

## CHAPTER VI

### Local Residents and Married Women as Teachers<sup>1</sup>

DENNIS H. COOKE and C. W. SIMMS

**T**HE PROBLEMS of local residents and married women as teachers were reviewed previously by Cooke (282). He included 35 reports for the years 1934-36, inclusive. Few of the reports since this time show any scientific treatment of the problems in these fields. Most of the 47 reports referred to in this chapter consist primarily of opinions of the authors.

#### Arguments Concerning Local and Nonresident Teachers

Cooke (281) summarized the arguments usually presented in favor of local teachers as follows: (a) local teachers through knowledge many times avoid blunders made by the "foreign" teachers; (b) local teachers live at home and are able to maintain better health due to better living conditions; (c) superior teachers will remain in the system to be at home; and (d) local teachers are not absent from the city and the school as much as the "foreign" teachers. Wimbish and Lafferty (315) reported that schoolboards claim local teachers are an intelligent and economical investment and an insurance against teacher transiency. Young (316) stated that the home girl argues that she belongs to a permanent family which pays taxes and as a result she deserves first consideration.

Arguments usually presented against local teachers as given by Cooke (281) are: (a) an excessive number of local teachers makes the danger of "inbreeding" greater; (b) low salary schedules as a result of local teachers will not attract the best teachers; and (c) local teachers are many times promoted regardless of efficiency. Wimbish and Lafferty (315) stated that schoolboards discriminate against local teachers: (a) to minimize the influence of local politics; (b) to facilitate dismissals in case of unsatisfactory teachers; and (c) to insure the selection of properly qualified and adequately trained teachers. According to Young (316) local teachers have an unfair advantage as they can live at home and shift part of their expense to their parents. Coulbourn (284) is of the opinion that even though there may be justifiable reasons for employing a large number of local teachers in times of great economic stress, sound administration requires that the dangers of too much inbreeding be avoided.

#### Policies and Practices Concerning Local Residents as Teachers

Cooke, Hamon, and Proctor (283) concluded that in actual practice approximately 58 percent of the cities have policies favoring local candidates. This percent is less than that shown in rural areas. To avoid inbreeding they recommend that not more than one-half of the teachers in any system be local residents. Another research (303) has shown that there has been an increased pressure upon superintendents to employ local teachers

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<sup>1</sup> Bibliography for this chapter begins on page 278.

since 1931. Only 14 percent of 256 city school systems reporting stated that they did not give preference to local teachers. Of the 86 cities with a population over 100,000 it was found that only eleven definitely favor local candidates. A few superintendents make an effort to keep their teaching staffs well balanced, but admit that if the local teachers have sufficient preparation and experience it would not be an incorrect procedure to elect them.

Tarbell (309) found that a greater number of local residents were finding employment through their own efforts, and oftentimes that of their friends, in their own home towns. In the five counties studied by Bucklen (279) in Minnesota evidence was presented to show that residence seems to be the most important factor influencing teacher selection, because 61 percent of all teachers selected resided in the county in which the selection took place. Umstattd and Hanson (310) reported that 54 percent of the superintendents who answered a questionnaire regarding their practices in teacher selection stated that they wanted no local teachers; one out of four preferred 10 percent local teachers; while one out of seven preferred from 11 to 20 percent. The number of local teachers employed greatly exceeded the wishes of the superintendents. In 22 elementary and seven secondary schools more than 50 percent of the teachers were local residents. On the other hand, 53 percent of the elementary and 70 percent of the secondary schools had no local teachers. Humphrey (291) cited data showing that of the 88 teachers employed in Johnson County, Kentucky, 63 of them were local residents.

### **Qualifications of Local and Nonresident Teachers**

Joiner (273) in his study of the Eighth Congressional District of Georgia revealed that local teachers are employed in many systems, especially in the rural areas, with little college education. He found nonresident teachers to be better qualified than local teachers in almost every type of school system. Tarbell (309), in surveying the possibilities of employment for graduates of normal schools, reported that hometown residents were being employed without considering too minutely the excellence of their qualifications. The author of an article (285) dealing with the practices of trading teachers in the iron-range country of Minnesota reported that many capable teachers were being dismissed in an effort to avoid the questionable practice of having too many local teachers.

Cooke (281) is of the opinion that intimate contact with local patrons and the public in general may hinder the local teacher's effectiveness. This, however, may not apply in large cities, particularly if the local resident is teaching in a section remote from where she lives. Wimbish and Lafferty (314) found evidence to support the contention that local teachers are inadequately prepared. It was also found that a larger percent of nonlocal than local teachers joined professional organizations, and that this percent increased with the size of the school system. There is, however, no proof to show that a teacher's residence is in itself evidence

of the degree of his efficiency. Lafferty and Wimbish (294) concluded that local teachers have less transiency, longer experience, and greater maturity, while the "foreign" teachers receive higher salaries and have better academic preparation.

Humphrey (291) reported in his study that local teachers ranked higher than nonresident teachers on the basis of: (a) length of tenure in present position; and (b) percent of enrolments in correspondence and extension courses during the period in question. "Foreign" teachers ranked higher than local teachers on the basis of: (a) general scholastic preparation; (b) quantity of credit in education courses; (c) percent of membership in educational associations; (d) percent of attendance at the Kentucky Educational Association; (e) percent of attendance at the county faculty meetings; and (f) acquisition during the current year and succeeding summers of academic credits that were not required for present degree or certificate.

### **Local Teachers and Nepotism**

Many people think that nepotism is merely the employment of a relative, when actually it is the showing of preference for relatives in bestowing patronage. If a relative of the superintendent is well qualified, as a rule, nepotism is not practiced when that person is appointed. As a result of this misconception of the term many qualified persons are discriminated against in an unwarranted fashion (302). Humphrey (291) found that of the 63 local teachers covered in his study, 65 percent of them were related to one or more of their employers, namely, the superintendent, members of the county board of education, and the subdistrict trustees.

### **Regulations Concerning Employment of Local Teachers**

The Committee on Equal Opportunity of the National Education Association (302) failed to find any state laws or court decisions governing the practice of schoolboards in employing resident or nonresident teachers. Strict rules, therefore, against the employment of local residents usually represent an attempt on the part of school authorities to escape constant pressure from citizens who try to force appointment of their friends and relatives. Cooke (281) stated that few schoolboards have ruled against local teachers but many have ruled that they be preferred. Bucklen (279) found that the schoolboards in three of the five counties which he studied in Minnesota had rules requiring that the "county" teachers be given preference in teacher selection.

### **Arguments Concerning Married Women Teachers**

Chamberlain and Meece (280) presented the following arguments in favor of the married woman teacher: (a) the attractive woman who finds it easy to marry is the kind of woman the schools need and cannot secure or retain under regulations against marriage; (b) prohibiting married women from teaching is but another example of interference with

the private lives of public employees; and (c) married women have a saner view on sex and are less likely to become "queer." Cooke (281) stated that those who contend married women are holding jobs whose husbands are able to support them, and that these jobs should be given to single women teachers, are attacking from economic and sociologic bases rather than on sound educational principles. Lobaugh (295) contended that the economic objection to double salaries, as large as these salaries loom in the eyes of the public, will appear insignificant when we begin to think of the teaching positions in terms of service to the child rather than as a political sinecure. Parker (304) was of the opinion that money values are placed above human values, and if schoolboards would place emphasis on their positions as educators rather than as employers of labor, no doubt the ban on married women teachers would be lifted.

In view of the fact that married women have spent time, money, and energy in preparation for teaching, Hill (289) did not think it fair to bar them from the profession. White (313) believed that the contention that the married woman is not willing to devote the necessary time to extracurriculum activities is unfair and that the unmarried woman spends as much time in pursuit as does the married woman in possession. Popenoe (306) thought that the present system of pedagogical celibacy is intolerable eugenically and that it results in lowering biological fitness in the teaching profession. He said, "The matter is almost axiomatic: if a woman is not inferior, she should be a wife and mother. If she is inferior, she should not be teaching." Schwankovsky (307) contended that legislation should be established to encourage marriage, thereby making motherhood honorable and maternity leave reasonable. In order for men and women to mature properly he believes they should live a normal life, which is a married life. Watson and others (311) were of the opinion that schoolboards should administer selective processes in such a way as to increase the opportunities for men and women with complete family experiences.

Sivertson (308) stated that although there may be many valid arguments against indefinite tenure, he who condemns it because it means the retention of married women is guilty of faulty economic reasoning in that children are deprived of well-trained and experienced teachers. In deploring the great number of single women teaching, McColley (297) was convinced that there should be a single standard for men and women in education, which offers equal rewards for the same type of work, and which makes no attempt to dictate marital or other conditions. Hall (287) said that instead of the usual arguments presented against married women teachers the real reason for discrimination is "patronage." Geisel (286) believed that one way to overcome the economic objection to married women teachers was to employ married women as teachers on a half-time, half-pay basis.

In contrast to the above reasoning which favors the employment of married women teachers, Chamberlain and Meece (280) summarized the arguments usually presented against them as follows: (a) the married

woman lacks genuine interest in her work as she is motivated by a desire to help her husband increase his estate; (b) the married woman teacher many times is a local resident and often through pressure prevents the authorities from dealing with her according to the best interest of the school; (c) only an exceptional individual can handle both a home and a career; and (d) the employment of married women will deprive men and single women of positions which they need as a means of supporting their families. Myers and Reynolds (300) engaged in a debate in which the latter answers the contention of the former that more married women are needed in the teaching profession. Reynolds stated that one out of six marriages end in divorce, while many others are unhappy marriages, and it is likely that many of these people will appear in the teaching profession. In this connection Wessel (312) added that it may be better to have the disappointments which come with singleness than the bitterness and cynicisms that come with unhappy marriages.

### **Married Women Teachers versus Single Women Teachers**

There is a complete lack of objective evidence concerning the relative efficiency of either of these two groups of teachers. The Committee on Equal Opportunity of the National Education Association (301) stated that comparative studies show teaching efficiency to be an individual matter, relatively independent of marital status, but with whatever slight advantage there may be on the side of the married women teachers. The Committee pointed out, however, that this advantage may be due to selection, because the unsuccessful teachers are likely to resign upon marriage, and a select group of married women would continue to teach.

McKee (298) ascertained the opinions of pupils regarding their teachers and found that, on the whole, the group of 460 pupils preferred the married woman rather than the single woman teacher.

### **The Courts and the Married Woman Teacher**

The courts, as a rule, have upheld the right of the married woman to teach. The enactment of tenure legislation is said to be the most important factor in making the position of the married woman teacher more secure (299). Andersen (277) pointed out the usual reasoning of the courts when he stated that restraint of marriage is against public policy and is so generally accepted in law that contracts violating this principle are incapable of enforcement. Rules against the employment of married women teachers many times have been held to be arbitrary, unreasonable, and beyond the discretionary powers of schoolboards. Hodgdon (290) reported that the woman teacher in this country has the same right to marry as any other professional woman who has prepared herself for a special position in life such as the woman lawyer, doctor, or college professor. It should be noted, however, that this refers only to those under tenure.

If the causes for dismissal are named in the law, and marriage is not one of them, local schoolboards may not terminate a teacher's contract

solely because of marriage. Only two states, Kentucky and North Carolina, and the District of Columbia have specific legislation protecting the married woman teacher from discriminatory dismissal. Some of the other states have similar protection under tenure laws (301).

Loomis (296) in an attorney general's opinion ruled that marriage is not a just cause for dismissal and that a salary cut for the purpose of forcing the resignation of a married woman teacher is a subterfuge to circumvent the law. He further reasoned that the law does not favor indirectly that which is forbidden by statute when done directly.

Jeffrey (292) found that the courts have not always favored the married woman teacher. He cited cases in Missouri wherein decisions were not in agreement.

### **Current Trends**

Married women are employed as new teachers in less than one-half of the cities over 100,000 in population and in less than one-fifth of the cities between 30,000 and 100,000. Sixty-four of the ninety-three larger cities permit teaching after marriage, while fewer than one-half of the smaller schools allow such. In the larger cities discrimination against married women teachers has been checked to a great extent. In the smaller cities there is evidence to indicate increased discrimination against married women as new teachers. In 1928 it was found that 32.6 percent of the women teachers were married. In 1931 this percent was 23.8 and in 1938 it had decreased to 19.7 (303). Anthony (278), in deploring this increased discrimination against the employment of married women as new teachers, pointed out that recently in Massachusetts five bills were introduced against married women working. The movement became so strong that many married women teachers whose husbands were teaching in the same system, in order to keep their jobs, had to bare their financial obligations.

Coulbourn (284) found that 29 of 37 large cities recognize the eligibility of married women for assignment or appointment as regular teachers. Of those cities that bar married women, exceptions are made upon proof that their husbands are unable to support them. Cooke, Hamon, and Proctor (283) reported that in large city school systems slightly more consideration is given to the married woman teacher with dependents than to those without dependents. More married women are employed in elementary than in secondary schools.

Hanson and Umstattd (288) stated that seven-eighths of the secondary schools in Minnesota have no married women teachers. Approximately 84 percent of the superintendents said that the rejection of married women teachers was due to economic stress. Peters (305) concluded that if marriage does not involve change of residence, the woman who marries may remain in her position in less than 60 percent of the school systems in the United States. If marriage does involve change of residence, she may remain in less than 20 percent of the school systems.