Review

Reviewed Work(s): Education and American History: Committee on the Role of Education in American History: The Wonderful World of Ellwood Patterson Cubberley: An Essay on the Historiography of American Education by Lawrence A. Cremin

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BOOK REVIEWS

EDUCATION AND AMERICAN HISTORY

Committee on the Role of Education in American History

(New York: The Fund for the Advancement of Education. 1965. Pp. 24.)

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF ELLWOOD PATTERSON CUBBERLEY:

An Essay on the Historiography of American Education

Lawrence A. Cremin

(New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University. 1965. Pp. 81.)

Two small pamphlets which came to the desks of readers of the *Quarterly* in almost the same mail last spring add further clarification to a running controversy between educationists concerned with the history of the school and historians having some interest in education. The controversy is interesting as an exercise in definition inasmuch as it serves to delimit appropriate subject matter for investigation and suggest appropriate academic affiliation for those engaged in teaching and research pertaining to education. The general historians desire to define education in the very broad meaning as "the entire process by which culture transmits itself across the generations," while educationists have tended to concentrate on schooling, and—in American history—the American public school specifically. Both these pamphlets advocate the use of the broader definition.

The one, entitled *Education and American History*, was published by the Fund for the Advancement of Education established by the Ford Foundation as a report of the Committee on the Role of Education in American History. Members of the Committee sponsoring the report were Paul H. Buck (chair-

man), Clarence Faust, Richard J. Storr, Robert Merton, Bernard Bailyn, Lawrence A. Cremin, and Timothy L. Smith. Following an interesting prefatory statement explaining how a concern with education in the large sense can provide a general historian with a point of focus for work in social and cultural history, the Committee explains differences between its approach and that which has prevailed heretofore.

> Because the members of history departments showed little interest, concerted study of education was carried forward until recently by professors of education and their students. As their eyes were fixed primarily on schooling, quite naturally that part of education was the principal topic of the literature. In common usage, "history of education" meant the history of schooling only, which often took the form of textbooks designed to prepare teachers and school administrators. Contrary to a widespread misconception of the writing, it sometimes took American history into account; but it did so largely to explain the school—not to clarify that history itself. Schooling as a cause received more attention than education as a cause. Thus the interests of general historical scholarship were only incidentally, and inadequately, served by an inquiry directed towards a segment of formal education and conducted on the periphery of the historical profession (p. 12).

It is emphasized that the purpose of the Committee is to bring about greater scholarly activity in history of education within history departments and on the part of promising young scholars in history. A point is made of the fact that "twenty-two, or all but two of the participants" in the Chatham, Massachusetts, conference of June, 1964, held appointments in history departments.

The Committee on the Role of Education in American History renders a valuable service both to general historians and to scholars connected with professional schools of education in working to stimulate more systematic study of education. There is little indication, however, that the Committee has interest in making use of history of education in professional preparation of school teachers.

The second pamphlet, regrettably provided with the lampooning title, *The Wonderful World of Ellwood Patterson Cubberley,* was published by the Bureau of Publications of Teachers College, Columbia University. However, this latter statement, of which Lawrence A. Cremin is author, was presented in its original form at the Chatham Conference mentioned above. While the pamphlet coming from the Fund for the Advancement of Education is a formal committee report introduced as such by its chairman Paul H. Buck, the pamphlet coming from the Bureau of Publications at Teachers College is sponsored by the Committee but stands as a scholarly contribution made by Professor Cremin under Committee auspices.

Cremin's essay is a most interesting and informative review of the historiography of American education in which Cubberley looms, of course, as a massive figure. In his assessment of Cubberley's work, Cremin agrees in the main with Bailyn as to Cubberley's limitations, but he takes issue on one important point. Cremin maintains that Cubberley was not so much in "isolation from the mainstream of American historiography" as Bailyn had maintained. "What Bailyn portrays as a conflict between historians and educationists in their interpretation of educational history was, in its early phase, as much a conflict among historians themselves" (p. 43). Cremin proceeds, however, to suggest that Paul Monroe and educational historians since his day deserve the charge of isolationism. He also maintains that there has been no fundamental departure from Cubberley's interpretation, and that revisions are needed.

As in earlier publications coming from the "new historians of education" these two pamphlets emphasize the distinction between *education as schooling* and *education as enculturation*. Both are critical of the educationist scholars who have chosen to concentrate on institutional history of the American public school as their way of doing history of education.

But definitions of words like *education* are not written univocally. Continuing criticism of a scholar like Ellwood Patterson Cubberley might well draw special attention to his preference for institutional history and his use of the term *education* to designate the school. Such criticism, of course, works in no way to sanctify an alternative definition. Thus, Cremin reports Bailyn's contention that Cubberley committed the "sins . . . of anachronism . . . parochialism . . . and evangelism" (p. 43).

Does it really contribute to productive scholarly progress to make use of such judgmental and moralistic language? The New England influence upon American culture, including the town and the town school, is a field for continuing scholarly investigation and interpretation. The seventeenth century school provisions in Massachusetts were, indeed, laws, and the record shows that efforts were made for some period of years to enforce them. Eighteenth century research to determine more conclusively degrees of linkage across the century between the public provisions for schooling of the mid-seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries is called for. Again, it is not a "sin," but a legitimate delimitation to devote primary attention to school education; however, whenever scholars fail to make such crucial delimitations crystal clear, secondary interpreters render a service by exhibiting explicitly the definition which did, in fact, operate. And the question whether history of education should have a place in the special preparation of teachers is, again, an issue not to be resolved by high moralizing. If history of education, whether under the auspices of historians in the arts college or professors of education in the training school for teachers, is to be a stipulated part of a preparatory course, professional interest is involved. Then the issue as between "disinterested

scholarship" and "interested scholarship" becomes unavoidable. What goes on in the professional school cannot really escape being "interested." This is what the professional school is all about, whatever conception may be taken to guide the arts college.

The crux in these two pamphlets, as in so much of the literature on education and the preparation of teachers produced by scholars subsidized by the Ford Foundation and the various Funds established by it, is the role of the professional educationist, and departments and schools of education. When it comes down to specific issues of scholarly craftsmanship, the educationist scholars working on institutional history of the school really come off quite well. It is interesting indeed, for instance, to note extensive reference to their work by Bailyn in documenting his own substantive writing in *Education in the Forming of American Society*. William W. Brickman has given numerous specific instances of reliance by the "new historians" on educationist sources in his article in the *Quarterly* of December, 1964, entitled "Revisionism and the Study of the History of Education."

The efforts of the Committee on the Role of Education in American History to encourage greater interest in history of education by historians in the arts colleges is to be commended. Moreover, as historians use education in the broad sense to denote the total array of cultural influences by which a civilization is perpetuated from generation to generation, a most fertile perspective for social and intellectual history is provided. Certainly, however, the group of historians having some interest in education but preferring not to be closely associated with professional preparation of teachers would not wish to have the historical dimension removed from teacher training courses. In denigrating study of the history of the school they may be misunderstood on this point. Again, in de-emphasizing the role of the American public school in American history, they may be-fog their own vision of the unique role of a peculiarly American institution which has been central in the forming of American society. At any rate, whether it has or has not is a question to be settled neither by definition nor by lampoon, but by continuing scholarly investigation into the history of the school as well as other educative influences.

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