

NOTES AND COMMENT

YANKEE TEACHERS AND THE FOUNDING OF ARGENTINA'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Argentina had no state system of free schools for its people. The national and the provincial governments had long been supporting secondary schools and universities but not the elementary schools. The latter depended upon the Catholic Church and private individuals. The founding of a state system of free elementary schools was the joint achievement of the national and provincial governments, a task in which the national government usually took the lead. The system was established during the administrations of Presidents Domingo F. Sarmiento, Nicolás Avellaneda, and Julio A. Roca, who served in turn as chief executives of the nation from 1868 to 1886. Roca was followed by Miguel Juárez Celman, who continued to give some support to elementary education; but his régime was so corrupt that he was forced to retire from the presidency in 1890.

These men and their administrative associates were the founders of Argentina's public elementary schools, but they were ably assisted by teachers from the United States. Argentina had almost no teachers with the capacity and disposition required to inaugurate a system of primary education for the children of the people. It was therefore necessary at the outset to establish teacher-training schools, and between 1871 and 1886 more than thirty of these were opened in almost every part of the country. Some were for men; more were for women; a few were for both sexes, or "mixed." It was in connection with these normal schools that the Yankee teachers made their contribution to the public education of Argentina.

The first of the training schools, the "mixed" normal at Paraná, was opened in 1871, with a New Englander named George Stearns as director. The fourth, the normal for men at Tucumán, was founded in 1874, with John W. Stearns, probably a relative of George Stearns, as director. Apparently these two men were the only men imported from the United States for the staffs of the Argentine normals. Women teachers were imported in considerable numbers. A total of some thirty or forty were employed during the twenty years following

1871 either in the women's normals or the "mixed" normals—perhaps a few in the training schools for men. The first of the women were induced to come to Argentina by Sarmiento, who had spent some time on official missions in the United States, where he had become the warm friend of Mr. and Mrs. Horace Mann and developed a great admiration for the United States and its public schools. Many more were imported by Sarmiento's successors, especially President Roca.

Reverend J. R. Wood, a Methodist missionary residing at the time at Rosario, Argentina, appeared before a commercial commission sent by the United States to the Río de la Plata nations and other parts of Spanish America in 1885 and presented, among other things, a list of "American" women teaching in Argentina at this period. The list included twenty-eight, located as follows:

Rosario: Alcinda Morrow and Antoinette Choate.

Paraná: Sarah Strong, Myra Kimball, and Mrs. Sallie E. Eccleston.

Concepción del Uruguay: Isabel King and Rachel King.

Corrientes: Edith Howe and a Miss Howard.

Córdoba: Frances Armstrong, Mrs. L. M. Turney, and a Miss Wall.

Catamarca: Clara Armstrong, A. A. Cross, Amy E. Wales, May Armstrong, and a Miss Ellis.

Mendoza: Sarah A. Cook, Rosa E. Dart, and Louise Daniels.

San Juan: Mary O. Graham, Clara J. Gillies, Sarah Atkinson, and Sarah Harrison.

La Rioja: Annette E. Haven, B. E. Avery.

Jujuy: Jeanette Stevens and Theodora Say [Gay].

A few other names are mentioned in the reports of officials connected with the Argentine ministry of public instruction. Isabel B. Coolidge had charge of the women's normal at Rosario in 1880-1881 and a Miss Boyd was head of the one at Mendoza in 1878-1879, where Emma Cemb [Combs?] and Sara E. Lobb were members of the teaching staff in the 1880's. Mary MacMillan was vice-directress at the Mendoza normal for women in 1878 and Mrs. Martha Graham Dudley, perhaps a relative of Mary O. Graham, had charge of the kindergarten at the "mixed" normal in La Plata in 1889-1890. Anna Doolittle was on the staff at Paraná and later at Concepción. Probably still other women were connected during the period with these training schools or those at Salta, Tucumán, San Luis, Santiago del Estero, or Buenos Aires. Consul Willis E. Baker, who also appeared before the United States commercial commission in 1885, said that some of the women had "married and left off teaching." At least one of these, Miss Gay, who married a Mr. Schlosser, was back in the

teaching service in 1890, as acting head of the women's normal at Jujuy.

As a rule, these women went down to Argentina on three-year contracts and studied Spanish at Paraná before they began to teach. Their salaries were high for the time, for they received from 150 to 200 Argentine *pesos* a month, amounting to nearly as many dollars in money of the United States. Nearly all of them held administrative posts of one kind or another. Some twelve or fifteen were directresses or vice-directresses of normals for women or for both sexes. Others had charge of schools for practice teaching, which were connected with almost every normal. A number had charge of kindergartens, of which there were six in 1892, for instance, each attached to one of the training schools for teachers.

The majority of the women, perhaps, were from New England, a good many from Boston; but some were from the West; from Michigan, Wisconsin, and Missouri. Miss Doolittle, Miss Cook, Miss Frances Armstrong, and probably the other Armstrongs were from Boston; Miss Graham was from St. Louis; Miss Strong was from Wisconsin; and Mrs. Eccleston, a native of Ohio, was from Michigan; but she had taught for a time in the school for kindergarten teachers at Winona, Minnesota, where Miss Choate had been one of her pupils.

A good many of these Yankee teachers remained in Argentina for a decade or more, and some held positions at different times in two or more normals. A number of them made Argentina their permanent home and remained long in educational work, finally retiring on government pensions. Still others, after shorter periods of teaching, turned to new occupations in the land of their adoption. Practically all of the women were noted for their character, capacity, and industry. Perhaps the most distinguished of the group were Edith Howe, Mary O. Graham, Clara Armstrong, Mrs. Eccleston, and Frances Armstrong. Miss Howe was head of the Corrientes normal for women from its opening in 1884 until 1895 or later. Clara Armstrong became directress at San Juan after serving for a decade as head of Catamarca. Miss Graham was directress at San Juan and then at the "mixed" normal at La Plata. Mrs. Eccleston opened the kindergarten at Concepción del Uruguay as well as at Paraná. Miss Frances Armstrong, who arrived in Argentina in the 1870's, served for four years—from its opening in 1884 to 1888—as directress of the normal for women in conservative, ardently Catholic Córdoba, where she had serious difficulties with the bishop, but was firmly supported by the Roca government. The dispute provoked a bitter conflict between Church and State and resulted in the expul-

sion of the papal nuncio and the breaking of relations with the Vatican. The Roman Catholic authorities had warned parents not to send their children to this proselytizing Protestant school.

These training schools were rather elementary institutions. In the majority, the course of study ran for only three years; others offered a five-year course, designed to train teachers for the staffs of other normals. But over the years these Yankee women helped to lay the foundation of Argentina's public school system and advance the nation to front rank among Latin-American countries in popular education. They trained hundreds of teachers both for the normals and the elementary schools.¹

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NUEVOMUNDO

Under the name *Nuevomundo* there has appeared in Medellín, Colombia, the first issue of this ideological magazine (Año 1, No. 1, April, 1943) devoted to continental unity and the defense of democracy.

As proof of its deep American sense this first issue of *Nuevomundo* is consecrated to the memory of the outstanding Peruvian writer, José Carlos Mariátegui, who wrote such brilliant pages on the American scene. But Mariátegui was a revolutionary and this indicates the nature of the magazine.

Revolution? Well, this is a very complicated subject. However, if this magazine is to concern itself with a particular revolution, it cannot be other than the Total American Revolution. America, North, Central and South, for the people, for peace and democracy, and for international coöperation.

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APRISTA BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mr. Luis-Alberto Sánchez has written that he collected most of the items of the Aprista bibliography which appeared in the August, 1943, number of THE HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW in collaboration with Mr. Luis de las Casas, Peruvian student now in exile in Chile, and with Mr. Luis Salcedo, prominent young Aprista leader

¹ *House Executive Document*, No. 50, 49 Cong., 1 Sess., Serial No. 2392, pp. 392-393, 421-424, 453; Argentina: Ministerio de Justicia, Culto é Instrucción Pública, *Report upon the State of Secondary and Normal Education in the Argentine Republic* (La Plata, 1893), pp. 25-29, *passim*; *idem*, *Antecedentes sobre enseñanza secundaria y normal en la República Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1903), pp. 271, *passim*; *idem*, various *Memorias*, 1871-1895 (Buenos Aires, 1871-1896).