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INTRODUCTION

Working Americans 1880-2012 Volume XIII: Educators & Education is the 13th volume in the *Working Americans* series. Like its predecessors, this work profiles the lives of Americans – how they lived, how they worked, how they thought – decade by decade. The earliest volumes focus on economic status or social issues. More recent volumes focus on a specific group of Americans – athletes in *Volume X* and musicians in *Volume XII*. This volume highlights American educators – from traditional teachers to unlikely mentors, from coaches to authors, from parents to program innovators. *Educators* depicts the classroom that is America – from natural environments to thoughtful buildings, from educational television programs to programs for children of immigrants, from war trenches to piano benches.

Arranged in 12 chapters, this newest *Working Americans* includes three **Profiles** per chapter for a total of 36. Each profile offers personal insights using *Life at Home*, *Life at Work* and *Life in the Community* categories. These personal topics are followed by historic and economic data of the time. **Historical Snapshots** chronicle major milestones. A variety of **News Features** puts the subject's life and work in context of the day. These common elements, as well as specialized data, such as **Selected Prices**, in currency of the time, punctuate each chapter and act as statistical comparisons between decades. The 36 individuals profiled in this volume represent all regions of the country, and a wide variety of ages and ethnic backgrounds.

In *Volume XIII: Educators & Education*, you will read about educators who:

- Travel to the Dakotas in 1881 to teach Sioux children;
- Design school buildings that encourage learning and community involvement;
- Teach young immigrants the importance of being American;
- Convince schools to buy and use IQ tests;
- Discover why Johnny can't read;
- Convince schools that sex education reduces teen pregnancy;
- Teach with armed officers posted outside their windows during desegregation;
- Tutor children in South Africa and Teach for America.

All thirteen volumes, regardless of economic status, time period, or specific focus, offer a unique look at those Americans whose talents, desires, motivations, struggles, and values shaped – and continue to shape – this nation. Without exception, the 437 individuals profiled in the thirteen volumes of this *Working Americans* series are working toward their version of the American dream.

Like its companion volumes, *Working Americans 1880-2012 Volume XIII: Educators & Education* is a compilation of original research (personal diaries and family histories) plus printed material (government statistics, commercial advertisements, and

news features). The text, in easy-to-read bulleted format, is supported with hundreds of graphics, such as photos, advertisements, pages from printed material, letters, and documents.

All thirteen *Working Americans* volumes are “point in time” books, designed to illustrate the reality of that particular time. Some Americans portrayed in this 13th volume went on to realize fame and fortune, while others did not. What they all did, however, is help America find her voice, and many of their stories and struggles march on.

Praise for earlier volumes –

“ . . . this unique volume portrays music and musicians in America over the past 130 years. . . . The intent . . . is to profile individuals involved in music at all levels . . . and the publisher . . . achieves that lofty goal.”

“ . . . by arranging the people chronologically rather than alphabetically, users can see how industry changed over time and how ideas and inventions built upon each other. . . . an outstanding overview of the unique inventions and entrepreneurial efforts . . . This work is highly recommended for school libraries from middle school through high school as well as college libraries from community college through graduate school . It should also be found in public libraries of every size.

American Reference Books Annual

“this volume engages and informs, contributing significantly and meaningfully to the historiography of the working class in America . . . a compelling and well-organized contribution for those interested in social history and the complexities of working Americans.”

Library Journal

“these interesting, unique compilations of economic and social facts, figures, and graphs . . . support multiple research needs [and] will engage and enlighten patrons in high school, public, and academic library collections.”

Booklist

“[the author] adds to the genre of social history known as ‘history from the bottom up’ . . . Recommended for all colleges and university library collections.”

Choice

“the volume succeeds at presenting various cultural, regional, economic and age-related points of view . . . [it is] visually appealing [and] certainly a worthwhile purchase...”

Feminist Collections



1881 PROFILE

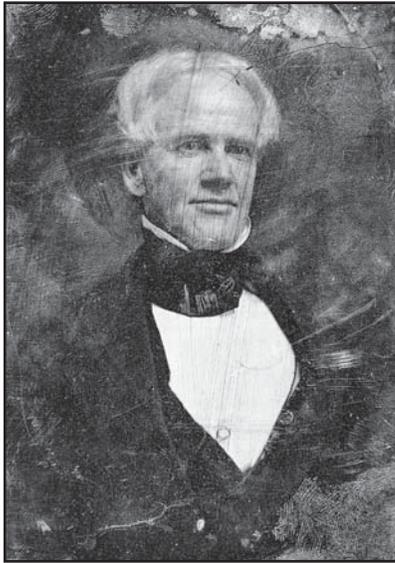
With two years of college under her belt and two years of teaching in northern Michigan, Mary Greene was ready for the educational change sweeping the nation.

Life at Home

- When Mary Greene entered her tiny, one-room school in Wisconsin in 1881 for the first time, she was well aware of the educational reforms sweeping the prairielands.
- Industrialist Horace Mann—building off the ideas of Thomas Jefferson—had seen to that.
- A modern education required a standard curriculum, universal attendance and graduated steps to completion; Mary was proud to be at the center of the transformation.
- In 1778, Thomas Jefferson, while still a member of the Virginia Assembly, proposed that all children be guaranteed three years of public schooling.
- It was a radical concept that he believed was essential to the perpetuation of democracy.
- “General education will enable every man to judge for himself what will secure or endanger his freedom,” Jefferson said.
- “But was it necessary?” asked his fellow landowners, who already paid a fee to send their children to private “dame schools”; besides, no one was sure that field hands needed the capacity to read William Shakespeare.



Teacher Mary Greene was ready for educational reform.



Horace Mann was at the center of education reform.

- The debate raged for decades.
- Despite a professed belief that free, universal education was essential to the perpetuity of democracy, by 1840 America still offered few educational opportunities to the children of its agrarian workers and industrial workforce.
- With no state supervision, inconsistent local budgets and a tepid commitment to instructing the masses, America's schools languished.
- Most of the schools offered an education linked to the Protestant Bible; the most common schoolbook was the New England Primer—used to teach reading and the fundamentals of Protestant catechism.
- The few older boys who went beyond the grammar school years studied mathematics, Latin and philosophy.
- Mary Greene was fully aware of the role Horace Mann played in changing attitudes for her sake.
- His personal inspection of 1,000 Massachusetts schools over a six-year period had demonstrated that most lacked adequate light, heat and ventilation.
- With no standardized textbooks, pupils spent hours memorizing or reciting passages from books they brought from home, no matter how dated or irrelevant they might have been.
- Mann supported a new system called “common schools” that would serve all boys and girls and teach a common body of knowledge that would give each student an equal chance at life.
- “It is a free school system, it knows no distinction of rich and poor...education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the equalizer of the conditions of men, the great balance wheel of the social machinery.”
- Mann proposed that the state establish both a taxation system adequate to meet the needs of the school and create standards or expectations on a statewide basis.
- Additional innovations included the introduction of school desk chairs with backs, standardized textbooks, a bell to signal the time and the visibility of a blackboard.
- Convinced that an educated citizenry benefited the entire community, he was also a major proponent of teacher education and universal taxation.
- Fearing any statewide control, local school boards attacked the plans vociferously, but the debate fully exposed the concept that everyone in society should pay for universal education.
- In 1879, a uniform grading program was instituted in Wisconsin.
- In 1881, for the first time, students would be formally charted on their progress.
- Mary had grown up in Wisconsin schools that mirrored the educational process that Mann criticized.
- During Mary's schooling, the role of the teacher was largely to oversee and monitor pupil behavior; there was no clear curriculum and no graduated steps to higher grades.
- Raised on a farm as one of nine children, Mary's father loved school so much that his parents agreed to extend his education to the sixth grade, whereas most of his classmates and siblings left school after three years.
- Her mother had had no formal education beyond Bible reading at home, and desperately wanted one of her children to acquire enough education to become a preacher, a teacher, or an undertaker, since all three guaranteed paying jobs.
- Growing up, Mary was taught to commit to memory words for public recitation; the person who possessed the best word memory was the most satisfactory pupil.
- Education experts speculated that since the object of education was to strengthen the innate properties of the mind, recitations served as the rigorous, muscle-building exercise children needed.

- Mary also experienced the custom of “boarding ‘round,” in which her teachers moved from house to house every two weeks, spending time in the home of each child who attended her school.
- Mary was thrilled when the teacher came to stay at her house; only years later did she realize that the custom was necessary because of the low wages paid to female teachers, and that few adults would wish to change their location every two weeks.

Life at Work

- Mary Greene’s first challenge as a newly hired teacher was to figure out when the school year started.
- Every year the school board set the dates for the start of the school year based upon the amount of school taxes that had been collected; the funds covered teacher wages and contingency.
- Only after the numbers were in could the local school board establish the calendar for the winter and summer terms—each running about four months.
- Generally, school attendance in the country was an erratic, seasonal activity based on the farming needs of the family, the opening day of hunting season, or the unexpected illness of a prized animal.
- In Otsego, Wisconsin, the summer term traditionally began after the spring planting of the potato crop, and the winter term started after the harvest.
- Some boys only attended school in the summer session.
- In years past, men were hired as schoolteachers in the winter term when boys were considered more obstreperous and difficult to teach; women were hired for the summer term.
- From 1867 to 1880, the one-room school in Otsego was served by 25 different teachers.
- It made for very poor continuity, and the skills of the students lagged.
- At the same time, women were beginning to dominate teaching.
- Women were considered more temperamentally suited to the teaching profession and would work for less.
- For the first time in years, the school board had contracted with Mary to cover the entire year, and told her they wished to break the cycle of frequently changing teachers.
- But unlike her predecessors, Mary was experienced in teaching and in the ways of politics.
- Before the school year had begun, she visited the most influential families in the area to demonstrate why an education should take precedence over potato farming; as important, she talked about the future as a time of change when their children would need the ability to read and write effectively.
- The community listened and threw its support behind education; they even embraced the statewide curriculum that established graded steps toward graduation using statewide standards, including an expectation that a child’s education should last eight years.
- Using the plans distributed by the Wisconsin State Superintendent’s Office, pupils were to be graded or grouped based on their abilities into one of three levels: primary form, middle form, and upper form.
- Movement from one grade to the next was to be determined based on a system of examinations.
- The year Mary arrived, the school was transitioning from the New England Primer to the McGuffey Reader.
- McGuffey Readers, including a primer, a speller, and five readers, had been around since 1836; nearly 100 million copies had been sold in the prior 34 years.
- The Readers were designed to become progressively more challenging with each volume; word repetition in the text was featured as a learning tool, helping to develop reading skills.
- Sounding out, enunciation and accents were emphasized, gradually introducing new words and carefully repeating the old.



Outdoor recess for Wisconsin school children.

- McGuffey also listed questions after each story to aid the teacher and assist in the statewide plan to establish grades.
- While Mary’s youngest students, eager to catch up with their older brothers and sisters, loved the energy and focus of the new curriculum, the older students fought the changes.
- A year earlier, they knew exactly what was required to obtain high grades; now, everything was unfamiliar.
- So on the last day of the first week, the older students staged a strike by refusing to re-enter the classroom after recess.
- Mary simply ignored them while she taught the first graders and left the protest alone.
- One by one her charges, looking very sheepish, reappeared in her classroom.
- They all expected to be paddled—a punishment Mary avoided.
- “I don’t plan to tell your parents what you have done,” she proclaimed at the end of the school day, and “I expect no more student strikes—leave that to the unions that are fighting for workers’ rights.”
- The next day, Mary devoted the first hour of the day to explaining why change was taking place.
- She told her 28 charges that “what was good enough for pa is good enough for me” was no longer true.
- “The world is getting more competitive; hundreds of thousands of people arrive in America searching for work. They want jobs—your jobs—to raise their families.”
- With that out of the way, she got out a map of Europe to show everyone where the immigrants were coming from, and then helped everyone with their arithmetic by demonstrating how many zeros were in 100,000—as in 100,000 new immigrants.
- She then used a horseshoe to demonstrate how to measure in inches—then she asked one of the boys to throw the horseshoe and showed how to measure in feet.
- Then a student brought in a plot of his family’s property, and the next class was devoted to acres, divisions and calculating triangles.
- But when one of her quietest students brought in figures showing the shoulder height of her cows compared to their weight and asked how math could be used to determine the weight of cows in the field, Mary knew it was going to be a good year.

Life in the Community: Otsego, Wisconsin

- Otsego, Wisconsin, got its start as a transportation center and functioned as a station on the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad.
- Situated in the prairie region north of Madison, it served as the center of agricultural and dairy; potatoes dominated the agricultural crops throughout the county.



Mary Greene outside her one-room school.

- By 1881, amenities included a graded school, and Lutheran and Catholic churches, while the Modern Woodmen of America and the Catholic Order of Foresters added to the sociability of the area.
- The first settler to the area, Wayne B. Dyer, arrived in 1844 and erected a log house in which to live and entertain weary travelers.
- Being on the direct route between Milwaukee and Stevens Point, Dyer prevailed upon quite a number of travelers to settle around his hostelry, and by December 1847, the Post Office of Otsego was established.
- As other hotels were built, the village attained a fair degree of prosperity.
- In January 1849, the growing community was organized into a town to which was given the name of Otsego.
- The two largest cities nearby were Milwaukee and Madison.
- Madison was created in 1836 when former federal judge James Duane Doty, planning to build a city on the site, purchased over a thousand acres of swamp and forest land on the isthmus between Lakes Mendota and Monona.
- The Wisconsin Territory had been created earlier that year and was tasked with choosing a permanent location for its capital.
- Doty lobbied aggressively for the legislature to select Madison as the new capital, offering buffalo robes to the freezing legislators and promising choice Madison lots at discount prices to undecided voters.
- Doty named the city Madison for James Madison, the fourth president of the U.S., who had died on June 28, 1836, and he named the streets for the other 38 signers of the U.S. Constitution.
- Even though Madison was still only a city on paper, the territorial legislature voted on November 28 in favor of Madison as the capital, largely because of its location halfway between the new and growing cities around Milwaukee in the east and the long-established strategic post of Prairie du Chien in the west.
- When Wisconsin became a state in 1848, Madison remained the capital, and the following year it became home to the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT

1881

- Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell formed the Oriental Telephone Company
- The city of Phoenix, Arizona, was incorporated
- Kansas became the first state to prohibit all alcoholic beverages
- Black colleges Spelman College in Georgia and the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama opened
- The Four Dead in Five Seconds Gunfight erupted in El Paso, Texas
- The University of Connecticut was founded as the Storrs Agricultural School
- Clara Barton established the American Red Cross
- The USS *Jeannette* was crushed in an Arctic Ocean ice pack
- President James Garfield was shot by Charles Julius Guiteau and died 11 weeks later; Vice President Chester Arthur became the nation's twenty-first president
- Sheriff Pat Garrett shot and killed outlaw William Henry McCarty, Jr.—widely known as Billy the Kid—outside Fort Sumner, New Mexico
- Sioux Chief Sitting Bull led the last of his fugitive people in surrender to U.S. troops at Fort Buford in Montana
- The fifth hurricane of the Atlantic season hit Florida and the Carolinas, killing about 700
- Francis Howell High School in St. Charles, Missouri, and Stephen F. Austin High School in Austin, Texas, opened on the same day, September 12, putting them in a tie for the title of the oldest public high school west of the Mississippi River
- Atlanta, Georgia hosted the International Cotton Exposition
- In London, Richard D'Oyly Carte opened the Savoy Theatre, the world's first public building to be fully lit by electricity, using Joseph Swan's incandescent light bulbs
- The Gunfight at the O.K. Corral in Tombstone, Arizona, captured nationwide media attention
- The magazine *Judge* was first published
- New York City's oldest independent school for girls, the Convent of the Sacred Heart, was founded
- The United States National Lawn Tennis Association and The United States Tennis Association were established, and the first U.S. Tennis Championships were played
- The Vatican's archives were opened to scholars for the first time



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**“High School Football: At Elizabeth High School,
It’s a Matter of Getting From Here to There,” Robert Lipsyte,
The New York Times, November 27, 1992:**

ELIZABETH, N.J.—The sounds and rhythms change at Elizabeth High School as the squeaky slap of leather on hardwood replaces the meaty thud of colliding bodies. The football season ended yesterday and practice begins for the girls’ and boys’ basketball teams today.

But for the coaches, the purpose of all this noise and sweat remains the same: keep the 4,300 students of New Jersey’s largest high school interested and involved until they are prepared to escape this tough port city of 110,000, to college or to meaningful work.

Most coaches here believe, perhaps self-servingly, that a successful athletic program is the secular church of this predominately Hispanic and black school, even for those who only worship. And that the coaches, overwhelmingly white men, are the ministers of a higher order.

Basketball brings particular promise and pressure. The boys’ coach, Ben Candeloni, is routinely expected to field a powerhouse. He has sent players to major colleges and the National Basketball Association. The girls’ coach, Shannon Luby, may have a harder job: persuading historically oppressed young women from minority groups to assert themselves, even as she fights her own Title IX battles in a department that would prefer a man in her job.



Continued

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