
Career Ladders and the Early Public High-School Teacher

A Study of Inequality and Opportunity

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In the 1980s, American schools once again came under heavy fire. This time it was the high school that became the primary target. A series of academic studies published during the decade argue that the high school of today is a far cry from the “people’s college” on which early supporters placed the hopes of the young republic. To its contemporary critics, the high school appears to be little more than a “shopping mall,” a temple of educational consumerism where students and teachers bargain away learning and promote credentialism.¹

If high schools are seen to be part of an educational problem, perhaps today’s teachers may be viewed as the key to an educational solution. Reformers talk about plans to transform the way in which we educate, certify, test, reward, and remove teachers, all aimed at improving the quality of education. One particularly prominent plan focuses on altering the arrangement of work incentives for the teacher through the introduction of career ladders. Both the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy suggest a form of career ladder that would eliminate the present undifferentiated structure of teaching and erect in its place a new structure with distinct tiers.

The Holmes Group calls for three different positions—instructor, professional teacher, and career professional; the Carnegie Forum calls for two—teacher and lead teacher. These different levels of occupational attainment would carry with them a corresponding set of differential rewards and responsibilities which the teacher could pursue without having to leave the classroom.²

How would these proposed career ladders help any response to the problems in contemporary schools, especially high schools? The aim is to give good teachers the incentive to stay in the profession instead of moving on to “more rewarding” jobs, and to provide all teachers with the impetus to work hard at improving their craft. The Holmes Group report puts it this way:

Differentiating the teaching career . . . would make it possible for districts to go beyond limited financial incentives and to challenge and reward commitment. This is essential to encourage teachers to reinvest in their work, and earn rewards while remaining in their classrooms; it will also counterbalance the defection of talented, committed teachers into administration.³

The current interest in the problems of the high school, combined with the potential for reducing some of these problems by means of teacher career ladders, makes this an opportune time to examine the history of job mobility patterns among high-school teachers. My aim in this chapter is to explore the possibilities for career advancement that confronted the early public high-school teacher and to relate these to the present flat structure of the profession. I focus on the teachers in public high schools in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ending in the 1930s.

This is not a history of these teachers. It is a preliminary cross-sectional evaluation of the kinds of career ladders that were available to them during this period, and the various ways in which they did and did not succeed in achieving occupational mobility. The result should be read as a study in the historical sociology of teachers as workers.

What I find is that these early teachers were faced with a complex set of market incentives which encouraged them either to move out of teaching altogether or move up to a higher occupational level within the profession. These incentives presented no fewer than three different routes to advancement, three distinct career ladders, and the most successful practitioners tended to combine most or all of these routes.

First I will present the career histories of a few high-school teachers who pursued advancement in their profession during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Then I will sketch some of the distinguishing characteristics of each of the three mobility routes pursued by these teachers (along with the primary mechanisms that facilitated and retarded progress along these routes), and illustrate each with examples from the experiences of individual teachers. Finally, I will consider these historic career ladders in light of the opportunity structure of contemporary high-school teaching. There I will argue that the current Holmes and Carnegie proposals for teacher mobility are grounded in bureaucratic principles, in contrast with the market principles that formed the basis for the earlier career ladders.

Of course, the sources for this study are fragmented: The academic literature on the history of teaching is quite small, and the literature on high-school teaching is virtually nonexistent. At the same time, the primary sources on the latter subject are fraught with problems. For example, there is a considerable amount of information about high-school teachers in the records, reports, histories, and ceremonial publications of individual school districts and high schools. I draw on some of these sources here, but they are of only limited use in a discussion of career ladders because these ladders tended to run across (rather than within) these units. I also use the result of several surveys of high schools and their teachers, but these aggregate and cross-sectional accounts do not permit inferences about either the nature or available career choices of the development of careers over time. To study career ladders, one must examine a series of individual career histories and look for the patterns within them. The major sources I used to uncover these career histories of high-school teachers included their own published memoirs, correspondence, and diaries and biographical sketches provided by colleagues, children, and former students.

These kinds of sources pose some obvious difficulties. Their unsystematic nature means that any conclusions that I draw must be read as suggestive rather than

authoritative. In addition, the sources strongly favor the most successful high-school teachers, since these are the ones who were most likely to publish their memoirs and to be remembered by others in print. For the most part, the subjects I found made education a career. Yet Thorndike found that the modal high-school teacher in 1907 had only three years of experience;⁴ most people, especially the women, passed through the occupation quickly. The voice of these more typical short-timers is therefore missing from this study. However, for a study of career ladders, it is precisely the careerists who should be the objects of analysis, for we need to look at the ones who climbed the ladder, rather than those who stepped off after the first rung.

The fact that most high-school teachers did not attain upward mobility suggests that the career-ladder metaphor is a bit misleading, since it projects an image of accessibility that simply did not exist. A career pyramid is a more appropriate (if awkward) image for a process in which most teachers stayed at the lowest level and the numbers dropped off sharply at each succeeding level above. This pyramid model of career mobility is the same pattern found in large bureaucratic organizations, where only a small number of management employees ever reach the executive suite. By examining the careers of those high-school teachers who succeeded under such selective conditions, we can gain insight into the workings of this occupational mobility structure, the incentives and disincentives it offered to teachers in general, and the feasibility of reinstituting a form of such a mobility structure in contemporary schools.

The Setting: High-School Teachers in the 1890s

In 1894, at the same time that high-school enrollments began to soar throughout the country, U.S. Commissioner of Education William T. Harris published the results of the first relatively comprehensive survey of American high schools. The survey uncovered a total of 3,964 public high schools at that point, each with an average of 73 secondary students. But since these schools contained twice as many elementary students as they had high-school students, it appears that many of them were little more than extended elementary schools. A total of 12,120 teachers worked in the public high schools, for an average of 3.1 teachers per school, and these teachers were highly concentrated geographically: 48.2 percent taught in the North Central states and 32.2 percent in the Northeast, leaving only 14.8 percent in the South and 4.8 percent in the West. Overall, 52.7 percent of all public high-school teachers were women, but the sex ratio was relatively even in all areas of the country except the Northeast, where women accounted for 59.3 percent of the total.⁵

Four Career Histories

By looking at the career histories of four high-school teachers, we can see many of the central elements in the structure of occupational mobility that existed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

MARY DAVISON BRADFORD⁶

Born in Kenosha County, Wisconsin in 1859, Mary Davison entered Kenosha High School in 1870. In the spring of 1872 and 1873 she taught in a one-room country school at a pay of \$25 a month, returning to her high-school studies each fall. She never graduated, however, because a smallpox quarantine imposed on her family prevented her from finishing her senior year. Instead, she taught in another rural school in the spring of 1874, and then picked up a year-long job teaching third grade in Kenosha. She spent the following year studying at Oshkosh Normal School, then went back in 1876 to teach at Kenosha High. The job was second assistant (at \$400 a year) in a school where the rest of the faculty consisted of a female first assistant and a male principal.

After two years at this position she quit to get married and bear a son. Then, after an extended illness, her husband died in 1881. The following year she had no choice but to return to teaching, spending two years in the third grade and then regaining her second-assistant position in the high school at a salary of \$500. In 1886 she moved up to the first-assistant spot, and in the next year won a raise to \$600. At this point in her career she began to pursue a life teaching certificate, which required her to study in Madison every summer for the next half-dozen years. Her pay jumped to \$1,000 in 1890, and in 1894 she finally received her life certificate.

That same year, Mary Bradford left the high school and took a teaching position at the Normal School in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, where she remained until 1906. Then from 1906 to 1909 she taught in the kindergarten training school at the Stout Institute in Menomonie, and spent the following year in the Normal School at Whitewater. Finally, in 1910 she returned to Kenosha as the superintendent of schools, a position she held until retirement.

PAUL H. HANUS⁷

Paul Hanus was born in Prussia in 1855. Four years later, his family moved to Wisconsin. In 1871 he entered the preparatory department of the State Normal School at Platteville, and after a year was admitted into the school proper. However, in 1873 he left without graduating and took a job as a clerk for a New York City drug company. A year later he came back to Platteville and taught a fifth-grade class for a term before entering the University of Michigan in the scientific course. He received a B.S. in 1878 and took a job teaching science and mathematics at Denver High School, at a salary of \$950, turning down an offer of a job teaching German at a rural Iowa high school for \$780. A year later he became an instructor of mathematics (salary \$1200) at the University of Colorado, then only a small college with a large preparatory department, both of which were housed in a single building. At the end of that year he quit when he was denied a promotion and a raise and, with the help of a partner, bought a drugstore in Denver. After only one year, Hanus sold his share in the store and returned to the University of Colorado in 1881 as a full professor of mathematics and with an increase in salary.

He remained at the university until 1886, when he accepted a position as principal

of a new high school in Denver. When he arrived, this school (located on the upper floor of an elementary school) consisted of 35 students, two teachers, and the principal. By the time he left in 1890 it had grown to 150 students and four teachers, and had a full four-year course. In that year he became a professor of pedagogy at the brand-new Colorado State Normal School in Greeley, the only college graduate on the faculty. Then, in 1891, Charles W. Eliot recruited him to go to Harvard and head that school's new department of education at a salary of \$2,000. He remained in this position long enough to preside over the founding of the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1920, then retired one year later.

MARGARET FOGELSONG INGRAM⁸

Margaret Fogelsong was born around 1885⁹ in a small town in Missouri. After graduating from high school, she taught in a series of one-room rural schools (starting at \$7 a week) on one-term contracts, while attending teachers' institutes during the summer. In pursuit of a life certificate, she enrolled in the State Normal School at Kirksville while continuing to teach part of the year in a one-room school and a graded elementary school. After graduation, she took a position as principal and sole teacher of a high school in a small town in Montana, at a salary of \$80 a month—a big jump from the \$40 she received at her previous job. The school had 54 students enrolled in a three-year program. After one year, the board decided to replace her with a man and offered her a combined second- and third-grade class instead, at \$75. She accepted; but when the students revolted against the new principal, and the board asked her to take over her old job again, she angrily refused.

As a result of this experience, she resolved to seek a university education in order to insure her access to high-school teaching positions, and she began attending the University of Chicago during the summer. While continuing with her studies, she obtained a better job in a bigger town, teaching seventh and eighth grade in Bozeman (Montana). But there she found a superintendent who failed to support her efforts at restoring discipline. So, she moved on:

Once again I packed my zinc-bound trunk and headed for Chicago, this time with no hint of a job for the next season. And I had expected such success once I had my life diploma from Kirksville. I was a hobo teacher! Anyway, I still had close connection with that resolution to get an education. The trouble seemed to be that education had a queer way of seeming to rise higher and move farther out of my reach, the more I struggled to attain to its lofty eminence.¹⁰

In desperation, she for a time considered a career in journalism, and even took a correspondence course in the subject. But she kept teaching. The next job was as supervisor of the fifth and sixth grade at the model school attached to a state normal school in Kentucky. Here she was dropped summarily in an economy move, and trundled once again back to Chicago, mulling over a decade of penury and gender discrimination in her chosen profession. In ten years of teaching she had earned an

average of only \$430 a year—which, with careful budgeting, was just enough to tide her over every summer.¹¹ However, “What rankled within my soul was the discrimination against me because of sex, upon the very threshold of my career.” She summed up the situation this way:

Too many good men left the profession. Too many weak superintendents leaned heavily upon their strong teachers, usually women, while they drew the lion’s share of the pay, took the credit, and bossed, merely because they were men. Meantime, localities engaged in the expensive pastime of wrangling, the petty larceny of Nepotism, and the exacting of missionary devotion from their women teachers.¹²

Graduating from the University of Chicago in about 1912, she resolved to resist any situation that left her dependent on men, and to hold out for a minimum of \$100 a month. Finding no such jobs available, she became a traveling agent for a textbook publisher for a time before finally landing a position as head of the English department at a high school in Marshall, Texas. (In a dozen years she had taught in four states—Missouri, Iowa, Montana, and Texas.) During her summers, she continued to study at Chicago, receiving a master’s in education in 1914. In 1920 she left Marshall for Spearfish, South Dakota, to become head of the English department at the State Normal School. Four years later she enrolled at Columbia’s Teachers College and earned a Ph.D., moving on to a position where she taught English to teacher candidates in the Jamaica Training School (part of the New York City public schools). Her account breaks off in the 1930s while she was still in this position.

SADIE SMITH TRAIL¹³

Sadie Smith was born in 1873 in a sod house near the town of Western, Nebraska. Her mother died 14 months later, and Sadie was raised by foster parents. When she reached the appropriate age, her father sent her to high school in Crete, where she boarded with a family. She intended to become a teacher, but friends warned her that graduation from high school would make her overqualified for a teaching job in rural schools. She still completed high school, but hedged her bet by apprenticing herself to a local dressmaker.

In her senior year, Sadie taught as a substitute in a one-room school, and then, after graduation, attended a county teachers’ institute and obtained a certificate. Subsequently, she taught for a two-month term (at \$25 a month) at one rural school, and another term at a second school (at \$30), but was not rehired at the latter when a local girl underbid her by \$5. After this disappointment she worked in a Crete dressmaking shop for a while, then moved to Colorado Springs to join her father and stepmother. There, while she continued sewing, she studied for a third-grade teaching certificate. Upon receiving this, Sadie taught in yet another one-room school (now at \$45 a month). Finding living conditions unpleasant, she passed another teachers’ examination and took over a village school.

After two years in Colorado, Sadie Smith went back to Nebraska and attended Peru State Normal School, graduating a year later. She taught for a year in Dunbar, and attended the normal school in Lincoln that summer. Then, in the fall of 1896, she took a job as assistant teacher in a high school in North Bend, Nebraska. Her letters to her fiancé, Rollin Trail, provide a vivid picture of that experience.

Teaching duties were divided between the male principal and his new assistant, which meant that she was responsible for teaching no fewer than eight subjects during her first term alone: "Caesar, Latin Lessons, Algebra, General History, Literature, Botany, Physical Geography and Grammar." As she comments to Trail, "Perhaps I shall have plenty of spare time, but I can't see it now."¹⁴ During her first year she was paid in scrip, not receiving the first cash payment until the following spring. But she was cheerful about attaining reelection for the next year at a raise of \$5 per month. Meanwhile, she continued shuttling back to Lincoln every summer to pursue her studies, in the hope of finding a better (paying) job.

During Sadie's third year at North Bend, the principal assumed the title of superintendent, and announced that Sadie was now the principal. This elevation in title had little effect on either his or her work, however, and she was unimpressed, telling Trail, "If it amounted to anything I should feel elated, but it doesn't so I am no larger than before. . . ."¹⁵ She still did the lion's share of the teaching. As her fiancé put it, "Your principal or superintendent Sherman must have learned how to draw pay with little work. Don't you grow weary of doing all the work? Does he get a good salary?"¹⁶ "Yes," she responded, "his salary is a thousand a year. Somewhat larger than mine, you see," which at that point was \$495 a year.¹⁷

Sadie Smith left North Bend in 1900 to become principal of the high school in Holdrege, Nebraska, where she stayed until her marriage to Trail in 1906. She then kept house for her civil-engineer husband in a variety of locations around the western United States, raising three children. When she became ill, they returned to Nebraska, where they lived until her husband died in 1916.

Widowhood propelled Sadie Trail back into teaching. Her daughter records that "She was principal of the high school in Waco, 1917-1919; superintendent of school at Carleton, 1919-1920; and high school principal at Castana, Iowa, 1920-1922."¹⁸ At this point she returned to Lincoln, with family in tow, and taught in nearby Malcolm for a year, ending her career by teaching as a substitute in the Lincoln schools.

Alternative Routes to Advancement

All four of these high-school teachers reveal at least one trait in common, and that is ambition. Each in her or his own way was perpetually in pursuit of a better position. Unwilling to leave education for very long (although each of them did it for at least a short period), they aggressively sought to improve on their situation within the profession. They were generally aiming to attain two goals: better pay and better working conditions.

Not surprisingly, the discussion of money runs through all of the personal accounts of early high-school teachers. These teachers complain bitterly about the

pay they received early in their careers, and make clear that the pursuit of higher salary was the most prominent reason motivating them to move from one job to another. And move they did. They shuttled from one position to another and from one place to another, in a zigzag pattern which made sense mostly in monetary terms.

But money was not the only factor. In addition, these teachers were seeking better conditions for living and working. These included a variety of factors: having a home of one's own instead of continuing to board out; living in a town that offered social and cultural amenities; working in a school that permitted the teacher to focus on a specialized subject area, instead of having diffuse responsibility for the whole curriculum; and finding a position that permitted a degree of autonomy and personal respect, free from arbitrary interference and sexist dependency.

Read as a group, these career histories suggest that there were at least three different routes to upward mobility for high-school teachers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. First, all four teachers sought to advance their careers by means of geographical mobility, particularly the movement from country to city. Second, they all climbed the school-level hierarchy from primary to secondary teaching, three of them ending up in higher education. Third, all of them also moved up the positional ladder from teacher to such positions as department head, principal, and superintendent. In addition, these histories suggest that there was a key factor that helped teachers climb these career ladders – namely education; for all of these teachers pursued advancement by means of acquiring additional education and certification. But they also point out factors that restricted this climb – most notably gender and (as we will see in later examples) race. Let us consider each of these issues in more detail.

GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY: FROM COUNTRY TO CITY

In their first century, the most striking characteristic of American common schools was the gross inequality of conditions that marked off the country from the city, and nowhere was this inequality more evident than in the high school. Large cities had both the population and the wealth to support large, free-standing high schools with a graded, four-year course taught by a well-educated and well-paid array of instructors responsible for only their area of specialization. By contrast, rural areas could at best support only small, ungraded schools located in a corner of the elementary-school building and taught by one or two poorly paid instructors whose limited education and experience were matched against a breathtaking range of subject-area responsibilities. The obvious result of this disparity was to induce career-minded high-school teachers to continually seek positions in progressively larger communities in order to improve both their pay and their working conditions.¹⁹

To a degree, this disparity still exists. Pay levels in large urban and suburban school districts today often are considerably higher than those in rural areas, a fact which provides continuing incentive for teacher migration. However, there are several factors that help undercut this incentive: State equalization formulas reduce

the differences in local tax revenues and thus differences in teacher pay; tenure and pension concerns make teachers less willing to pursue opportunities in other districts and states; and the perception that urban districts offer poorer working conditions helps offset the attraction of higher salaries. As a result, compared with their contemporary counterparts, early elementary- and high-school teachers were faced with an occupational structure characterized by more geographical diversity and fewer constraints against capitalizing on it.

Lotus D. Coffman's 1910 national survey of American primary and secondary teachers suggests that teachers in general had a strong incentive to move from country to town to city.²⁰ Table 6.1 shows that the median education level, age, and experience of city teachers was markedly higher than that of rural teachers, presumably in part because the former were paid two or three times as much as the latter. Urban districts could afford to spend four times as much per student, and often keep school open twice as long as rural districts.²¹

Data on high-school teachers, however, are sketchy. Thorndike's 1907 study of this population did not distinguish between urban and rural settings, but it does show a wide range in pay. He found that for male high-school teachers, 5 percent earned less than \$500, 51 percent earned between \$500 and \$1,000, 27 percent earned from \$1,000 to \$1,500, and 17 percent earned over \$1,500. For women, he found that 22 percent earned less than \$500, 59 percent earned from \$500 to \$1,000, and 19 percent earned more than \$1,500.²²

Other evidence suggests that a prime explanation for this highly differentiated pay structure is the gap between country and city. A national survey of teachers' salaries done in 1905 by the National Education Association showed that the pay of high-school teachers increased steadily with the size of the community supporting them (Table 6.2). The average pay for men ranged from \$674 in communities of less than 8,000 to \$1,886 in cities of more than a million, while women's pay ranged from \$575 to \$1,387.

Table 6.1 Median Characteristics of Primary and Secondary Teachers in Rural and Urban Areas, 1910

	<i>Men</i>			
	<i>Experience in Years</i>	<i>Years of Training Beyond Primary</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Salary</i>
Rural	2	3	22.8	\$390
Town	12	4	32.7	613
Urban	12	6	34.6	919
	<i>Women</i>			
	<i>Experience in Years</i>	<i>Years of Training Beyond Primary</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Salary</i>
Rural	2	4	21.4	\$366
Town	6	4	25.8	492
Urban	7	5	27.5	591

Source: Lotus D. Coffman, *The Social Composition of the Teaching Population* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1911), 25, 28, 33, and 39.

Table 6.2 Average Pay of High-School Teachers by Community Size, 1905

<i>Population of Community</i>	<i>Average Pay</i>		<i>Number of Communities</i>
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	
1,000,000+	\$1,886	\$1,387	3
200,000–1,000,000	1,489	1,056	16
100,000–200,000	1,229	936	20
50,000–100,000	1,185	865	38
30,000–50,000	1,019	767	58
20,000–30,000	960	724	74
15,000–20,000	934	744	60
10,000–15,000	856	655	110
8,000–10,000	740	622	88
Less than 8,000	674	575	40

Source: National Education Association, *Report of the Committee on Salaries, Tenure and Pensions of Public School Teachers in the United States* (Winona, MN: National Educational Association, 1905), pp. 16 and 106–115.

Data from Indiana, compiled in 1903 by the state superintendent of public instruction, provides additional insight into the degree of differentiation among high-school work settings, according to location.²³ The key differentiating factor in Indiana at the turn of the century was whether or not a high school was “commissioned.” A commissioned high school had to meet a variety of minimum state standards for curriculum and faculty (for example, it must have had at least two full-time teachers, one of whom had to be college-educated) which were closely related to the size of the community supporting the school. In 1903 there were approximately 1,003 high schools in the state; of these, 763 had two or more teachers, but only 185 of these were commissioned.²⁴

As Table 6.3 shows, the average commissioned high school had nearly eight times as many students, and five times as many teachers, as the average noncommissioned school, and these teachers were paid 68 percent more.

Therefore, there was a powerful financial incentive for a teacher in a small rural high school to move on to one of the larger schools. The same superintendent’s report provides data on conditions at each of the commissioned high schools. I selected a random sample of 20 schools from this group, and Table 6.4 shows the comparison in pay and teaching conditions between the five largest and five smallest schools in the sample. Even within this relatively elite group, the larger schools paid

Table 6.3 Characteristics of Commissioned and Noncommissioned High Schools in Indiana, 1903

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Average No. of Students</i>	<i>Average No. of Teachers</i>	<i>Average yearly pay</i>
Commissioned high schools	185	126	5.3	\$726
Noncommissioned high schools	818	16	1.0	\$432

Source: Fassett A. Cotton, *Education in Indiana: An Outline in the Growth of the Common School System* (Indianapolis: Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1904), p. 194.

Table 6.4 Characteristics of a Sample of Large and Small Commissioned High Schools in Indiana, 1903

	<i>Number of Students</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>	<i>Average Annual Pay of Teachers, Including Supt. and Principal</i>	<i>Average Number of Subjects Taught Per Teacher</i>
Median for five large* commissioned high schools	243	8	\$820	1.1
Median for five small* commissioned high schools	40	3	\$617	3.0
Median for twenty commissioned high schools (all sizes)	67	3	\$682	2.2

* Size determined by number of students enrolled.

Source: Based on a random sample of 20 commissioned high schools drawn from Fasset A. Cotton, *Education in Indiana: An Outline in the Growth of the Common School System* (Indianapolis: Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1904), pp. 232-470.

their teachers 33 percent more than did the smaller schools.²⁵ But, in addition, the teachers in the larger schools were expected to teach only one subject area, while the teachers in the smaller schools had to teach three.

Yet the incentive was not entirely financial. In their personal accounts, high-school teachers complained frequently about being required to teach subjects in which they did not feel competent, and of thus being forced into the demeaning position of having to rely heavily on the text. Recall Sadie Trail's comment about being stuck with eight subjects in her first term. When Henry Johnson took a job at Lutheran High School (Albert Lea, Minnesota) in 1890, he had to teach thirteen classes covering seven subjects.²⁶ There was a serious difference in the workload facing teachers in rural and urban settings, and it provided a stimulus to seek positions in larger towns that was nearly as great as the desire for higher pay.

Notice one more thing about Table 6.4: Most schools in the sample were closer to the smallest high schools in terms of pay and specialization than they were to the largest schools, and this was within the category of commissioned high schools that constituted the most advanced 20 percent of the high schools in the state. Thus the proportion of high-school teachers in Indiana who were receiving more than \$800 to teach only one subject was very small indeed. To the rest, the kinds of rewards and working conditions that existed in places like Laporte, Millersville, and Indianapolis (three places in the large-school sample) were both remote from their own teaching experience and thoroughly enticing.

If teaching in an urban high school was as attractive as I suggest, then teachers would have been likely to stay longer there than at a rural school, and they also

would have been likely to stay in the profession longer had they landed a position in a city than if they were trapped in a rural school. The geographical mobility pattern, therefore, would have produced a situation in which urban high schools would collect teachers who had lengthy tenures in the school and extended professional experience.

Consider the experience factor first. Thorndike argues that years of experience provide the strongest explanation for the differences in pay among high-school teachers: For the first 22 years of teaching, women received \$27 in additional pay for each year of experience; men received \$28 for each of the first 12 years, and \$8 for the years between 13 and 22.²⁷ Since the median number of years of experience was six for women and eight for men, most high-school teachers never climbed high enough on the experience ladder to cash in on it.²⁸ However, Thorndike does not include a variable measuring the urban–rural dimension, and as a result he overlooks the distinct possibility that the city was the crucial link between pay and experience, as high urban salaries attracted the most experienced high-school teachers.

School-level data on length of tenure at a given school provide more direct, if still fragmentary, support for the greater attractiveness of urban high schools. Princeton Township High School was founded in 1867 through the formation of a special high-school district around a county seat in a rural northwestern Illinois. In 1892, its supporters celebrated the school's twenty-fifth anniversary and published a memorial volume that contains the names of its faculty for each year.²⁹ Table 6.5 shows that, on average, these teachers remained at the school less than three years. In fact, 43 percent left after one year, and 66 percent were gone after two; only 16 percent stayed as long as five years. This was a substantial rural high school, with an enrollment of about 200 students, a faculty of six or seven, and enough backing to produce a memorial volume; it would have ranked among the largest of the

Table 6.5 Tenure of Teachers at Princeton Township (IL) High School, 1867–1892*

<i>Number of Years at School</i>	<i>Female Teachers (Percent)</i>	<i>Male Teachers (Percent)</i>	<i>Total Teachers (Percent)</i>
1	42.5	43.6	42.8
2	25.6	17.4	22.9
3	10.6	4.3	8.6
4	8.5	13.0	10.0
5	6.4	8.7	7.1
6 to 10	2.1	13.0	5.7
11 or more	4.3	0.0	2.9
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	47	23	70
Average tenure	2.91	2.96	2.93
Average tenure (without principals)	2.91	2.33	2.75

* Includes data on all teachers who were hired between 1867 and 1886, but reflects tenure through 1892. Source: Richard Alston Metcalf, *A History of Princeton High School* (Princeton, IL: Princeton High School, 1892).

commissioned high schools in neighboring Indiana a quarter-century later. Even so, it experienced a very high faculty turnover. Its teachers either left teaching altogether, or moved on to a better opportunity in a larger town.

One step up the geographical mobility ladder from the township high school was a school such as the English High School in Worcester, Massachusetts. Founded in 1845, this was an older and larger school in a middle-sized Eastern city, which would suggest that teachers would have found it a more attractive place to seek a job, and would have been more likely to stay there. Table 6.6 shows data on the tenure of the women and men who taught there between 1845 and 1892, and these data provide some support for this view. In one way, the experience in Worcester was identical with the experience in Princeton, Illinois, for in both schools about 45 percent of the teachers left after the first year. But those teachers who remained at Worcester beyond this point showed a stronger tendency to stay for the longer term—especially the women. Compared with Princeton's, the average tenure for women there was about a year longer; and 24 percent of the female Worcester teachers taught there for six or more years, compared with only 6 percent of those in Princeton.

At the top end of the opportunity structure for high-school teachers were a small number of schools like Central High of Philadelphia. Founded in 1838 in the second largest city in the country, Central offered an extraordinarily attractive maximum salary (\$1925 in 1880, for example), considerable prestige (its teachers, known as professors, were the leading educators in the city), subject specialization, and urban amenities; and, as a result, its faculty stuck with it for the long haul. The 16 men who taught there in 1880 ultimately stayed at the school for an average of no fewer than 30.3 years—more than ten times as long as teachers stayed in Princeton. In fact, the average tenure of all 120 men who taught at Central from 1838 to 1900 was

Table 6.6 Tenure of Teachers at Worcester (MA) English High School, 1845–1892*

<i>Number of Years at School</i>	<i>Female Teachers (Percent)</i>	<i>Male Teachers (Percent)</i>	<i>Total Teachers (Percent)</i>
1	39.8	46.2	42.6
2	7.9	15.4	11.3
3	11.1	19.2	14.8
4	11.1	0.0	6.1
5	6.3	3.8	5.2
6 to 10	15.9	9.6	13.0
11 or more	7.9	5.8	7.0
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	52	115
Average tenure	3.86	3.10	3.51
Average tenure (without principals)	3.86	2.77	3.44

* Includes data on all teachers who were hired between 1845 and 1885, but reflects tenure through 1892.

Source: *Dedication of the English High School, Worcester, MA, Monday, September 5, 1892*, pp. 72–76.

23.0 years.³⁰ What the evidence suggests, then, is that teachers were drawn to the larger urban high school by means of relatively high pay and good working conditions; and that once there, they stayed.

Survey data show that the relatively low position of the rural high-school teacher continued into the 1930s. In 1921, Emery N. Ferriss did a survey of rural high schools in New York State and found that the median teacher in these schools had 3.4 years of experience, and 49 percent were in their first year at their particular location.³¹ In a national survey of rural high schools published in 1925, Ferriss reported that in schools with fewer than four teachers, 72.6 percent of the teachers were teaching three or more different subjects every day. Since the median school in this sample had 3.5 teachers, most rural high schools fit into this category.³²

John Ruff's 1924 study of five small high schools in Pennsylvania showed that the average teacher was expected to cover between six and eight subjects.³³ Problems were even more severe in the South. A 1929 study of Alabama high-school teachers shows that the median rural teacher had 2.1 years of experience and 0.9 years at a particular job, compared with 4.8 and 2.5 respectively for the city teacher, and that the median rural salary was \$1,066 vs. \$1,411 in the city.³⁴ Combined, these studies show that the rural high school continued to act as a turnstile for teachers, and that one reason for this was that these schools still offered difficult working conditions.

Given the heavy subject loads and low pay that characterized rural high-school teaching during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is little wonder that the more ambitious and career-oriented minority of the high-school teaching population moved on as soon as it got the chance. Indeed, in his 1924 interviews with teachers at five small rural high schools, Ruff found that *all* of them wanted to leave for better jobs. The reasons they gave were understandable: unreasonable teaching schedule, lack of facilities, absence of social life, meager salaries, and poor living conditions.³⁵ Since the high schools in the larger towns and cities offered teachers a significant improvement in all of these conditions, it is hardly surprising that ambitious teachers migrated in that direction; nor is it surprising that, once lodged in these schools, they tended to remain.

SCHOOL-LEVEL MOBILITY: FROM ELEMENTARY TO SECONDARY TO HIGHER EDUCATION

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, public schoolteachers sought to gain career advancement by several methods in addition to geographical mobility. Prominent among these was to climb the ladder leading from one level of school to another. The main rungs of this ascent led from the primary to the secondary level and from there, for a number of individuals (especially in a success-biased sample drawn from memoir writers), into some form of higher education.

Yet, in an era when the grading of American schools was far from perfectly realized, there was a second form of school-level mobility, interstitial in character, which led from the ungraded to the graded form of schooling at each level. That is,

ambitious teachers not only sought to rise to the next higher level of schooling, but they also tried to find positions within a given level, at schools that practiced the sharpest form of differentiation—both internally (by grading and subject specialization) and externally (by distinguishing itself clearly from the level of schooling below it).

At the elementary level, teachers sought to move as quickly as possible from the ungraded one-room school in the country to the graded multiteacher school found in towns and cities. Shifting then into an ungraded one- or two-teacher high school (often located in the elementary-school building) was an important form of career advancement, but the next step was to try for a position in a fully differentiated high school (with its own building and a specialized faculty).³⁶ Following this, the next logical move might be into a normal school, which (depending on time and place) had some of the characteristics of both a high school and a college. Finally, at that point a more clearly collegiate form of school, such as a teachers college or university, offered the best promise of career enhancement.

We saw evidence of this kind of upward mobility through the graded structure of schooling in the four career histories presented earlier. Mary Bradford started in a one-room country school, shifted to a graded elementary school, moved up to a high school, and then leveled off in a normal school. Paul Hanus taught briefly at a graded elementary school, then at a high school, a university preparatory department, high school again, a state normal school, and finally a university department of education. Margaret Ingram started in a one-room school, moved to a graded elementary, an ungraded high school, several graded elementaries, a graded high school, a state normal school, and then a university. Finally, Sadie Trail went from a series of country schools to several graded elementaries, then to an ungraded high school, and several other high schools that may or may not have been graded.

Let us examine, by considering evidence from their career histories, some of the routes that ten different teachers followed through the hierarchy of schools. Then we can explore how the incentives offered by this mobility structure spurred the pursuit of advancement. The summaries that follow (presented chronologically by birth-date) focus exclusively on the schools at which these teachers worked, leaving out other aspects of each person's career. School positions are as teachers unless otherwise noted.

Edward Hicks Magill³⁷

1825 born in Solebury, PA

1841 one-room school

1844 graded elementary

1952 Providence High School (ungraded)

1859 Boston Latin School (partially graded)

1869 Swarthmore College (president)

John Swett³⁸

1830 born in New Hampshire

1847 one-room schools in New England

1853 ungraded grammar school in San Francisco

1862 superintendent of public instruction (California)
 1867 graded grammar school for girls (principal)
 1869 deputy superintendent of schools, San Francisco
 1873 graded grammar school for girls (principal)
 1876 Girls High School (principal)
 1890 superintendent of schools, San Francisco
 1894 retired

Samuel Thurber³⁹

1837 born in Providence, RI
 1858 ungraded grammar school
 1859 Providence High School (ungraded)
 1867 Bangor High School (principal)
 1869 high school in St. Louis (headmaster)
 1870 high school in Hyde Park, MA (principal)
 1872 Syracuse High School (principal)
 1878 Worcester English High School (principal)
 1880 Boston Girls High School
 1883 Milton Academy (principal)
 1887 Boston Girls High School
 1909 retired

Julia Anne King⁴⁰

1838 born in Milan, MI
 1858 ungraded high school in St. Clair
 Lansing High School (principal)
 Kalamazoo College (head of ladies' dept.)
 high school in Flint (9 years)
 1876 high school in Charlotte (principal)
 1881 State Normal School at Ypsilanti (preceptress, head of history dept.)
 1915 retired

Lizette Woodworth Reese⁴¹

born in Baltimore, MD (birthdate unknown)
 1873 one-room elementary parish school in Baltimore
 1876 public elementary grammar school
 1897 Colored High School
 1901 Western High School
 1921 retired

Henry Johnson⁴²

1860 born in Sweden
 1885 one-room school in Minnesota
 1890 ungraded high school, Albert Lea
 1891 superintendent of schools, Rushford
 1894 ungraded high school, Northfield
 1895 superintendent, Rushford
 1895 State Normal School, Moorhead
 1899 State Normal School, Charleston, IL

1906 Teachers College, Columbia

1936 retired

Emma Lott⁴³

1867 born in Lansing, MI

1887 ninth grade in Portland (MI) High School

1891 second grade in Lansing

1893 Lansing High School (teacher, dean of girls, assistant principal)

1933 retired

Grace Annie Hill⁴⁴

1874 born in Dedham, MA

1896 private schools

1900 Detroit Central High School

1917 Detroit Junior College (grew out of Central HS)

1923 College of the City of Detroit (grew out of Detroit JC)

Inez Taylor⁴⁵

1877 born in Ohio

1894 one-room country school

1895 third-fourth grade in Hillsdale, MI

1903 left to raise children

1917 Hillsdale High School (graded)

1933 retired

Marie J. Rasey⁴⁶

1891 born

1907 ungraded high school

1910 another ungraded high school

1913 graded high school in Illinois

1917 graded high school in Detroit

1919 Detroit Junior College

Overall, the careers of all ten of these teachers show signs of significant upward mobility—from lower- to higher-level schools, from ungraded to graded schools, or (most often) both. Only two of these ten teachers, Emma Lott and Marie Rasey, started their teaching careers in a high school; all the rest began at the elementary level. And, depending on how one counts state normal schools, either four or five of those teaching in them ended up in some form of higher education. One teacher (Grace Hill) actually rode up the school-level ladder as her school, Detroit's Central High School, transformed itself into a junior college (later becoming Wayne State University). Note also how frequently mobility across school levels overlapped with mobility from country to city. The strategy for getting ahead involved seeking a graded higher-level school, and these were most likely found in the more populous areas.

The incentives for pursuing a position at such a school were, once again, the superior pay and working conditions one could find there. For example, after teaching several years in various ungraded high schools and simultaneously acquiring two degrees, Marie Rasey found a job in the Detroit suburbs in 1917. However, "The stay here was short and unprofitable, largely because the great city

beckoned to something more in keeping with her ambitions.’’ When she suddenly attained a job in Detroit, she was exultant: ‘‘Marie [Rasey] Garn was at last a high school teacher in Detroit, at a salary of \$120 a month, and she did not question for a moment that with that princely salary she would soon be able to buy Cadillac Square.’’⁴⁷

But let us look at the effect of school level on teacher pay, apart from the effects of the rural–urban factor. Coffman estimates that the median pay for all male teachers in 1910 (the large majority of whom taught at the elementary level) was \$489, while Thorndike fixes the pay of male high-school teachers (in 1907) at \$900, 84 percent more. For all female teachers the median pay was \$450, while female high-school teachers earned \$650, 44 percent more.⁴⁸ The 1905 NEA salary survey showed that the average elementary teacher earned \$661 while the average high-school teacher earned \$1,046, a 58 percent advantage, and this advantage held for every size of community, ranging from those of less than 1,000 to those of more than 1 million in population.⁴⁹ Thus high-school teaching in general was substantially more lucrative than elementary-school teaching, and this fact alone was sufficient to explain why teachers aspired to gain what in effect was a promotion to the high school.

However, since high-school teachers were more highly concentrated in the better-paying urban districts, we need to examine pay differences within districts in order to isolate the effect of school level. Tables 6.7 and 6.8 show the distribution of teacher pay in Lansing (Michigan) and Philadelphia for two different years, 1894 and 1918. In 1894, Lansing male and female high-school teachers made between 41 percent and 79 percent more than the city’s all female elementary teachers; and in 1918, male high-school teachers enjoyed a 60–220 percent advantage over the elementary teachers, while the female high-school teachers earned between 13 percent less and 150 percent more than women at the elementary level.

Philadelphia had a much more highly differentiated system of schools than Lansing, which led to a more complex structure of rewards. Yet, in the end, high schools there offered teachers the same sort of powerful financial incentive to seek

Table 6.7 Pay of Lansing (MI) Teachers by School Level, 1894 and 1918

<i>Position</i>	<i>1894 Pay</i>	<i>1918 Pay</i>
High School		
Principal	\$1,200	\$2,000
Assistant principal	700	1,350
Teachers	600–625	—
Male	—	1,200–1,600
Female	—	650–1,250
Elementary schools		
Principals	400–500	790–930
Teachers	350–425	500–750

Source: Frederick C. Aldinger, *History of the Lansing Public Schools, 1847–1944* (Lansing: Lansing School District, n.d.), pp. 71–72.

Table 6.8 Pay of Philadelphia Teachers by School Level, 1894 and 1918

<i>Position</i>	<i>1894 Pay</i>	<i>1918 Pay</i>
High Schools		
Male		
Central High School		
Principal	\$4,000	\$4,500
Professors	2,500	2,700
Manual training schools		
Principal	3,000	4,500
Teachers	2,000	2,700
Female		
Girls High School		
Principal	4,000	4,500
Teachers	1,150	1,750
Grammar schools		
Male		
Principals	1,865	3,100
Teachers	—	1,400
Female		
Principals	1,250	3,100
Teachers	—	1,100

Source: David F. Labaree, *The Making of an American High School: The Credentials Market and the Central High School of Philadelphia, 1838-1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), Table 5.1.

a position at the secondary level. In the hierarchy of pay, there were three levels of high-school teaching in 1894, with men earning more than women, and teachers at Central earning more than those at other schools. In 1918, male high-school teachers there earned 93 percent more than men teaching grammar school, and female high-school teachers earned 59 percent more than their grammar-school counterparts.

The 1894 data for both cities reveal something else about the opportunity structure for teachers: Teachers received a bigger reward from being promoted to the high school than they did for being made principal. That is, school level provided a bigger incentive to teachers than did position in school. In Lansing, male and female high-school teachers earned from 20 percent to 56 percent more than did female elementary-school principals. In Philadelphia, male high-school teachers earned between 7 percent and 34 percent more than male grammar-school principals, while female high-school teachers earned 8 percent less than female lower-school principals. Thus, at least for men, the salary gap between high school and elementary school was wider than the gap between principal and teacher within a given level. As a result, ambitious teachers were forced to pursue a path of career advancement that took them into higher levels.

POSITIONAL MOBILITY: FROM TEACHING TO ADMINISTRATION

Not only did high-school teachers pursue career mobility by moving to the city and by aiming for higher-level schools, but they also sought advancement by aspiring to administrative positions at each school level. In particular this meant seeking to become principal or superintendent. For the contemporary American teacher, administration has become the primary remaining route for attaining occupational advancement, a route that the Holmes Group and others have complained about because it draws some of the most ambitious and (perhaps) most accomplished practitioners out of teaching and into full-time administration. However, two characteristics distinguish the form of positional mobility that was open to the early high-school teacher from the contemporary form: a blurring of the boundary between administration and teaching, and an extreme pattern of gender-differentiated access to administrative opportunities.

In the previous section we saw that an elementary-school principal frequently was paid less than a high-school teacher, which suggests that school-level mobility was a better way to get ahead than was promotion into administration within a given level. One reason for this was that, in a system marked by staggering attrition, high schools and high-school teachers were scarce and valuable commodities in relation to elementary schools and their principals. But another reason was that being a principal or superintendent in most school systems around the turn of the century did not mean very much. Most high schools were very small. As Harris reported in 1894, the average public high school had 3.1 teachers, and this estimate left out a large number of the smallest schools. In Indiana, the average in 1903 was only 1.8,⁵⁰ and by 1925, the median rural high school in the country still had a total faculty of only 3.5.⁵¹

All of these figures include the principal as part of the teaching force, for the simple practical reason that in schools this small, there was no room for a full-time administrator. These principals were in fact principal teachers. Sometimes they were the *only* teachers. More often they were the *lead* teachers in the school, who taught the more advanced students and did administration part-time. Ferriss found that among the rural high schools, the principal spent about 200 minutes a day teaching, 55 minutes doing clerical work, and 40 minutes supervising instruction.⁵² Not a very glamorous or distinctive position for a teacher to aspire to.

In addition, about half of the time spent on instructional supervision was devoted to overseeing the workings of the elementary schools. For small districts, the high-school principal often was seen as the instructional leader of the system as a whole, acting as a quasi-superintendent. Some districts had no superintendent, and others had someone filling a clerical role under this title; in both cases, the high-school principal had to take charge. However, in a number of districts, it was the superintendent who acted as the instructional leader, frequently occupying an office in the high school and teaching classes there. The possibilities were rife for widespread confusion about the boundaries separating these positions. Often it was difficult to tell the difference between a high-school teacher and a principal, or between a principal and a superintendent, since frequently their functions were interchangeable.

One need only recall the situation that faced Sadie Trail in the high school at North Bend, Nebraska in 1896. She was hired to teach in a school where the only other teacher was the principal, who, in the absence of a superintendent, also supervised the lower schools. Yet in her third year, the principal suddenly took the title of superintendent, and she became principal—although there was no discernible change in the duties of either. Did this constitute positional mobility for either of them? She thought not. Later in her career, she was a principal in three different towns and a superintendent in one, but each time she left the position within two years. It is unclear whether any of these administrative posts consisted of much more than a teaching job with an impressive title. And this leads to the problem of gender.

The mobility of high-school teachers into administration was eased by the muddle over what distinguished an administrator from a teacher, but this led to a two-track system based on gender. Normally, women were offered jobs as high-school principals and superintendents only when no man wanted those positions. This generally meant that women ended up as administrators in the smallest districts, where the pay was too low to attract a man and where the job was basically a teaching job anyway.⁵³ Even under these circumstances, the appointment often was considered temporary until such time as a male candidate appeared. Remember how Margaret Ingram took a job as a small-town high-school principal, only to be summarily replaced after one year by a man who quickly turned out to be incompetent. Even when women succeeded in making it to the college level, they tended to do so as regular faculty instead of as chair, dean, or president.

For men, however, the picture was quite different. Blessed with the right of first refusal for administrative jobs in general, they could choose to pursue the most attractive possibilities, which meant the larger schools in the larger communities. Paul Hanus rose from high-school teacher in Denver to college professor, high-school principal, and finally university dean. John Swett found his way to San Francisco, where he went from grammar-school principal to state superintendent of public instruction to high school principal to city superintendent.⁵⁴ For these men, the promotional ladder seemed to reflect an opportunity structure that was more meritocratic than the one confronting the women. For example, Jesse Stuart started out in Kentucky in the 1920s teaching in a one-room rural elementary school, followed by a one-room high school. However, when his students won a state-wide academic achievement contest, he became principal of a city high school, and later the city and county superintendent. Another story of male merit rewarded that would have set Margaret Ingram to gnashing her teeth in frustration!⁵⁵

PROMOTING MOBILITY: EDUCATION

A key method by which high-school teachers moved up any or all of the three career ladders open to them was to pursue further education and acquire additional levels of certification. This is a familiar story, and a couple of examples will serve to flesh it out. Recall that Margaret Ingram graduated from high school, then taught while attending teachers' institutes in the summer. Later, she chose to seek a life

certificate, attending the State Normal School while continuing to teach during the year. After some unpleasant experiences in small-town jobs, she began spending her summers going to classes at the University of Chicago, earning her B.A. in 1912. She still continued studying during the summer, gaining a master's in 1914, and then finally attaining a Ph.D. from Teachers College in the 1920s. All of her education after high school, with the possible exception of her doctorate, was obtained part-time while teaching. Each stage in her educational process in turn led to a higher-level position, and when each new position failed to satisfy her professional ambition, she went back to school.

Fern Persons⁵⁶ graduated from Olivet (Michigan) High School in 1913 and spent the following year at Eaton County Normal School. For the next ten years she taught at three different elementary schools, gradually working toward a life certificate—which she received in 1922 from Western Michigan College. She immediately began working on a bachelor's degree at Olivet College. In 1926 she moved up to teaching math at Olivet High School, and a year later received her B.A. and won the position of dean of women at the school. Continuing her education, she did graduate work at Northwestern and the University of Michigan, becoming principal at Olivet in 1931, the first woman to hold such a position in that part of the state. In 1939 she was awarded a master's from Michigan, then became acting superintendent while the male incumbent was absent during the war. Meanwhile, she continued piling up credits toward a doctorate.

This pattern runs through most of these teachers' personal accounts in one form or another. Educational enhancement provided a crucial catalyst for the ambitious high-school teacher seeking to get ahead. The education itself took on a variety of shapes—from teachers' institutes to city or county normal schools, state normal schools, teachers' college, liberal-arts colleges, and universities. It ranged from an informal study program in preparation for a certifying examination to a formal graduate degree. Education in all these various forms was then combined with one or all of the other mechanisms for occupational mobility, as degrees and certificates helped to support a teacher's upward progress toward a city school system, a higher-level school, and a higher position.

The most successful careerists among the early high-school teachers were the ones like Margaret Ingram, Fern Persons, Paul Hanus, and Mary Bradford, who used education to pursue all three routes to upward mobility at the same time. Here is where the analogy of the career ladder simply deconstructs, since it is rather awkward to picture them climbing all of these ladders simultaneously.⁵⁷

Restricting Mobility: Gender and Race

There are two additional elements which, unlike education, have served to limit the possibilities for teacher mobility: gender and race. The impact of these two factors on the process of teacher advancement was to create largely separate mobility tracks leading up each of the three career ladders already identified. The routes to career success for men and whites were in this way parallel with those for women and

blacks, yet the mechanisms for getting ahead worked more effectively for the former than for the latter.

We have seen a variety of statistics that show a significant difference in pay between men and women high-school teachers. Let us consider the evidence about whether or not these differences were the result of sexist pay practices or other factors. One plausible explanation would be that women were paid less because they left the profession earlier than men.⁵⁸ In apparent confirmation of this point, Thorndike, it should be recalled, found in 1907 that male and female high-school teachers earned a nearly identical pay increment (\$28 and \$27, respectively) for each additional year of experience during their first 12 years of teaching. Yet the median salary was \$900 for men and \$650 for women, while the median years of experience for each was eight years and six years respectively. Thus the extra two years of experience enjoyed by the men would only account for \$50 of their \$250 pay advantage. This suggests that the gender difference in pay arose not through differential pay increases or longer tenure but from the initial pay levels set when men and women were first hired to teach high school.

This interpretation receives some support from the data on pay differences between country and city. Thorndike's study drew on data from high-school teachers nationally, and, since the number of urban high-school teachers constituted a small fraction of this population, his median figures primarily reflect the condition of country and small-town teachers. There is another source from the previous decade that provides some insight into urban pay levels. In 1895, A. F. Nightingale, superintendent of the Chicago high schools, sent a questionnaire to superintendents in most of the largest school systems around the country, asking them about how they paid their male and female high-school teachers. He received salary data from 52 of them. By my rough calculation, the average male high-school teacher in the larger districts earned about \$1,470 while his female counterparts earned \$900.⁵⁹ This means that in urban high schools, male teachers earned 63 percent more than female teachers, while in small-town high schools (a decade later) the male advantage was 38 percent.⁶⁰ The respondents to Nightingale's survey explain this differential in terms of market pressures. One speaks for most of them when he says:

Why do we pay men more than women? The market demands it. . . . The woman will stay at her work for years—the man, as soon as he becomes of value to the school, must be promoted, or he will leave to go where higher salaries are paid. It is a simple question of supply and demand, governing the price of work for the two sexes.⁶¹

Under these conditions, the city schools were in a better situation to compete for male teachers simply because they could afford to pay more than the country districts. Thus the gap between male and female teachers was greater in the city because the upper pay limit was less restrictive, allowing the high schools to attract and hold male teachers, while the absence of market alternatives prevented the female high-school teacher from capitalizing on these possibilities to the same extent. However, in the country high school, the limited local tax base put a lower ceiling on male salaries (even at the expense of driving men out of these jobs altogether), while the floor on female salaries could not be held at a level that was

proportionately as far below the male level as was true in the city. After all, there was a certain annual pay below which even a country woman could not eke out a living.

This argument implies that city high schools had a higher proportion of male teachers than did country high schools, even though the evidence shows that cities had a smaller proportion of males in the teaching population as a whole. In fact, the NEA's 1905 survey shows that in cities with a population of more than 100,000, the males made up 41.0 percent of the high-school teaching force, while in towns of less than 15,000 the male proportion dropped to 25.1 percent.⁶²

I would argue that this occurred for two reasons. First, as noted, cities could afford to pay what men demanded. Second, urban high-school teaching offered a degree of prestige and influence that made it attractive even in light of the other opportunities open to men. Given the small number of high schools that existed prior to this century, and the prominence of these institutions within their respective cities, high-school teachers—accorded the honorific title of professor—constituted the leading figures in the local educational community, and played a respected role in the public life of the noneducational community. In Philadelphia during the nineteenth century, for example, the professors (all men) from the only boys' high school were listed in back of the city directory along with the judges and political officeholders.

Two other factors contributed to the gender differences in pay among high-school teachers. The first was positional. Men were much more likely to hold the position of principal, and principals were paid more than other teachers. A prime reason for this situation was an ideological preference for having men in charge. One of Nightingale's superintendents put the case simply: "Why do we pay men more than women? The most important and responsible positions are filled by men. It is of quite rare occurrence for a woman to be considered successful either as a city superintendent or a high school principal."⁶³ The second factor was educational. Men at the turn of the century were more likely to be college graduates than women, especially at the start of their careers, and this gave them an advantage in competing for a high-school job, in demanding higher pay for such a job, and in making a claim for the principalship. By contrast, the career histories of even the most successful women high-school teachers show that they tended to acquire their education gradually over a lifetime, and that university training came (if at all) years after they entered the teaching profession.

In 1979, Myra Strober and Laura Best did a remarkable study of male-female pay differentials among San Francisco public-school teachers that pulls together many of these elements. They found that position and school level had a larger impact on these gender-based pay differentials than did experience and education. But when the effect of the other three variables was controlled, the most powerful factor influencing gender differences in pay was school level. The male high-school teacher enjoyed an advantage over his female counterpart which extended beyond education, experience, and position, and which simply came from *being in a high school*.⁶⁴

When the expansion of high-school enrollment in the 1890s undercut the exclusiveness of high-school teaching, male teachers scrambled to hold on to the

special position they had once occupied. For many, this meant returning to the university and seeking credentials that would take them into educational administration.⁶⁵ But the change propelled others into unionism, wherein male high-school teachers have continued to play a leadership role since the turn of century.⁶⁶

If gender created a partially divergent and shortened career ladder for women in high-school teaching, race constructed a radically separated and truncated track for blacks. Whites could teach in black high schools (recall that Lizette Reese, a white woman, taught at the "Colored High School" in Baltimore,) but blacks could not teach in white schools. And the situation facing black teachers in black high schools was grim. One study found that as late as 1933 about half of the Southern black high schools in rural areas offered only one- or two-year programs, and about half had fewer than 40 students. Overall, 60 percent of all Southern black high schools had less than a four-year program, and these schools had on average less than one full-time teacher.

In effect, being a high-school teacher under these conditions was a part-time addition to one's grammar-school duties.⁶⁷ Too, pay levels for these teachers were commensurate with their abysmal working conditions. Average monthly pay levels for Southern public-school teachers in 1909–1910 were \$60 for whites and \$33 for blacks; in 1928–1929 the gap had narrowed only slightly, to \$118 versus \$73.⁶⁸

Conclusion

This discussion has focused on the nature of the career ladders available to high-school teachers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The opportunity structure within the profession offered three different routes to career advancement: moving from country to city, from lower- to higher-level schools, and from teaching into administration. A small number of the most ambitious early high-school teachers took advantage of all of these routes to achieve a substantial degree of career mobility.

The evidence for this mobility process that I have presented in this paper is not of the sort that leads to strong and confident conclusions about the nature of early high-school teaching as a form of work. One reason is that I have focused almost exclusively on the most successful cases, while in fact most high-school teachers never moved beyond the first rung or two on *any* of the three career ladders. Another is that my sources have largely consisted of rather idiosyncratic personal accounts, which are difficult to organize into a systematic understanding of the condition of high-school teachers more generally. Therefore, let me state again that the function of this discussion is not to analyze the typical high-school teacher but to examine the structure of incentives that shaped the possibilities for advancement by the exceptional teacher who stayed in the profession long enough to consider it a career.

With this limited goal in mind, I can venture two comments about general tendencies that appear in the preceding discussion. First, the opportunity structure within the profession was molded by two forces arising from the social context of schooling: a meritocratic ideology, and a structure of occupational opportunity

stratified by gender and race. Second, the substantial changes that affected high-school teaching in the twentieth century had the effect of undercutting the importance of the first two routes to advancement (geographical and school-level mobility) and of ritualizing the positional route.

MERITOCRACY, INEQUALITY, AND GENDER

The career ladders of high-school teachers modeled meritocratic ideology in two related ways.⁶⁹ First, the career histories of those teachers I found in print are framed in the style of the classic American success story. The full title of one of these accounts captures the spirit of this tradition: *Memoirs of Mary D. Bradford: Autobiography and Historical Reminiscence of Education in Wisconsin, through Progressive Service from Rural School to City Superintendent*. The genre is familiar, only instead of plotting the path from the log cabin to the White House, these authors display the triumphant steps leading from the rude one-room schoolhouse to the comfortable administrative offices of a major urban school system or university. It was a tough world, they grimly tell us, but true merit still ultimately gained its just reward.

Yet these stories do provide evidence that career advancement for the early high-school teacher was in fact partly structured along meritocratic lines. Given a form of school organization at the turn of the century that was, for the most part, prebureaucratic or only partially bureaucratic, career advancement was highly unstructured, and thus rewards tended to go to those teachers who were the most entrepreneurial.⁷⁰ These were ambitious women and men who carefully managed their careers, seeking out opportunities and promoting their interests. The open structure of American schooling during this period, in combination with the radical inequalities that existed within this structure, provided them with a set of rewarding ladders to climb. It is worth remembering that what made advancement possible was the abject poverty (financially *and* educationally) of American education at the bottom of these ladders. The poor conditions and low pay that existed in rural districts, in elementary schools, and in teaching generally compared with administration, and the low level of teacher training—all of these unpleasant facts about the early teaching experience for most teachers were themselves the source of great opportunity for the ambitious few. What made the incentives effective was that so few could take advantage of them. What made the career pyramid worth climbing was the extreme narrowing that occurred between bottom and top.

As we have seen, however, the meritocratic character of career mobility for high-school teachers was sharply undercut by the extreme differentiation of career opportunities by gender and race. Women and men, blacks and whites, had their own separate structures of inequality to climb, and these structures did not have the same shape. The pyramid of opportunity for women and blacks narrowed much more quickly as one moved upward. Women like Mary Bradford could move “from rural school to city superintendent,” but the chances of making it were much smaller than for a man. During the course of this century, there has been a gradual but significant reduction in the differences in opportunity open to women and blacks

in American secondary education. But ironically, one result of this change is that the range and flexibility of meritocratic career opportunities has at the same time declined for teachers of both sexes and both races.

EQUALITY, BUREAUCRACY, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF TEACHER INCENTIVES

During the course of the twentieth century, the opportunity structure for high-school teachers has undergone significant change. Two factors that helped bring about this change were the growing equalization of previous educational differences, and the relentless bureaucratization of school organization. Let us consider each of the major routes to advancement in light of these changes.

One important characteristic of American educational development in this century has been a gradual reduction in the extreme differences that marked off rural areas and small towns from cities. The migration of a large portion of the rural population to the city, the growth in the relative vitality of rural economies, and radical consolidation of rural school districts, all have helped reduce some of the old advantage enjoyed by urban schooling. And states have pushed the process even farther through their recent efforts to equalize per-capita support for schooling by means of redistributive funding formulas.

As I mentioned earlier, these changes have by no means ended differences in pay between urban and rural high schools. Teachers still move to urban and suburban districts in pursuit of a better salary; but the financial incentive is less now than it was, and it is even smaller if one takes into account cost of living. In addition, teachers frequently choose the less urbanized district because the teaching conditions there are seen as preferable, even if it means sacrificing a little in pay. Finally, tenure and pension rules make mobility generally less attractive.

There has also been a reduction in the incentive once offered by moving from one level of schooling to the next higher level. Bureaucratization has brought elementary and secondary schooling together under a common set of rules, and unionization has equalized the pay differences that were due to school level alone. Through its subject-matter specialization and departmental structure, the high school retains a different set of teaching conditions from the elementary school, but the old pay differential is gone. Also gone is the financial incentive to seek "promotion" from high school to university teaching. Now that unions have succeeded in raising pay scales for public schoolteachers, experienced teachers find that taking a college teaching position even after acquiring a Ph.D. requires a substantial cut in pay. When teachers do make this change, therefore, it tends to be in pursuit of different working conditions rather than more money. The pay incentive to change school levels—so powerful 50 years ago—simply has evaporated.

The ascendancy of bureaucratic organization has brought with it the emergence of position as the key incentive for upward mobility among ambitious high-school teachers. One reason for this is that bureaucratization led to a sharp differentiation of function between teachers and administrators, focusing the blurred boundaries and ill-defined responsibilities that characterized these positions in the early high

school. Another reason is that, as the chances for advancement within teaching (by means of moving to the city or climbing to a higher school level) grew smaller over the course of the twentieth century, the prospects offered by the newly differentiated administrative positions looked increasingly attractive. "Getting ahead," which used to have multiple meanings, came to mean one thing: leaving the high-school classroom and entering administration. A variety of routes to career advancement finally converged on a single preferred path, which led to the principal's office and the superintendent's staff.

Even the way in which education leads to advancement has changed in character. Teachers' contracts and district policies have formalized the previously more entrepreneurial role of education in career enhancement by establishing a rigid connection between the accumulation of graduate credits and degrees, and the awarding of pay increases. But at the same time, education leads to less differentiation among contemporary high-school teachers than it did 50 or 100 years ago. The higher minimum for entering the profession (a B.A.), and the prevalence of state rules requiring graduate credits to maintain certification, have made it difficult for teachers to differentiate themselves from the pack by means of any sort of educational distinction short of a doctorate.

The gradual equalization of what was once a radically differentiated opportunity structure for high-school teachers, and the bureaucratization of what was once an open and improvised organization of schooling, produced momentous changes for those trying to make a career within public secondary education. The privileged teachers at the older high schools in large American cities experienced this change as a form of proletarianization through which they lost their former advantages of pay, prestige, and professional autonomy.⁷¹ But for the more typical high-school teacher, working in a smaller school and a less populous area, these changes looked more like a thoroughly benevolent and desirable process of professionalization, one which was raising their status, improving their working conditions, and enhancing the quality of secondary education.

This general elevation of the entire occupational group led to the erosion of the old routes by which a select group of early high-school teachers once pursued career mobility. Yet for most teachers at American high schools, the loss of career ladders from which they were unlikely to benefit anyway was hardly cause for alarm. They lost a long shot at fulfilling the American dream of individual success, but they gained the ability to make a comfortable living in the high-school classroom.

The contemporary Holmes and Carnegie proposals for a multitiered teaching profession are an attempt to create a new form of career ladder to fit the new structure of the profession. The old career ladders were based on market incentives arising from the inequalities and disorganization of nineteenth-century schooling, characteristics that have been steadily declining during the current century. Instead of trying to recover the old system by striving to reinstate a declining set of market incentives, the current reform effort seeks to provide for teacher mobility by extending the trend toward the elaboration of bureaucratic structures within education. The old opportunity structure provided hierarchy everywhere except within teaching itself, which was (and still is) completely undifferentiated. In that earlier setting, the ambitious teacher was thrust into the role of an entrepreneur seeking to take advantage of the

opportunities offered by the unregulated educational market. However, the proposed reform would provide a way for vertical differentiation to penetrate teaching itself, so that teachers could pursue upward mobility without having to leave their community, their school level, or even their classroom.

Although the old career ladders were based on market principles and the new are based on bureaucratic principles, both offer a hierarchy of rewards. Holmes and Carnegie in this sense, then, are proposing to fill the temporary vacuum of hierarchical incentives that occurred within teaching as a result of the demise of the old opportunity structure. The rationalization of schooling into "the one best system" reduced the inequalities that had stratified and segmented the profession—particularly geography, school level, race, and gender—and left teachers in a state of relative equality.

This condition has proven to be awkward, for reasons that are both ideological and organizational. From the perspective of meritocratic ideology, membership in an undifferentiated status group is tantamount to an admission of mediocrity, since merit is seen as rising to the top. Thus a profession with no top or bottom cannot be a profession at all, but must be some form of mass occupation. In addition, the flat structure of teaching is an anomaly within the bureaucratic structure of schooling. At present, schools are characterized by a hierarchy of positions within the administrative ranks, but by positional equality within the ranks of teachers. Thus educational bureaucracy has so far failed to extend into the group that has the primary responsibility for carrying out education.

The proposed stratification of teaching would provide a chance for teachers to be inducted simultaneously into both the meritocracy and the bureaucracy. The new career ladder would offer a top rung whose very exclusiveness would suggest excellence. At the same time, the incorporation of teaching into the larger school-system hierarchy would establish teachers as education's street-level bureaucrats. Thus these recent career-ladder proposals represent a continuation of the historical process that has progressively undermined one form of occupational inequality, based on an unregulated mix of achievement and ascription, and replaced it with another, based on a bureaucratically defined mix of certified merit and organizational position.

These reforms might prove effective as part of a "collective mobility project"⁷² which raises the status of teachers under the mantle of merit, and they also might prove effective as a mechanism for extending bureaucratic control into classrooms. The more important question, however, is whether they will improve the quality of the teaching and learning that takes place in those classrooms.

Notes

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The author appreciates the comments and suggestions of William Reese, James Fraser, Donald Warren, Cleo Cherryholmes, Michael Sedlak, and Michael Apple.

1. Arthur G. Powell, Eleanor Farrar, and David K. Cohen, *The Shopping Mall*

High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985); Michael W. Sedlak, Christopher W. Wheeler, Diana C. Pullin, and Philip A. Cusick, *Selling Students Short: Classroom Bargains and Academic Reform in the American High School* (New York: Teachers Col-

- lege Press, 1986); and Philip A. Cusick, *The Egalitarian Ideal and the American High School: Studies of Three Schools* (New York: Longman, 1983). See also Theodore R.Sizer, *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984); and Ernest L. Boyer, *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983).
2. The Holmes Group, *Tomorrow's Teachers* (East Lansing, MI: The Holmes Group, 1986); and Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty-first Century* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986).
 3. The Holmes Group, *Tomorrow's Teachers*, p. 36.
 4. Edward L. Thorndike, "The Teaching Staff of Secondary Schools," in U.S. Bureau of Education *Bulletin 4* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909).
 5. U.S. Bureau of Education, "Statistical Review of Secondary Education," in *Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1893-1894* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1894), pp. 33-95; Tables 1 and 19.
 6. Mary D. Bradford, *Memoirs of Mary D. Bradford: Autobiography and Historical Reminiscences of Education in Wisconsin, through Progressive Service from Rural School to City Superintendent* (Evansville, WI: Antes Press, 1932).
 7. Paul H. Hanus, *Adventuring in Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937).
 8. Margaret Fogelsong Ingram, *Toward an Education* (New York: Comet Press, 1954).
 9. This book is written as a memoir, not a historical record, and as a result there are very few dates in it. Some can be inferred, but for the most part the passage of time is recorded in a thoroughly impressionistic fashion.
 10. Ingram, *Toward an Education*, p. 271.
 11. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
 12. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
 13. Rosalie Trail Fuller (ed.), "A Nebraska High School Teacher in the 1890s: The Letters of Sadie B. Smith," in *Nebraska History 58* (1977), pp. 447-474.
 14. *Ibid.*, p. 451.
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 463.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 469.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 470.
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 471.
 19. One answer to this problem was for rural areas to create consolidated high schools. However, the issue of consolidation created conflict within rural communities over whether to build such a high school (which would be accredited and graded and blessed with a substantial faculty and an appropriate facility), or to keep the small, unaccredited high schools that were more accessible locally. Localism tended to win out because, in the absence of good transportation, the residents of the town where the consolidated school was located tended to benefit from it much more than did the surrounding farmers. See, for example, Frank A. Balyeat, "County High Schools in Oklahoma," in *Chronicles of Oklahoma 37* (1959/60), pp. 196-210.
 20. Lotus D. Coffman, *The Social Composition of the Teaching Population*, Columbia University Contributions to Education, No. 41 (New York: Teachers College Press, 1911).
 21. The figures are for 1880. David B. Tyack and Myra H. Strober, "Jobs and Gender: A History of the Structuring of Educational Employment by Sex," in Patricia Schmuck, W. W. Charters, Jr., and Richard O. Carlson (eds.), *Educational Policy and Management: Sex Differentials* (New York: Academic Press, 1981), pp. 131-152.
 22. Thorndike, "The Teaching Staff of Secondary Schools," pp. 13-14.
 23. Fassett A. Cotton, *Education in Indiana: An Outline in the Growth of the Common School System* (Indianapolis: Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1904). This book was prepared for the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition held in St. Louis in 1904.
 24. Given the ease with which a school

- district could assign a grammar-school teacher part-time to teach a few "advanced" courses to a small number of students, and call this a high-school operation, data on the exact number of high schools were difficult to obtain, and varied according to the compiler's definition of what it took to be considered the equivalent of such a school.
25. Average salaries ranged from \$520 to \$1,100; the latter was at Indianapolis Shortridge High School, founded in 1853.
 26. Henry Johnson, *The Other Side of Main Street: A History Teacher from Sauk Centre* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 88.
 27. Thorndike, "The Teaching Staff of Secondary Schools," p. 41.
 28. *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17.
 29. Richard Alston Metcalf, *A History of Princeton High School* (Princeton, IL: Princeton High School, 1892).
 30. Franklin S. Edmonds, *History of the Central High School of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1902), pp. 319–349; David F. Labaree, "The People's College: A Sociological Analysis of the Central High School of Philadelphia, 1838–1920," doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1983, Table 2.2.
 31. Emery N. Ferriss, *The Rural High School: Rural School Survey of New York State* (Philadelphia: William F. Fell, 1922), p. 105. (He also found that the median salary for teachers was only \$1,222; *ibid.*, p. 108.)
 32. Emery N. Ferriss, "The Rural High School: Its Organization and Curriculum," in U.S. Bureau of Education *Bulletin* 10 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1925), pp. 2 and 13.
 33. John Rufi, *The Small High School*, Columbia University Contributions to Education, No. 236 (New York: Teachers College Press, 1926), p. 63.
 34. Henry C. Pannell, *The Preparation and Work of Alabama High School Teachers*, Columbia University Contributions to Education, No. 551 (New York: Teachers College Press, 1933), pp. 33, 36, and 39.
 35. Rufi, *The Small High School*, p. 50.
 36. In 1890, only 9 out of 59 high schools in Connecticut were located in a separate building; in Illinois, only 38 out of 258 were thus differentiated. Theodore R. Sizer, *Secondary Schools at the Turn of the Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 39–40.
 37. Edward Hicks Magill, *Sixty-five Years in the Life of a Teacher, 1841–1906* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1907).
 38. John Swett, *Public Education in California* (New York: Arno Press, 1969).
 39. Charles Swain Thomas, *A Memorial of Samuel Thurber: Teacher and Scholar, 1837–1913* (Boston: New England Association of Teachers of English, 1914).
 40. Mary A. Lord, "Julia Anne King," in *Michigan History Magazine* 38 (1954), pp. 306–312.
 41. Lizette Woodworth Reese, *A Victorian Village* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1929).
 42. Johnson, *The Other Side of Main Street*.
 43. Nellie Beaumont, "Emma Lott: 1867–1937," in *Michigan History Magazine* 41 (1957), pp. 335–363.
 44. Anges Houghton Boss, "Grace Annie Hill (1874–1944)," in *Michigan History Magazine* 38 (1954), pp. 153–156.
 45. Inez Taylor, "I am a Teacher," in *Michigan History Magazine* 45 (1961), p. 263–276.
 46. Marie J. Rasey, *It Takes Time: An Autobiography of the Teaching Profession* (New York: Harper, 1953). Dates and locations are difficult to determine from this impressionistic account.
 47. Rasey, *It Takes Time*, pp. 137 and 139.
 48. Coffman, *The Social Composition of the Teaching Population*, pp. 38–39; and Thorndike, "The Teaching Staff of Secondary Schools," pp. 13–14.
 49. National Education Association, *Report of the Committee on Salaries, Tenure, and Pensions of Public School Teachers in the United States* (Winona, MN: National Education Association, 1905), pp. 16 and 106–114. The average figures are for communities larger than 8,000.

50. Cotton, *Education in Indiana*, p. 194.
51. Ferriss, "The Rural High School," p. 2.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 16 and 18–19.
53. In a collection of biographical sketches of Michigan educators in 1900 one can find a sizeable number of female high-school principals listed, but they almost always worked in the smallest communities (Caro, Vassar, Blissfield, Allegan, Constantine, Norway, etc.) and retained major teaching responsibilities. *Educators of Michigan: Biographical* (Chicago: J. H. Beers, 1900).
54. Swett, *Public Education in California*.
55. Jesse Stuart, *The Thread That Runs So True* (New York: Scribners, 1949).
56. Mabel Gildart and Mary A. Lord, "A. Fern Persons," in *Michigan History Magazine* 41 (1957), pp. 471–476.
57. Coffman's analysis would seem to contradict the importance of education to occupational mobility. He argues that, for teachers in general in 1909, "There is no uniform tendency or relation existing between salary and education." But he notes that it is the first four years of school after the elementary level (the high-school years) that have little career impact. However, he found that the "correlation between salary and education becomes increasingly marked with each succeeding year after the fourth year." It is precisely this more advanced level of education that those teachers sought who aspired to positions in the high school and beyond. Coffman, *The Social Composition of the Teaching Population*, p. 45. Thorndike found a strong relationship between the education and pay of high-school teachers. Thorndike, "The Teaching Staff of Secondary Schools," p. 41.
58. John Rury has argued this point for teachers in general at the turn of the century, analyzing teachers listed in the 1900 census public-use sample. John L. Rury, "Gender, Salaries, and Career: American Teachers, 1900–1910," in *Issues in Education* 4 (1986), pp. 215–235.
59. A. P. Nightingale, "Ratio of Men to Women in the High Schools of the United States," in *School Review* 4 (1896), pp. 86–98. These averages are at best rough estimates. Some superintendents reported an average pay, but others simply reported two or three pay levels without indicating how many teachers earned each amount. In the latter case, I simply computed the average between the high and low figures, although this probably biases the result upward.
60. Strober and Langford found that in the largely urban school systems where schools were formalized (graded, with a longer school year and more credentials required for teaching), the proportion of female teachers was higher, and so was the pay differential between men and women. Myra H. Strober and Audrey Gordon Langford, "The Feminization of Public School Teaching: Cross-Sectional Analysis, 1850–1880," in *Signs* 11 (1986), pp. 212–235.
61. Nightingale, "Ratio of Men to Women," p. 92.
62. National Education Association, *Report of the Committee on Salaries*, pp. 16 and 106–114.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 89–90.
64. Myra H. Strober and Laura Best, "The Female/Male Salary Differential in Public Schools: Some Lessons from San Francisco, 1879," in *Economic Inquiry* 17 (1979), pp. 218–236.
65. Arthur G. Powell, "University Schools of Education in the Twentieth Century," in *Peabody Journal of Education* 54 (1976), pp. 3–20.
66. Wayne J. Urban, *Why Teachers Organized* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1982).
67. Edward E. Redcay, *County Training Schools and Public Secondary Education for Negroes in the South* (Washington, DC: John F. Slater Fund, 1935), p. 57 and 63.
68. Henry A. Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South: From 1619 to the Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), Table 4.
69. This discussion of meritocratic ideology and career advancement owes a considerable amount to David Tyack and Elis-

- abeth Hansot, *Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820–1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1982).
70. Especially for men in the mid-nineteenth century, this entrepreneurship frequently took the form of establishing proprietary schools. It was a common practice for men to gain experience and a following through teaching in the public schools, then cash in by going private. For example, Anson D. P. Van Buren, after teaching in a variety of public schools, took over the proprietary Battle Creek (MI) High School in 1849. Then, a year later, at the urging of local authorities, he merged his school into the public Battle Creek Union School and took over as head. But in 1851 he set up his own select high school in town. Anson D. P. Van Buren, "The Log Schoolhouse Era in Michigan," in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Historical Collections* 14 (1889), pp. 283–403.
71. For an elaboration of this point in relation to one prominent example of such a school, the Central High School of Philadelphia, see David F. Labaree, *The Making of an American High School: The Credentials Market and the Central High School of Philadelphia, 1838–1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), Ch. 4.
72. Magali S. Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California, 1977).

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