The letters had several functions. First, they provided systematic practice in composition and writing skills. In some cases, the quality

of a student's letters to Allen improved remarkably over the space of just a few terms. Either in class, or through this writing practice, students were effectively learning sentence construction, paragraphing, spelling, and penmanship.<sup>112</sup>

Some students balked at writing to Allen. They claimed they were not accustomed to writing to teachers. Allen simply responded that they could all find something to write about. One student remarked that writing to his grandmother would be easy enough, but to write to his teacher was "a poser." He guessed he should "write 3 or 4 gross in vacation so as to have them on hand when called for." Just the act of writing to a teacher seems to have altered some students' perceptions of Allen as a teacher. It made them regard him more as they might regard a friend or relative, someone to whom they might usually write.<sup>113</sup>

Sometimes he asked them to include certain topics in the letters and this challenged their traditional notions about teachers as well. Instead of telling them how well they had done in schoolwork and what classes they would take, Allen gave this responsibility to students. He asked them to keep records of their progress and to tell him how well they thought they were doing. Many dutifully reported on how many "lessons," usually recitations, they had completed perfectly or imperfectly. One student kept such careful records that at the end of a term she could report 154 perfect recitations and 15 imperfect. Some students made the letters into cursory reports on their conduct, listing how many times they had whispered, been tardy, ~~absent~~, or dismissed, or were spoken to by the teacher. Others were uncomfortable judging their behavior and asked Allen to do it for them. Some found clever ways to

avoid the actual report. One boy wrote that he didn't want to discuss his conduct because he would lay himself open in two ways: first, by reporting misconduct, and second, by the chance of misrepresenting what actually had happened. One student accused Allen of assuming the role of a Catholic priest in requiring the letters.<sup>114</sup>

Some students did use the letters for airing their minor misdeeds. They gave excuses or charming descriptions of exactly what they had done wrong or why. One girl offered her own logical reason for talking in class: "The last school I attended was a school where there was little or no order and therefore you may imagine that it comes rather hard to me to keep from talking." Another seemed to understand her own shortcomings when she signed her letter, "Your pupil though not a scholar." Other students tried to make their behavior seem less important, such as the student who wrote, "Mr. Allen one thing I can say if I have been absent a good deal is that I have not been tardy," or "My general deportment has been about the same as usual, rather wild."<sup>115</sup>

One boy reported that he had spent the unhappiest week of his life because of some mischief in a nearby brook. He seemed to be sorting through an entire range of feelings: "I don't believe that I am the worst boy in the world though I am bad enough. In stopping up the brook I did not put in half of the things that filled it up . . . I think this trouble has done me a great deal of good. I have tried to do better ever since. I hope to do better still."<sup>116</sup>

Many students used the letters to discuss uneasy feelings or major emotional problems. One girl, whose mother and father had recently died, thanked Allen for being sympathetic after her sister's



death. She feared no one liked her. Others admitted fears about reading before the whole school for the first time, or fears about moving away. A student named Mary Bingham thanked Allen for "the pains you have taken with me. . . . Half of what was said of me was not true . . . Anna Johnson used to say anything about my mother and who could bear it. How I wish I never had been born for this to have my teacher hate me and no one speak to me. . . . I wanted to talk to you of this before but never dared."<sup>117</sup>

Such letters gave Allen insights to understand students better. Impressed, the Newton School Committee recommended that all teachers take up this practice of student letters.<sup>118</sup>

Normalites in the Model School

The main purpose of the model school was to provide an example of good teaching and a place for normal school students, or "normalites," to practice what they were learning. Although many educators agreed that a model school was an important part of teacher training, no one had determined exactly how one should operate. Probably the most commonly accepted method of training new teachers was emulation: through observing an experienced teacher, neophytes learned by example. Henry Barnard thought demonstration teaching so important that he built a portable classroom for use in Connecticut and Rhode Island teachers' institutes. Allen appeared to use emulation in the model school as well.<sup>119</sup>

Each normalite had three weeks scheduled in the school under Allen. During the first week, they simply observed, and for the following two weeks, they taught various subjects under his supervision. Allen

had these aspiring teachers write him weekly letters or reports in much the same way his students wrote. Thirty-five surviving letters from sessions during 1850-51 describe young women's feelings about being teachers, their successes and failures, and details of teaching tasks and individual students. The letters reveal personal, idiosyncratic reactions to work in the model school. The wide variety of concerns represented in them suggests that even this best of model schools lacked an organized, specific method of imparting practical teaching experience.

Within this context, however, some patterns emerge. Allen, for example, encouraged the young women to teach by asking questions. Some understood this approach and succeeded at having their students "think out difficulties for themselves." One even carried this philosophy into moral instruction. She preferred to use every day incidents as they arose rather than give specific moral lectures.<sup>120</sup>

Emulation as a training method caused normalities some anxiety because they didn't know exactly how they would be supervised. Allen did not leave them totally on their own — one referred to times when he corrected her. But others asked for much more active supervision from him. One pointedly wrote in her report, "So much for the faults of the scholars, I think the teacher has one very prominent one, that is he does not tell his assistants any of their faults, so that as far as being criticized is concerned, they go from the school as ignorant as they entered it."<sup>121</sup>

More striking than any issue throughout the letters is the overall feeling of success and confidence these young women felt about their

teaching in the model school. Even those who had not taught before or those who were younger than some of the students were pleased with their own performance. In nearly every case when a normalite's first letter to Allen indicated fear, uncertainty, or failure in some aspect of the work, a later letter described improvement and often a confidence beyond the writer's own expectations. They found better ways to explain arithmetic, or help individual students, or solve discipline problems over time.<sup>122</sup>

Normalites agreed that their time spent in the model school was the most valuable aspect of their normal school training. Some returned to their regular classes grudgingly. One Harriet Tainter spoke for many when she wrote, "I do not care about going back to school but I ought to give others a chance I suppose." Many normalites commented that they had never seen a better school than Allen's.<sup>123</sup>

Others in Newton admired his work. Allen had in fact won the confidence of both Peirce and the townspeople in spite of their differing philosophies. Peirce quickly approved of Allen's methods and also found in him a Unitarian ally. At the same time, more and more parents wanted their children to go to the model school. Some moved to West Newton for this purpose, and others wrote Allen, offering to pay tuition and trusting him to find good boarding places for their children. Some expected that the model school training was advanced enough to prepare their sons and daughters immediately for jobs in business or teaching. Soon Allen was turning away applicants because the school was full.<sup>124</sup>

With such success came job offers from throughout the state. Allen considered other positions, and consulted with his older brother, Joseph, but chose to stay in West Newton and used job offers as leverage for yearly salary increases of at least \$100, or about 20 percent per year.<sup>125</sup>

Horace Mann also noticed Allen's achievements and included him in gatherings at Mann's West Newton home. Whereas Cyrus Peirce had continued to cause problems and controversy in West Newton, Allen had won respect and affection in the community. When Peirce let his name be published as a vice president of the Anti-Slavery Society, some Board of Education members were convinced that he had triggered a new effort in the Massachusetts House of Representatives to abolish the Board and the normal schools. Mann finally moved Peirce out of the normal school and replaced him with Ebenezer Stearns, a younger, less controversial man.<sup>126</sup>

Given the problems Peirce caused in West Newton, Mann must have been extremely pleased with Allen's work. Not only had he won supporters, but he also provided a daily example of the sort of schooling Mann himself supported. Mann was not a teacher and had spent a limited amount of time in schools. His insistence on methods of schooling without the disciplinary rod could never have gained recognition without the efforts of remarkably successful teachers such as Allen. Mann acknowledged Allen's success by inviting the young teacher to join his lively West Newton household.

Life in Horace Mann's Household

Life in Horace Mann's household gave Allen a wide range of contacts in a world he found very exciting. At the center of it was Mann. Allen had long been in awe of him. He regarded Mann as a great reformer, similar to Martin Luther, William Ellery Channing, Theodore Parker, and William Lloyd Garrison, all were men who endured powerful opposition because they spoke out against societal wrongs. One of Mann's nephews, Julian Hawthorne, described him as a man who approached life seriously and grimly, always emphatically in earnest. Allen found him both charmingly persuasive and ruthlessly persistent when pursuing a favored cause.<sup>127</sup>

Mann had just been elected a United States Congressman in 1848, but maintained his position as Secretary of Education in Massachusetts. He was a tall, handsome man who was always on the move. He slowed down only when problems with his false teeth or stomach bothered him. He once told Allen, "It is next to impossible for a dyspeptic to be a Christian." Mann treated Allen almost as a younger brother and teased him about his good health and physique. He joked that Allen should be ashamed ever to be sick and recommended he "should get into a perspiration twice each day."<sup>128</sup>

Allen joined the Manns' active social life. He visited often at the house with their friends who were politically active, such as Senator Charles Sumner and Lydia Maria Child, editor of the Anti-Slavery Standard. Other frequent visitors championed new trends in educational thought: Catherine Beecher, advocate for women's education and calisthenics, who had opened her first school twenty-five years before;



Elizabeth Peabody, Mann's sister-in-law, who would bring the kindergarten movement to America; and Rebecca Pennell, Mann's niece, then a normal school instructor, who would soon become the first woman college teacher in America at Antioch. Nathaniel Hawthorne and poet Celia Thaxter added to cultural discussions.<sup>129</sup>

Although all these people expanded Allen's view of the world, he benefited most from his proximity to Horace Mann, who often took him along to special events, such as the inauguration of Mann's old friend, Jared Sparks, as Harvard president. In 1849, when Allen traveled with Mann for a week's stay at West Point, he witnessed Mann's powers of persuasion. There, Mann heard annual examinations and made a speech to Cadets. He refused to talk of battle or war, but instead spoke on peace and good will. Mann was clever enough to promote peace with an audience of soldiers and receive three cheers. Allen later learned Mann's method of reconciling his peace sentiments with his congressional duty to appoint West Point Cadets. He satisfied his own ideals through an annual ritual. Mann gathered all candidates in a village hall to judge their physical, mental, and moral powers. Then he chose the "meanest" of the lot as "good enough for gunpowder."<sup>130</sup>

Allen and Mann shared strong anti-slavery views. While Mann was Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, he avoided making public statements on the controversial slavery issue for fear of losing broad support for his educational reforms, but he privately supported the anti-slavery movement for years. When no one in Newton would board Chloe Lee, the first black student at a Massachusetts normal school, Mann took her into his home. Wendell Phillips and

Charles Sumner pressured Mann into taking a strong public position against expanding slavery. Once in Congress, he committed himself more fully to the cause. He admitted to his wife that he found much of Washington life disgusting and would give it up except for his desire to solve the slavery problem. When Mann emerged as an anti-slavery advocate, he became a sought after speaker for Free Soil meetings. Soon Allen's family and Free Soil friends requested that he use his influence with Mann to arrange visits in their towns.<sup>131</sup>

Living in Horace Mann's household earned Allen additional respect from his family and peers. It also reinforced his own beliefs on the issues of peace and slavery. The contacts Allen made with Boston's major intellectual and political figures there would continue throughout his life.

Allen's Political Activities  
and Travel South

Allen was influenced by Mann's anti-slavery stance, but he had always had his own strong political beliefs, and his family supported his views. Politics and public issues had always been of intense interest in the Allen family. One of Allen's cousins, William, wrote a presidential campaign poem at age nine. When slavery became a political as well as a moral issue, the Allens joined a small group of anti-slavery activists to form the fledgling Free Soil Party. Allen himself actively opposed Zachary Taylor in the Presidential election of 1848 through public and private debates. He and other Newton Free Soilers arranged meetings and conventions to develop strategy. With



bravado, Allen wrote to his friend, Richard Edwards, then teaching at Bridgewater, that it was "easy to silence a Taylorite gun."<sup>132</sup>

Almost every letter between Allen and his family members during this time included some reference to anti-slavery or Free Soil activities. Some of the Allens began to boycott Southern goods in opposition to slavery. They sealed letters with printed slogans: "One of the best, if not the very best means of spreading at the North a just sense of the wickedness and horrors of American slavery, is abstinence from the products of slave labor." In Syracuse, Allen's brother, Joseph, and his sister, Lucy, were also caught up in the anti-slavery movement. Although Lucy could not vote, she debated privately against Zachary Taylor, and Joseph Allen would soon help Samuel J. May rescue the accused fugitive slave, "Jerry," from U.S. Marshals. Allen's cousin, Ned, while in Baltimore, came across twenty or thirty white boys stoning a black man. He stopped them, but lamented to Allen that such incidents were common there. He described too the worn out bodies of black men, grown crooked from overwork.<sup>133</sup>

Many model school students and their parents shared Allen's interest in anti-slavery activities. At a time when some Americans demanded that William Lloyd Garrison be jailed for his abolitionist activities, one of Allen's students wrote, "Fifty years from now Garrison will be regarded as one of the greatest men that ever lived in America." Another student described his feelings towards an accused fugitive slave in Boston, "Crafts is a noble man. He would live a free man here or die." One student's father wrote Allen to schedule a discussion between Free Soil Party members to prepare for an upcoming caucus and

asked Allen to notify others, including the father of another student. It is quite likely that some of the parents who sent their students to the model school from outside the district did so because they agreed with Allen's political ideas.<sup>134</sup>

In 1851, Allen had an opportunity to examine slavery first hand when he took a trip south for his health. By this time, the model school had nearly 200 students and Allen's eyes began to give him trouble under the strain of long hours and overwork. Dr. John Dix, a Boston oculist, suggested he needed rest and might benefit most from spending the winter season in the South, away from the snow's glare.

Allen eagerly anticipated seeing the "Peculiar Institution" of slavery he'd heard so eloquently described by Frederick Douglass, one of its self-proclaimed graduates. The trip astonished some members of his family since none of them had ever been that far from home. Others were frightened for his safety. They read reports of violence over the slavery issue regularly now, and knowing that Allen had never hesitated to make his views known, they wondered if he wouldn't be too strongly tempted to speak out. Allen's parents especially tried to dissuade him from the trip. His father insisted that only harm could come from eating and using the products of slave labor for an extended time. His mother, fearful for both his physical and moral health, begged him not to visit such a "wicked" place as New Orleans. She implored him to recuperate in Delaware, Baltimore, or even Syracuse, all places where she had friends or relatives. But at twenty-seven, Allen was eager to travel independently and explore the world away from his family ties. Within a few weeks, he had arranged for his cousin to take over the model school and was headed South.<sup>135</sup>

Allen lost four or five pounds on the rough eight day sail from Boston to Charleston. Finally going ashore in a small boat, he stepped on to South Carolina land and marveled at cotton piled in all directions. He gaped at squads of the filthiest human beings he'd ever seen, groups of slaves laboring under lone white slave drivers. Allen "rolled into town" on his sea legs and counted five Negroes for every white. He caught himself staring. But others stared back at Allen and his young companion, Jeremiah Nelson, who acted as a scribe to Allen on the trip. By 1851, northern anti-slavery sentiment had grown so fierce that a vigilance committee of seventy Charleston citizens regularly followed strangers such as Allen in their community.

Allen was fascinated by the alien climate, the architecture, and the vegetation. As he walked among houses strangely discolored by weather and sea air, crowds of slaves moving on the outside of the sidewalk passed by him. Most, bareheaded and barefooted, bowed or curtsyed if Allen happened to glance in their direction. He saw a few well-dressed house servants, and when a beautiful young white woman passed in a carriage seated next to a black driver, he reflected that some Northerners would be shocked at how physically close they were.<sup>136</sup>

The courtesy that Allen gave blacks who provided directions for him or waited on his table surprised and angered other whites. While preparing to leave for Aiken, Allen and Jeremiah carried their own baggage to the train depot, leaving blacks as well as whites incredulous. Boarding on the "John Calhoun" car, they passed a crowded, filthy car dubbed the "Hyena," filled with newly purchased slaves en route to Alabama and Mississippi.



While traveling on the train at seventeen miles per hour, Allen admired the countryside — the forest and swamps. The palmetto trees were green from the January rainy season. Gardens were already planted along the railroad route. As the train rolled past tall straight pines and swamps, Allen heard local folklore he later shared with his family: "It is considered certain death for a white person to spend a summer's night in this region, so perfectly poisonous is the night air." A fellow traveler pinpointed the exact cause of the danger in the moss which hung thickly, dangling anywhere from two to six feet from tree branches. Allen described it as "very peculiar and beautiful [in] appearance though one wishes to hurry through such a place as quick as possible, even in the winter." His notion of plantations and wealthy slave owners changed as he passed lone miserable houses and saw behind them even more miserable slave huts.

Allen's courtesy to slaves created suspicion, and word of his anti-slavery sentiments spread quickly. In Aiken, the postmaster regularly opened his mail. His Boston friend Dr. Dix, who was wintering in South Carolina, received a letter from the Editor of the Charleston Courier warning that Allen's views were well known. Allen soon heard that South Carolina would certainly secede from the Union and that President Taylor would permit it. Once, while discussing disunion in an Augusta, Georgia, hotel, he incurred the wrath of some South Carolina citizens he'd mistaken for unionist Georgians. Only by quickly praising a prosperous South Carolina manufacturing town he'd just visited did Allen avoid a serious confrontation.<sup>137</sup>

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Although absorbed in the slavery issue, Allen also visited schools whenever possible. He made a trip to New Orleans to meet John Shaw, a fellow New Englander and friend of Horace Mann. As a prominent and outspoken member of the Massachusetts Legislature's Committee on Education during the 1840s, Shaw had defended Mann's Board of Education against attack at a critical time. He became Superintendent of the New Orleans schools and created a city-wide system of primary, intermediate, and high schools. Allen was surprised to find these schools among the best he had ever seen for instruction, order, and a "friendly feeling between the teacher and the taught." Much of Shaw's success resulted from his ability to attract good teachers, usually other New Englanders. Shaw had sufficient support from the city to pay superb salaries for that time: men teaching in intermediate schools earned \$1200 per year, and women teaching in similar schools for girls earned \$900 per year. This was significantly more than salaries in Newton. Even with his salary augmented by tuition-paying students from outside the model school district, Allen was then earning more than any other teacher in Newton at only \$700 or \$800 per year.<sup>138</sup>

The students Allen saw in Southern schools must have reminded him of his own students in West Newton, for although he was away from his work, he could not stop being a teacher. He collected specimens of unusual rocks and minerals to take back and maintained correspondence with his students. They were most interested in the South; Allen's trip gave the region a new and concrete significance for them. They became more aware of the political and economic manifestations of slavery. One girl who heard abolitionist minister Theodore Parker

describe New Englanders who became slaveholders once they had been in the South only a short time wrote Allen that she hardly thought Parker was alluding to him. Another, worried about Southerners' reactions to Allen, suggested an appropriate reply when they found him staring at blacks: he should simply explain that he was traveling because of his eye condition, and she advised, "tell them that you like to look at Black folks because it does not hurt your eyes so much as it would if they were any other color."<sup>139</sup>

Within a few months, Allen's eyes greatly improved and he headed home by train and stage. In Philadelphia, however, a minor case of food poisoning prevented him from traveling on schedule. His stomach pains became worse. A local doctor applied forty leeches to his stomach, but no relief came. In agony, Allen watched as twenty-four more leeches attached to his abdomen. He had little faith in Philadelphia physicians. They were at the center of allopathic medical practices, and Allen's family believed in hydropathic medicine, applications of cold water packs or baths to heal various ailments. Foul tasting medicines only made Allen worse. He sent letters to nearby friends in Baltimore for help as he grew weaker from loss of blood. After six days, his brother, George, arrived, took him out of bed, scrubbed him, and probably saved his life by simply letting him sleep. After days of rest, Allen traveled to his parents' Medfield home where he spent a few more weeks recuperating. When he arrived home in a weakened condition, his parents felt justified in their earlier worry over his trip. His father pronounced that "living off the produce of slave labor

[could] never produce flesh for a Christian but only bloating, which in the end produceth mischief."<sup>140</sup>

Still, the trip had been an important one for Allen, and such trips were in fact not unusual for northern teachers. Hundreds of male and female teachers traveled South during the mid-nineteenth century to teach for a few years or to establish permanent schools. Many of them certainly did not share Allen's strong response to slavery. A. De Puy Van Buren, for example, a northern teacher who published Jottings of a Year's Sojourn in the South in 1859, admitted that he wanted to produce "a pleasant volume filled with pleasant memories." He wrote "with perfect disregard for political prejudice, as if slavery did not exist in our Southern Border," and even dedicated his book to one wealthy plantation owner. Allen, in contrast, could not have returned home and written a "pleasant" description of what he had seen. Although the effects of Southern censorship and opposition to his ideas lingered and made him hesitant to write about anti-slavery opinions when he first returned, the trip as a whole only reinforced his sentiments. A few years later, after the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin, Allen felt he could have added a sympathetic chapter to the book based on what he had seen and learned while in the South. He would continue to share his experiences and sentiments with both friends and students.<sup>141</sup>

#### Developing a Professional Consciousness

After his return to West Newton, Allen worked with renewed energy to improve the model school and attract students. In 1851, he organized a fund-raising campaign among local citizens to construct in his building

what would be the first gymnasium in an American secondary school. Soon, nearby school boards voted teachers half days off so they could visit the school. In the 1852-53 school year alone, 1,000 visitors observed Allen's methods. Enrollment in that same year swelled to nearly 270 students with 150 applicants turned away. Allen refused countless job offers in order to stay in the model school near Mann.<sup>142</sup>

As Allen's reputation grew throughout his years at the model school, he was in a better position to promote the teaching profession in many ways. Allen had always informally shared job offers and ideas about teaching with relatives and friends, and he now extended this sharing through formal teachers' organizations and through his work with the normal school students.

Locally, he attended weekly teachers' meetings in Newton and debated such issues as whether textbooks should include slang and the resulting difficulties for a fellow teacher who severely whipped a young girl. Allen once presented a talk to the Newton teachers on the faults in public schools. On the state level, he attended music conventions in Boston and helped organize annual meetings of the Bridgewater Teachers Association. In 1850 he solicited convention resolutions for Bridgewater, such as one urging that Massachusetts have compulsory schooling (two years later the first such law was passed there). A friend wrote a resolution which read almost like a manifesto for political action. It stated, "That it is no less the teacher's duty to inform himself upon the various moral and political questions of the day, and having informed himself, to inculcate his views and carry out his principles upon all suitable occasions, than



it is to labor faithfully in the duties of the schoolroom." Whenever he could, Allen also attended large regional teachers' meetings, often in upstate New York.<sup>143</sup>

Because of Allen's convention activities and his prominent job as model school Principal, many teachers felt he had the background and circle of acquaintances to aid them in various pursuits. Some asked for his support in business ventures — starting up public elocution classes, or publishing a book of map outlines for teaching geography. Such ventures interested Allen little. Instead, he turned his attention to recommending candidates for teaching posts and to advising other teachers. He became a sort of broker for information and teaching jobs. He helped others purchase pianos, conferred over textbooks, and shared mineral samples. He encouraged countless beginning teachers in their first jobs. Most of these beginning teachers were former normal school students, but some went directly into teaching from the model school without further training. Some students enrolled in the model school specifically to prepare for teaching jobs as they felt Allen's reputation would guarantee them good positions.<sup>144</sup>

In 1853, Allen made a choice which would define the rest of his life. At the height of his success in the model school, Horace Mann decided to move to Yellow Springs, Ohio, to be founding president of Antioch College. The normal school was scheduled to move to larger quarters in Framingham. Instead of moving with it, or accepting other job offers, Allen chose to follow the advice of Mann, Theodore Parker, Charles Sumner, and others: he stayed in West Newton, bought the

normal school building, and rented Mann's house to start a family school with boarders. The desire to give free vent to his political beliefs was most likely one of his major reasons for choosing to run his own school.<sup>145</sup>

From 1848 to 1853, Allen had aided the fledgling normal school movement by providing a conspicuous example of good teaching and an opportunity for good practice teaching for normal school students. He tested his teaching methods and demonstrated them to other teachers. His tenure at the model school had built his reputation as an exceptionally qualified teacher. He could now use this success and his wide circle of acquaintances to begin a more challenging endeavor.

PART V

THE WEST NEWTON ENGLISH AND CLASSICAL SCHOOL

"I have never known anyone who has made so helpful or generous use of success."

Joseph H. Allen, Jr.<sup>146</sup>

The West Newton English and Classical School, commonly known as the Allen School, opened in January 1854 and flourished for nearly fifty years. Allen's partner in operating the school was his new wife, Carrie Bassett, a Nantucket high school teacher who had attended the West Newton Normal School. She would take a major responsibility for their boarding students. In this school, Allen would refine the features he had developed at the model school. He would make the school a fulcrum for the issues of anti-slavery, women's rights, the peace movement, and anti-imperialism.<sup>147</sup>

Education of Blacks and Young Women

Because Allen ran the West Newton English and Classical School independent of school committees, he could make it reflect his more radical political beliefs. At a time when most schools were racially and sexually segregated, Allen included both blacks and young women as students from the outset. Previous attempts to integrate black and white students in the North had caused strong and sometimes violent opposition. Legislators in Ohio, Iowa, and Kansas expressed strong objections to the use of public funds for black education, whether



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separate or integrated. In 1834, Prudence Crandall's private school for black girls in Canterbury, Connecticut, closed after numerous stonings, attempted arson, and a hastily passed state law against educating blacks who were not Connecticut residents. Local citizens in Canaan, New Hampshire, pulled the Noyes Academy to the ground after it admitted black students. Even in relatively tolerant Boston, Bronson Alcott's attempt to enroll one black student in his Temple School in 1839 caused white parents to withdraw their children and helped hasten the school's demise.

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Unlike his friend Alcott, Allen was able to garner wide support for his school even while taking a blatant abolitionist stand. He was an officer in Garrison's Anti-Slavery Society, and he became president of the West Newton Anti-Slavery Society. Allen often acted as a bodyguard for Wendell Phillips and for Charles Sumner during their public appearances. His home in West Newton became a station on the underground railroad for moving former slaves safely to freedom in Canada.

After the Civil War broke out, Allen hired a contraband black man to work for him and escorted him to a voting booth on election day so as to forestall harassment. Blacks in the North and South alike knew Allen's school well. Frederick Douglass wrote him, "I am glad to know that the school of which I have often heard, in W. Newton, is under your charge. I am sure that no harm can come to any from the lessons they learn under your care." In later years, Allen raised money for Booker T. Washington and encouraged one of his West Newton graduates, Ethel Shaw, to be an instructor at the young Tuskegee Institute.

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Nineteenth century women confronted educational discrimination almost equal to that encountered by blacks. A growing movement for women's rights advocated women's participation in journalism, medicine, law, religion, and politics, but entry into any of these fields required changes in the educational experiences available to girls and young women. Even at co-educational schools, girls often had a separate curriculum which stressed sewing or knitting. Some private seminaries for girls, such as Frances Willard's Troy Female Seminary in Troy, New York, offered academic education mixed with traditionally feminine household skills, but Willard also faced discrimination. She had to fight a keen political battle to establish her school.

When Allen opened his school, thirty-six per cent of his students were young women studying in the same classes as young men. Each year his catalog carried a rationale for educating the sexes together and, in publishing tuition rates of the school, he concluded that scholarships would be available for "desirable pupils, girls especially, when necessary." No record of scholarships for girls at any other school exists until women's colleges opened toward the end of the century.

Allen aided Lucy Stone's causes and contributed articles to her Women's Journal. As President of the Newton Woman's Suffrage Association, he campaigned for more women on the local school board and helped obtain local suffrage for women thirty years before the constitutional amendment for national suffrage.<sup>150</sup>

#### School Curriculum

The curriculum at the West Newton English and Classical School evolved from innovations that Allen began at the model school. His

practice of having students write him letters developed into a system of keeping journals for daily writing practice. Each student wrote at least a page per day about whatever interested him or her at the time. Teachers periodically reviewed the journals for style, spelling, and penmanship. Allen had one of the most advanced physical education programs anywhere in the country. In addition to light gymnastics, Allen's students were among the first to use roller skates (Allen's cousin James Plimpton invented the first guidable roller skate, which set off a craze for skating halls in America and Europe). Students boated on the Charles River and took hikes of seven to twelve miles, visiting Lexington, Cambridge, or Bunker Hill. On longer hikes, they slept overnight at a local farm or poorhouse. They used the school bowling alley, ball field, and even a 5000 square-foot swimming pond.

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The first kindergarten experiment in the United States as part of a larger school took place in the Allen School. Friedrich Froebel's concept of a less formal training program for younger students had only recently gained attention in America. In 1856 Margaretta Schurz, the wife of Carl Schurz, started a kindergarten in her Watertown, Wisconsin, home, and Elizabeth Peabody tried a short-lived experimental kindergarten in Boston in 1861. Many prominent Bostonians regarded kindergartens only as Peabody's hobby. Allen's brother James had returned from an 1859 European trip impressed with Froebel's theories, but <sup>he was</sup> unable to employ a German kindergarten teacher as Allen had requested. Allen <sup>as well as</sup> wanted to provide such a school for his own children ~~and~~ for others. In 1862, his former pupil, Isabel Welchman, began teaching the kindergarten. A year later, Louise Pollack took over. She was a German,



thoroughly trained in the method, who published pamphlets about her work with Allen and later ran the Kindergarten Normal Institute in Washington, D. C. for many years.

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Students from ages three to eight attended the kindergarten. That department of the school stressed training in "observation, conception and memory." Students were taught how to read simple prose and given oral instruction in French. Math lessons employed beans and kernels of corn. Children learned weights through actually measuring sand or grain before committing the tables to memory. Object lessons in natural history taught students to recognize minerals, plants, flowers, and characteristics of animals and insects.

Students from ages nine to thirteen attended separate classes in what Allen called the Training School. Here they continued object lessons and also began to learn reasoning and study habits through reading, mathematics, and geography. Students above thirteen years of age chose between a set of courses to prepare for college or to fit themselves for business careers. Occasionally Allen took special students, such as Rebecca Crumpler, a 44-year-old physician who wanted extra training in mathematics. Allen expected all students to learn at least one modern foreign language and to develop skills in drawing, painting, or music. He later diversified the school offerings by adding an Industrial Department at his family homestead in Medfield so that students could have practical experience in farming.

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Allen stressed the natural sciences--his mineral collection had 12,000 specimens. Allen's knowledge in this area was so respected he was appointed to the Harvard College examining committee in Natural History. His boarding students had garden plots in spring



and kept all manner of pets: rabbits, squirrels, pigeons, hens, lambs, ponies, even monkeys.<sup>154</sup>

Daily talks on current events kept students abreast of their time. Occasionally, Allen arranged for students to witness events in the making. In June 1854 he took students to Boston where abolitionists were outraged by a new Fugitive Slave Law. Under the new law, an accused fugitive could not testify in his own behalf. Abolitionists had recently failed in an attempt to rescue an accused fugitive, Anthony Burns, from jail where he was being held pending return to his former owner. Thomas Wentworth Higginson had plotted to rush the Court House with axes as Wendell Phillips, the great abolitionist orator, gathered a crowd at Faneuil Hall to follow and assist. When their timing became confused, deputy marshalls had stopped Higginson's men with gunfire, and one deputy was killed in the fracas. President Franklin Pierce immediately wired that the law should be enforced and Burns returned South at any expense. A few days later, Boston citizens turned out to see what might happen next.<sup>155</sup>

Allen and his students joined the fifty thousand spectators who mobbed Boston streets between the Court House and Long Wharf. Amid their jeers and shouts, a special marshall's posse and troops of U. S. Marines led the trembling Burns toward the dock and a cutter headed for Virginia. In the jostling, excited crowd, Allen became separated from his students. Although not part of Higginson's and Phillips's rescue plan, Allen's ardent opposition to slavery equaled theirs. Allen grew more angry as Burns and the Marines came nearer. Special police held back the crowd and artillery passed by. Allen

could not contain himself and his powerful voice boomed out, "Shame!" Authorities grabbed Allen and whisked him away for questioning.

When the crowd dispersed, Allen's students could not find him and did not know what had happened. They traveled the ten miles back to West Newton without him. Allen eventually returned home that evening as authorities had only detained him for a few hours. When he arrived, he was pleased to find students debating whether the North should aid the South in returning accused fugitive slaves. <sup>156</sup>

Allen's Students

Allen was able to educate the students he chose in the manner he chose because a core of wealthy liberal families continued to send him their children. Many of these parents were reformers or political radicals. One black who sent his daughter to Allen was Robert Smalls, who, while still a slave, executed a daring plot early in the Civil War to steal a Southern supply boat for the North. Other parents included the Free Soil politician Henry Wilson, who would become U. S. Vice President; women's rights activists Caroline Dall, Caroline Severance, and Mary Livermore; and Samuel Hill, an abolitionist who <sup>had</sup> organized an interracial utopian community in Florence, Massachusetts during the 1840s. Reformers such as Theodore Parker consistently donated money for scholarship students.

The school attracted students from all over the United States <sup>as well</sup> as thirty foreign countries. On the roster of students who would become prominent were William H. Dall, Alaskan explorer and early curator at the Smithsonian Institution; Tanetaro Megata, reportedly the first Japanese citizen to give a speech in English in America, and later Minister of Education in Japan; and Sarah Fuller, teacher of the deaf and



colleague of Alexander Graham Bell. In 1872, Jujoi Atzmori Shimidz, Japanese Prince Royeal and nephew of the Mikado, enrolled in the school. He arrived with sixteen servants, one for each year of his life. Allen explained that he would have to attend on the same footing as every other student, and, except for two servants who remained nearby, Shimidz dismissed the retinue.

Hundreds of Allen's graduates became teachers. Others would represent a wide variety of occupations: a federal judge, a Massachusetts Governor, a New York stock exchange president, and early women lawyers and physicians. Of Allen's lesser known students, many became officers in professional organizations, took part in community activities, and published articles and books in their fields. One such student was Lizzie Piper, a black born in New Bedford who entered the Allen School in 1865 at age sixteen. She accompanied Allen to Europe where she studied and tutored his children from 1869-71. Piper later taught school and ran a library before her marriage to a professor. In 1888, she moved with her husband and three children to Denver, but two weeks after their arrival her husband died and seven weeks later, their four-month-old baby was also dead. She arranged a loan with Allen to keep up her mortgage payments and then supported her children and became the Colorado editor for The Woman's Era, a Boston-based, black women's newspaper. One of her editorials in the mid 1890s praised the progressive legislation proposed by Colorado's three new women state representatives. They supported promotion of the sugar beet industry, equalization of divorce laws, and an industrial school for girls.<sup>157</sup>



Teachers in the Allen School

Allen consistently chose well qualified and professionally trained people to teach at the West Newton English and Classical School. Of 130 teachers listed for the period from 1854 to 1895, 33 had been to college (among them were 4 doctors of divinity, 2 medical doctors, and 1 doctor of philosophy). Twenty-nine of his teachers had had specialized teacher training at a normal school. These two groups exemplified the shift which Paul Mattingly described as taking place among more professional teachers during this time when normal schools were gradually replacing academies and colleges as an accepted training ground for the profession.

Some of the teachers without advanced training had specialized skills in art, music, or foreign languages. Many of these instructors were natives of France, Germany, or Italy. They lent a cultured, European air to the school, which was no doubt attractive to those upwardly mobile middle class parents who sent their children to Allen.

Of the remaining teachers without advanced formal training, twenty-five had been students at the West Newton English and Classical School and were, therefore, already familiar with school methods. Altogether, about one-third of the teachers were former Allen students, and they contributed a continuity to the school's philosophy and practice.

Further evidence of the professional nature of Allen's teachers were their activities outside of the school. Ten were published writers, mostly in the field of education. Others would continue on in educational careers. Seven became school principals or superintendents, and nine went on to teach in colleges or normal schools.

Distinctive teachers at West Newton included Bronson Alcott's



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cousin, William Alcott, a physician who taught physical culture and published over 100 works on physiology and education. Another who promoted physical health at Allen's school was Dr. Dioclesian Lewis, the first person to introduce Swedish light gymnastics in America and head of a teacher training school for physical education. Special guest lecturers who addressed the school as a whole ranged from educator George Emerson to an American Indian chief to William Wells Brown, the black physician and author.

Most academies rarely held teachers for more than a year or two. By contrast, two-thirds of Allen's teachers stayed at the school for three or more years, and nearly one-tenth taught for over ten years, some for thirty or forty years. The eighty-one women teachers and forty-nine men teachers taught at the school for about the same average number of years.

Allen maintained continuity of school management through a system of co-principals. His first co-principal was Cyrus Peirce. Their contract and subsequent financial records show equally shared profits after Allen took expenses for the building. When Peirce retired from the school, Allen had similar contracts with his brothers and cousins.

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Allen's family members played important roles in the school. Among those who set up households for boarding students and took on teaching responsibilities were his brother Joseph, who had originally inspired Allen to become a teacher and later carried out striking educational reforms as superintendent of the Massachusetts State Boys Reform School, and his brother James, who had studied European pedagogy <sup>as early</sup> as the 1850s. Others included Allen's Uncle Phineas, a

Harvard-educated language scholar who set up a multi-lingual household for foreign students, and Allen's cousin, William Francis Allen, a classics scholar who compiled the first book of American slave songs and who <sup>would later</sup> organize an advanced history program at the University of Wisconsin. (One of ~~William Allen's~~ <sup>would</sup> protégés ~~be~~ Frederick Jackson Turner.) By 1880, the Allens had such a far reaching reputation as teachers that Henry Barnard asked Allen's mother, Lucy Lane Allen, the family matriarch, to describe her own teaching experiences for his American Journal of Education.

Throughout the years, Allen continued to rely on his family members as teachers in the school. Each succeeding generation of Allens seemed to produce more teachers. As a family enterprise, the school kept Allens together and gave them a strong sense of identity. Allen's niece, Rosa S. Allen, taught in the school and in 1899 compiled a booklet of the songs Allens had sung for generations. Family Songs was the first publication of traditional songs in America. She knew them especially well because they were the same songs she had sung daily in the school. <sup>159</sup>

#### The Teacher as a Public Figure

Although his school kept Allen busy, he took an active interest in all schools. He described his attitudes toward public schools as

follows:

I believe the public schools of Massachusetts are superior to the private as a whole. I also claim, most emphatically, that a private school under equally competent management, if well sustained, should be superior to any public school. It is impossible to find a school committee who can manage or arrange a school so well or efficiently as competent teachers. Our mission has never been antagonistic to the best interests of the public schools. We know, the higher they rise, the more can our standard be raised. 160

He felt a commitment to improve all schools and played an active role in educational issues beyond his own school. He joined professional associations such as the American Institute of Instruction, where he gave the annual address in 1872. He was an early vice president in the Massachusetts Teachers Association, gave lectures to local teachers on such topics as modern reading methods, and served on the examining committee in Natural History at Harvard. The West Newton English and Classical School served as a demonstration school in much the same way the model school had. Large groups of teachers or normal school students came to observe Allen's methods. He also continued to attend teachers' conventions--some as far away as Chicago. 161

Two particular incidents put Allen and larger educational issues in the public eye. The first involved <sup>his</sup> taking a strong stand against a pending law which would require <sup>mandatory</sup> military drill in schools. In the 1860s, the Massachusetts Legislature considered such a law when high casualties from the Civil War led some to believe that better preparations would make a difference in future conflicts. Allen requested a hearing to protest state allocations for thousands of muskets and drillmasters. He solicited testimony from peace advocate William Lloyd Garrison and several educators who argued that military drill often exaggerated boisterousness in their students'

personalities. After debate from the opposition, Dr. Dioclesian Lewis staged a demonstration, putting both an ex-member of the 44th Regiment and a female gymnastics student through their exercises. He pointed out that over 100 more muscles <sup>were</sup> used and developed during gymnastics. The legislature seemed impressed, and the measure went no further. <sup>162</sup>

Commonwealth v. Nathaniel T. Allen

The second incident which put Allen in the public eye was much more complicated. It centered on a much publicized trial which threatened his reputation and the continuation of his school. It demonstrated how a teacher, who takes risks in how he educates can be vulnerable to public scrutiny. The trial would raise important questions about the rights and responsibilities of teachers, and the teachers' organizations Allen had helped form came to his defense during this <sup>critical</sup> time.

The incident began in November 1864, when one of Allen's 14-year-old students, Albion Emerson, fell while playing outside and injured his hip. The following day, he complained to Allen and to several others of pains, and two days later he could not get out of bed. Allen summoned a physician, Dr. Bigelow, whose advice was to take Albion home. Allen carried Albion to his mother's Boston home where, as he kissed Allen, the boy seemed somewhat better. But, five days later, while Allen was visiting, Albion died.

Not until weeks later did Allen learn that some people in Newton were spreading a rumor that Allen had caused Albion's death through a disciplinary punishment. He tried to ignore the stories but, when

a friend of Albion's mother decided to take advantage of the stories with a crude attempt at blackmail, Allen became very worried. His school was at a peak enrollment of 168 pupils. If people believed the rumors, they would withdraw their children. Allen could lose his stature in the community and his source of income for his wife and four children. He consulted several different friends for advice and decided to see a lawyer, who advised him to go naturally about his work because he had nothing to fear. Within a few short weeks, however, Allen was required to appear in court. Albion's mother and her friend had filed a formal complaint. 163

The trial of the Commonwealth v. Nathaniel T. Allen opened on March 2, 1865, in Superior Court of East Cambridge. Allen was charged with assault and battery on Albion Emerson. The prosecution called George Brown, a student, for its first witness. Brown testified that "Mr. Allen spoke to Emerson and said something about whispering, then went across the floor, took hold of and shook him, and the boy went down on the floor out of my sight . . . I did not hear any complaint from Emerson the next day, when he was at school."

Allen had recorded that day in his journal. His entry stated that Albion and others were tardy and were expected to stay in during recess in order to learn the morning hymn. Albion went out to recess and Allen sent for him. Taking his place next to the other boys, Albion broke another rule by whispering to them. When questioned about whispering, Albion lied. Only then did Allen remember giving him a moderate shaking to express his disapproval about lying.

William Brown, the second student witness, came next to the stand. "Mr. Allen saw or heard him, came and took hold of and pushed him once or twice against the blackboard," Brown said. "I thought he was thrown down violently. His clothes were somewhat disarranged and a button was torn from them. He was at school the next day and part of the next, but went home early that day which was Friday, complaining of being hurt." Brown continued about Albion, "I next saw him in bed, Saturday morning, at Mr. Allen's where he boarded. He was taken home on Sunday and I never saw him alive afterwards." The witnesses seemed to follow quickly. A student, George Barrett, said, "I never knew of Emerson's receiving any injury except by the hands of Allen." Another student, Henry Ethridge said, "Mr. Allen took him by the coat, bumped his head against

the blackboard, threw him down, and put his foot, I think, upon his breast."

Dr. Bigelow next came to the stand. He described his visit to Albion the night before his death, the boy delirious and hallucinating. He also performed the post mortem examination, finding the cause of death to be Pyremia--the deposit of pus matter in various parts of the body, usually resulting from a running sore or injury. "In his case, it was found in the lungs and liver, and was sufficient enough to cause death," the doctor said. "I examined the right hip and found it highly inflamed, inside and out; it would be fair to infer that the injury caused the disease of which the boy died."<sup>164</sup>

The defense opened its case. Twelve or fifteen students testified that Allen's punishment that day had been moderate and left no strong impression. In addition, many testified that after Allen shook Albion, the boy turned to a friend, laughed and whispered again.<sup>165</sup>

Character witnesses testified for Allen. Among them were the most respected educators in the Boston area, John Philbrick, Superintendent of the Boston Schools, and George Emerson, <sup>who had been</sup> first principal of Boston English School. A stream of public figures described Allen's constant patience and generosity toward his students: former Governor Thomas Rice, former Speaker of the House of Representatives James Goodwin, physicians, lawyers, and clergymen.<sup>166</sup>

Perhaps the most powerful testimony to Allen's character was unsolicited letter placed on his desk shortly before the trial. A group of 115 students determined that reports against Allen were,

in fact, injurious to them because, they said, "it would imply a suffrance on our part of what would be unmanly and improper to endure." 167

The trial closed for the day. Newspapers reported an unusually large number of women in the crowded courtroom. Allen worried about his wife Carrie and all their friends who were listening to the testimony. Even if acquitted, Allen worried that the trial would harm his reputation and the reputation of his school. 168

On March 3, Judge Brigham charged the jury with making a decision. He emphasized the importance of guarding the rights of both pupil and teacher in considering their relationship, and urged that a loose application of the law would not change the quality of education, nor the ease parents feel when leaving their children under the responsibility of another adult. He stressed that their job was only to determine Allen's guilt or innocence.

After only a short time out, the jury acquitted Allen.

Some jury members immediately came over to congratulate him. Letters of shared happiness poured in. Even Carrie's dressmaker penciled a note on a scrap of paper to express her joy at the trial results. She had had no doubt that it would turn out in his favor. When she heard bells and cannons signifying Lincoln's second inauguration that day, she wrote, "We could hardly tell which the Bells and Cannon were for--Mr. A. or the President." 169

Allen had little energy to think about Lincoln, whom he greatly admired. Instead, he continued to worry about how the trial would affect his school. It wore on him. Within a few days, Allen underwent a startling physiological change. He recorded in his journal,



"My hair turned completely gray." 170

The rumors did persist. They were spread, most likely, by those who were either jealous of Allen's self-confident manner or those who disagreed with his tolerant beliefs regarding blacks. The war had just ended. Many bereaved Northerners who had lost family and friends blamed the war on abolitionists such as Allen. As late as 1978, one Newton resident whose mother had attended the Allen school claimed that Allen had thrown Albion down a flight of stairs and had in fact caused his death. 171

In the aftermath of the trial, prominent teachers organized to defend Allen's reputation. The group signed an article in the Massachusetts Teacher to that purpose and reproduced it in popular newspapers throughout the state. In it, they posed two questions: first, what was the cause of Albion's death; and second, if Allen was not guilty, why was he prosecuted? They reasserted Allen's innocence by summarizing the incidents involved and by publishing doctors' certificates which verified that Albion's injury resulted from his fall. They dismissed the second question as to why Allen was prosecuted by writing simply, "an ample answer may readily be conjectured by any person who knows anything of the character of the complainants." They were no doubt alluding to Albion's mother's occupation, listed in Allen's enrollment book as "Keeper house of ill fame."

This article signified the growth of a sense of solidarity and shared professional concerns among teachers in a manner that could not have happened thirty years before without the advent of professional organizations and journals. Additionally, this group, by dismissing the claims of



Albion's mother and her friend, indicated their perception of their own elevated status as teachers. 172

Only two people seemed to understand the larger import of the trial as to its future effect on teachers. Judge Brigham was the first who was aware that teachers and students still had no clearly defined rights in disciplinary situations. He reminded the jury that they were not responsible for determining teachers' duties or rights. He asked them to separate their thoughts about what constituted proper teacher behavior from their decision about Allen's guilt or innocence--Brigham realized that this issue was powerful enough to affect their judgement. The second person concerned about this issue was Samuel Gridley Howe, a Boston reformer and founder of the New England Asylum for the Blind, who had once asked Allen to follow him as head of that school. He wrote a letter indicating that the trial had set off debate about disciplinary practice among teachers. He stated a dictum that would be part of professional debate until the present day: he recommended that teachers never touch children except when they were in danger. 173

As time passed, Allen realized that the trial had not hurt his school. It continued to attract students and prosper.

European Travel and Continuing Work

In 1868, Allen had been teaching almost continuously for more than twenty-five years. The responsibilities of a large school and boarding students had sometimes been too great--he and his wife had needed long rests away <sup>from the school</sup> to recover from overwork. Allen needed a change. He planned an extended trip to Europe.



When Henry Barnard, then the first U. S. Commissioner of Education, learned that Allen was going to Europe, he asked him to act as his agent and to study European schools. He also asked Allen to take his son, Henry Barnard, Jr. along. Allen was pleased to take both responsibilities. In 1869, he left his school in the care of his brother Joseph and set off for a two year stay in Europe.

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With letters of introduction from Barnard and from Ambassador George Bancroft, Allen visited hundreds of schools, mostly in Prussia. Unlike Barnard, Horace Mann, Calvin Stowe, and Victor Cousin who previously had reported favorably on German schooling, Allen was able to view the system from the perspective of twenty-five years of actual classroom experience. As an activist, he also judged what he saw according to his reform beliefs. His reports to Barnard amplified the social and political implications of European educational practices.

Allen met Froebel's widow and admired her kindergarten. He satisfied himself that his kindergarten in West Newton was a true representation of Froebel's ideas. He had long talks with Baroness Bertha von Marenholtz-Bulow who had first met Froebel in 1849 and introduced him to German court circles. Allen was especially impressed by her ability to translate Froebel's theories into practical methods. By this time, she had more than a dozen publications in different languages and had set up kindergartens throughout Europe.

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Allen admired the superior training of German teachers and their ability to produce qualified scientists. He saw students who at eighteen or nineteen had mastered all the scientific branches of



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study then taught at Yale or Harvard. In a letter to his students, Allen described how they would benefit if, like the young Germans, they could read and write "the three great modern languages--English, German and French." 176

After studying German schools exclusively for nearly a year, Allen had several objections to their system. First, they had poor buildings and furniture. He wrote, "I could not consent to send my son or daughter to one out of ten of them solely on physical reasons as the ventilation is terrible & the air one breathes in them really dreadful." He described "inconvenient desks and benches without backs to them, such as were seen in our New England school buildings fifty years ago." 177

Allen also would not have subjected his children to the "denominational, narrow, bigoted" nature of the schools. He felt students spent entirely too much time in strict Lutheran religious studies, even when their religion outside of school was different. Further, he found the schools "grossly unjust and illiberal toward women." Except for the first three grades, boys and girls were never in the same schools, and girls, judged mentally inferior, were prohibited from taking Latin, geometry, algebra, natural philosophy, and many other subjects. Following this same line of reasoning, Germans employed few women teachers. Allen found "neither the government, professors or the community consider the sex fitted for the work." One man assured him that "ladies were too irritable and have too little self control to manage children well." 178

Allen's strongest objection was against the universality of one teaching method. Almost all subject matter was given through

lectures without the aid of textbooks. Students diligently filled copybooks with notes and submitted them for inspection. Allen complained that it was " the 'pouring in process' carried to its extreme, not at all that drawing out process on which true education so largely depends." He went on,

I have never seen, in all my experience in these German schools, a pupil raise his hand for questioning the teacher upon anything he has said, and just here is the great difficulty and fault in this method of instruction when used so exclusively. The pupil is taught to receive each statement without a doubt of its accuracy, thus failing to develop that habit of questioning, examining & proving all things . . .

Allen was convinced that this method would "repress individuality and independence of thought and research." 179

Allen was especially interested in the professional status of German teachers. He noted, "As a profession that of teaching is as thoroughly established as the ministerial, legal or medical. It is not made a stepping stone to other professions in Germany as it so often is with us." Those who would become teachers prepared for their work from early schooling through universities. All teachers in the country were under strict government supervision and were required to have strong intellectual and religious qualifications. Allen noted, "Professors and teachers are universally respected and held in higher esteem by the community than with us. They are not worked so severely as are our teachers in their schools and they often add to their income by giving private lessons outside of school." 180

On his return, Allen published a summary of his two years' observations in a U. S. Department of Education Circular and as the 1872 annual address to the American Institute of Instruction.



When Allen returned to West Newton in 1871, some students and friends feared that he might not continue with the school. A group of ex-students planned a large reunion and celebration to welcome him home. In what would become a pattern over the next thirty years, those present praised Allen's work and urged him to continue. William Lloyd Garrison could not attend, but he congratulated Allen with a letter. While praising his past example of "disregarding complexional caste," Garrison encouraged Allen's continued educational endeavors for "the public safety, the general welfare, the preservation of liberty, and the maintenance of free institutions."<sup>181</sup>

Allen did continue his work, but by this time, the most interesting part of his career had passed. He would make few other pedagogical innovations. As the number of public high schools increased, he had fewer pupils. As he grew older, Allen had less energy. Occasional illness made him consider leaving the school for retirement in Medfield. He even had plans drawn for a new stone house there, but he would never build it. Now the children and even grandchildren of his former pupils expected to attend his school, and Allen couldn't refuse them.

He managed the details of the school until he was 78. Allen also remained active in politics and civic activities. He, his wife Carrie, and his sister Abby Davis founded a women's rights group in Newton and he aided in Abby's successful campaign as the first woman school committee member in their town. He joined the anti-imperialists in opposition to the Spanish-American War, and refused to fly an American flag over his school for the war's duration. With student correspondence, school business, and



political activities, Allen sometimes wrote as many as eighty letters per day. 182

Finally, in 1901, Allen sold the school. That same year he visited former pupils in Cuba and became even more committed to that island's independence. Until he died in 1903, Allen would continue to correspond with former students and promote his political beliefs.

Allen's family background had steered him in the direction of public service. Once he began teaching, he wanted his life to serve as an example to his students. He believed Horace Mann's maxim, "As is the teacher, so is the school." Allen's profession made him a public figure, and others both accepted and came to expect his way of life. His teaching, his political work, and his community involvement served as a response to a statement from his cousin, Charles Adams, when they were beginning teachers: "There is a vast amount of good to be done in the world . . . there are only a few to do all this-- you and I know what is to be done. We have no excuse for not doing it." 183

PART VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study sets forth the educational theories and practices of Nathaniel T. Allen. Although he has been overlooked until now because his papers were undiscovered and because he never published about his work, Allen stands out as a significant figure in nineteenth century education. His early work in the model school, his European tour, his commitment to equal educational opportunity, and the longevity of his West Newton English and Classical School mark an important career in the history of American schooling.

Allen as a Transitional Figure

Allen is best understood as a transitional figure who made significant contributions to both pedagogy and to the wider professionalization of teaching. He followed in the tradition of his friends Bronson Alcott, George Bancroft, and William Alcott in trying to institute Pestalozzian practices in America, but unlike any of their short-lived experiments, his own teaching and demonstration of these methods continued for sixty years. Throughout this time, he experimented with new methods and linked Pestalozzian practice with what would be later labeled progressive education. He promoted kindergartens, physical education, and nature study while also emphasizing social reforms. Such an approach to schooling would not be widespread until the progressive education movement gained popularity after the turn of the twentieth century. Because Allen was well known and his school so long-lived, he gave credibility to these practices. Because so many of his own students became teachers, they may have



accelerated acceptance of such practices in the progressive era.

Allen's life provides a case study in the developing profession of teaching. Much of his experience illuminates the typical situations encountered by nineteenth century American teachers and their increasing efforts at professionalism. From the very beginning of his teaching in 1842, Allen's correspondence with other teachers created a sense of professional kinship while sharing information about the work. He and others attended early teachers' institutes and went on to the first public normal schools for teacher training. They participated in the forming of local, state, and regional organizations for teachers. Allen himself took a leadership role in the Bridgewater Normal Association, was an early vice president of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, and gave a major address to the American Institute of Instruction. By actively supporting all these organizations, he helped create a forum where teachers could address professional issues. Allen further aided the profession through training several hundred teachers, both in the model school and in his own West Newton English and Classical School. Teachers' reactions to Allen's trial indicated some level of professional organization but also raised the problem of a uniform code of behavior.

Allen is a transitional figure from the larger perspective of social history. His life reflected the changes taking place in America during the nineteenth century. Especially in the Northeast, people were moving away from the centuries old structures based on family or religious ties into larger associations and institutions for both business and social purposes. Throughout his career, Allen relied on and cultivated family and religious ties while he created and joined new institutions and associations. Examples of very good teachers within his family encouraged Allen to try teaching and to



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teach in a humane fashion. Family members also helped him locate teaching positions and decide to attend the Bridgewater Normal School, itself an example of a new institution. His training at Bridgewater eventually led to his work at the model school in West Newton, also part of a larger institution for teacher training. Allen's close alliances with family members helped him provide *teaching of quality* and continuity at the West Newton English and Classical School. At the same time, he relied on teachers' journals which promoted some of the new methods he used, and teachers' organizations defended his reputation after his trial. The success and longevity of the West Newton English and Classical School depended on Allen's ability to continue old alliances and form new ones.

#### Further Study

This study suggests other potential areas for research in the future. The Allen manuscript collection is a rich resource and should be used. One potential area for study is a comparison of teacher training methods. Although the normal schools provided an important training ground for Allen, the number of teachers who had attended normal schools by 1860 was still small. Many who attended normal schools in early years never taught. At the same time, many of Allen's students became teachers *immediately* after their attendance at the West Newton English and Classical School. A comparative study between Allen's graduates and normal school graduates would demonstrate the continuing importance of a variety of training possibilities for teachers and determine what kinds of students were more committed to teaching as a lifetime profession.

Other studies of nineteenth century teachers have portrayed them as apolitical. Yet Allen's political activities were as important to him as his teaching. In addition, many early leaders in the normal schools were also strong anti-slavery activists. These included Samuel J. May, Cyrus Peirce, Nicholas Tillinghast, and Allen's Bridgewater classmate Richard Edwards, who became head of the Illinois Normal University. According to Allen's correspondence, many of the West Newton "normalites" were Free Soilers. We need further study on the connection between <sup>those in</sup> early normal schools and <sup>reform</sup> political activity.

The West Newton English and Classical School makes us question existing concepts of New England academies--the school was longer lived, had a wider age range of students, a more diverse curriculum, and a more professional, committed teaching staff. The school appears to deserve mention as another academy model.

Enough information on Allen's students is available to complete an in-depth study on their backgrounds and later lives. Some interesting questions might include the following: what was the financial background of students; how did students' later occupations vary from those of their parents; what types of foreign students attended the school; how many students were Unitarians; did student letters and journals display typical or atypical attitudes and concerns for their time?

In another area, Allen's library has survived almost intact, and his catalogs through the years list textbooks used in his school. A study of these books would determine more of Allen's philosophical approach and allow comparison of his curriculum with other schools.

Finally, an area related to Allen has shown that the history of



education can provide a compelling resource for community preservation activity and for history curriculum at the elementary and secondary school level. Allen's home and papers furnished the impetus for a major community preservation effort which successfully saved his home, library, and papers. Local teachers developed a new history curriculum utilizing the Allen papers. They found that students who were previously uninterested in history found something appealing in educational history because they had all been in school and could relate it to their own lives. These teachers have received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to expand their program in the greater Boston area. Educational historians have a responsibility to encourage and facilitate such efforts.

#### Conclusions

Nathaniel Allen deserves recognition as an important educator in his own right and as a case study in a developing profession. The papers in the Allen manuscript collection are a rich resource that should be used both by scholars and by teachers who want to expand their history curriculum.

Allen demonstrates what is possible in running an innovative institution for an extended time. His work is an example of the diversity which has long existed in American education, but has not always been recorded. Historians need to search out and document that diversity.

## FOOTNOTES

(Unless otherwise noted, Allen papers are located in the Allen collection, West Newton, Massachusetts; School Committee Reports in State Library, Boston.) NTA = Nathaniel Topliff Allen.

<sup>1</sup>Cyrus Peirce to Horace Mann, 6/4/1839, Mann Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>2</sup>The best description of teachers' examination is in Willard Elsbree's The American Teacher (1939), pp. 178-191. The descriptive section of Allen's teaching examination is found in his MS Reminiscences, Book, I, pp. 24-26.

<sup>3</sup>Quotes from the Mansfield School Committee found in their Annual Report, 1842, MS in Massachusetts State Library.

<sup>4</sup>Physical description of Allen from Mary A. Greene, Nathaniel T. Allen, Teacher, Reformer, Philanthropist (1906), passim, and photos of Allen in NTA collection.

<sup>5</sup>Barbara Finkelstein cites the attention focused on teachers' fashioning pens from quills and teaching their students to do the same in her doctoral dissertation, "Governing the Young: Teacher Behavior in American Primary Schools, 1820-1880," (1970), pp. 56-58. Allen never really knew whether the committee would have hired him without the ability to point pens. Warren Burton, The District School As It Was, (1850), p. 92.

<sup>6</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I.

<sup>7</sup>Frank Allen Hutchinson, Genealogy and Historical Sketches of the Allen Family of Dedham and Medfield, Massachusetts, 1637-1890, (1896), passim; William Tilden, History of Medfield, (1887), p. 21.

<sup>8</sup>George Allen to Aunt Sally, 2/16/1872, in NTA MS; Interview with Rebecca Allen Renear, May, 1980; NTA to Noah Allen, 12/3/1902, in Rebecca Allen Renear collection; NTA to Henry and James Plimpton, 4/8/1879, in NTA MS; Vance Randolph, Ozark Folksongs, Vol. I, (1980), pp. 423-424.

<sup>9</sup>David Allmendinger describes the change in New England farming in Paupers and Scholars, (1975), see pp. 4-18; James A. Henretta "Families and Farms: Mentalité in pre-Industrial America," The William and Mary Quarterly, (1978), pp. 3-32.

<sup>10</sup>"Phineas Allen," in Eugene Fay, An Illustrated Biographical Catalogue of the Principals, Teachers and Students of the West Newton English and Classical School, 1854-1893, (1895), pp. 10-11. Hutchinson, passim; Phineas Allen MS Diary, begun in 1829, in private family collection, Philadelphia.

<sup>11</sup>Biographical notes on Lucy Lane Allen, MS in NTA MS.

<sup>12</sup>Ellen B. Washburn, printed Christmas letter, (1893), in Rebecca Allen Rinear collection.

<sup>13</sup>Copy of deed from Phineas to Ellis Allen in Rebecca Allen Rinear collection; Hutchinson, passim; "The Late Ellis Allen," Norfolk County Gazette, March 20, 1875; Washburn, Christmas letter; Frederick Douglass to NTA, 7/6/1882, in NTA MS.

<sup>14</sup>NTA, remarks in "Exercises at Chenery Hall," on dedication of a new cemetery in Medfield, 2/22/1890, in NTA MS.

<sup>15</sup>Washburn, Christmas letter; Hutchinson, p. 29; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book I; U.S. Census; Joseph A. Allen, "North Street in Medfield as It Was 70 to 75 Years Ago," Speech read to Medfield Historical Society, June, 1898, MS in Rebecca Allen Rinear collection.

<sup>16</sup>Tilden, p. 224; Ruth N. Allen, "Medfield of Yesteryear," MS in Rebecca Allen Rinear collection; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book I.

<sup>17</sup>Allen, "North Street in Medfield"; NTA to Noah Allen, 12/3/1902, Rebecca Allen Rinear collection; Hutchinson, p. 30; NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.; Greene, p. 17; NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book II; "Remarkable Trio of Allens," clipping, n.d., in Rebecca Allen Rinear collection; NTA, "Copy of my answers to inquiries concerning my educational life made by the Mass. Teachers Association," 12/1884, MS; Andrew Dickson White, Autobiography of Andrew Dickson White, (1905), pp. 8-12.

<sup>19</sup>Lucy Lane Allen, "Old Harvard," clipping from Medfield newspaper, 6/1878, in NTA MS. The whole Allen family anticipated and celebrated Joseph Allen's graduation from Harvard. Lucy Lane, then engaged to Ellis Allen, made fine clothes fitting for the occasion: ruffled shirts, elegant coats, and silk stockings tied at the knee with ribbon for the men, and for herself, a new white muslin dress and silk gloves that reached above her elbows. The family and several buggies of friends set off at 4:00 a.m. for the Cambridge graduation with plenty of food to serve to others throughout the day. They even hired people to carry food and help serve. They finally returned home well after midnight.

<sup>20</sup>Caroline Stetson Allen, Children of the Parsonage, (1900), pp. 16, 37, 84; Memorial to Joseph Allen and Lucy Clark Allen (by their children), (1891), pp. 102-103.



<sup>21</sup>Judith Strong Albert, "There is No Place Like Home," Harvard Educational Review, LI (1981), pp. 565-576; Memorial to Joseph and Lucy Clark Allen, p. 94.

<sup>22</sup>Memorial to Joseph and Lucy Clark Allen, pp. 96, 104.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 118; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book I.

<sup>24</sup>Edward Everett Hale in "Introduction," Children of the Parsonage.

<sup>25</sup>NTA Speech to Schoolmasters Club, 12/17/1892, printed program in NTA MS; Phineas Allen MS Diary, begun in 1829, in private family collection, Philadelphia; obituary of Lucy Maria Allen Davis, Dedham Transcript, 12/15/1900; NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I. Katz in the Irony of Early School Reform (1968); and Bowles and Gintis in Schooling in Capitalist America (1976), suggest that interest in school reform grew from a desire to exert social control on a rapidly changing society.

<sup>26</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I.

<sup>27</sup>See Frederick Binder, The Age of the Common School (1974) and Lawrence Cremin, American Education, The National Experience (1980).

<sup>28</sup>Horace Mann to Cyrus Peirce, 11/3/1845, in Mann collection, Massachusetts Historical Society; Etiza Ripley to Martha, 9/10/1838, in Douglas-Maney Papers, Tennessee State Library, Nashville.

<sup>29</sup>Chaotic realities of district school teaching are described in many literary and historical sources. See especially David Tyack, The One Best System (1972), Finklestein, Burton, Catherine Fennelly, Town Schooling in Early New England (1962).

<sup>30</sup>Mansfield School Committee Report, 1840-41; Memorial to Joseph and Lucy Clark Allen, pp. 117-118; NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I.

<sup>31</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I.

<sup>32</sup>Charles Adams to NTA, 1/12/1843; Augustus W. Whipple to NTA, 1/1/1843, 1/4/1843; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book I; the Northfield School Committee Report of 1845-1846 praises teachers for visiting each other's schools when Allen and his cousin Edward taught there; Charles Adams to NTA, 12/10/1842; Edward A. H. Allen to NTA, 12/11/1842; William B. Fowle to Horace Mann, 10/27/1845, in Mann Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>33</sup>Charles Adams to NTA, 1/12/1843; Augustus W. Whipple to NTA, 6/20/1843, 2/6/1844, 12/8/1842; Joseph Allen to NTA, no date; Edward A. H. Allen to NTA, 11/5/1844; NTA MS Commonplace Book, p. 56; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book I.

<sup>34</sup>David Atwood to NTA, 12/14/1846; Augustus W. Whipple to NTA, 12/8/1842; Edward A. H. Allen to NTA, 12/6/1846; William F. Allen to NTA, 1/1850; James T. Allen to NTA, 12/1849; Northbridge School Committee Annual Report, 1846-47; Medfield School Committee Annual Report, 1840-41.

<sup>35</sup>James T. Allen to NTA, 12/1849; Augustus W. Whipple to NTA, 12/8/1842, 1/1/1843.

<sup>36</sup>William F. Allen to NTA, 1/1850; Augustus W. Whipple to NTA, 7/17/1843; NTA to George Allen, 7/21/no year; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book I.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.; some families were as entertaining to district school teachers as others were threatening. When Allen taught in Northboro, one family of children traveled through the woods for a mile in a sleigh harnessed to their father's horse. When they got out of school, the old family dog drove the horse home. In the afternoon, the horse arrived at school, driven by the dog with reins in his mouth. Dog and horse would turn around and wait for dismissal time. (NTA MS Reminiscences, Book I); James T. Allen to NTA, 12/1849.

<sup>38</sup>Charles Adams to NTA, 12/10/1842; 1/2/1843.

<sup>39</sup>Salem School Committee Annual Report, 1845-46; Northboro School Committee Annual Report, 1845-46; Woburn School Committee Annual Report, 1847-48; Augustus W. Whipple to NTA, 12/25/1843; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book I; NTA MS of speech to Schoolmasters Club, no date.

<sup>40</sup>Edward A. H. Allen to NTA, 12/6/1846; David Atwood to NTA, 12/14/1846; Augustus W. Whipple, 12/8/1842.

<sup>41</sup>Northfield School Committee Annual Report, 1844-45; Plymouth School Committee Annual Report, 1846-47.

<sup>42</sup>Northfield School Committee Annual Report, 1842-43; Mansfield School Committee Annual Report, 1841-42; Cyrus Peirce to Horace Mann, Mann Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Groton School Committee Annual Report, 1849-50; Edward A. H. Allen to NTA, 12/6/1846.

<sup>43</sup>Cyrus Peirce to Horace Mann, 12/14/1840, 4/19/1840, 9/18/1840; Jacob Abbot to Horace Mann, 12/7/1839; all in Mann Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>44</sup>Augustus W. Whipple to NTA, 2/11/1843; William F. Allen to NTA, 1/1850.

<sup>45</sup>Augustus W. Whipple to NTA, 1/1/1843, 5/20/1843, 6/20/1843, 7/17/1843; Joseph Allen to NTA, no date, 6/25/1845; Charles Adams to NTA, 6/29/1843.

<sup>46</sup>Charles Adams to NTA, 11/24/1845.

<sup>47</sup>Charles Adams to NTA, 5/9/1844, 8/26/1845.

<sup>48</sup>Jonathan Messerli, Horace Mann (1971), pp. 325, 364; general discussion of normal schools from J. P. Gordy, Rise and Growth of the Normal-School Idea in the United States (1891), and Writers Project of the Work Projects Administration, The State Teachers College at Westfield (1941), especially pp. 25-26.

<sup>49</sup>Paul H. Mattingly, The Classless Profession (1975), p. 146. See the following School Committee Reports: Gloucester, 1844-45; Kingston, 1844-45; Woburn, 1844-45; Northboro, 1844-45; Mansfield, 1841-42; Kingston, 1846-47; Northboro, 1846-47; Shrewsbury, 1846-47.

<sup>50</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I; Joseph Allen to NTA, 6/25/1845.

<sup>51</sup>From Mann's speech at Bridgewater on August 19, 1846, in Henry Barnard, Normal Schools (1851), p. 165.

<sup>52</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I.

<sup>53</sup>Barnard, Normal Schools, p. 165.

<sup>54</sup>Albert G. Boyden, "Life at Bridgewater Sixty Years Ago," MS in Bridgewater State College Archives.

<sup>55</sup>Mattingly, p. 146; A. C. Boyden, Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the State Normal School (1915), pp. 63-64; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book I; MS Record Book of the Bridgewater Normal School, in Bridgewater State College Archives (Vol. 1); Tillinghast even married for the first time because he believed a wife would help him at Bridgewater.

<sup>56</sup>Francis Jackson, Account Book of the Boston Vigilance Committee (reproduction of the original held by the Bostonian Society), p. 13; NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I.

<sup>57</sup>Ned Harland Dearborn, The Oswego Movement in American Education (1925), pp. 57-58; Barre Normal School had a definite Pestalozzian stamp as well. See The State Teachers College at Westfield (1941), p. 30; Monroe, passim; NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I. Tillinghast or his assistant Greene taught from platforms built on three sides of the town hall rooms. At the beginning of Allen's second term in 1846, he attended a dedication of the nation's first permanent normal school in Bridgewater, and the school moved into the new building. Horace Mann had finally garnered the necessary financial support for this building by appealing to individual contributors who provided funds and the necessary land. The successful Boston schoolmaster, George B. Emerson, gave a furnace. This new building seemed gloriously large and well-equipped. The upstairs portion housed the main schoolroom and two recitation rooms. Downstairs were a chemical room, the model school, and two anterooms. Each room had large windows, new furniture, and blackboards all around the walls.

<sup>58</sup>NTA, MS Bridgewater Normal Journal, pp. 7, 31, 51-53, 56, 67.

<sup>59</sup>Boyden, Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the State Normal School, p. 70.

<sup>60</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I; Bridgewater Normal Journal, pp. 52-53; State Normal School Journal, pp. 3, 15; Mattingly describes teachers of this period as very much concerned with developing "character" in their students. Tillinghast at one point brought moral training into his discussions of arithmetic when he described profit and loss as "the most neglected of Branches but the most important for any man . . . every question in arithmetic is a question of right and wrong, a question of morality." (NTA in State Normal School Journal, p. 49) Finklestein reviews arithmetic texts of this time, giving special explanations of Colburn's method and Pestalozzian exercises in "Governing the Young," pp. 77-78.

<sup>61</sup>NTA, MS Bridgewater Normal Journal, passim.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., pp. 53, 55, 57.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 38-39, 43.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 52, 56, 67, 69-71; NTA MS State Normal School Journal, p. 11.

<sup>65</sup>NTA, MS Bridgewater Normal Journal, pp. 53, 54, 57.

<sup>66</sup>Joseph F. Kett, in Rites of Passage (1977), describes the gradual physical and emotional maturing process of young people in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Young men at that time did not reach full physical height until age twenty-five. See pp. 44-45. Tillinghast emphasized this last point by claiming that all the young men who sustained high scholarship at West Point later became inefficient or died young.

<sup>67</sup>MTA, MS Bridgewater Normal Journal, pp. 7, 68.

<sup>68</sup>Richard Edwards, "Memoir of Nicholas Tillinghast," Address delivered before Annual Convention of the Graduates of the State Normal School at Bridgewater, July 30, 1856, in Bridgewater State College Archives.

<sup>69</sup>The State Teachers College at Westfield, pp. 26, 101.

<sup>70</sup>A. G. Boyden, History and Alumni Record of the Bridgewater Normal School (1876), pp. 35-36; Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Education (1842).

<sup>71</sup>Martin Cushing to NTA, 2/2/1846; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book I; Edward A. H. Allen to NTA, 8/1/1850, 7/27/1846; "Fanny" Journal started by Carrie B. Allen in October, 1861, MS in NTA collection; "OBH" receipt, 8/1846, MS in NTA collection.

<sup>72</sup>NTA MS, State Normal School Journal, pp. 34-35.

<sup>73</sup>Martin Cushing to NTA, 11/16/1846; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book I; State Normal School Journal, pp. 14, 28, 53.

<sup>74</sup>Annual Report of the School Committee of Salem, 1846; the Annual Report of the town of Shrewsbury in 1845 encouraged schools to hire women teachers "because they can be educated cheaper and will teach cheaper after they are qualified." For detailed information on women teachers in Massachusetts through the nineteenth century, see Carl F. Kaestle and Maris Vinovskis, Education and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts (1980).

<sup>75</sup>Jonathan Messerli, Horace Mann (1972), pp. 367-68; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book I, State Normal School Journal, p. 69. Ironically, women's traditionally feminine characteristics also made them more desirable as teachers. Very often communities hiring more women teachers referred to their feminine skills of "winning affection" or "meeting the wants of younger children" when discussing their ability as teachers. In a speech particularly addressed to women students at Bridgewater, Horace Mann remarked on their ability to "go, day after day, with inexhaustible cheerfulness and gentleness, to obscure, unobserved and almost unrequited labors." (Annual Report of the School Committee of Lancaster, 1846; Barnard, Normal Schools, p. 165). Hindsight and recent studies of the salaries of nineteenth century women teachers might lead one to wonder if by "unrequited" labors, Mann meant miniscule pay. There is no record of the women's response to Mann's speech, but their views of the world as depicted in personal mottos mirror the Lancaster School Committee ideas about them. The mottos of Allen's women classmates show a passive, abnegatory, and religious attitude toward their work: "Live for Heaven," "Sympathy for all," "Diligence is not without reward," "Aim to do right," "Hope on, hope ever," and "Live not for thyself alone." In sharp contrast, their male counterparts had mottos suitable for young American industrialists of that time. In much bolder script, they wrote: "Progress!!!" "Keep the steam up," "Onward and upward," "Excelsior," "Forward to the front rank," and "Never say die." Collected in NTA, MS "A Commonplace Book."

<sup>76</sup>Mary E. Ware, Betsey J. Samson, Celia A. Littlefield to NTA, no date; Hannah Howes to NTA, 11/19/1850; "Shakespeare Revised by Homer, Jr.," by Lucy Maria Wyman, dated Bridgewater, 1846, in NTA collection; Edward A. H. Allen to NTA, October 31, 1849. Not all men and women viewed the female role as essentially passive at this time. In 1846, Samuel J. May gave his first sermon on the right of women. The Allen families knew May and could have easily been discussing women's rights with him or among themselves.

<sup>77</sup>NTA, MS Bridgewater Normal Journal, pp. 5, 52, 67.

<sup>78</sup>NTA, MS State Normal School Journal, p. 17. Allen often attended functions at the West Newton Normal School, as recorded in State Normal School Journal and in Richard Edwards to NTA, 7/27/1846.

<sup>79</sup>In spite of all Tillinghast's work, he had to take a salary cut from \$1400 to \$1200 per year in 1844. He used \$100 of his own money to pay an assistant to run the model school and used still more to buy needed materials. Arthur C. Boyden, The History of Bridgewater Normal School (1933), p. 15; A. G. Boyden, Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Bridgewater Normal School, p. 70; Arthur C. Boyden, Albert Gardner Boyden and the Bridgewater State Normal School (1919), p. 68. Respect for Tillinghast extended to respect for his students. When Samuel May took over the Lexington Normal School, he claimed that he would not have taken the job if he had not had Caroline Tilden, who trained under Tillinghast, for an assistant. See Samuel J. May, The Revival of Education (1855). Bridgewater townspeople so respected Tillinghast that even several years after his death, they still had lithograph prints of him in nearly every home in the village. See George H. Martin, "The Bridgewater Spirit," in Boyden, Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Bridgewater Normal School, p. 11. Vernon Mangun, in The American Normal School (1928), notes that not until 1856 was Tillinghast's widow reimbursed \$1,810.82 by the Legislature for his expenditures at Bridgewater. The action indicated an increase in the Legislature's friendliness towards education after the controversial Mann had left the state. See pp. 243-44.

<sup>80</sup>Christopher Greene to Horace Mann, 8/8/1846; Nicholas Tillinghast to Horace Mann, 8/7/1846, both in Mann collection, Massachusetts Historical Society; NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I.

<sup>81</sup>Martin Cushing to NTA, 7/15/1846; Augustus Whipple to NTA, 9/12/1846; David Atwood to NTA, 3/22/1847; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book I.

<sup>82</sup>NTA; MS Reminiscences, Book I. During this time, Allen bought fifty songbooks for his singing schools, receipt dated 12/9/1846, MS in NTA collection.

<sup>83</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I. The recalcitrant apprentices at Shrewsbury could be evidence of the estrangement Michael Katz found between schools and the working class community in The Irony of Early School Reform (1968).

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Annual Report of the School Committee of Shrewsbury, 1847. Spelling discrepancies in this report are evidence of varying literacy levels among the individuals responsible for monitoring district schools.

<sup>86</sup>At a salary of \$30 per month, Allen received more than any other teacher in Shrewsbury that year. Two other men were paid salaries of \$22/month and \$20/month. One woman received \$22/month. Of the remaining five teachers, all women, two received \$9/month, one received \$8/month, one received \$7/month, and one received \$5/month. Annual Report of the School Committee of Shrewsbury, 1847.

<sup>87</sup>David Atwood to NTA, 12/14/1846, 3/22/1847; Edward A. H. Allen to NTA, February 15, 1846; Martin Cushing to NTA, 12/1/1846.

<sup>88</sup>Edward A. H. Allen to NTA, 2/15/1846; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book II.

<sup>89</sup>David Atwood to NTA, 12/14/1846, 2/10/1847. Atwood himself was embarrassed by the whole issue of whether he would court local women. He confessed to Allen that he was afraid the committee had less faith in him because he was assigned a married assistant.

<sup>90</sup>Edward A. H. Allen to NTA, 2/15/1846.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., Annual Report of the School Committee of Shrewsbury, 1847.

<sup>92</sup>Augustus Whipple to NTA, 9/12/1846; David Atwood to NTA, 3/22/1847. One of Allen's Bridgewater classmates actually made less money in his off-season private school after normal school training than before. Elizabeth Peabody and Dorothea Dix both urged young people to leave the draining profession of teaching as quickly as possible.

<sup>93</sup>August Whipple to NTA, 7/25/1846, 9/12/1846, Charles C. Greene to NTA, 11/10/49.

<sup>94</sup>Charles C. Greene to NTA, 11/10/49; David Atwood to NTA, 12/14/1846, 3/22/1847, 4/8/1847, 2/10/1847, NTA, MS Rensselaer notebook, p. 1; Reminiscences, Book II; NTA to George Allen, 6/24/1847; David Atwood to NTA, 8/12/1847.

<sup>95</sup>Edward A. H. Allen to NTA, 9/20/1847, 4/3/1848. Edward's job at the German school was demanding. He had two classes of sixty students and one of eighty-six. He met with all three classes daily to teach them reading, writing, grammar, and "thinking" in English. David Atwood to NTA, 5/26/1847, 1/25/1848; NTA MS Reminiscences, Book II.

<sup>96</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book II.

<sup>97</sup>David Atwood to NTA, 5/9/1848.

<sup>98</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book II; David Atwood to NTA, 5/9/1848. Although George Walton was not very successful at running the model school, he later gained prominence as president of the American Institute of Instruction. Walton married Electa Lincoln, the highly capable assistant teacher at the West Newton Normal School.

<sup>99</sup>Newton Town Reports in the Massachusetts State Library; Cyrus Peirce to Horace Mann, 10/10/1844, Mann Collection, MHS. A few years earlier, although exhausted by his labors at Lexington, Peirce traveled five weeks to deliver a controversial anti-slavery petition to Congress. Thousands of Massachusetts citizens had signed the "Great Latimer Petition" to urge freedom rather than prosecution for George Latimer, an accused fugitive slave. The whole petition was nearly one half mile long and rolled up in a wooden frame, nearly the size of a barrel. Peirce deposited it on John Quincy Adams's desk in the House of Representatives amid jeers and shouts from Southerners. (Peirce to Electa Lincoln, 4/6/1843, Peter Foulger Museum.)

<sup>100</sup>Since the normal school had moved from Lexington to West Newton, it had been the source of many aggravations for Mann. Cyrus Peirce overran the budget for renovations, paint, desks, and a new furnace in an effort to make the school a showplace. He spent fully twice as much as Mann had originally given him. Mann pressured Peirce to raise money within West Newton, but Mann eventually provided much of it from his own pockets. Mann to Peirce, 8/12/1844, 11/11/1844, 5/7/1845; Peirce to Mann, 8/19/1844, 12/13/1844, 5/13/1845, 5/28/1845; William B. Fowle to Mann, 8/9/1844, all in Mann collection, MHS. Mann to Josiah Quincy, Jr., 2/10/1849, Nahum Capen to Josiah Quincy, Jr., 2/10/1849, both in the Boston Public Library. Even in 1848, the year Allen was to begin in West Newton, an unsigned article entitled "Fallacies in Education" and published in the Massachusetts Teacher declared that no "sensible" person who had taught for a length of time would ever theorize on the subject of education and that teaching theories were useless.

<sup>101</sup>Messerli, pp. 432-35; Mangun, pp. 232-38; Cyrus Peirce to Mann, 4/17/1847, 4/22/1848, both in Mann Collection, MHS.

<sup>102</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book II; Lucy Clark Allen to E. A. Allen, 5/19/1848; Report of the Newton School Committee, 1847-48.

<sup>103</sup>Greene, p. 14; NTA, MS, "A Commonplace Book."

<sup>104</sup>From the following letters to NTA: George Sautelle, 1/1850; Horace Snow, 2/8/1850; Charles J. Stephens, 12/16/1850; Anna Bent, 11/21/1852; Alice Ayers, 7/1852; Mary A. Plimpton, 2/4/1850, 5/10/1850; E. A. Bradbury, 11/21/1851; M. J. Gilbert, 12/14/1849; E. P. Winning, 4/6/1850; Isabel Welchman, 5/9/1850; Richard Edwards, 1/1849.

<sup>105</sup>Quote from Carrie E. Jones to NTA, 7/20/1852; R. M. Tredick to NTA (n.d.); Alice Ayers to NTA (n.d.); Mary A. Plimpton to NTA, 2/5/1850; Carrie Lewis to NTA, 6/15/1851.

<sup>106</sup>O. C. Everett to NTA, 5/8/1850; NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book II. Agassiz wanted his students to realize that every field held objects to be studied. He began one lecture by putting a grasshopper into the hand of each member of the audience.



<sup>107</sup>Sarah Gilbert to NTA, 7/16/1850; Ellen Frost to NTA, 7/19/1850; Isabella Rice to NTA, (n.d.); Josephine Plimpton to NTA, (n.d.). Peabody believed that all education was basically self-education. She liked to have each student represent a different country and then give presentations to other students. She developed a European system of teaching history for American schools. Students had charts divided into 100 squares to represent the years of each century. Heavy black lines divided the chart into quarters, which made it an effective mnemonic device. Each year was further divided into nine squares. As students learned about different historical events, they painted in the charts with colors and symbols to represent events. An orange cross in one section meant a civil war in Spain; a black mark in another represented a scientific discovery in Rome. For details on this method, see Peabody in "Bem's Method of History" (1856) and "Blank Centuries for Monographs of History" (1870). Peabody's method was used at Antioch College when it opened a few years later.

<sup>108</sup>Lizzie Spiller to NTA, 7/20/1852; Franena Babcock to NTA, 7/1852; Bethia Dyer to NTA, 5/10/1850.

<sup>109</sup>Sarah Gilbert to NTA, 7/16/1850; MS "Record Book of the Model School," (kept by teachers). The pet goldfish inspired study and many compositions. Sarah Aldrich to NTA, 5/18/1850; B. W. Bush to NTA, 6/20/n.d.; Marry Merritt to NTA, 12/29/1851; Laura Jones to NTA, 6/13/n.d.; Ellen Frost to NTA, 5/10/1850.

<sup>110</sup>From the following to NTA: Mary A. Plimpton, (n.d.); Sophie Teulon, (n.d.); Ellen Plimpton, (n.d.); Charlotte Sawyer, 7/21/1850; Sarah Aldrich, 6/15/1851; H. S. Clark, 12/17/1849; H. Augusta Daniels, 5/15/1851.

<sup>111</sup>From the following to NTA: Sarah Aldrich, 3/18/1850, 3/15/1852; Louise Tyler, 4/22/n.d.; Ellen Frost, 2/8/1850; Isabella Welchman, (n.d.); Rosina Frederick, 1/30/1850, 5/10/1850; Walter Gale, 6/23/1850; Carrie Lewis, 6/15/1851; Margaret Kimball, 11/1/1851; Lucy Jenison, (n.d.); Annie Marie Allen, 7/1852; Mary Strong, 7/9/1852; Walter Gale, 12/8/1850; H. S. Clark, 12/17/1845; Harriet Flagg, 11/21/1851; Sarah Aldrich, 5/18/1850; Carrie Lewis, 7/29/1852; Lucy Reading, 2/8/1850; Ellen Frost, (n.d.); 2/10/1851; Mary Peabody, 7/20/1852; Ellen Peabody, 6/1851; Harriot Clark, 5/10/1850, 6/19/1850, 10/25/1850. Alice Bertha Gomme, The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1898), pp. 88-89. Some of the affection students expressed for Allen was very likely the result of the rather natural feelings adolescent girls have toward a handsome, slightly older man who shows them attention. The letters reflect this. Harriot Clarke wrote, "When you have showed me any little kindness the later part of this term it has sent a pang to my heart."

<sup>112</sup>Frank N. Stephenson to NTA, 2/24/1850. For improvement, see especially letters of Henry A. Barker, 1850-51.

<sup>113</sup>Eliza Kidder to NTA, (n.d.); Mary A. Knapp to NTA, 7/20/1852; Henry Richmond, 7/19/1850.

<sup>114</sup>From the following to NTA: William J. Gilbert, 12/17/1849; Elizabeth Chamberlain, (n.d.); John H. Bixby, 12/17/1849; Isabel Orr, 2/9/1852; Henry Bracket, 2/24/1850; Sarah Hills, 7/22/1850; Horace Snow, 2/11/1850.

<sup>115</sup>From the following to NTA: Mary L. Edmond, (n.d.); Sarah Aldrich, 5/18/1850; Mary A. Knapp, 7/29/1852; Mary Merritt, 6/15/1851.

<sup>116</sup>Charles Spear to NTA, 1/24/1850.

<sup>117</sup>Mary E. Bingham to NTA, 11/21/1851.

<sup>118</sup>Report of the Newton School Committee, 1851-52.

<sup>119</sup>In Allen's early years at the model school, normalites were expected to take responsibility for younger students in a separate room and probably received less supervision from him. Later, as the school grew, he had a permanent assistant in charge of younger students.

<sup>120</sup>M. K. Kimball to NTA, 7/1850; Mary E. Bridge to NTA, 9/13/1851. One normalite questioned the wisdom of asking her physiology students so many questions.

<sup>121</sup>From the following letters to NTA: Mary E. Bridge, 9/13/1851; C. Roffe, 1850; M. Jeannie Tarr, 4/12/1850.

<sup>122</sup>From the following letters to NTA: S. H. Field, 10/1850; Fannie Parsons, 6/7/1850, 6/14/1850; Mary E. Bridge, 9/13/1851; Amelia Douglass, 9/25/1851, 10/2/1851; Harriet Tainter, 7/12/1850, 7/1850; Iris Dewey, 11/1850; Anna H. Burns, two letters dated 9/1850; Mary Green, 5/23/1850, 6/7/1850; Mary Peirce, 5/10/1850, 5/17/1850; C. Roffe, two letters dated 6/1860; M. Jeannie Tarr, 5/12/1850, 5/24/1850; H. P. Stearns, July, 1851; Sarah Carter, 6/15/1851; Augusta Tuck, 11/14/1850; Harriette Spalding, 6/14/1850, 6/21/1850; Sarah Hooker, 4/1850, 5/10/1850; Susan Banks, 6/6/1851, 6/13/1851.

Many had particular questions for Allen about their work: should they keep students after school when they hadn't finished assignments; how could they stop students from criticizing others or laughing at mistakes; how could they be sure to grade students fairly?

Allen's model school students took the parade of practicing teachers in stride. Most never mentioned the normalites in their regular letters to Allen. Those who did usually had positive remarks or particularly liked certain teachers. One student complained of feeling nervous when "many" normalites were in the room at the same time. Occasionally, the closeness in age between practicing teachers and students complicated the relationships between them. When one normalite was expelled and then readmitted to the normal school amid rumors that she often went to Boston and was a "coquette" among men, a fourteen-year-old model school student who was her friend defended her reputation to any who would listen. This incident demonstrated an ongoing concern with the morality of schoolteachers.

See the following student letters to NTA: Susan Frost, 6/13/1851; Lucy Jenison, 2/9/1850; Adelia Jenison, (n.d.); Anna Allen, 11/26/1851; Sarah Aldrich, 11/2/1852, 11/1851, 11/22/1851; Clara Davis, 7/20/1852; Isabel Welchman, 6/1851.

<sup>123</sup>Harriet Tainter to NTA, 7/5/1850.

<sup>124</sup>Richard Edwards to NTA, 9/17/1848; James A. Baldwin to NTA, (n.d.); Florence Kind to NTA, (n.d.). Among those parents who sent their children to Allen was Horace Mann's brother-in-law, Nathaniel Cranch Peabody, who has such strong feelings about education that he had previously kept his children out of all schools and taught them at home himself. Peabody's mother, who once ran a school where her daughter Elizabeth assisted, expected her grandchildren to flourish in Allen's school. She described him, "Mr. Allen is very genial and will give them all reasonable social indulgences, walks, companionship with their equals, &c, at the same time he will exact close attention to study and school discipline." Peabody, however, couldn't resist raising questions about Allen's methods. He complained that allowing boys and girls in the same school had proved unfavorable for one daughter and argued that having students "supervise" kept them from responsibilities at home. (Peabody to NTA, 12/4/1850, n.d.; Mrs. Elizabeth P. Peabody to Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, 12/1850, in R. L. Straker's typescript.)

<sup>125</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book II. Allen relied on family advice when considering job offers. His brother, Joseph, warned him to look out for his own interests, and that Mann and Peirce would pressure him to stay at the model school to advance their interests in the educational cause. Joseph encouraged Allen to be ambitious and suggested that he should plan to become head of the entire normal school.

<sup>126</sup>Horace Mann to Mary Mann, 2/22/1849, Mann Collection, MHS; Horace Mann to Josiah Quincy, 6/22/1849, Boston Public Library. Mann eased Peirce out of the normal school by leading a campaign to send him to an international peace conference in Paris. Mann raised money from Charles Sumner and other prominent citizens. Peirce's traveling companion to the conference was Allen's Uncle Joseph from Northboro. A difference in personality made Allen more accepted than Peirce in West Newton. He could ignore church doctrine and had been able to do so even while at Bridgewater. While there, he quoted a preacher in his journal, "Many people would shudder at the thought of being doomed to Hell in the next world, but seemed not to think of the Hell they might bring upon themselves in this world, which was ten times worse." Allen commented, "I did not believe him." (MS, State Normal School Journal, p. 30.)

<sup>127</sup>NTA, MS of speech, "Reminiscences to Schoolmasters," Julian Hawthorne, Hawthorne and His Circle (1903); 1850 U.S. Census.

<sup>128</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book II; Horace Mann to Mary Mann, 2/18/1852, Mann Collection, MHS.

- <sup>129</sup>E. I. F. Williams, Horace Mann (1937), p. 278.
- <sup>130</sup>NTA, MS Record Book of the Model School; NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book II, "Address of the Hon. Horace Mann," Boston Atlas, June 1848; Horace Mann to Josiah Quincy, 6/22/1849, Boston Public Library.
- <sup>131</sup>"Hon. Horace Mann," The Liberator, No. 926, Vol. 18, No. 40; Wendell Phillips, article on Mann's Eleventh Report, The Liberator, No. 892, Vol. 18, No. 6; Mary Mann to Horace Mann, 4/24/1848, 1/22/1850, Mann Collection, MHS; S. Clark to Horace Mann, 10/8/1851; Charles Sewell to Horace Mann, 10/20/1851; Nicholas Tillinghast to Horace Mann, 10/27/1851; C. O. Green to Horace Mann, 11/1/1851, all in Mann Collection, MHS; Clarke to NTA, 10/9/1851.
- <sup>132</sup>Poem by William F. Allen in Allen Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society; Richard Edwards to NTA, 9/17/1848; Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men (1970).
- <sup>133</sup>Edward A. H. Allen to NTA, 9/29/1847, 4/2/1848, 4/3/1848; Alfred Allen to NTA, 2/8/1849; Lucy Davis to NTA, 3/3/1850; "Professor Joseph A. Allen," Obituary clipping in Rebecca Allen Renear collection.
- <sup>134</sup>Walter Gale to NTA, 12/8/1850; J. H. Stephenson to NTA, 10/5/1850; James Lincoln to NTA, 11/3/1850; Ellen Plimpton to NTA, 2/9/1851.
- <sup>135</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book II; NTA to George Allen, 1/14/1851; Lucy M. Davis to Susan Allen, 1/5/1851, 12/39/1850. Allen's mother would write him other letters in an attempt to control his behavior. She wrote that she'd been ill until his first letter arrived and emphasized that she was glad her sons were not "intemperate in food or drink." (Lucy Lane Allen to NTA, 2/16/1851.)
- <sup>136</sup>NTA to George Allen, 1/14/1851.
- <sup>137</sup>NTA to Ellis and Lucy Allen, 1/23/1851.
- <sup>138</sup>NTA to Ellis and Lucy Allen, 1/25/1851; Messerli, pp. 330-31, 340; Mangun, pp. 191-92, 204; "The Paulding School," New Orleans Delta, June 12, 1853.
- <sup>139</sup>From the following to NTA: Eugenia Teulon, 2/12/1851; Sapphie Teulon, (n.d.); Mary Edmond, 2/22/1851; Sarah Aldrich, 2/13/1851; Carrie Lewis, 2/12/1851; Eliza Lewis, 2/12/1851.
- <sup>140</sup>NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book II; Joseph Allen to NTA, 4/8/1851.
- <sup>141</sup>Joseph Allen to NTA, 11/30/1851; A. De Puy Van Buren, Jottings of a Year's Sojourn in the South (1859), passim; NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book II.

<sup>142</sup>Report of the Newton School Committee, 1851-52; NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book II.

<sup>143</sup>Mary Lincoln to NTA, 8/26/1850; Edward A. H. Allen to NTA, 1/19/1851; M. V. Pratt to NTA, 2/8/1850; NTA, MS Commonplace Book, entry dated 1848.

<sup>144</sup>From the following letters to NTA: Christopher Greene, 9/18/1850; A. Conant, 9/24/1850; S. C. Dillingham, 11/20/1850; M. Jeannie Tarr, 5/4/1851; Lizzie Lord, 12/20/1840, 12/9/1850, 4/18/1851; S. Watson, 9/29/1849; S. L. Davis, 4/21/1851; Walter Gale, 1/8/1850; James Lincoln, 11/3/1850; Laura Jones, 9/19/n.d.; J. B. Plimpton, 8/28/1850; Edward A. H. Allen, 6/10/1849, 8/25/1849, 4/2/1848; D. Atwood, 3/20/1849; Joseph Allen, 12/9/1849; William F. Allen, 1/11/1850; M. V. Pratt, 2/8/1850; J. G. Nickerson, 3/24/1850; Abigail Adams, 4/9/1850; George Watson, 8/29/1851; Richard Edwards, 9/17/1848. Edward A. H. Allen to James Allen, 1/27/1853. Allen seemed to encourage beginning teachers to continue their own schooling. He suggested to one young woman that teaching in a primary school would give her more free time to make rapid progress in her studies. (Mrs. Elizabeth Peabody to Mary Mann, 3/26/1852, in Straker typescript, Antioch.)

<sup>145</sup>NTA, MS, "Questions concerning educational life made by Massachusetts Teachers Association to be preserved in their archives," 12/1884.

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146. Joseph H. Allen, Jr. to NTA, 9/19/1877.
147. NTA, MS REminiscences, Book II; Carrie Bassett, MS Journal, entries from 1850 to 1852. Allen courted Carrie on trips to Nantucket. On one trip, they went collecting specimens with Louis Agassiz on the Atlantic Ocean. Carrie was happy to leave her Nantucket teaching job where she felt under appreciated and underpaid. Although she was an able and hardworking teacher, her male supervisor refused to let her participate in public examinations. The school committee knew little of her qualifications and denied her request for a deserved raise in salary.
148. Leon Litwack, North of Slavery (1961), passim; Gerald Davis describes the forces that kept black children out of schools and especially out of integrated school in nineteenth century Massachusetts in "Massachusetts Blacks and the Quest for Education: 1638 to 1860" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1977). See also Meyer Weinberg, A Chance to Learn (1977).
149. Frederick Douglass to NTA, 7/6/1882; Greene, pp. 166-73; NTA to Carrie Allen, 11/16/1892; Dorothy McCuskey, Bronson Alcott, Teacher (1940), p. 111; Booker T. Washington to NTA, 3/29/1903.
150. Eugene Fay, An Illustrated Biographical Catalogue of the Principals, Teachers and Students of the West Newton English and Classical School 1854-1893, (1895), pp. 17-45; Nathaniel Allen, Catalogue of the West Newton English and Classical School, 1881; Thomas Woody, A History of Women's Education in the United States (1929), passim; Anne Firor Scott, "What, Then is the American: This New Woman?" Journal of American History, LXV (1978-9), pp. 679-703.
151. Address of Mary A. Greene in Fay, p. 168; Greene, p. 80-112.
152. Greene, pp. 80-112; NTA, MS Financial Journal; Nathaniel Allen, Catalogue of the West Newton English and Classical School, 1874; NTA to Henry Barnard, 6/1/1880, in Barnard Collection, New York University; Louise Pollack to Henry Barnard, 6/11/1880, Barnard Collection, New York University.
153. Greene, pp. 80-112; Allen, Catalogue (1874).
154. Greene, pp. 80-112.
155. John L. Thomas, The Liberator (1963), pp. 385-6.
156. John H. Ricketson, Address in Fay, p. 162.
157. Fay, passim; Alice Manning, Florence, A Small Village on the Mill River (1978), pp. 15, 19; Lizzia Piper to NTA, 4/6/1892; the spelling, Jujoi Atzmöre Shimidz appears to be an error in Fay's catalog.

158. Paul Mattingly, "Academia and Professional School Careers, 1840 - 1900," Teachers College Record (Winter, 1981), pp. 219-234;
- NTA, MS Financial Journal; Fay, pp. 8-16; Mary Lambert, MS Student Journal, 1855; Mary Chisholm, MS Student Journal, 1864; William Wells Brown to NTA, 3/1861; George Emerson to NTA, 1874; Theodore Sizer, The Age of the Academies (1964), passim.
159. Fay, pp. 8-16; NTA, MS Financial Journal. For information related to Joseph A. Allen, see Joseph Allen, Westboro State Reform School Reminiscences (1877); Governor's annual address, January 3, 1862, p. 265 in Massachusetts State Archives; and Kenneth Geiser, "Reform School Reform," Ph.D. Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1977. For material related to William Francis Allen, see David Frankenburger's Address to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (1890) and Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the School (1964), p. 163; and William F. Allen to Edward A. H. Allen, 7/12/1854, 6/10/1855, 4/6/1856, all in State Historical Society of Wisconsin. For information on the family songs, see Rosa Allen, Family Songs (1899) and reprinted edition (1976) with an introduction by Tony Saletan. See also Lucy Lane Allen, "District School--Summer and Winter," American Journal of Education (1880), pp. 581-3.
160. Fay, p. 169.
161. NTA, MS Financial Journal; Alpheus Crosby, "Teachers' Meetings," The Massachusetts Teacher, XII (1860), p. 187.
162. NTA, MS Reminiscences, Book I.
163. NTA, MS Financial Journal.
164. Testimony taken from Boston Daily Advertiser 3/3/1865, located in Boston Public Library; other description from NTA MS Financial Journal
165. Boston Telegraph and Pioneer, March, 1865, Boston Public Library.
166. The Liberator, 3/17/1865.
167. The Liberator, 3/24/1865
168. Boston Daily Advertiser, 3/7/1865.
169. Boston Daily Advertiser, 3/7/1865; Amanda to Carrie Bassett Allen, 3/4/1865.
170. NTA, MS Financial Journal, 12/31/1865.
171. Interviews with Mary Eaton, West Newton, Massachusetts, April, 1978.
172. Telegraph and Pioneer, clipping, no date, in NTA collection; NTA, MS Enrollment record.
173. Boston Daily Advertiser, 3/7/1865; Sharlene Cmochrane, work in progress on Ph.D. History dissertation, Boston College.

174. NTA to Henry Barnard, 4/4/1869, 5/1/1869, 19/28/1869, all in Barnard Collection, New York University; letter of introduction from George Bancroft in NTA collection.
175. NTA, MS Dresden Journal; Henry Barnard, Papers on Froebel's Kindergarten (1890), pp. 149-60.
176. NTA to students, 1/11/1870.
177. Ibid.
178. NTA, MS Dresden Journal.
179. Ibid.
180. Ibid.
181. Ibid.
182. William Lloyd Garrison to NTA, 11/14/1871; Fay, pp. 163-8.
183. Greene, pp. 190-1; NTA, MS Financial Journal; "Abbey Allen Davis," 1896 Obituary, clipping in NTA Collection; "School Suffrage for Women," Newton Journal, 1/8/1887. Sharlene Cochrane's forthcoming dissertation focuses completely on Allen's years at the West Newton English and Classical School. Greene, passim; NTA MS, Speech, Reminiscences to Schoolmasters; Charles Adams to NTA, 11/24/1845.

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