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**“AN ALARMING STATE OF EVIL AMONG OUR JUVENILES”**

A Case Study of Public Education in Manchester, New Hampshire from 1845-1915

BY

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Baccalaureate Degree in History, University of New Hampshire, 2011

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THESIS

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire

in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

History

September, 2023

**THESIS COMMITTEE PAGE**

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08/07/2023

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Date

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of New Hampshire Graduate School.

**Dedication**

I want to dedicate this work to my family, Benjamin, Emerson, and Beckett, for giving me the support and time to complete this research project. I also want to dedicate this to all the other full-time teachers who want to know more about the subjects they teach. It is a huge risk to go back to school while teaching full-time.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge my Thesis Committee, Professors Kurk Dorsey, Michael Lesse, and Lucy Salyer, for their feedback and dedication to help make this happen. My Advisor, Professor Lucy Salyer, without whose help and support this thesis would not have happened. We worked through the birth of two children and a global pandemic. This research project started as a short paper for Michael Leese's History of Rich and Poor class in 2018.

I would also like to acknowledge the Manchester Historic Association. Their abundance of primary sources is what made this paper possible.

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**ABSTRACT****“AN ALARMING STATE OF EVIL AMONG OUR JUVENILES”**

A Case Study of Public Education in Manchester, New Hampshire from 1845-1915

BY

AMY SHERR

University of New Hampshire, September, 2023

This thesis investigates the effectiveness of compulsory public education laws in Manchester, New Hampshire from 1845-1915, drawing on detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of school attendance records, legislative proceedings, and media coverage. The thesis identifies shifting objectives in the campaigns for compulsory education laws and child labor laws in New Hampshire over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which help to explain lackluster enforcement. Reformers re-defined the perceived problems over time which led to new legislation and changing priorities in enforcement. Initially, reformers focused on “idle children” causing trouble and disrupting society. Then with mass immigration to the cities, people began to worry less about the idle children and more about the uneducated immigrant children. Once most children were off the streets, either in factories or at school, the focus turned to ensure the education of the immigrant children working in the factories by limiting ages and hours of child workers. As the working conditions these children experienced came to light, reformers called for the end of child labor and pushed for compulsory education laws that required a longer school year.

Reformers had to contend with the economic imperatives of families and their employers who often frustrated enforcement. Reformers eventually realized that only federal legislation could bring an end to child labor. They soon discovered, however, that there were no quick fixes for ending child labor at the federal level, either, as states continued to differ on the issue and some mounted successful efforts to challenge federal legislation before the Supreme Court. The Manchester, New Hampshire case study provides an excellent opportunity to study the law in action, exploring the multiple factors that shaped the creation and enforcement of child labor and compulsory education at the local, state, and national level.

## **Introduction**

On June 25, 1859, nine-year-old James Fitzgerald was sent to the Manchester House of Correction for 60 days. James cried when he heard the news and said that he would have attended school, but his mother wanted him home. James promised he “would go to Mr. Aldrich’s school every day and never leave, if he could be only forgiven this once.” Despite James’s tearful plea, the court showed little compassion and upheld his sentence under an 1853 New Hampshire law for being consistently truant. James was just one of many children in the mid-nineteenth century who were sent to the house of reformation or house of corrections in Manchester, N.H, in his case, for being consistently truant.<sup>1</sup>

James’s incarceration for failing to attend school seems harsh by today’s standards, but 19<sup>th</sup> century reformers likely applauded the judge’s diligent enforcement of a law they had helped to enact. New Hampshire reformers participated in a national trend as child welfare organizations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries pushed legislation not only to compel students to attend school, but also to ban child labor in the country’s burgeoning factories. Reformers saw the two reforms – compulsory education and child labor – as intimately linked. Both were part of a larger societal shift that occurred nationally in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. As revealed in this thesis, reformers (especially the National Child Labor Committee, NCLC, founded in 1904) believed that “successful child labor laws worked in conjunction with compulsory

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<sup>1</sup> "Police Court," *Dollar Weekly Mirror*, June 25, 1859. The article also notes that James is not the only one to blame. His parents were not able to control him, as they should have, and his father was the one who requested the arrest. According to the article, parents not being able to keep their children out of trouble was not an uncommon occurrence.

education laws.”<sup>2</sup> Throughout the late 19th century and early 20th century, child labor laws prompted debates over what was morally correct and what was economically necessary, as is revealed in contentious arguments over whether to require school attendance in Manchester, New Hampshire, the state’s largest industrial city and home to the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, a major employer of young workers.

The NCLC’s national campaign built upon decades of reform efforts at the state level. This thesis focuses on the efforts in New Hampshire, specifically in the industrial city of Manchester, to abolish child labor and ensure school attendance, showing how those campaigns were linked. The study offers insight into how and why such laws were passed. More importantly, this thesis provides a rare assessment of the effectiveness of such laws, compiling data from school attendance and other records that shine light on the enforcement of the reforms. The lessons learned from early attempts to regulate child labor and school attendance in states like New Hampshire informed the national campaigns of the Progressive Era.

### **Background and Historiography**

Public education in the United States has a long history dating back to the Puritans in the 1600’s. The Puritans were an extremely religious group who believed that everyone should be able to read the Bible because it was the word of God, and all practitioners of the faith should know what God said. As a result, they created schools for all children in their community to teach them how to read to carry on the devout practice of the religion.<sup>3</sup> Still, education until the

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Schuman, "History of Child Labor in the United States—Part 2: The Reform Movement," *Monthly Labor Review* (2017), 11.

<sup>3</sup> Edith Abbott, "A Study of the Early History of Child Labor in America," *American Journal of Sociology*, 14, no. 1 (1908), 15.

1840s had become a privilege of the wealthy who could afford to hire tutors or send their children to private schools. Most children learned the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic, along with a trade, from their parents at home. Unfortunately, this unregulated and ad hoc system meant many children received little to no education.<sup>4</sup>

In the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, education was a local matter, regulated by the states. Many states and towns created public elementary schools for children to attend in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1900, thirty-four states had compulsory schooling laws and twenty-eight states had enacted child labor laws.<sup>5</sup> As a result, around 80% of American children were attending school as the nation entered the 20th Century.<sup>6</sup> Every state required children to attend and complete at least elementary school by 1918.<sup>7</sup> Compulsory public education laws did not explicitly end child labor in America. However, if children were going to school, they could not be working.<sup>8</sup> Eventually, by passing and enforcing compulsory public education laws, the number of children working in America decreased.

Today, most historians agree about the multiple origins of compulsory public education in America. Michael B. Katz in “The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment” (1976) argues that previous historians had over-simplified the history of public education in America by

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<sup>4</sup> Abbott, "A Study of the Early History of Child Labor in America," 15-17; Michael B Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," *History of Education Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1976), 390-391.

<sup>5</sup> John A. Fliter, *Child Labor in America: The Epic Legal Struggle to Protect Children* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2018), 23; John G. Richardson, "Variation in Date of Enactment of Compulsory School Attendance Laws: An Empirical Inquiry," *Sociology of Education* 53, no. 3 (1980), 157.

<sup>6</sup> Schuman, "The Reform Movement," 11.

<sup>7</sup> Richardson, "Enactment of Compulsory School Attendance Laws," 157.

<sup>8</sup> Fliter, *Child Labor in America*, 20.

looking at it independently of other developments. Katz, however, believed that the beginning of widespread public education was part of a larger social and political shift that took place in the late nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Katz showed broader connections between the arrival of public education and other developments, such as the expansion of public welfare, immigration, and industrialization in the nineteenth century.

As Katz and other historians reveal, advocates pushed for compulsory public education legislation for a variety of reasons. In the 1820's voting rights expanded, and more white men were able to participate in government. Americans soon realized that it was important to have an educated citizenry to ensure the continuance of a thriving democratic system. Katz claimed that reformers believed in playing on the fears of the upper class as the best way to gain support for public education, especially after the rise of immigration in industrial cities. Some members of both the upper-class and reformers in America were afraid that uneducated Americans would be making political decisions that could affect the entire country. Donald Warren expanded on Katz's argument in his 1988 article "Original Intent: Public Schools as Civic Education." He showed how the Industrial Revolution drew waves of immigrants to American industrial cities looking for work. Starting in the 1840's, some people in America viewed cultural differences as a threat to the predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant views of citizenship and society. These Americans feared the new groups, primarily Catholic Europeans, coming to the United States and wanted to ensure that they assimilated into American society.<sup>10</sup> In the eyes of reformers and nativists alike, schools would provide the best path of assimilation for immigrant

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<sup>9</sup> Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment." 381-384.

<sup>10</sup> Donald Warren, "Original Intent: Public Schools as Civil Education," *Theory into Practice* 27, no. 4 (1988), 245.

children. Andrew Carnegie stated, “The free common school system of the land is probably, after all, the greatest single power in the unifying process which is producing the new American race.”<sup>11</sup>



Figure 2: Group portrait of one hundred and six school children on the steps of Lincoln School - 1887  
(Photo courtesy of the Manchester Historic Association)

As seen in the image above, there were many school-age children living in Manchester, N.H. Lincoln School was a grade school which taught children who were mostly too young to hold jobs in the nearby mills. By the Progressive Era, as numerous historical studies demonstrate, the concepts of childhood and child labor also changed, prompting calls for school attendance laws. Child labor was not a new phenomenon in the Progressive Era. Children had always worked and had been seen as a vital part of the family economy, but often they had

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<sup>11</sup> Andrew Carnegie, “The Upward March of Labor,” *Problems Today: Wealth, Labor, Socialism*, (Garden City, NJ, Doubleday, 1908), 44.

worked in family businesses – on farms or in shops – and under their parents’ supervision.<sup>12</sup>

Over the course of the nineteenth century, however, the centers of production moved from home to factory. Societal conceptions of the ideal family changed as well, with men viewed as the “sole breadwinner” of the household, while women cared for the house and children went to school.<sup>13</sup> This societal ideal did not align with the reality, however, as a high number of women and children continued to work outside the home and often in dangerous environments.<sup>14</sup> In 1870, there were 750,00 people under age fifteen performing wage work outside the home in the U.S. By 1911, that number grew to more than two million under the age of sixteen.<sup>15</sup> Disturbed by the rise of child labor in the industrial age, reformers such as Edith Abbott and Lewis Parker pushed to abolish child labor in the Progressive Era, seeing compulsory education as the main way to limit child labor.

As children increasingly worked outside the home, critics worried that they lacked the education and vocational training to be fully productive and self-sufficient participants in the American economy. Working in a factory was not a job that led to much upward mobility or growth. It was unlikely, but not impossible, that a bobbin boy was going to accumulate enough wealth to later be able to open his own factory, unlike the children working on the family farm

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<sup>12</sup> Debra Satz, "Child Labor: A Normative Perspective," *The World Bank Economic Review* 17, no. 2 (2003), 298-300.

<sup>13</sup> Abbott, "A Study of the Early History of Child Labor in America," 22-25.

<sup>14</sup> Schuman, "The Reform Movement," 1-3.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Schuman, "History of Child Labor in the United States—Part 1: Little Children Working," *Monthly Labor Review* (2017): 4-5.

or shop where they learned a trade that would later become a career.<sup>16</sup> According to historian Michael Schuman, reformers argued that the “training within the family became increasingly inadequate; the productive skills of parents were no longer adequate for the needs of the children during their lifetime” because parents were now working outside the home. Instead of families living and working together as a unit, family and work took place in distinct and separate locations, by the late nineteenth century. Children no longer learned career skills and basic education, such as reading and writing, at home.<sup>17</sup> Aside from the economic benefits of schooling, many Americans also believed children should have a basic education so they could participate fully in society as democratic citizens when they were older. As a result, many people started to call for compulsory public education during late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, especially as immigration to the United States surged, to create better workers and better citizens.<sup>18</sup>

Historian Donald Warren, agreeing with Katz, argued that Americans saw the education of immigrant children as one way to guarantee the safety and continuation of the American democratic system. America became increasingly diverse by the late nineteenth century, populated with people of different cultures, religions, and languages. Without public education for all, reformers argued, the immigrants and their children would not learn English and

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<sup>16</sup> One of Andrew Carnegie’s first jobs as a young immigrant boy was as a bobbin boy. His spectacular economic rise was an exception to this norm. 1. “Timeline: Rags to Riches,” PBS, accessed July 28, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/carnegie-timeline-rags-to-riches/>.

<sup>17</sup> Maris A Vinovskis, *History and Educational Policy Making* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 149.

<sup>18</sup> Lewis W. Parker, "Compulsory Education, the Solution of Child Labor Problem," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 32, no. 22 (1908), 40-44.



American values and culture.<sup>19</sup> As Katz concluded, reformers presumed that public education would help prevent the “impending rot of Anglo-American civilization... through a concerted effort to shape the still pliable characters of [the immigrants’] children into a native mold.”<sup>20</sup> Reformers believed that compulsory public education was the best way to assimilate the newcomers. The passage and enforcement of compulsory education laws would force parents to take their children out of the workforce and into the schoolhouse, ensuring the continuation of the democratic society that was the American ideal. Yet many immigrant children worked in the factories and were not able to obtain an education.<sup>21</sup> Thus, immigrant children increasingly became the target of reformers who pushed for both compulsory education and an end to child labor.

However, to do this, public schools had to be funded, built, and then filled with children. Getting immigrant families to participate in this process was a challenge. Instead, they usually had to send their children to work in the factories or mines. Numerous working-class, typically immigrant, families relied on their children’s labor to bring in money. When given the choice of sending their children to school or work, many could not afford the former.<sup>22</sup> Industry might also be reluctant to let go of child workers. Child labor was integral to the expansion and profitability of major industries, especially textile industries in New England and, by 1920, the

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<sup>19</sup> Franklin H. Giddings, "The Social and Legal Aspect of Compulsory Education and Child Labor," *Journal of Education*, 62, no. 4 (1905), 107-08; Warren, "Original Intent: Public Schools as Civil Education," 243.

<sup>20</sup> Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," 394.

<sup>21</sup> Parker, "Compulsory Education, the Solution of Child Labor Problem," 47.

<sup>22</sup> Abbott, "A Study of the Early History of Child Labor in America," 15-18; Giddings, "The Social and Legal Aspect of Compulsory Education and Child Labor," 107-08.

American South.<sup>23</sup> Given the economic incentives, child labor would not be easy to outlaw. The stage was set for contentious battles, primarily at the state level.

While Progressive era organizations, such as the NCLC, eventually turned to controversial national legislation to outlaw child labor, city and state legislatures proved to be the primary arenas for reformers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. States were seen as the appropriate locus of reform for both constitutional and practical reasons. The Constitution did not give the federal government explicit power over education, and, in the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment, all powers not delegated to Congress remained in the hands of the states and the people. While administration of education lay in the hands of the states, Congress did recognize the importance of education early in the nation's history, when it passed the Land Ordinance of 1785. While state governments drew on the Land Ordinance to fund public schools, they funded their schools primarily from local property taxes. The fact that schools were locally funded meant that public education remained within the state's domain, and often a contentious issue of debate among taxpayers, businesses, families, and reformers alike.<sup>24</sup>

In an effort to uncover the first legal attempts to limit child labor and expand public education at the state level, this thesis provides an in-depth study of Manchester, New Hampshire, and its implementation of compulsory education laws. Manchester, New Hampshire has the state's largest and oldest school system. In 1783, the Manchester school system began

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<sup>23</sup> The Northwest Ordinance split land into sections and directed that taxes from section 16 was for public education. National Child Labor Committee, *Child Labor and Social Progress: Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia, April 2-5, 1908* (National Child Labor Committee, 1908), 149-150; Schuman, "the Reform Movement" 9-12.

<sup>24</sup> Michael B. Katz, "Public Education as Welfare," In *Public Education Under Siege*, by Michael B. Katz and Mike Rose (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 94-95.

with a loose, four district system. In 1840, selectmen divided the town into nine school districts. As the population grew, so did the need for public schools.<sup>25</sup> Prior to 1852, there were no universal education standards in America, even at the state level. According to historian Robert Macieski, the New Hampshire state legislature was one of the first in the United States to pass limits on child labor in 1846. The 1846 law was supported by “petitions from thousands in favor of such reform,” stemming from the movement for a ten-hour workday led by the Female Labor Reform Association.<sup>26</sup> It prohibited “children under fifteen years old from working unless they completed three months of schooling each year.” New Hampshire also adopted the Truancy Law in 1853 which required children ages 6 -16 to either be in school or working.<sup>27</sup> These laws directly linked child labor and compulsory education in Manchester. Yet, despite such laws, child labor expanded rapidly in Manchester, as well as in the United States, between 1850 and 1900. Success came slowly. Significant numbers of children attended school only eighty years after the first state laws were passed. In 1930 there were 17,976 children ages ten to seventeen living in Manchester; 10,065 of those children were attending public school and only 1,363 were

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<sup>25</sup> "About." District - SAU 37, <http://www.mansd.org/msd-history>; “Manchester School Register Collection” Manchester Historic Association, <https://www.manchesterhistoric.org/research-center/catalog-a-holdings>. A history of public education in New Hampshire has many gaps that future historians should research to get a fuller picture.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Macieski, “‘Before Their Time’: Lewis W. Hine and the New Hampshire Crusade against Child Labor,” *Historical New Hampshire* 55, no. 3 (2000), 93.

<sup>27</sup> United States Census Bureau, “State of New Hampshire 1850-1870,” generated by Amy Sherr, using data.census.gov, <https://www.nh.gov/osi/data-center/documents/1850-1870-historic.pdf> (13 Dec. 2018); *Laws of the State of New Hampshire, Passed June Session, 1852*, “Chapter 1278” Concord: Butterfield and Hill Public Printers (1852).

gainfully employed. By the time the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company closed its doors in 1936, there were not many children that remained employed.<sup>28</sup>

Why did New Hampshire become one of the first states to embrace child labor and compulsory education laws? And why did these laws prove so difficult to implement? This thesis investigates the effectiveness of compulsory public education laws in Manchester, New Hampshire from 1845-1915, drawing on detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of school attendance records, legislative proceedings, and media coverage.<sup>29</sup> The thesis identifies shifting objectives in the campaigns for compulsory education laws and child labor laws in New Hampshire over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which help to explain lackluster enforcement. Reformers re-defined the perceived problems over time which led to new legislation and changing priorities in enforcement. Initially, reformers focused on “idle children” causing trouble and disrupting society. Then with mass immigration to the cities, people began to worry less about the idle children and more about the uneducated immigrant

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<sup>28</sup> United States Census Bureau, “New Hampshire Population” 1840, generated by Amy Sherr, using data.census.gov, <[www.census.gov/library/publications/1841/dec/1840c.html](http://www.census.gov/library/publications/1841/dec/1840c.html)> (12 Jan. 2018); United States Census Bureau, “Volume 1. Statistics of the Population” 1880, generated by Amy Sherr, using data.census.gov, <<https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1883/dec/vol-01-population.html>> (16 Jan, 2018). United States Census Bureau, “Chapter 6. Children in gainful occupations” 1930, generated by Amy Sherr, using data.census.gov, <<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1930/population-volume-5/41129379v5ch6.pdf>> (30 April 2021); United States Census Bureau, “Chapter 12: School Attendance” 1930, generated by Amy Sherr, using data.census.gov, <<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1930/population-volume-2/16440598v2ch15.pdf>> (30 April 2021). Although the primary sources do not confirm, it is likely that most of the remaining 6,548 school age children were attending private or parochial schools in Manchester.

<sup>29</sup> The study begins in 1845 because the state began to collect quantitative data on school attendance in that year. In 1846, New Hampshire passed its first child labor law and, in 1853, it enacted the school truancy law. Starting prior to the enactment of the 1853 truancy law will allow for a baseline of attendance numbers in Manchester. Manchester, NH is the perfect place for a case study of compulsory education laws because it was an agricultural town turned industrial city with a large immigrant population.

children. Once most children were off the streets, either in factories or at school, the focus turned to ensure the education of the immigrant children working in the factories by limiting ages and hours of child workers. As the working conditions these children experienced came to light, reformers called for the end of child labor and pushed for compulsory education laws that required a longer school year.

Always, reformers had to contend with the economic imperatives of families and their employers who often frustrated enforcement. Increasingly, textile companies in the South which drew heavily on child and women's labor threatened Amoskeag Manufacturing Company's dominance. Reformers eventually realized that only federal legislation could bring an end to child labor and secure compulsory education, forming the National Child Labor's Committee in 1904. The National Child Labor Committee, like many of the other reform groups, soon discovered that there were no quick fixes for ending child labor at the federal level, either, as states continued to differ on the issue and some mounted successful efforts to challenge federal legislation before the Supreme Court. The Manchester, New Hampshire case study provides an excellent opportunity to study the law in action, exploring the multiple factors that shaped the creation and enforcement of child labor and compulsory education law.

## **Chapter 1**

### *Calls for Education Reform (1845-1865)*

On April 13, 1861, *The Daily Mirror* published the results of the Manchester, N. H. police court decisions, which sent multiple boys to the House of Reformation. Thomas and Frank Cole, 8 and 10, were sentenced to the House of Reformation for four years for being truant. Albert Simons, age 12, was ordered to the House of Reformation for two years for truancy after his mother “could not prevail him to attend school.” These are just a few of many accounts of the children of Manchester apprehended while playing truant in the streets.<sup>1</sup>

Initially, residents of Manchester, N.H. were not overly concerned about children’s lack of formal education. Rather, they worried about idle, unsupervised children causing problems in the streets. Starting in the 1840’s, the city’s newspapers and annual reports revealed community support for mandatory public education laws, due to concerns over these unsupervised children running rampant in the city. Nevertheless, it took years to successfully pass state legislation and even then, children, their families, and their employers found ways to avoid attending school regularly. It was not until the enforcement of such laws became consistent, decades later, that school attendance in Manchester increased significantly.

Starting in the 1840’s, northern cities in America became industrialized, prompting a shift in how society viewed childhood and the role children should play in the economy. Historically, children worked and learned at home, within the family economic unit. However, during industrialization, production moved out of the home and into the factories. Manchester was a city

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<sup>1</sup> "Police Court," *The Daily Mirror*, April 13, 1861.

trying to find a balance between educating future citizens and developing its manufacturing infrastructure. In Manchester, many people, including countless children, worked for the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, which opened its doors in 1831. After the Civil War, the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company was determined to become successful at creating fine textiles, like gingham, for clothing. The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company dominated the city of Manchester from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its control of the economic life of the city gave it great influence over state and local politics. The company and its officials were able to hold political positions within the city, giving them more control over the lives of the workers and their families.<sup>2</sup> By the early 1900s, Amoskeag would be the largest textile mill in the United States.<sup>3</sup>

In the early nineteenth century, child labor did not have a negative connotation and was viewed as a way to prevent idleness and vice among poor children whose parents were working, frequently leaving their children at home alone. Historian Jill Haunold argued that a “common value held by the dominant culture regarding the poor was that ‘idleness, being the devil’s workshop,’ would lead to a life of laziness and moral turpitude. Criminal pursuits would follow a youth filled with unguided play.”<sup>4</sup> Left to their own devices, children roamed the streets,

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<sup>2</sup> Aurore Eaton, *The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company: A History of Enterprise on the Merrimack River* (2015), 95; Tamara K. Hareven, *Family Time & Industrial Time: The Relationship between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 14-15.

<sup>3</sup> Robert B Perreault, *Manchester* (N.p.: Arcadia, 2005), 20.

<sup>4</sup> Jill L. Haunold, "Idle Hands are the Devil's Workshop: A History of American Child Labor and Compulsory Education: Emancipation or Reconstituted Oppression," *Counterpoints* (Peter Lang AG) 209 (2002) 96.

pestering shoppers and causing havoc. Putting them to work was one solution. If children were working in factories or mines, they would not be running loose on the streets causing trouble.<sup>5</sup> Compulsory education provided an alternative solution to the idle child and potential juvenile delinquent. Americans turned to truancy and compulsory education laws in industrial cities to combat and control disruptive social forces. Many of these same concerns were seen time and time again in Manchester.

Starting in the late 1840's, many Manchester citizens began to address the problem of idle children by pushing for compulsory education policies. In 1846, the New Hampshire Legislature passed a law providing that children ages twelve to fifteen must attend school for three months of the year and children ages six to twelve must attend school for six months. The law arose from the nationwide reform movement for a ten-hour workday for all laborers, not just children. It also required certificates of attendance from the school. That same year, the city, in its annual report addressed the importance of attending school. Noting that truancy was an issue in Manchester, the report instructed that teachers should make sure that all students attended school unless a parent supplied a written note excusing them. Teachers were also expected to keep attendance records. But in 1847, the state legislature passed a law passed allowing children under fifteen to work ten hours a day without consent from parents, which made the 1846 law effectively worthless.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that most historians and sociologists who focus on child labor and compulsory education in the 20th Century because it was not until 1910 that most states had both compulsory public education laws and limits on child labor. Child labor legislation was not successful in the United States until 1938 with the passing of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The research done by these experts has some overlap in time period but there will not be in depth analysis of their work here.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Macieski, "'Before Their Time': Lewis W. Hine and the New Hampshire Crusade against Child Labor," *Historical New Hampshire* 55, no. 3 (2000), 93; Chas P. Neill, *Summary of the Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage Earners in the United States, December 1915* (1916), 239.



Due to the conflicting state laws, the problem of idle children only seemed to increase. Manchester in its 1847 annual report called for changes to education requirements because truant children were “daily spending their time in the streets, in idleness and incipient dissipation, disturbing the peace of our citizens by their profane, obscene, and blasphemous language.”<sup>7</sup> The 1849 Manchester School Committee Report estimated that hundreds of children were not working or in school, noting that those numbers included “not only foreigners, but natives of our own.”<sup>8</sup> The Manchester School Committee reported in 1851 that “the vagrancy of boys is an alarming evil in our city... their time is spent in idleness, dissipation, and more alarming wickedness... something must be done.” The Committee suggested, again, that all children be compelled to attend school regularly, and warned that until such a change occurred, children would continue to cause trouble in the streets of Manchester.<sup>9</sup>

Beginning in 1848, the Manchester Superintendent School Committee lobbied for legislation to keep children off the streets and in the classroom for several years. In that year, the committee recommended an ordinance to compel truant children to attend school. It knew that “something ought to be done to obviate, in part at least, this great evil.” They recommended the city police and truant officers combine forces to increase school attendance. The Committee

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<sup>7</sup> *The Second Annual Report of the Committee on Finance of the Receipts & Expenditures of the City of Manchester, together with the Treasurer's Account for the Financial Year Ending in January 31, 1848*, (Manchester: The American Office, 1848), 48. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1848*.

<sup>8</sup> *Reports of the Selectmen, the Superintendent of the Alms-House, the Board of Firewards, and the Superintending School Committee of the Town of Manchester for the year 1845-1846*, (Manchester: The American Office, 1846), 40-41. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1846*; *School Committee Report for 1848*, 48-49; *The Third Annual Report of the Committee on Finance of the Receipts & Expenditures of the City of Manchester, Together with the Treasurer's Account for the Financial Year Ending in January 31, 1849*, (Manchester: Messenger Press, 1849), 71. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1849*; *Annual Report Superintending School Committee of the City of Manchester, for the Year Ending March 1, 1851*, (Manchester: The Democrat Press, 1851), 12-13. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1851*.

<sup>9</sup> *School Committee Report for 1851*, 12-13.

recognized that some children would need to be punished for being truant and suggested the city create a house of reformation for the children who required further convincing.

The committee believed that legislation and a truant officer to enforce it would be the best way to ensure children in Manchester attend school.<sup>10</sup> The School Committee requested further support from the city many times, urging that “our City Council should pass an Ordinance empowering the School Committee, or Police Officers to collect [truant children], and with the consent of their parents or guardians, introduce them to the teacher.”<sup>11</sup> When the state failed to act, the committee and other advocates continued to press for legislative changes requiring children to attend school, highlighting the vast numbers of children who remained unschooled. From 1845 to 1852, over 50% of school-age children regularly attended school in Manchester, which meant that close to half the children in Manchester were either working in the factories or potentially “running wild in the streets”.<sup>12</sup>

After the passage of the 1847 law, reformers made compulsory education and truancy laws, rather than laws limiting child labor, their primary objective because they realized that they could have more success with education legislation. By 1852, the complaints of the Manchester School Committee and other reformers finally seemed to gain traction. On December 22, 1852, the New Hampshire State Legislature proposed a truancy law that went into effect in 1853. The act, entitled, “An Act concerning truant children and absentees from schools” was passed on January 5, 1853. It declared that children, ages six to sixteen, in New Hampshire were compelled

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<sup>10</sup> *School Committee Report for 1848*, 48-49; *School Committee Report for 1851*, 12-13.

<sup>11</sup> *School Committee Report for 1848*, 49.

<sup>12</sup> Compiled from the *Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester*, 1846-1940. For full table see the appendix.

to attend school regularly.<sup>13</sup> It also directed that it was the job of the school committee and truant officer in each city and town to enforce the new law. Importantly, children were only considered truant if they were not in school *or* gainfully employed. The primary objective of the new law was not to end child labor but, rather, to ensure children remained under adult supervision and productively occupied at schools or factories.<sup>14</sup>

The city of Manchester created a corresponding ordinance in 1857 to further support public education in Manchester, New Hampshire. The 1853 state law laid out the punishment for failure to attend school, but Manchester elaborated on how to enforce those provisions. Truant officers and the school committee first had to attempt to persuade the child and his or her parents to ensure the child regularly attended school. The records note that a visit from the truant officer usually did the trick in getting children to school. By 1855, the School Committee believed that attendance had improved due to the help of the truant officer.<sup>15</sup> However, families with children who were regularly truant would be fined up to \$10, based on the amount of time the child has been truant. If, in spite of the fines, a child continued to be truant, he or she could be sent to the house of reformation for a period of time.<sup>16</sup> Section Six of the Manchester Truancy Ordinance, adopted in 1857, stated that the “School Committee of this city shall immediately provide and

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<sup>13</sup> The law did not address what it meant by “regularly”.

<sup>14</sup> *By-Laws of the School Committee of the City of Manchester, and the Regulations for the Government of the Schools in the City* (1853), 1-9; *Laws of the State of New Hampshire, Passed June Session, 1852*, “Chapter 1278” (1852); *Reports of the School Committee and the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the City of Manchester; 1857* (Manchester: Fisk & Gage's Steam Printing Establishment, 1858), 49-53. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1857*; “Truant Children and Absentees from School” *The New Hampshire Patriot*. December 22, 1852.

<sup>15</sup> *Report of the School Committee of Manchester, for the Year Ending March 1855*, (Manchester: Abbott, Jenks & Co., 1855), 15-16. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1855*. Although no attendance charts were provided for the 1854-1855 school year, the report noted that the committee appointed a truant officer and that parents, in general, were very supportive of the enforcement of the truancy law.

<sup>16</sup> *Laws of the State of New Hampshire; School Committee Report for 1857*, 52.

create an institution of instruction” for children who were perpetually truant to be sent to if fines were not successful in compelling the child to regularly attend school. The state, in 1857, funded and built a “House of Reformation” in Manchester, which was also known as a “House of Corrections,” where such children were sent. It was designed to be an alternative school placement for children who struggled to obey laws, but at times, it functioned more like a jail for children.<sup>17</sup>

In 1851, the New Hampshire state legislature voted to build a reform school that would focus on growth instead of punishment, which meant the school was expected to teach the child how to behave like an appropriate and acceptable member of society, through education and chores. It opened in 1858, with its first student arriving in June, and the first girl arrived in September of that year. The people of New Hampshire recognized that there was a distinct difference between adult and youth offenders which means the rehabilitation of these children must be different than the adults who go to prison. The majority of children who were sent to the reform school were convicted of stealing, vagrancy, and “stubbornness.” Less common crimes were truancy, prostitution, lewdness, drunkenness, assault, and arson. The court typically sentenced offenders to 1-2 years in the reform school. Children were rewarded for good behavior and punished for bad behavior.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *School Committee Report for 1857*, 52. The New Hampshire state Youth Service Center has been known by many names: The House of Reformation (1858), The State Reform School (1868), The State Industrial School (1882), and then The Youth Development Center (1972). Matt Labbe, “‘Strict Rather Than Repressive:’ A History of the Reform School,” *The General News: The Friends of Stark Park Newsletter* (Spring 2023), 1.

<sup>18</sup> Labbe, “‘Strict Rather Than Repressive:’” 1-4; “A Reform School for N.H., Thursday Morning, May 13, 1852,” photocopied clipping from unidentified newspaper, and “Reform School,” photocopied clipping dated 26 July 1856, from unidentified newspaper, both in “Schools—State Industrial School,” in clippings file, Research Center, Manchester Historic Association, Manchester, N.H.

Overall, Manchester residents appeared to support the truancy law and its enforcement in Manchester. Multiple New Hampshire newspapers published articles that blamed parents for the continued truancy issues after the passage of the 1853 state law. The parents of nine-year-old James Fitzgerald, sentenced to sixty days in the House of Corrections, admitted they were unable to control their son and required outside assistance to get him to attend school regularly. Parents who struggled to control their children or were working and unable to care for them were often happy to have the truant officer enforce the law. The Manchester School Committee Report of 1855 also stated that parents “heartily co-operated with the agent.”<sup>19</sup> Additionally, middle- and upper-class residents of Manchester supported the law because they feared the influx of uneducated children who got into trouble. They also wanted to ensure that future citizens were educated enough to make decisions, based on fact and evidence, meaning children should be required to receive a uniform education.<sup>20</sup>

Evidence suggested, initially, that the 1853 law was working. In August of 1853, *The Portsmouth Journal* published an article about the new truancy law, reporting that the public believed that a “change for the better has already been effected by the late truant law.” The Manchester School Committee also believed that the enforcement of the truancy law resulted in higher attendance rates at school.<sup>21</sup> The Manchester newspapers regularly published the number

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<sup>19</sup> "Truancy," *The Portsmouth Journal*, June 11, 1853; "Truancy," *The Daily Mirror*, June 1, 1857; *School Committee Report for 1855*, 16; Mary Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 121.

<sup>20</sup> "Juvenile Delinquency," *The State Capitol Reporter*, April 8, 1853; *Annual Reports of the School Committee and the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the City of Manchester, 1858*, (Manchester: Steam Power Press of Goodale & Farnsworth, 1859), 8. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1858*; Odem, *Delinquent Daughters*, 98.

<sup>21</sup> "Truancy Law," *The Portsmouth Journal*, August 18, 1853.

of children who were found truant. Some were fined, while others were sent to the house of reformation. The *Dollar Weekly Journal* published the results from the Police Courts every week. For the week of May 14, 1859, a boy was fined \$3.88 and sentenced to three months in the House of Corrections. In June of that same year, Edward Wyman was sent to the House of Corrections for 30 days for being truant regularly.<sup>22</sup>

However, despite the law and its apparent enforcement, some children were still refusing to attend school regularly in Manchester. Girls were also truant and perceived as causing problems in the streets of Manchester. The 1851 Manchester School Committee Report noted that “this evil is not confined to boys alone. Girls... are found in the streets by day and night.” Yet few girls ended up in the police court or were sent to the House of Reformation. Perhaps a simple visit from the truant officer was enough to get the girls to regularly attend school.<sup>23</sup> Despite such enforcement efforts, the attempts at increasing school attendance were not successful in Manchester. Although some children were taken to the Police Court for truancy and many people in the community applauded the truancy law, getting children to regularly attend school in Manchester was still a problem. The state laws and city ordinances that had been put in place at this time were nearly useless because of issues with enforcement and the continued ability for the children to work in the factories.

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<sup>22</sup> "Police Court," *Dollar Weekly Mirror*, May 14, 1859; "Police Court," *Dollar Weekly Mirror*, June 25, 1859.

<sup>23</sup> *School Committee Report for 1851*, 12; The early 20th century saw an increase in female residents at the New Hampshire Reform School, which led to the building of a female dorm in 1912. In 1904, the reform school had a capacity of 150 residents but housed 177. Labbe, “Strict Rather Than Repressive” 4.

Table 1a: Manchester, N.H. Yearly Public-School Attendance			
Year	Total Enrolled for School Year	Average Attendance for School Year	Annual Attendance Percentage from previous columns
1844	399 from all but District 2 (1249 total)	244 from all but District 2	61% from all but District 2
1845	1618	908	56%
1846			
1847	1492*	1046*	70%
1848	2005*	1285*	64%
1849	1873*	1248*	75%
1850	2073*	1469*	71%
1851			
1852	1823*	1373*	75%
1853	4608*	2165.25*	47%
1854	2954*	1168*	40%
1855	3836	1748	46%
1856			
1857	2490	1590	64%
1858	3823	1919	50%
1859	2043*	1472*	72%
1860	3246	1591	49%
1861	3309	1797	54%
1862	3552		
1863	4020		
1864	3861	1895	49%
1865	4309	2352	55% <sup>24</sup>

As seen in Table 1, in the years following the passing of the truancy law of 1853, the yearly attendance percentages were significantly lower than the years prior to the law. From 1845 to 1852, between 60% and 75% of students regularly attended school. But from 1855 to 1860, usually between 40% and 55% attended. There was a large fluctuation in enrollment data for Manchester public schools during this time. It is interesting to note that both the general population and the overall number of registered students increased during this time. The truancy law might have pushed parents to register their children for school but not make them attend

<sup>24</sup> Compiled from the *Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester, 1846-1940*. For full table see the appendix. In 1840, the population of the city of Manchester was 3,235. By 1850, the population had jumped to 13,932. United States Census Bureau, "New Hampshire Employment" 1840, generated by Amy Sherr, using data.census.gov, <[www.census.gov/library/publications/1841/dec/1840c.html](http://www.census.gov/library/publications/1841/dec/1840c.html)> (12 Jan. 2018); United States Census Bureau, "State of New Hampshire." 1850, generated by Amy Sherr, using data.census.gov, <<https://www.nh.gov/osi/data-center/documents/1850-historic.pdf>> (9 Dec. 2018).

regularly. This would explain the increase in enrolled students and is most likely an accurate representation of school-aged children living in the city, since the 1850 Census reported 13,932 inhabitants in Manchester.<sup>25</sup> The 1853 truancy law initially appeared to cause a surge in enrollment and then people realized that the law and its enforcement were not successful, leading to a decrease in children attending school. There are many possible reasons for the decrease in the percent of students who consistently attended school after 1853. The most probable is that children went to school for part of the year and then worked in the factories or on the farms for the remainder of the year. It is also important to remember that Manchester became a city in 1846 and the budding Amoskeag Manufacturing Company was coming into its own during this time and initially did not need as many children working for them. Immigrant families also began to arrive in Manchester to work in the mills. Most of their children either worked alongside them or attended parochial schools in the city.<sup>26</sup> It is possible that the seasonal farming work many men did played a role in whether their children were needed to earn an income for the family during the winter months. Another plausible reason for the dip in the attendance percentage could be that the city began to keep more detailed attendance records after the 1853 Truancy Law. Most importantly, however, the state and local laws failed to make school attendance compulsory, resulting in low attendance rates.

The Manchester School Committee appeared determined to keep children, especially poor and immigrant children, off the streets, yet the law made significant exceptions.<sup>27</sup> The state

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<sup>25</sup> United States Census Bureau, "State of New Hampshire." 1850,

<sup>26</sup> *School Committee Report for 1857*, 49-53.

<sup>27</sup> *School Committee Report for 1848*, 48; *Report of Superintending School Committee of the City of Manchester, N.H., 1855-1856*, (Manchester: Steam Power Press of Abbott & Warren, 1856), 18. Hereafter known as *School Committee Report for 1856; Fifteenth Annual Report of the School Committee*



law did not require children who were physically or mentally unfit to attend school, even if they wanted to. But, most importantly, children who had a “regular and lawful occupation” were not required to attend school.<sup>28</sup> The state law and city ordinance did not consider children working to be truant since they would not be roaming the streets of the city. Manchester was an industrial city that relied on children to work in the mills. Unfortunately, statistics on the percentages of children working in the Amoskeag Mills in this era do not exist. Many families, especially immigrants, needed the money their children made to survive. This allowance perpetuated the use of child workers in Manchester and kept children regularly attending school.<sup>29</sup> It is possible that this exception was made because of the important role children played in the economy of Manchester during this time period. Children who did not regularly attend school and did not work were considered “idle” and tended to cause trouble, in the eyes of officials and reformers. They hoped that the truancy law would solve the problem of unsupervised children on the streets of Manchester but worried less about the impact of hard work upon children who were working in the mills. But as immigration to New Hampshire increased, reformers saw another compelling reason to push children into schools: the immigrant children would soon become American citizens and needed to be taught the “American ways of life.” Schools played an essential role, in many Americans’ opinions, in assimilating immigrants into American society.

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*of the City of Manchester, 1860*, (Manchester: American Stream Printing Works of Gage and Farnsworth, 1861), 17-18. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1860*.

<sup>28</sup> *School Committee Report for 1857*, 49-53.

<sup>29</sup> Hareven, *Family Time & Industrial Time*, 8.



Figure 3: Photo taken by NCLC member Lewis Hine of children employed by the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in 1909, when it was against the law for children under the age of 14 to be working.<sup>30</sup>

As historian Michael Katz argued, one cannot ignore the massive shifts in urbanization, industrialization and immigration that occurred during the campaign for public education in America.<sup>31</sup> From 1820 to 1870, over seven and a half million immigrants came to the United States, which was more than the entire population of the country in 1810.<sup>32</sup> Many immigrants,

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<sup>30</sup> Lewis Wickes Hine, photographer. *A few of the small girls and boys not the smallest ones that I found working in the spinning room of one of the Amoskeag Mfg. Co. mills at Manchester, N.H. Photo taken at 1:00 p.m., in hallway of spinning room. Many others there and in the other mills. Smallest boy on left hand is Geroqe Brown, No. 1 Corporation. Corner of Granite and Bedford Sts. Next is Eugene Lamy, 16 Marion St. Girls: Melvina Proulx, 145 Cartier St. Laura Oclair, 145 Cartier St. Location: Manchester, New Hampshire / Photo by Lewis W. Hine.* United States New Hampshire Manchester, 1909. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018675135/>.

<sup>31</sup> Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," *History of Education Quarterly* (Cambridge University Press), 16, no. 4 (Winter 1976), 387, 390-393.

<sup>32</sup> Hareven, *Family Time & Industrial Time*, 14-17; Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 2-5. Most of *Atlantic Crossings* focuses on the twentieth century and the direct connection between the Progressive Movements in America and Western Europe. This has implications for further research on this topic into the twentieth century.

predominantly Irish and French-Canadian came to live and work in New England cities.<sup>33</sup> As the success of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in Manchester grew, more immigrants flocked to the city with their families, where their children tended to work instead of attending school. As the mills grew and prospered, they came to rely more on immigrant labor. In the 1850's, Irish family groups were replacing New England mill girls. In 1848, there were about 600 Irish immigrants in Manchester. Only two years later, their numbers had grown to 1,325. In addition to the Irish, many skilled weavers came from Scotland, Sweden, and Germany.<sup>34</sup>

These immigrants had different cultural beliefs and often spoke different languages and were determined to preserve them. Concerns about broad changes ushered in by industrialization and immigration led many Americans to focus on education as a particularly important arena for reform.<sup>35</sup> By having control over the children's education, the state could ensure the continuation of "American" societal and political beliefs.<sup>36</sup> Support for widespread access to public education came from "nineteenth-century anxiety about unrest in urban settings, particularly where large numbers of immigrants were living". There was societal pressure to ensure immigrants learned

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<sup>33</sup> John Clayton, "A Tale of Manchester's Irish Community," *Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce*, March 16, 2017. <http://www.manchester-chamber.org/a-tale-of-manchesters-irish-community/> (accessed June 30, 2021); Hareven, *Family Time & Industrial Time*, 14-17; Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 2-5.

<sup>34</sup> Tamara K. Hareven and Randolph Langenbach, *Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory-City* (New York City, NY: Pantheon Books, 1978), 18; Sally K. Ward, Justin R. Young, and Curt Grimm, "Immigration to Manchester, New Hampshire: History, Trends, and Implication" *Carsey Institute*, Regional Issue Brief #39, (Spring 2014), 2-3. The French-Canadian later became the largest immigrant group in Manchester and is discussed in depth in later chapters.

<sup>35</sup> Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment" 394; Lucy E. Salyer, *Under the Starry Flag: How a Band of Irish Americans Joined the Fenian Revolt and Sparked a Crisis over Citizenship* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 28-30.

<sup>36</sup> Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment" 394.

the American way of life.<sup>37</sup> Some people in America viewed these differences as a threat to the predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant views on politics and society. Undereducated children would someday be able to vote and make decisions that affected all Americans. Public education allowed for a uniform way to educate all children in America and safeguard the national polity. However, immigrant parents faced societal pressures and if their children were sent to public school, the children learned different, “American” values.<sup>38</sup>

Manchester leaders argued the education of immigrant children was necessary to guarantee the safety and continuation of the American democratic system for future generations. The *Portsmouth Journal*, in August of 1853, noted in response to the new 1853 truancy law that numerous foreign children were being punished for having “grown up in the habit of idleness” and not attending school.<sup>39</sup> Prior to the Civil War, uniform reform or “consensus” around child labor and education did not exist in New Hampshire. The industrialization of cities in the state, and the corresponding economic success was far more important to both the government and society in general at the time, despite growing concerns around the ever-increasing foreign-born population in the state.

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<sup>37</sup> Russell A. Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History." *American Historical Review* (1995): 442.

<sup>38</sup> Clayton, “A Tale of Manchester's Irish Community”; Brian Gratton and Jon Moen, “Immigration, Culture, and Child Labor in the United States, 1880-1920,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 34, no. 3 (2004), 356.

<sup>39</sup> "Truancy Law," *The Portsmouth Journal*, August 18, 1853.

## **Chapter 2**

### *Growth of Local and State Reform (1865-1890)*

In the fall of 1870, factory overseers in Manchester received a notice from Joseph Edgerly, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, about the new child labor law passed by the state government. Mr. A. E. Straw, an agent at the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, was one of many who responded and showed interest in ensuring the education of all children in New Hampshire. In his letter, Mr. Shaw stated, “In reply to your inquiry as to my views of the State law requiring children under fifteen years of age, who are employed in manufacturing establishments, to attend school a certain portion of the year, I have to say, that I think the law to be one absolutely needed and believe it should be strictly enforced. I believe it to be the duty of the State to see that all its children receive a good common school education.” This exchange between school officials and manufacturing establishments in Manchester shows the widespread concern people had about the lack of uniform public education in the United States. It is possible that manufacturers were feeling pressure from reformers and responded in such a way to deflect blame and criticism from themselves. Additionally, it is plausible that, with the increase in available immigrant labor, they did not need to rely on children as heavily as they had in the past. At this time, there were thousands of children in each state not attending school, where instead of becoming useful citizens, they were “dead weights upon the community.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the School Committee together with the Fifteenth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the City of Manchester, for the year ending December 31, 1870.* (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1871), 35-41. Hereafter cited as *School Report for 1870*. Shaw’s response was one of many from factory officials and each one gave their support to the new law and thought it was much needed.

After the Civil War, reformers became more vocal in their calls to change child labor and compulsory education laws at the state and national levels. At this point, reformers voiced less concern about children on the streets wreaking havoc. The concern shifted to immigrant children working in the factories instead of attending school. Between 1815 and 1924, 55 million Europeans emigrated with  $\frac{3}{5}$  of them coming to America. Americans often gave immigrants a cool reception. Though courted for their labor, immigrants encountered suspicion and hostility from their American-born neighbors who worried that immigrants, as they became citizens, did not fully understand the responsibility that came with citizenship and often “sold their votes to the highest bidders.” As historian Lucy Salyer explains, anti-immigrant “nativist” movements warned that “the fate of the nation hung in the balance, for newcomers threatened to demolish all that was “American” about the United States. Immigrants spoke different languages, clung to their native customs, and lounged in beer gardens and saloons— even on the Sabbath.” In 20 years, from 1840 to 1860, 4.3 million immigrants arrived in the United States, with an additional 2.3 million arriving after the Civil War. Most of these newcomers settled in industrial cities.<sup>2</sup> As seen in Table 2, the major waves of immigration, especially to industrial cities changed the size and makeup of society.

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<sup>2</sup> Lucy E. Salyer, *Under the Starry Flag: How a Band of Irish Americans Joined the Fenian Revolt and Sparked a Crisis over Citizenship* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 24-25, 28-29; Lucy E. Salyer, “Reconstructing the Immigrant: The Naturalization Act of 1870 in a Global Perspective,” *The Journal of the Civil War*, 11, no 3. (2021), 385.

Table 2: Census Data- Population				
Year	City of Manchester Population	Hillsborough County Population	New Hampshire Population	United States Population
1830	877	37,560	268,977	12,866,020
1840	3,235	42,361	284,304	17,069,453
1850	13,932	57,478	317,785	23,191,876
1860	20,107	62,140	325,858	31,443,321
1870	23,530	64,238	318,090	39,818,449
1880	32,630	75,634	346,638	50,189,209
1890	43,983	93,247	376,175	62,947,714
1900	56,987	112,640	410,938	76,212,168
1910	70,063	126,072	430,376	92,228,496
1920	78,384	135,512	442,716	106,021,537
1930	76,834	140,165	465,293	123,202,624

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The budding anxiety seen before the Civil War over the ability of a society of uneducated immigrants to function bloomed into alarm that resulted in calls for stricter compulsory education laws at the state level. These laws sought to take immigrant children out of the factories and into school where they could receive a proper education to ensure the continued success of the democratic society. It was not only the small groups of reformers who called for changes to education in America. During his speech to Congress on December 7, 1875, President Ulysses S. Grant stated, “It is of the greatest importance that all should be possessed of education and intelligence enough to cast a vote with a right understanding of its meaning. A large association of ignorant men cannot for any considerable period oppose a successful resistance to tyranny and oppression from the educated few.” In the speech, Grant noted the industrial might and progress America had made in the past one hundred years but despaired that the expansion of education had not been as successful. He feared that an uneducated population would not be able put a stop to oppression.

In the same speech, Grant asked Congress to consider creating a constitutional amendment that would “[make] it the duty of each of the several States to establish and forever

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<sup>3</sup> Compiled from the *US Census Bureau*; generated by Amy Sherr; using [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

maintain free public schools adequate to the education of all the children in the rudimentary branches within their respective limits, irrespective of sex, color, birthplace, or religions.” Grant believed that education of the masses was necessary to preserve America.<sup>4</sup> This proposal became the Blaine Amendment a week later. The Blaine Amendment was proposed by Representative James Blaine of Maine, and it quickly passed in the House of Representatives. However, it failed to gain support in the Senate and the attempt to create compulsory public education at the national level was thwarted for the first time.<sup>5</sup>

By 1870, many people viewed child labor as both a moral and social problem. They believed that child labor damaged both the physical and intellectual development of children and began to gather data to document the extent of child labor and its effects.<sup>6</sup> For the first time, in 1870, the federal census published the number of children working. The 1870 Census reported just over 12.5 million workers in the United States; of that number, 739,164 were children aged ten to fifteen years old. The 1880 Census identified 17,392,099 workers, which included 1,118,356 children ten to fifteen years old. However, the statistics do not measure the number of children under ten who were employed, so the number of children working was actually much higher, even at the young age of seven.<sup>7</sup> In 1906, sociologist and reformer, Edith Abbott published an article examining early child labor in America and stated, “the inevitable result of

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<sup>4</sup> Ulysses S. Grant, “Seventh Annual Message,” December 7, 1875; “Legislative Acts/Legal Proceedings,” *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, December 15, 1875.

<sup>5</sup> Alfred W. Meyer, “The Blaine Amendment and the Bill of Rights,” *Harvard Law Review* 64, no. 6 (1951): 941–945. The vote in the House was 180-7 in favor, while the vote in the Senate was 28-16 in favor with 27 Senators absent. Each house of Congress needed 2/3 of its members to be in favor of the amendment for it to move on to the state governments.

<sup>6</sup> John A. Fliter, *Child Labor in America: The Epic Legal Struggle to Protect Children* (University Press of Kansas, 2018), 24.

<sup>7</sup> Fliter, *Child Labor in America*, 25; Michael Schuman, “History of Child Labor in the United States—Part 1: Little Children Working.” *Monthly Labor Review* (Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 2017), 4.



this lack of regulation was not only that very young children worked, but that they were worked long hours, overtime, and at night.”<sup>8</sup> Some started working in dangerous conditions as young as four. These children sometimes worked twelve to sixteen hours a day, six days a week. They also made one-quarter to one-half of the wages paid to adult males. Working in the factories and mines resulted in a high rate of injury and death. According to Abbott’s study in 1906, children who participated in industrial labor spent hours in poorly ventilated rooms that were dirty, smelly and led to further health deterioration.<sup>9</sup> Since these children were working, they were not in school, learning. Historian John Fliter claimed, “Thousands could not write anything other than their name, and most could not read.”<sup>10</sup> This greatly decreased their chances of being fully functional citizens as adults.

The 1870 census also revealed climbing rates of public education, rising to over 60% attendance or higher during this time period.<sup>11</sup> However, compulsory education laws between 1850 and 1900 varied greatly state by state. In 1910, reformer and NCLC member, Fred Hall recognized that many states did not keep track of the number of hours children worked each week, which made it hard to enforce current legislation without tracking who was working and for how long.<sup>12</sup> Some states required employment certificates, but these were often issued by

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<sup>8</sup> Edith Abbott, "A Study of the Early History of Child Labor in America." *American Journal of Sociology* (The University of Chicago Press) 14, no. 1 (July 1908), 32-33. As a reformer, Abbott published her study to gain support for the end of child labor.

<sup>9</sup> Abbott, "A Study of the Early History of Child Labor in America," 34-37. Fliter’s findings support Abbott’s claim of younger children working by providing evidence of children as young as four working in tobacco factories.

<sup>10</sup> Fliter, *Child Labor in America*, 24.

<sup>11</sup> Abbott, "A Study of the Early History of Child Labor in America," 15

<sup>12</sup> Fred S. Hall, "Child Labor Statistics," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 35 (1910), 114.

school officials who kept imperfect records, leading to evasion of the laws. Parent affidavits as proof of age were unreliable and were used to evade both child labor and compulsory education laws. If enforced properly, he argued, compulsory education laws were more successful and realistic than child labor laws. The truant officer or factory inspector had to find the children and bring them to school. However, Hall pointed out that there was a difference between passing and enforcing such legislation. Without enforcement, the legislation was useless, which meant the desired societal changes did not take place.<sup>13</sup> New Hampshire was one of the first states to implement mandatory public education. As seen in the chart below, compiled by historians William Landes and Lewis Solmon, by 1890, the required attendance was between 12 and 20 weeks a year.<sup>14</sup> It is interesting to note that New Hampshire, along with Rhode Island, had the lowest attendance requirements in the industrial North.

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<sup>13</sup> Hall, "Child Labor Statistics," 118-126.

<sup>14</sup> W. Landes & L. Solmon, "Compulsory Schooling Legislation: An Economic Analysis of Law and Social Change in the Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of Economic History*, 32(1), (1972), 56-57.

TABLE 1  
CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOLING AND CHILD LABOR LAWS

<i>State</i>	<i>Year of Educ. Law<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Required Yrs. of Schooling (1890)<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>Required Attendance Each Yr. (1890)<sup>c</sup></i>	<i>Existence of Child Labor Law in 1879<sup>d</sup></i>	<i>Existence of Child Labor Law in 1889<sup>d</sup></i>
Maine	1875	8-15	16 weeks		X
Vermont	1867	8-14	20 weeks	X	X
New Hamp.	1871	6-16	12 weeks	X	X
Mass.	1852	8-14	20 weeks	X	X
Conn.	1872	8-16	While school is in session		X
R.I.	1883	7-15	12 weeks	X	X
New York	1874	8-14	14 weeks		X
Penna.	1895			X	X
New Jersey	1875	7-16	20 weeks	X	X
Delaware	1907				
Maryland	1902				
Virginia	1908				
W. Virginia	1897				X
N. Carolina	1907				
S. Carolina	1915				
Georgia	1916				
Florida	1915				
Kentucky	1896				
Tennessee	1905				
Mississippi	1918				
Alabama	1915				X
Arkansas	1909				
Louisiana	1910				X
Texas	1915				
Oklahoma <sup>e</sup>	1907				
Wisconsin	1879	7-15	12 weeks	X	X
Michigan	1871	8-14	4 months		X
Illinois	1883	7-14	16 weeks	X	X
Indiana	1897			X	X

TABLE 1 (Continued)

<i>State</i>	<i>Year of Educ. Law<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Required Yrs. of Schooling (1890)<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>Required Attendance Each Yr. (1890)<sup>c</sup></i>	<i>Existence of Child Labor Law in 1879<sup>d</sup></i>	<i>Existence of Child Labor Law in 1889<sup>d</sup></i>
Ohio	1877	8-16	20 weeks	X	X
Nebraska	1887	8-14	12 weeks		X
Kansas	1874	8-14	12 weeks		X
Missouri	1905				X
Iowa	1902			X	X
Minnesota	1885	8-16	12 weeks		
N. Dakota <sup>e</sup>	1883	10-14	12 weeks		
S. Dakota <sup>e</sup>	1883	10-14	12 weeks		
California	1874	8-14	2/3 of school term		X
Oregon	1889	8-14	12 weeks		
Washington <sup>e</sup>	1871	8-18	3 months		X
Alaska <sup>e</sup>	1929				
Hawaii <sup>e</sup>	1896				
Nevada	1873	8-14	16 weeks		
Colorado	1889	8-14	12 weeks	X	X
Montana <sup>e</sup>	1883	8-14	12 weeks		X
New Mexico <sup>e</sup>	1891				
Utah <sup>e</sup>	1890	8-16	16 weeks		
Idaho <sup>e</sup>	1887	8-14	12 weeks		X
Arizona <sup>e</sup>	1899				
Wyoming <sup>e</sup>	1876	7-16	3 months		X

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Landes and Solmon, like Hall, linked compulsory education laws to child labor.

Comparing state to state, Landes and Solmon found that “in 1880 the average level of schooling, measured in a variety of ways, was greater in states with compulsory school laws than in states

<sup>15</sup> Landes & Solmon, “Compulsory Schooling Legislation.” 56-57.

without laws,” showing that having laws on the books, even with the enforcement issues, was better than nothing.<sup>16</sup>

The national concern over the rise in child labor and the lack of compulsory public education was mirrored in New Hampshire, especially in the industrial city of Manchester. Throughout the 1870’s the Manchester School Reports and local newspapers called for more stringent compulsory education laws with stronger enforcement. Many of these accounts expressed fear of uneducated immigrants making decisions. The school reports described an increase in the number of French-Canadian families moving into the city, noting that few of their children were attending public schools at that time.<sup>17</sup> The *Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics* called for a compulsory education law that would force thousands of the children of immigrants and “Romanists” into the public schools. The journal insisted that public schools must educate all children, regardless of their background and religion.<sup>18</sup> According to Manchester’s 1872 school report, out of the 3,500 students enrolled in Manchester public schools, only 500 French-Canadian children were attending, despite the high number of French-Canadian families in the city.<sup>19</sup> Such statistics sparked alarm that the groups that needed

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<sup>16</sup> Landes, & Solmon, “Compulsory Schooling Legislation.” 72.

<sup>17</sup> *Twenty-Six Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester, 1872*, (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1873), 16, 43. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1872*; *Thirty-Third Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester together with the Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1879*, (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1880), 37. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1879*; *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester together with the Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1880*, (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1881), 17. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1880*.

<sup>18</sup> “Catholicism & Public Schools,” *Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics* April 17, 1875. “Schools and School-Houses,” *The Mirror and Farmer*, January 9, 1869.

<sup>19</sup> *School Committee Report for 1872*. 16, 43. The other children either attended private Catholic school or worked in the factories. Unfortunately, records of exact numbers of school-age children and their ethnicity could not be found at this time.

education the most were typically not receiving it. According to the school reports, truancy among immigrant families, notably the Irish, was a serious problem. Unfortunately, in the eyes of school officials, there were many parents in the city that cared more about money than the education of their children.<sup>20</sup>

Without mandatory public education for children, reformers argued, there would be a generation of “imbeciles” with disastrous consequences since every man in New Hampshire had the ability to vote. In the 1860s, the United States had relatively lax naturalization laws and once the newcomers became citizens, it was common for them to exercise their new political power, which frightened many Americans.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, commentators urged that it was absolutely necessary to educate all children to ensure a better society within the nation.<sup>22</sup> Being a responsible citizen meant being educated enough to understand what was happening in politics and government and then using that information when voting. The boys not attending school, who were either working or playing truant, would soon be old enough to vote, but without a proper education, they would not know what they were voting for.<sup>23</sup> The *Farmer's Museum*, out of Walpole, N.H., published an article about the need for uniform education in New Hampshire in 1877. The author argued, “There can be no question in which the people feel a deeper interest

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<sup>20</sup> “Truancy,” *The Portsmouth Journal*, July 20, 1872; “My Missionary’s Report for the Year ending April 1, 1872,” *Mirror and Farmer*, April 13, 1872: 3.

<sup>21</sup> Salyer, “Reconstructing the Immigrant”, 383-385. As a result of this fear, the US Naturalization Act of 1870 was passed on July 13, 1870. Also known as the Enforcement Act and the Elections Act.

<sup>22</sup> *School Committee for 1880*, 18; “Compulsory Education,” *The Patriot*, September 13, 1871; “Catholicism & Public Schools,” *Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics*, April 17, 1875.

<sup>23</sup> “Catholicism & Public Schools,” *Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics*, April 17, 1875; *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester, 1871*, (Manchester: Campbell & Hanscom, 1872), 13. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1871*.

than in the education of the youth, for upon this alone rests the permanency of our republican institutions.”<sup>24</sup> Another newspaper in Concord, New Hampshire, the *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, informed readers that the New Hampshire Republican State Convention met on January 9, 1878, where there were calls for universal education of children with support from the legal authorities to “secure to the children of the republic a primary education, so that every voter shall be able to read and understand the ballot that he casts.”<sup>25</sup> The people of New Hampshire took their civic duty seriously and viewed education as vital in ensuring the continuation of a successful republic. Some went so far as to suggest legislation that would make any man who cannot read or write ineligible to vote after 1890. They did note that with the new state laws regarding compulsory education, it might not be necessary to enact such a poll test at that time.<sup>26</sup>

As early as the 1860s, people raised concern about the lack of consistent education for children in Manchester. In 1867 there were about 4,500 students registered to attend, but the daily average attendance was less than 2,600 students. According to the school report, many were absent because they are “spending their time in the streets.”<sup>27</sup> It is doubtful that all 1,900 school-age children were roaming the streets of Manchester in 1867. It is more likely that the majority of them found employment in the Mills. The 1869 school report noted that there were at least 800 children working in the factories instead of attending school. That year, the truant officer made some arrests and managed to compel them to attend school, however, very few

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<sup>24</sup> “Education,” *Farmer's Museum*, June 16, 1877.

<sup>25</sup> “Republican State Convention,” *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, January 16, 1878.

<sup>26</sup> “Recapitulation of the Points Suggested,” *Mirror and Farmer*, December 11, 1875: 5; “Legislative Acts/Legal Proceedings,” *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, December 15, 1875.

<sup>27</sup> *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the City of Manchester, 1867*, 1868, 62. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1867*.

ended up in Police Court which had authority to punish violations of the truancy law.<sup>28</sup> The following year school officials reported 500-800 children under 15 were employed in the mills, many of whom had never attended school. Over 100 children were brought in by the truant officer. But only 9 went to the police court, with 7 going to reform school as a result. These numbers showed how inadequate the 1853 truancy law was.

The 1870 school report called for truant officers to be given more authority in order to increase school attendance numbers.<sup>29</sup> The *Mirror and Farmer* claimed that many Manchester citizens were happy with the “increased interest in the part of the city authorities” to deal with truant children and they believed that having truant officers was a “step in the right direction.”<sup>30</sup> Newspapers began to report that the Police Court was finding more children truant and either fining or sentencing them to reform school. For instance, in 1873, Patrick Ryan was fined \$7 for being truant, while James Butler was sent to the reform school for a year.<sup>31</sup>

From 1870 to 1890 people across the country recognized the need for both education and child labor reform. Many state legislatures were able to enact some version of compulsory education laws during this period. In 1871, the New Hampshire state legislature passed a compulsory public education law that allowed for children over the age of fourteen to apply for a

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<sup>28</sup> *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester, 1869*, (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1870), 48-53. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1869*. In 1870 there was an update to the 1853 Truancy Law and coinciding city ordinance. It stated that children between 6 and 16 without occupation must attend school.

<sup>29</sup> *School Committee Report for 1870*, 9, 10, 50.

<sup>30</sup> “My Missionary’s Report for the Year ending April 1, 1872,” *Mirror and Farmer*, April 13, 1872: 3.

<sup>31</sup> “Police Court,” *The Mirror and Farmer*, July 26, 1873; “Police Court,” *The Mirror and Farmer*, October 30, 1875; “City Marshal’s Report,” *The Mirror and Farmer*, April 15, 1876.

labor permit as long as they could “read and write simple sentences in English.”<sup>32</sup> This made it difficult for children under fourteen to work because they had to attend school for at least three months of the year. The law required compulsory attendance for ages 8-14 for 12 weeks of the year, specifying that 6 of the weeks had to be consecutive. Additionally, employment of children under 16 was forbidden without 12 weeks instruction. Children under 10 were outright prohibited from working, while children ages 10 to 14 were required to attend school for 6 months a year before being eligible to apply for a work certificate. A certificate from the school was required to show these parameters had been met before a child could work. The penalty for the first offense was \$10, then \$20 subsequently. As seen in the table created by Landes and Solmon earlier in this chapter, the educational requirements in the state of New Hampshire are not rigorous, especially compared to other New England States. Residents of Manchester hoped that the new 1871 compulsory education law would empower the truancy officers to have more power to compel children to attend school. The city of Manchester took it one step further than the state and enacted a new truant ordinance for the city. It stated that children between 6 and 16 without occupation must attend school, unlike the 1853 Truancy Law which only required that children stay off the streets of Manchester and had no educational requirement.<sup>33</sup> The sweeping 1871 law was seen by some as not going far enough. In 1879, people in Manchester suggested changing the working age to 15, instead of 14 in the law or creating a new law around

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<sup>32</sup> W. S. Deffenbaugh and Ward W. Keesecker, *Compulsory School Attendance Laws and Their Administration*, U.S. G.P.O., 1935, 83.

<sup>33</sup> "Compulsory School Laws." *Educational Weekly* 3, no. 20 (1884): 6-7; Samuel Colcord Bartlett, "The History of Education in New Hampshire" in William T. Davis, *New England States, Their Constitutional, Judicial, Educational, Commercial, Professional and Industrial History* (Boston, D.H. Hurd & Co, 1897) 1611; *School Committee Report for 1869*, 46, 52; *School Committee Report for 1871*, 34; *School Committee Report for 1872*, 13. \$10 in 1871 would be about \$225 in 2023, a lot of money for the family to pay for not going to school.



compulsory education instead because there were still children in Manchester who were not consistently attending school.<sup>34</sup>

Progress was made with the 1871 law for educating New Hampshire's youths. However, truancy continued to be a problem in New Hampshire until the passage of legislation limiting child labor in conjunction with compulsory education laws, with proper enforcement. The school reports and newspapers from the 1870s consistently pointed out the flaw in the new education law: continued difficulty with enforcement. It was reported that there were still around 4,000 truant children in the state that same year.<sup>35</sup> There were at least 5,500 school-age children in Manchester in 1873. Of those, 3,779 children were registered to attend public school, with an average of 2,800 attending daily that year. Another 1,500 of the 5,500 children were attending Catholic schools in the city. That same year 226 work certificates were granted by the school committee for children to work in the mills, a decline from the previous year when 421 were issued. Despite the overseers not being allowed to employ children without school certificates, it is probable that there were more school-age children working without certificates in the Manchester mills.<sup>36</sup>

In 1874, there were 2,148 school districts in New Hampshire with 69,178 pupils. The average attendance was 47,275 or 69%, leaving 2,593 children ages 4 to 14 not attending schools.<sup>37</sup> The population of Manchester in 1874 was about 25,000. That year there were 3,757

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<sup>34</sup> *School Committee Report for 1879*, 38.

<sup>35</sup> "Compulsory Education," *The Patriot*, September 6, 1871.

<sup>36</sup> *Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester, together with the Nineteenth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, for the year ending December 31, 1873*. (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1874), 29-30, 38. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1873*; *School Report for 1872*.

<sup>37</sup> J. E. Vose, "New Hampshire." *New England Journal of Education* 1, no. 3 (1875): 36.

pupils enrolled in Manchester public schools, however the average daily attendance was 2,305, or 74%, which left 1,452 school age children either working or playing truant.<sup>38</sup> State reports noted that “In a manufacturing city like Manchester, the question of truancy is one of the worst to deal with. The truant officer has brought in about fifty non-attendants during the year, but it is estimated that ‘there remain 200 to 300 who have been without a day's schooling in the whole year.’”<sup>39</sup> In 1879 the truant officer for the city managed to get 150 children back to school. However, there were still 350 requested work certificates. The fact that there were still a multitude of children working instead of regularly attending school, and by extension breaking the law, showed how ineffective the education and truancy laws were without proper and consistent enforcement and without “buy-in” from families and employees.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> "New Hampshire," *New England Journal of Education* 1, no. 10 (1875): 117-18. This source does not note if there are other school age children attending private or parochial schools in the city.

<sup>39</sup> "New Hampshire," *New England Journal of Education*, 117-18.

<sup>40</sup> "Education," *Farmer's Museum*, June 16, 1877; *Thirty-First Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester together with the Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1877* (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1878), 46. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1877*; *Thirty-Second Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester together with the Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1878* (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1879), 11, 23-24. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1878*; *School Committee Report for 1879*.

Table 1b: Manchester, N.H. Yearly Public-School Attendance			
Year	Total Enrolled for School Year	Average Attendance for School Year	Annual Attendance Percentage from previous columns
1865	4309	2352	55%
1866	4525	2628	58%
1867	4655	2310	50%
1868	4371	2654	61%
1869	2259	1989	87%
1870	3200	1987	62%
1871	3200	1911	65%
1872	3500	2110	65%
1873	3779	2284	60%
1874	3123	2318	74%
1875	3519	2295	65%
1876	4567	2379	52%
1877	3807	2413	67%
1878	3515	2348	67%
1879	3788	2648	70%
1880	4136	2727	66%
1881	4235	2602	61%
1882	4095	2712	66%
1883	4062	2612	64%
1884	3918	2645	68%
1885	3806	2430	64%
1886	3632	2475	68%
1887	3670	2468	67%
1888	3712	2500	67%
1889	3787	2581	68%
1890	3814	2536	67%

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After a decade of enforcement issues, the 1880s saw stable attendance rates in Manchester schools, holding in the 60 percentile range. With new laws, the truant officers were given more authority, which allowed them to complete more investigations into the high rate of absenteeism in Manchester schools. As a result, the annual Manchester School Reports became much more detailed, as the 1882 report reveals. It gave not only the number of children registered to attend public school and the average daily attendance, but also information on private schools in the city, absenteeism, and work certificate requests. The truant officer was an agent of the state, and therefore collected data on all truant children, not only students attending the public schools. The table above and the majority of primary sources used for this study include concrete data from the public schools in Manchester. There was little information found

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<sup>41</sup> Compiled from the *Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester*, 1866-1890. For full chart, see the Appendix. If data was not found, the corresponding cell in the chart was left blank.

in the sources about the number of students attending private and parochial schools. However, a handful of the School Reports supplied some insight and raw numbers.<sup>42</sup> There were 3,200 pupils attending private schools in 1882. The average attendance was 1,475 in Irish parochial schools, 555 in French parochial schools, and 46 in American private schools, totaling 2,178 students in addition to the 4,095 children registered to attend Manchester public schools.<sup>43</sup> By 1890, there were about 15,000 French-Canadian residents in Manchester, 1/3 of the city's population, which meant that about 1/3 of the school-aged children were probably also French-Canadian.<sup>44</sup> In 1882, the truant officer informed the school committee that there were 642 cases of absenteeism reported by teachers, 333 from city schools and 309 from parochial schools. Ninety-eight truant students returned to school without intervention from the truant officer. He investigated the remaining 544 cases and made 914 visits to families. Some children had legitimate reasons for not attending school: 66 students were found sick and another 39 were without suitable clothes and were excused from school. While others were truant without cause, 408 students were found in the streets during school hours and 265 school age children were not currently enrolled in any school. Of the 408 truant children, 41 were found to be habitually absent from school and were temporarily confined to city hall overnight. Seven of these were brought to the Police Court where 5 were fined and 2 were sent to the State Industrial School. About 50% of all absent cases

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<sup>42</sup> There is a lot about private and parochial schools in Manchester that historians do not know. The author could not find any databases or collections of sources that provided attendance information for these schools. It skews the percentages of students attending school since there was such high rates of immigrant families living in Manchester at the time.

<sup>43</sup> *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester together with the Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1882* (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1883), 16-17. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1882*.

<sup>44</sup> Sampson, *Manchester*, 55.

reported to the truant officer in 1882 were of Irish or French parentage. Since about 1/3 of the Manchester population was French-Canadian, it appears that children of foreign-born parents were more likely to be found truant, driven to work by the family's need for their wages and, perhaps, by a different value placed on education. As immigration rates in the city rose, the school committee reports focused more on ensuring civil education for immigrant children, than on cracking down on troublesome children on the streets of Manchester. That year, the truant officer granted 681 certificates for children to work in the mills, and the average age of these children was 13. In order to get a work certificate, the children needed at least 6 months of school if under 14; but 62 of these applicants could not read or write and 47 were French Canadian. This detailed information showed that the truant officer had been working hard to get children back into the classroom, but some – especially children of immigrants – remained undereducated.<sup>45</sup>

Subsequent years gave much of the same information regarding private schools, truancy reports and work certificate requests. Numerous truancy officers noted the high rate of private school attendance in Manchester, especially in Catholic and parochial schools. Close to half of the school-age children in the city attended these schools rather than the public schools, which may explain the decrease in public school enrollment despite the continued rise in the overall population of the city. One truancy officer stated that there was an “extensive system of Roman Catholic parochial schools, which chiefly accounts for the comparatively small portion of our population (37,600) in the public schools,” a fact which worried the school committee.<sup>46</sup> The

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<sup>45</sup> *School Committee Report for 1882*, 16-17.

<sup>46</sup> *School Committee Report of 1882*, 16-17; *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester together with the Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1884* (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1885), 14, 53 (footnote). Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1884*; *Fortieth Annual Report of the School*

committee was likely worried because they had no control over what was taught in these parochial schools. Students were certain to learn how to read and write, but it was not guaranteed to be in English. There was also concern about what civics and government students would be taught, since they would be eligible to vote as adults.<sup>47</sup>

The Manchester School Reports from the 1880s provide much more detail than earlier years and show the attempts made to get children from the mills to the schools. The 1884 Truancy Report published in the annual school report stated that 234 children were absent from city schools and 173 from parochial schools. Of these absent students, 3 were considered truants and sent to court, while 3 were sent to reform school. That same year, 501 employment certificates were granted.<sup>48</sup> Two years later saw similar numbers in the Truant Officer Report with 228 absentees reported from city schools and 315 from parochial schools. Of these, 36 were considered truants from city schools and 65 from parochial schools. Additionally, 51 school age children were not enrolled in school and found on the streets, 2 of these truants were brought to Police Court. Furthermore, 688 employment certificates were granted.<sup>49</sup>

Despite the increased implementation of the 1871 law, there were still numerous children truant from school. The laws and current enforcement were not enough to keep hundreds of children off the streets.<sup>50</sup> But the passage of child labor laws provided another strategy to keep

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*Committee of the City of Manchester together with the Thirty-First Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1886* (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1887), 15-18, 23-24. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1886*.

<sup>47</sup> Maris A. Vinovskis, *Education, Society, and Economic Opportunity a Historical Perspective on Persistent Issues* (Yale University Pr., 1998), 77; James E. Wright, 1987. *The Progressive Yankees: Republican Reformers in New Hampshire, 1906-1916* (N.p.: Dartmouth College), 14-15, 88.

<sup>48</sup> *School Committee Report for 1884*, 16.

<sup>49</sup> *School Committee Report for 1886*, 15-17.

<sup>50</sup> "Workings of the Compulsory Law," *The Farmer's Cabinet*, March 4, 1881.

children out of factories and in the classroom. In 1887, the New Hampshire state legislature passed an act that prevented the employment of females and minors under 18 in manufacturing establishments for more than 60 hours a week with a penalty of a \$25 fine, 30 days imprisonment or both in an attempt create a better work environment. It had much stronger punishment which would hopefully prevent employees from breaking the law.<sup>51</sup>

Not all citizens in Manchester supported these reform efforts. There were multiple groups that questioned the effectiveness of such laws. Some also believed that the state was taking away the rights of the parents by creating laws that took away their ability to decide how to raise their children. They believed that providing the opportunity for education was enough. As for the manufacturing companies, many claimed that it would be practically impossible to comply with these laws and they would constantly be in trouble as a result.<sup>52</sup>

In the 25 years since the end of the Civil War, New Hampshire passed only one law regarding compulsory education and one regarding child labor. These laws still allowed children to work for part of the year because for many families, there was a need for the money that came from children working. The “enforcement stage” of the legal struggle to protect children began in the 1870s. During this period government agencies, usually state labor bureaus and truancy officers, were established to enforce the requirements of the laws. Factory inspectors were given the ability to enter establishments, check records, search for violations, and take appropriate

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<sup>51</sup> "Opposing A Ten-Hour Law New Hampshire Corporations Before Legislative Committees," *Boston Daily Globe*, Jul 28, 1887.

<sup>52</sup> "Opposing A Ten-Hour Law New Hampshire Corporations Before Legislative Committees," *Boston Daily Globe*, Jul 28, 1887; "Workings of the Compulsory Law," *The Farmer's Cabinet*, March 4, 1881; "Compulsory Education," *The Patriot*, September 6, 1871.

action.<sup>53</sup> The lack of successful compulsory attendance laws and subsequent enforcement showed the weakness of state government at the time. Laws passed prior to 1880 were not effective because state and city officials were unable to enforce laws around school attendance, despite the hard work of the truancy officers.<sup>54</sup> Enforcement of these state laws continued to be an issue which resulted in little improvement in increasing school attendance prior to the Progressive Era. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, reformers were becoming more vocal about the lack of success at the state level and began to call for national legislation, since they were not seeing enough progress at the state and local levels.

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<sup>53</sup> Fliter, *Child Labor in America*, 37.

<sup>54</sup> Karen Clay, Jeff Lingwall, and Melvin Stephens, "Do Schooling Laws Matter? Evidence from the Introduction of Compulsory Attendance Laws in the United States" (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2012), 2.



### **Chapter 3**

#### *Nationwide Attempts at Reform (1890-1915)*

By the early twentieth century, child labor, with its appalling effects, captured the national spotlight. In March of 1912, in front of Congress, fourteen-year-old Camella Teoli testified that “one day, near the end of her shift, [her] hair became entangled in a machine and a portion of her scalp had been torn off. She spent seven months in the hospital and was still undergoing treatment.”<sup>1</sup> Camella had been working at the American Woolen Company in Lawrence, Massachusetts until she was injured on the job. Her account showed the horrors children went through and she was one of many who appeared before a House of Representatives committee to share their experiences as children working in the factories. Lax state regulations allowed these hazardous working conditions to continue.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Schuman, "History of Child Labor in the United States—Part 2: the Reform Movement," *Monthly Labor Review* (Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 2017), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Graham Boone, "Labor Law Highlights, 1915–2015," *Monthly Labor Review* (10, 2015), 1.

CHILD LABOR LAWS OF NEW ENGLAND

	Maine.	New Hampshire.	Vermont.	Massachusetts.	Rhode Island	Connecticut.
Minimum Age	14	12-14	12-16	14-16	14	14-16
Educational Qualifications	None	Must read and write English	Full 9 Years' Course	3 Years' Course	None	Must attend Evening School
Proof of Age	Certificate	Affidavit	None	Certificate	Certificate	Certificate
Hours of Employment	10-60	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ -58	Not after 8 P. M.	10-58 Between 6 A. M. and 10 P. M.	10-58 Between 6 A. M. and 8 P. M.	10-60
Enforcing Officers	Factory Inspector	State and Local School Officials	Local School Officials	State Police; Factory Inspectors; School Officials	Factory Inspectors	State and Local School Officials
Penalties	Fines (0)*	Fines (2)*	Fines (0)*	Fines (30+)*	Fines (0)*	Fines (61)*
Exemptions	Canneries	None	None	None	None	None
Physical Qualifications	None	None	None	None	None	None

\*Number of prosecutions.

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As seen in the chart, a wide disparity existed between 5 of the 40 states that had child labor laws in the books in 1908. It also shows the punishments levied upon children, including fines or incarceration in the House of Reformation, for breaking such laws. New Hampshire, along with Rhode Island, seemed to have the least restrictive laws in New England. However, New Hampshire was the only state to specifically require that children be able to read and write in English before being granted a work certificate. It was widely known that these laws were not well enforced and there were a significant number of children who did not meet the legal requirements who continued to work. By 1914, 40 states outlawed children under 14 working in textile mills. However, the state laws were not uniform, and enforcement was an issue.<sup>4</sup>

Reformer Owen Lovejoy pointed out that "All states, with one exception, have laws regulating employment of children. In no two states are these laws alike. Experience indicates that every

<sup>3</sup> E. W. Lord, "Child Labor in New England," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 32 (1908), 33.

<sup>4</sup> William Graebner, "Federalism in the Progressive Era: A Structural Interpretation of Reform," *The Journal of American History* 64, no. 2 (Sept. 1977), 354; Julie Novkov, "Historicizing the Figure of the Child in Legal Discourse: The Battle over the Regulation of Child Labor," *The American Journal of Legal History* 44, no. 4 (2000), 373-374.

year in some state radical legislation is sought by enthusiastic advocates, which has already proven unavailing in other states; or conservative legislation is blocked by ignorance and prejudice, although its operation in other states has proven its wisdom.”<sup>5</sup> Having uniform, national laws around child labor, safety and education would take away the “advantage” some states had over their neighbors. In 1910, Samuel Lindsay argued that “unequal laws in these various jurisdictions mean more than this. They penalize the citizens of the more advanced states and give an unfair advantage to the thoughtless, ignorant, and unscrupulous, who are always ready to avail themselves of that advantage.”<sup>6</sup> Businesses operating in states with looser laws and enforcement were able to make more profit because they were able to pay the children working in their factories less, placing the states with more stringent laws at an economic disadvantage. It was capitalism at its worst. These laws looked better on paper than in practice and state and local reformers quickly realized these flaws. They began calling for change on the national stage and believed that stories from children like Camella could help sway legislators into enacting sweeping legal changes to ensure what was morally correct trumped what was economically beneficial for the country. Not everyone in the United States, or even Manchester, agreed with the push to limit child labor, and some started to actively work against child labor limits in their cities and states.

Corporations and, up to a point, workers and their families, pushed back against these attempted regulations. Many manufacturing groups, such as the powerful National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), strongly opposed national child labor legislation in 1906, blaming the

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<sup>5</sup> Owen R. Lovejoy, "The Federal Children's Bureau," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 35 (1910), 68.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel McCune Lindsay, "Unequal Laws an Impediment to Child Labor Legislation," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 35, no. 2 (1910), 17.

unions for the push in Congress. NAM argued such laws would harm the economy. States had their own laws governing child labor and education, NAM insisted, and the national government did not have the authority to step in to enact federal legislation, despite Congress passing the Interstate Commerce Act in 1887.<sup>7</sup> Many working-class families also worried about the economic impact as they relied on their child's wages for survival.<sup>8</sup> Frequently, parents collaborated with their underage children to deceive the enforcement authorities so the children could work in the factories. Birth records did not always exist in the early 20th century. The lack of documentation made it difficult to prove a child's age when the enforcement agents came into the mills.<sup>9</sup>

Bringing an end to child labor and inaugurating compulsory public education in America were part of the larger reform spirit that defined the Progressive Era.<sup>10</sup> During the Progressive Era, reformers busily attacked a range of public issues, including cleaning up cities, reforming jails and poorhouses, campaigning for women's suffrage, pushing for protective labor laws. As industrialization reached its peak in the late nineteenth century, resulting in growing labor organization and strikes, the federal government began to devote greater attention to the nation's labor force in the late nineteenth century. Congress passed legislation creating the United States Bureau of Labor in 1884. In 1888, it became the Department of Labor's job to collect data about

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<sup>7</sup> Schuman, "The Reform Movement," 10.

<sup>8</sup> Graebner, "Federalism in the Progressive Era, 332, 335; Robert Macieski, *Picturing Class: Lewis W. Hine Photographs Child Labor in New England* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 69-70.

<sup>9</sup> Macieski, *Picturing Class*, 64; Schuman, "The Reform Movement," 4.

<sup>10</sup> Michael B. Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," *History of Education Quarterly* (Cambridge University Press), 16, no. 4 (Winter 1976), 384-385.

the laboring class.<sup>11</sup> In 1912, the federal government began to focus more intently on child labor. President Taft created the Children's Bureau, which collected data on the education and labor of children in the United States.<sup>12</sup> More Americans began to realize that "no society can be indifferent to how children are raised and educated, because these factors affect the nature of its future citizens. Uneducated, illiterate, and passive adults would not be able to contribute much."<sup>13</sup> The working conditions of children were closely tied to the working conditions of all poor wage workers in urban areas during the Progressive Era, but also involved broader questions about raising the future citizens of America, especially given rising immigration rates.

Well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, people were concerned about the lack of compulsory education for children, especially those that were immigrants. Immigration rates, particularly in industrial cities, continued to rise and reformers, like E. W. Lord, worried about what the lack of education would mean for the success of America's democratic society. Lord warned that "we must continue our work of child labor reform" in order "to safeguard the citizenship of the future and to protect those ideals which are so precious to every American."<sup>14</sup> In 1908, social worker Jean Gordon was more concerned about U.S.-born white children in her call for compulsory public education in the South. Gordon noted that she had "yet to find a Jew or a negro child in a mill, factory, or department store. They are at school, well nourished, playing out in our glorious Southern sunlight, waxing strong and fat; it is only your white-faced,

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<sup>11</sup> John Bourlet, *First Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor of the State of New Hampshire* (Concord, N.H., Republican Press Association, 1893), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/osu.32435063975544>, 23.

<sup>12</sup> Schuman, "the Reform Movement," 12.

<sup>13</sup> Debra Satz, "Child Labor: A Normative Perspective," *The World Bank Economic Review* 17, no. 2 (2003), 302.

<sup>14</sup> Lord, "Child Labor in New England," 38-39.

sunken-chested, curved-backed little Christians who are in the mills and department stores.”<sup>15</sup> She raised racist alarm that white children bore the brunt of industrialization while immigrant and black children were benefiting from state funded programs. Driven by various concerns, reformers raised the alarm about the inadequate education of children that existed in America. By the early 1900s, according to census data, around 80 percent of 14-year-olds, nation-wide, regularly attended school. This meant that close to 20% of children ages 10-15 still worked nationwide- a percentage that had not changed for 20 years.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the concerns about ethnic assimilation in America and the “Americanization” of immigrants that carried over from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, others, especially, organized labor, worried about the threat immigrants and their children created by lowering wages.<sup>17</sup> This abundant labor force flooded the workforce market with grown men compelled to work at low wages in extremely poor working conditions. At the same time, children competed with their parents for jobs, which some reformers and unions argued lowered the adults’ wages even further. Historian Michael Schuman pointed out that “grown men earned \$6 to \$7 a week, [while] children could be hired for only \$2 a week.”<sup>18</sup> The children became crucial to the family’s economic survival. The amount of money a family made was dependent on the number

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<sup>15</sup> Jean M. Gordon, "Why the Children Are in the Factory," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 32 (1908), 68.

<sup>16</sup> Schuman, "The Reform Movement," 10-11.

<sup>17</sup> John Clayton, “A Tale of Manchester's Irish Community,” *Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce* (March 16, 2017).

<sup>18</sup> National Child Labor Committee, *Child Labor and Social Progress: Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia, April 2-5, 1908* (National Child Labor Committee, 1908), 6.

of children they had working.<sup>19</sup> By supporting compulsory education laws, labor unions hoped to keep children out of the work force, thus increasing the positions open for men.<sup>20</sup>

Child labor during and after the Industrial Revolution increased wealth inequality in America. The minute wages paid to children, and the massive profits made by capitalists as a result, widened the wealth inequality that already existed. Most child workers had very little access to upward mobility because instead of being educated, they were working in horrible conditions for very little pay.<sup>21</sup> Reformers, frustrated with the resistance they faced, questioned the long-term economic logic of child labor. According to Jean Gordon,

The whole principle of child labor is such an extravagant one, I marvel that the great practical American people have permitted it to continue, from a purely commercial standpoint. It is certainly a poor business policy which permits a firm or corporation to get seven or eight years work out of a child and then turn him out upon the community, to be cared for at public expense through long years of invalidism or criminality.<sup>22</sup>

Felix Adler mirrored these sentiments at the Fourth Annual National Labor Committee Meeting when he stated, "I think that those who commit the offense against the child are hypnotized by greed; I think that it is the duty of the community to deliver them from such obsession, and to

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<sup>19</sup> National Child Labor Committee. *Child Labor and Social Progress*. 5.

<sup>20</sup> John Golden, "Children in the Textile Industry," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 35 (1910), 42-46.

<sup>21</sup> Samuel McCune Lindsay, *Child Labor a National Problem*. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 27 (1906), 74.

<sup>22</sup> Gordon, "Why the Children Are in the Factory," 71.

bring home to them the sense of their responsibility.”<sup>23</sup> The upper class further widened the wealth inequality gap by sending their children to private schools and hiring tutors, ensuring the best possible education available for them. Economist John Stuart Mill argued in 1870, that “it appears to me impossible but that the increase of intelligence, of education, and the love of independence among the working classes, must be attended with a corresponding growth of good sense.”<sup>24</sup> It was clear that one way to successfully close the wealth gap was through free public education for all.

As criticism of child labor grew by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, several organizations tried to make changes, first, at the local and state level, which were largely unsuccessful. It was not until 1904, with the founding of the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) by Edgar Gardener Murphy, that reform attempts were made to limit child labor at the national level.<sup>25</sup> It was understood that the employment of children was extremely profitable, especially because children usually did not strike and were paid less. Reformers created the National Child Labor Committee because they realized that states could not abolish the practice on their own and, therefore, reform on the national stage was necessary. Their goal was to end child labor and impose compulsory public education at the national level. A mutual dependence between local and national efforts existed and the NCLC had to be able to work with the state and local reform groups if they wanted their attempts at reform to be successful.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> National Child Labor Committee, *Child Labor and Social Progress*, 3

<sup>24</sup> John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy* (London Longmans, Green & Co.1904), 138.

<sup>25</sup> Schuman, “the Reform Movement,” 4-11.

<sup>26</sup> Edward W. Frost, "Relation of National Child Labor Committee to State and Local Committees." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 35, no. 2\_suppl (1910): 155-59.



From its inception, the National Child Labor Committee campaigned for tougher state and federal laws against the abuses of industrial child labor by trying to raise public and political awareness initially. Education reform saw more success than did child labor laws. As a result, the child labor reform movement changed tactics and began pushing for compulsory education in addition to ending child labor because education would help to destroy the cycle of poor wage work in the factories for the future.<sup>27</sup> Owen Lovejoy was a prominent leader of the NCLC who made countless speeches to raise awareness and called for stricter enforcement of legislation. When speaking about child labor and education, he once said, “The two are incompatible. Where child labor thrives education declines. When measures are taken that put an effective restriction upon child labor, education advances.”<sup>28</sup> The National Child Labor Committee, like many of the other reform groups, soon discovered that there were no quick fixes for ending child labor because it was an integral part of what made America so successful during the Industrial Revolution. These reform groups needed to change the way society and government viewed the child workers.<sup>29</sup>

Some well-known reformers who raised awareness with the public successfully were Mother Jones and Lewis Hine. Mother Jones was known for leading a march of children from factories on strike because of the conditions they were forced to work in.<sup>30</sup> Hine did not lead

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<sup>27</sup> Jill L. Haunold, "Idle Hands are the Devil's Workshop" 98; Lindsay, *Child Labor a National Problem*, 78; Lewis W. Parker, "Compulsory Education, the Solution of Child Labor Problem," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 32, no. 22 (December 1908), 43.

<sup>28</sup> Owen R. Lovejoy, "Next Steps in the Child Labor Campaign," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York* 2, no. 4 (1912), 82-84.

<sup>29</sup> Viviana A. Zelizer, "From Useful to Useless: Moral Conflict over Child Labor," *The Children's Culture Reader*, (New York City, NY: NYU Press, 1998), 85-87.

<sup>30</sup> Schuman, "the Reform Movement", 5-6.

marches or strikes. He, instead, sneaked into factories, took pictures of the children at work, and published a book of his photographs. Raising public awareness about the horrors of child labor made the American people who benefited from this labor see the pain and suffering they caused. One way reformers attempted to raise awareness was through child welfare exhibits. These exhibits educated the general public and pushed for new laws, institutions, and officials.<sup>31</sup>

The National Child Labor Committee believed that Hine's photography was a powerful way to gain support for their cause. Photographs were able to show in real time the daily experiences of children working in the factories. They did not require the readers to be literate or to use their imagination, as the photographs provided a visual narrative of the horrific conditions. Hine visited Manchester from May 21-26, 1909. While observing one of the gates at the entrance of the Amoskeag Mills, Hine claims he counted 30 boys and girls under the age of 14 leaving the mills.<sup>32</sup> This was only one of the many gates in the Millyard. His observation did not account for the children that appeared older than they were and as a result, were not counted by Hine. Therefore, it is likely there were significantly more than 30 children under the age of 14 working in Manchester in 1909. However, his age test was quite subjective because there could have been people who looked younger than their actual age that were counted by him. At this time children under 14 were prohibited from working in the mills. The photo below, taken by Lewis Hine, shows a blatant violation of the state laws, since this young girl working was under the age of 14.

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<sup>31</sup> Macieski, *Picturing Class*, 156.

<sup>32</sup> Macieski, *Picturing Class*, 66-67.



*Figure 4: Unknown Girl working in the Amoskeag Mills in 1909. Photo by Lewis Hine.<sup>33</sup>*

While the battles continued to rage on the national stage, New Hampshire found more success with its attempts to pass and enforce child labor and compulsory education legislation. Between 1890 and 1915, the state legislature in Concord passed numerous laws giving enforcement agents more power to ensure the families and manufacturing companies were following the laws. The state saw a drastic decline in children working and a correlating increase in school attendance. The census of 1890 showed that there were 3,229 manufacturing establishments in New Hampshire with 63,361 people employed. This was a 23% increase in employment since 1880 and yet children employed in manufacturing decreased by 49%. In 1880, it was reported that 3,291 children were working in manufacturing establishments throughout New Hampshire, but in 1890, that number fell to 1,669. According to the New Hampshire

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<sup>33</sup> Lewis Wickes Hine, photographer, Name: Little girl 48 inches high work in Amoskeag Mfg. Co., Manchester, N.H. She seemed to be 11 or 12 yrs. old. Photo taken at noon. Location: Manchester, New Hampshire (United States New Hampshire Manchester, 1909), Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018675164/>.

Bureau of Labor, this decrease was “undoubtedly brought about by the enactment of wise labor laws. At no time within half a century were so few children (under fifteen) employed in manufacturing establishments in the state.”<sup>34</sup> This is not surprising, given the stricter state laws and expanded enforcement powers given to the truancy officers.

The 1890 census reported that the city of Manchester had 43,983 inhabitants.<sup>35</sup> The Irish was the first ethnic group to come to Manchester in large numbers to work in the mills. They were followed by French-Canadians. By 1890, there were about 15,000 French-Canadians in Manchester, which was one-third of the city’s population, and they quickly became the largest ethnic group in Manchester. The French-Canadians became the preferred group of laborers to hire due to their “industrious and docile” nature. Amoskeag Manufacturing Company absorbed other textile companies in Manchester to become the largest manufacturing company in the world. At its peak, it is estimated to have employed 17,000 workers. Its Mill Number 11, constructed in 1891, was the largest cotton mill building in the world at the time with 4,000 looms in operation at once.<sup>36</sup> Due to labor demands, Amoskeag Manufacturing Company began to actively recruit families from Canada to relocate to Manchester. Many of these immigrants worked in the mills out of economic necessity. In addition, for the Amoskeag Manufacturing Corporation to get the cheapest labor for the mills, school attendance laws and minimum age labor laws were often ignored. Author and photographer Gary Samson stated that, “due to the

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<sup>34</sup> John Bourlet, *Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor of the State of New Hampshire*. (Concord, N.H., Republican Press Association, 1894), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/osu.32435063975155>, 478. It is likely that both the reports of children working in the state in 1880 and 1890 are higher than what was recorded because of falsified certificates and people providing inaccurate information.

<sup>35</sup> United States Census Bureau, "Eleventh Census - Volume 1. Report on Population of the United States," 1890, generated by Amy Sherr, using data.census.gov, <<https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1895/dec/volume-1.html>> (29 Jan, 2018).

<sup>36</sup> Robert B. Perreault, *Manchester* (N.p.: Arcadia. 2005), 20, 26.

large number of child laborers, French Canadians were often accused of exploiting their children. However, child labor was prevalent in the textile mills long before the French-Canadian immigration, and the French-Canadians simply followed a long-established custom reinforced by necessity.”<sup>37</sup>

In the early 1900s it was reported that three-quarters of the non-French-Canadian families in Manchester wanted their children in school, while two-thirds of the French Canadians did not. With more than half of Manchester’s immigrant population French-Canadian, it is not surprising that cultural values played a role in the city’s “educational problem” at the time. Clearly, many of these French-Canadian families valued the income their children generated working more than the children’s education. In addition to the loss of income school created, French-Canadian parents were also concerned about the loss of cultural identity that public schools might cause. Attending school would result in assimilation to the “American way of life,” including speaking and reading in English and most likely questioning the Catholic religion. This cultural and educational pushback by one-third of the city’s population frightened the rest of the city, resulting in a resolve to further pass legislation and strengthen enforcement around compulsory education.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Gary Samson, *Manchester: The Mills and the Immigrant Experience* (N.p.: Arcadia. 2000), 46, 50-51, 55, 87.

<sup>38</sup> Macieski, *Picturing Class*, 69-70, Samson, *Manchester: The Mills and the Immigrant Experience*, 88.

Table 1c: Manchester, N.H. Yearly Public-School Attendance

Year	Total Enrolled for School Year	Average Attendance for School Year	Annual Attendance Percentage from previous columns	Daily Attendance Percentage reported by Superintendent <sup>39</sup>
1890	3814	2536	67%	90.70%
1891	4071	2689	66%	91.50%
1892	4298	2837	66%	90.60%
1893	4775	3111	65%	
1894	4975	3336	67%	
1895	5206	3499	67%	
1896	5382	3651	68%	
1897	5501	3826	70%	
1898	5802	4070	70%	92%
1899	5399	3978	74%	90.40%
1900	5462	3998	73%	91.80%
1901	5808	4127	71%	90.50%
1902	6123	4480	73%	91.90%
1903	6013	4338	72%	90.80%
1904	5920	4483	76%	91.70%
1905	5841	4412	76%	91.60%
1906	5703	4531	80%	92.30%
1907	5974	4589	77%	91.70%
1908	5994	4795	80%	92.90%
1909	6391	4936	77%	92.50%
1910	6521	5100	78%	90.20%
1911	6303	4946	79%	91.80%
1912	7009	5469	78%	92.50%
1913	6679	5309	80%	93%
1914	6867	5578	81%	92.60%
1915	7454	6224	84%	93.40%

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In the last decade of the nineteenth century the raw enrollment number and attendance percentages increased in Manchester schools. The chart above shows two different percentages. The far right column provides percentages as reported by the superintendent of schools for the city of Manchester in his annual reports. They show the average daily attendance that year as a percentage out of the average membership of children in school that year. It does not indicate if

<sup>39</sup> Compiled from the *Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester*, 1890-1915. For full chart, see Appendix. These numbers do not include private or parochial schools in the city. It is interesting to note that in 1890 the Manchester School Reports started to provide the attendance percentages for each year. These percentages from the superintendent are about 15% higher than the raw percentages I created by taking the average attendance for the year divided by the number of students enrolled that year. He does not explain how he obtained that percentage when the raw math comes out significantly lower. It is possible he based his percentage on the daily attendance rather than on the yearly average. The attendance records after 1920 include a column called "Average Membership". If you take the daily attendance average and divide it by the average membership number, the percentage matches what the superintendent reports. This new column does not show up in the reports for the first 30 years of the percentage being reported. Despite these discrepancies, the raw numbers reported and percentages I calculated do show an increase in overall school attendance after the turn of the century.

those enrolled children actually attended school regularly. The preceding column calculates the percentage of attendance for all children enrolled in public schools. Looking at the differences in percentages, one can surmise that many children enrolled did not regularly attend school. Those same reports also show the number of students enrolled in Manchester schools and the average attendance for the year, provided in the column preceding the superintendent's percentages. The reports do not give the number of school-age children living in Manchester each year. The city, state and national census and labor bureaus did not consistently collect data on the number of school age children either. Since it was widely known at that time that not all school-age children were even enrolled in school, it is reasonable to assume that the school attendance rates were lower than what stated in the Manchester School Reports. Despite the inherently incomplete data, one can see the marked improvement in school attendance, which means there were few school-age children continuing to work, illegally at this time, in the mills.

In 1891 New Hampshire legislators passed a combined child labor and compulsory education bill. Public Statue, Chapter 93 laid out not only the limitations on children working in the state and the coinciding educational requirements, but also the penalties for breaking the law. It stated that no child under 10 was allowed to work in manufacturing and children under 16 who could not read and write in English were not able work in manufacturing while school was in session. An employer caught breaking this law could be fined up to \$50, which would go to the school district. The law also expected parents to get their children to attend school. It broke down the number of required weeks of schooling based on age. Children ages 8-16 must attend at least 12 weeks of school in the year, and 6 of those weeks must be consecutive. Children over 16 could continue attending school but it did not require a set number of weeks. Parents would be fined \$10 for the first offense and \$20 for following offenses, which would go to go to the school

district, if their child was not attending school. This law was different from the 1871 law because it required all children under age 16 to be able to read and write in English before being eligible for a work certificate.<sup>40</sup>

Along with the passing of this stricter law and the coinciding enforcement policies, came calls for better records of school-age children, child laborers, and truancy in the city of Manchester. Armed with factual data, both reformers and enforcement agents would be able to either prove that the legislation was successful or have data to support calls for stricter policies and enforcement in the future. In the early 1890's the New Hampshire Department of Labor was created and it became the duty of the commissioner 'to collect, assort, arrange, and present, in annual reports... statistical details relating to all departments of labor in the state of New Hampshire, especially in relation to the commercial, industrial, social, educational, and sanitary condition of the laboring classes, and the permanent prosperity of the productive industry of the state.'" However, the law that created this state agency clearly stated that the department was not responsible for the "enforcement of any violation of law, system of inspection, or arbitration."<sup>41</sup> According to the first annual report from the New Hampshire Department of Labor, there were 14,123 school-age children living in Manchester in 1893. The Manchester School Report for the year 1893 showed 4,775 children registered to attend public school. Only about one-third of school-age students were registered to attend public school in Manchester in 1893.<sup>42</sup> These numbers provided by the Bureau of Labor are at odds with the attendance percentages provided

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<sup>40</sup> Bourlet, *First Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor of the State of New Hampshire*, 298.

<sup>41</sup> Bourlet, *First Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor of the State of New Hampshire*, 9, 29.

<sup>42</sup> Bourlet, *First Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor of the State of New Hampshire*, 244; *Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester, N.H. Prepared by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1900*. (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1901). 23. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1900*.



by the Manchester superintendent. This is likely because the superintendent created his percentage by only using children who were enrolled and attended school. If the average daily attendance was divided by the number of school-age children living in the city, the percentage would be significantly lower. Given the large immigrant population, parochial schools did exist. It would make sense to assume that many of the school-age children who were not registered to attend public school in Manchester attended one of the city's many parochial schools instead. However, there were still children who did not attend any sort of school regularly. The idea that despite the laws in place, many children, and perhaps parents as well, chose to work rather than regularly attend school is supported by the truancy reports found in the Manchester School Reports. In 1892 a reported 445 employment certificates were granted with the average age being 14.5 years old, and all but 79 of the certificate holders were foreign born or had foreign born parents.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to collecting the number of workers and their vocation, the New Hampshire Department of Labor surveyed workers in the state which revealed how union members thought of education. There was a section for comments in the annual reports. Many people who were members of the local unions had strong feelings about compulsory education. The Knights of Labor called for 10 months of compulsory education every year for children under 16 and a law banning the employment of children under 16. One laborer believed that "There should be compulsory education for all voters, and only voters should be engaged in government employment, from common laborer up." Another agreed and said, "With our perfect educational system, it should be a crime for a child to be allowed to grow up in ignorance; but where so

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<sup>43</sup> *Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester together with the Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1892* (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1893), 8. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1892*.

much is spent for drink that the earnings of children are required to support the family, it seems likely that many generations yet will feel the blight of ignorance due to the squandering of earnings in debauchery.” Children working provided immediate benefits for themselves and their families, but in the long run the lack of education these children experienced would do more harm to society than help it. These comments from adult factory workers, not just upper-class society members, show how many New Hampshire residents viewed education as important, ensuring the continuance of a successful democratic society. In 1894, two hundred and seventeen workers who took the survey expressed themselves in favor of the restriction of foreign immigration, two hundred and seven in favor of an eight-hour workday, one hundred and forty-one in favor of an eight-hour workday with ten hours' pay.<sup>44</sup>

School attendance in Manchester slowly increased to over 70% in the 1890s. In 1899, the state further amended the child labor laws that were in place. Now children between the ages of 14 and 16 must have at least 12 weeks of schooling. Children between the ages of 12 and 14 must have at least 6 months of schooling. Children under the age of 12 must be in school while it is in session throughout the year. Children under 16 were not allowed to work in the factories unless they had a certificate from the school committee of their city or town. Lastly, the truant officer was to enforce the laws and keep children between the ages of 8 and 16 in school. Truant officers did not need a warrant to search the factories or see employment certificates.<sup>45</sup>

By 1900, 410,938 people resided in New Hampshire and around 88,000 of them were immigrants. Despite laws around compulsory education and child labor, Manchester had one of

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<sup>44</sup> Bourlet, *Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor of the State of New Hampshire*, 59, 417-422, 434. One of the surveys appears to be implying that the father was spending his income on alcohol instead of providing for the family, which created a need for children to turn to work. The survey report did not focus on what laborers thought of child labor or immigration.

<sup>45</sup> *Derry News*, April 8, 1899.

the highest percentages of residents that could not speak English in the country. According to reformers, schools were to help conserve the American culture in a society whose makeup was quickly changing. Historian James Wright observed that “Children of immigrant parents were less likely to attend school than were children of native-born parents...Also, a sizable number of the children of immigrants attended parochial schools, where the vision of assimilation differed from their public counterparts.”<sup>46</sup> Having laws and attempting to enforce them was not enough to compel the working class, especially the immigrants, to give up additional sources of income to send their children to school, where they could potentially lose their cultural traditions and beliefs.

It was not until the turn of the century that the percentage of school-age children in Manchester not regularly attending school fell below 25%. The city population from the 1900 census was 56,987. The Manchester School Report showed 5,462 students were registered for classes that year but did not provide the number of school-age children in the city. According to the city truant officer, there were 1,007 absentees reported from city schools and 461 from parochial schools. Three cases were brought to the courts and the school committee granted 376 employment certificates.<sup>47</sup> Great progress had been made but that was not good enough for reformers of the time.

They continued to press the state legislature for stricter laws. In 1901, a new law was passed where no child under the age of twelve years could be employed in any manufacturing establishment. Additionally, no child under the age of fourteen could be employed while public schools were in session and no child under the age of sixteen could be employed unless he could

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<sup>46</sup> James E. Wright, *The Progressive Yankees: Republican Reformers in New Hampshire, 1906-1916* (N.p.: Dartmouth College. 1987), 4-5, 14-15.

<sup>47</sup> *School Committee Report for 1900*, 21-24.

produce a certificate from the local superintendent of schools certifying his ability to read and write legibly simple sentences in the English language and had a sworn affidavit that he was over 16. The law gave the state superintendent of schools joint authority with the local school boards in enforcing the law and authorized him to employ deputies for that purpose. The law also noted that it was the parent or guardian's responsibility to ensure children between the ages of 8 and 14 attended school while it was in session.<sup>48</sup> By this time there were many pieces to the compulsory education and child labor laws in New Hampshire. Some aspects of the laws, such as reading and writing in English, became a focus, while other parts, like the parent responsibility, was overlooked.

At the same time, both the Manchester School Committee and the state of New Hampshire began collecting more detailed data around child labor, school attendance and truancy. These departments took their job seriously and provided accurate data around children working and school truancy. Now that data was being collected and presented to the local and state authorities, evidence existed to support the laws that had been in place for decades. The New Hampshire Department of Labor published their reports every two years, and, in those reports, they provided the number of school-age children living in the state and the number of school-age children that were working in different professions. The Manchester School Committee Reports, published annually, took it further and provided the number of children in the city that were absent from school, how many were taken to court, and, sometimes, how many were granted work certificates, however, it rarely identified the total number of school-age

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<sup>48</sup> Henry C. Morrison, "Enforcement of Child Labor Laws in New Hampshire," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 35, no. 2 (1910), 104; New Hampshire Department of Public Instruction, *Laws of New Hampshire relating to public schools: compiled from public statutes and session laws of 1891-1917 inclusive* (J.B. Clarke Company, 1917), 85.

children lived in the city. In 1902, 6,123 students were registered for school in Manchester. The truancy officer reported that 1,515 children were absent from school that year and that he took three children to juvenile court for truancy.<sup>49</sup>

Using their newly enhanced enforcement powers and the increased reporting, truancy officers did their best to ensure children were regularly attending school. The Manchester Superintendent and School Board decided to take a school census every three years starting in 1905. That year they reported that there were 11, 578 school-age children living in Manchester. Of that, 5,841 were enrolled in city schools. There were three children taken to court for truancy in 1905 and 1,409 were reported for being absent from school.<sup>50</sup> Compared to previous years, the average attendance per children enrolled in the early 1900s was a marked improvement, despite 20%-25% of children not regularly attending school. The New Hampshire State Superintendent of Schools, Henry C. Morrison, echoed this improvement after visiting schools and manufacturing establishments across the state. He said, “We know that immediately after its enactment there was a great influx of children into the public schools, so much so that it became necessary to increase school accommodations in nearly all our manufacturing towns. On our first tour of inspection in 1905, 75% of the children employed were found to be properly

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<sup>49</sup> *Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester, N.H. Prepared by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1902* (Manchester: Remy Bechard, 1903), 34. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1902*.

<sup>50</sup> *Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester, N.H. Prepared by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1905* (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1906), 36-37. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1905*; *Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester, N.H. Prepared by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1908*. (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1909). 13-14. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1908*. The school report does not provide names, ages or outcomes of children taken to the police court. One can assume that the 1,409 that were not in school that year were already enrolled in school and were found to have legitimate reasons for not attending, such as illness or having a work certificate.

certificated.”<sup>51</sup> However, there were still some that worked without certificates. In 1906, Marie Proulx started working for Amoskeag Manufacturing Company at age 12. She recalled, “we didn’t need a pass from the employment office to work. All we had to do was show them that we were fourteen years old... They’s just ask. ‘Are you fourteen years old?’... That’s how I went to work... I started working from six to six.”<sup>52</sup> The lax enforcement and the use of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company’s political power allowed for child labor to continue, despite the laws in place.

The school reports became more detailed as people continued to call for reform and wanted the hard data to back up their claims. The Manchester School District began to publish its census of children, taken every three years, alongside the attendance record for the year. In the census report, the school officials address the discrepancies, first by noting that the census data was collected in November and the attendance records consider the full year. It then notes, “error of no large proportions when the magnitude of the work of enumerating all the children is considered.” In 1908, there were 10,993 school-age children residing in Manchester, 5,227 of whom were enrolled in parochial schools and 5,433 in city schools. This number seems high but a large portion of the population of Manchester was either French-Canadian or Irish, both of whom were predominantly Catholic, and would likely send their children to private religious schools instead of the public schools in the city. The truant officer reported that 1,159 were enrolled but absent from school, while 348 children were not enrolled and attending school at all.<sup>53</sup> A 1908 report from the New Hampshire Bureau of Labor said that there were 986 children

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<sup>51</sup> Morrison, "Enforcement of Child Labor Laws in New Hampshire," 105.

<sup>52</sup> Tamara K. Hareven and Randolph Langenbach, *Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory-City* (New York City, NY: Pantheon Books, 1978), 66.

<sup>53</sup> *School Committee Report for 1908*, 13-14, 35-36.

under 16 working, earning an average of \$4.90 a week.<sup>54</sup> The powerful images Lewis Hine of the NCLC took in Manchester of small children dwarfed by the large machinery they worked at helped to promote the passage of strict labor laws.<sup>55</sup> The Manchester School District took note of Hine's investigations which threw its city into the national spotlight. The report produced by the NCLC and Hine stated that, "In the City of Manchester alone, an expert loaned by the National Child Labor Committee found within three weeks, nearly a hundred definite violations of the law." These accusations horrified labor unions, women's groups, and reformers in the state, which led to calls for further limits on child labor in New Hampshire.<sup>56</sup>

New Hampshire's Republican governor, Robert Bass, supported the reform movements to take children out of the mills and get them into the classrooms. Bass worked to create New Hampshire's Progressive Party which endorsed the national platform that called for industrial safety regulations, abolition of child labor, minimum wage for women, a six-day work week, and an eight-hour day in twenty-four-hour industries." Bass stated that he wanted to "see children under sixteen years of age spend their time not in the mills but at school... [to enable them to be] a credit to this country. Better-educated, more intelligent, and more secure voters will assure 'real popular government.'"<sup>57</sup> As governor, Bass expanded the Bureau of Labor's powers and helped push through new reform legislation.

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<sup>54</sup> Robert Macieski, "'Before Their Time': Lewis W. Hine and the New Hampshire Crusade against Child Labor," *Historical New Hampshire* 55, no. 3 (2000), 94.

<sup>55</sup> Macieski, Robert, *Picturing Class*, 67; Samson, *Manchester: The Mills and the Immigrant Experience*, 67.

<sup>56</sup> Macieski, "Before Their Time," 103.

<sup>57</sup> Wright, *The Progressive Yankees*. 111, 138.

New Hampshire's strictest child labor law to date was passed on April 15, 1911. This new law in 1911 was designed to strengthen the 1901 child labor law, which prohibited children under 12 from working. In addition to banning children under 12 from working, the 1911 law made it so children between the ages of 12 and 16 could not work if school was in session and if they could not read and write in English. Instead of working, these children were required to attend school regularly. Children who applied for work certificates not only had to prove they were literate, but also needed to provide multiple forms of identification to authenticate their age. These identification requirements strengthened the enforcement aspect of the law. State inspectors, who reported directly to the state superintendent of schools, were given the same power as to enforcement and the serving of warrants as the several truant officers. Families and employers who broke this law faced both fines and jail time. They could be forced to pay between \$5 and \$200 and serve 10 to 30 days in jail, or a combination of the two at the court's discretion. As a result of this new law and its stricter enforcement, the Manchester school truant officer reported that there were 719 employment certificates issued, 698 absentees reported, and 2 cases brought to court in 1911.<sup>58</sup> This was an improvement from previous years. In 1908 the truant officer reported there were 1,159 absentees and no cases brought to the courts.<sup>59</sup>

With the passing of the 1911 child labor and compulsory education law, many people in the state sang the praises of Henry C. Morrison, state superintendent of public instruction. They

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<sup>58</sup> Macieski. "Before Their Time," 104; *Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester, N.H. Prepared by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1911* (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1912), 7,8, 39. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1911*; *Derry News*, May 26, 1911; New Hampshire Bureau of Labor, *Compiled Labor Laws of the State of New Hampshire by J.S.B. Davie, Commissioner of Labor, 1913* (R.W. Musgrove, 1913), 33-38; New Hampshire Department of Public Instruction, *Laws of New Hampshire relating to public schools*, 89-98; Aurore Eaton, *The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company* (Arcadia Publishing, 2015), 124; Wright, *The Progressive Yankees*, 172.

<sup>59</sup> *School Committee Report for 1911*, 30-31.



claimed he had “had phenomenal success in keeping children in the schools until graduation from the grammar school, has secured their attendance upon the high schools, and has held many of them till graduation.” He was willing, with the support of Governor Bass, to take on the mills to get children in the state of New Hampshire into the schools and did everything he could to keep them there.<sup>60</sup>

The new Progressive attack on child labor put the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company on the defensive. According to statistics published by Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in 1912, it employed 8,500 men and 7,000 women who produced 50 miles of cloth an hour and earned a total of \$150,000 a week, which averaged out to just under \$10/person a week.<sup>61</sup> This report did not distinguish between child and adult labor. But a September 1913 edition of *Good Housekeeping* attacked the system of child labor, revealing that child labor persisted in the mills because children were cheap and did not strike, which was why companies wanted to employ them. It reported that in New Hampshire a 14-year-old, French-Canadian boy made 66 cents a day for the first 8 months he worked. The 1911 law was amended in 1913 and changed the minimum age of work from 12 to 14. However, these children could only work when school was not in session. With the 1911 law, this child was considered truant. The law also allowed truant officers to go into the mills and remove illegally employed children.<sup>62</sup> One of the manufacturers complained that it was a bad law. Superintendent Henry Morrison asked why they let the law be passed and the manufacturer responded with, “We never supposed you would enforce it.” This

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<sup>60</sup> A. E. Winship, “Looking About: In New Hampshire,” *The Journal of Education*, 76, no. 24 (1912), 653.

<sup>61</sup> Perreault, *Manchester*, 28; Samson, *Manchester: The Mills and the Immigrant Experience*, 69.

<sup>62</sup> New Hampshire Bureau of Labor, *Compiled Labor Laws of the State of New Hampshire*, 39.

correspondence suggests that the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company wielded significant political power in New Hampshire. They realized that society supported an end to child labor, but it was substantially profitable for them. As long as the enforcement of such laws remained lax, they could pay lip service and “support” the passing of such legislation without much concern of follow through from the state agents. As a result, in a case likely replicated in many immigrant families, Cora Pellerin arrived from Canada in 1911 and started working in the mills in 1912 at age 11. Her father had a false birth certificate made and used that to gain employment and bypass the 1911 law.<sup>63</sup>

The enactment of the 1911 law put a stop to the laissez faire enforcement that had been typical in Manchester. Morrison and his truant officers did such a good job that the schools started to fill up. This national press created a lot of negative opinions towards the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company. As a result, the company responded to the *Good Housekeeping* article in the *Amoskeag Bulletin* on November 15, 1913. In it, they claimed that “Child labor is a condition not a theory. The textile mills are made [scape]goats by the theorists and reformers quite naturally, because thousands of boys and girls are earning a living wage and learning a trade in these mills.”<sup>64</sup>

In 1914 it was reported that 13,356 children ages 5-16 lived in Manchester. The 1911 law resulted in an increase in school attendance. The Manchester School Committee reports that the attendance rate was 92.6%. However, the Truant Officer for the city reported that there were 1,333 absentees, 5 of which were brought to court and 1,490 employment certificates were

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<sup>63</sup> Hareven, *Amoskeag*, 201-202.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Samson, *Manchester: The Mills and the Immigrant Experience*. 60-62, 66.

issued. That was still a high rate of truancy in the city, regardless of the stricter laws and enforcement.<sup>65</sup>

From 1870 to 1914 great strides were made in getting children out of the workforce and into the classroom at the state level, as seen with Manchester, New Hampshire. The number of children ages five to eighteen in the United States doubled in that time. The number of pupils enrolled in school was nearly three times as many in 1914 as in 1870, which means more children were attending school by 1914.<sup>66</sup> The 1900 census reported that there were 1.75 million children aged five to ten working. This made up 6% of the nation's workforce.<sup>67</sup> Additionally, public elementary school enrollment climbed from about 12,500,000 in 1900 to 16,000,000 in 1910. However, reformers insisted that their work was not done "until the last child is taken from the mill, the mines, and the workshop and placed in the school and playground." Once the Federal Children's Bureau was created, reformers called for the agency to take care of the children by getting them out of the workforce and keeping them in the schools. At this time, there was a serious struggle to keep children in the schools for the full school year.<sup>68</sup> Economist Carolyn Moehling stated, "Between 1880 and 1920, the movement was successful in getting

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<sup>65</sup> The School Report claimed the attendance rate was 92.6%. With the data they provided, I found the rate to be 81%. Although it is still a rise in attendance rate, this is a large statistical difference. *Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester, N.H. Prepared by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Year ending December 31, 1914* (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1915), 6, 30-31, 51. Hereafter cited as *School Committee Report for 1914*.

<sup>66</sup> Ernest Carroll Moore, "Education for Fifty Years," *The Journal of Education*, Vol. 87, No. 11 (1918), 835.

<sup>67</sup> Boone, "Labor Law Highlights, 1915-2015," 2; John Spargo, *Bitter Cry of the Children* (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1968), 143. Tratner estimates that at least 2,250,000 children were working at the time of the 1900 census and only 1,750,000 were reported on the census making it woefully inaccurate.

<sup>68</sup> Golden, "Children in the Textile Industry." 45-46; Lovejoy, "The Federal Children's Bureau," 68; Sol Cohen, "The Industrial Education Movement, 1906-17," *American Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1968), 97, 113. School year is considered to be 9 months.

child labor legislation enacted in many states. Over this same period, the labor force participation rates of children fell dramatically: from 1880 to 1930, the gainful occupation rates of boys and girls aged 10 to 15 fell from 32 to 6% and 12 to 2% respectively.” The enrollment of American children in secondary schools increased 150% from 1890 to 1900 while the population increase was only 21%. Most states and cities successfully enacted stricter laws with better enforcement, resulting in an increase in children regularly attending school. For example, Manchester schools benefited from these new laws and stricter enforcement raising the attendance percentage from 67% in 1890 to 84% in 1915.

State.	1870	1880	1890	1900	1905
<b>Women 16 years and over:</b>					
New England.....	50,805	62,554	73,445	73,258	70,113
Middle States.....	14,126	13,185	16,240	16,056	15,116
Southern States.....	4,190	7,587	15,083	32,528	37,885
Western States.....	516	1,213	1,839	1,867	1,467
United States.....	69,637	84,539	106,607	123,709	124,711
Massachusetts.....	24,065	31,496	38,352	41,037	39,054
Rhode Island.....	8,028	9,199	10,887	9,240	9,377
Pennsylvania.....	6,097	4,454	6,288	7,119	6,516
North Carolina.....	916	1,727	3,656	10,304	12,235
South Carolina.....	308	772	3,070	8,673	10,157
Georgia.....	1,080	2,951	4,005	6,495	7,873
Alabama.....	445	631	852	2,743	3,377
<b>Children under 16 years:</b>					
New England.....	13,767	17,704	10,165	10,819	9,385
Middle States.....	6,382	6,014	4,021	4,314	2,765
Southern States.....	2,343	4,097	8,515	24,438	27,538
Western States.....	450	805	431	295	290
United States.....	22,942	28,620	23,122	39,866	40,009
Massachusetts.....	5,753	7,570	4,091	5,923	5,586
Rhode Island.....	3,134	3,930	3,182	2,253	1,917
Pennsylvania.....	2,774	2,086	1,417	1,711	1,187
North Carolina.....	279	741	2,071	7,129	8,212
South Carolina.....	326	585	2,152	8,110	8,535
Georgia.....	619	1,411	2,460	4,479	5,406
Alabama.....	284	433	501	2,437	3,094
<b>Total:</b>					
New England.....	94,775	125,779	147,359	162,294	155,981
Middle States.....	28,974	28,118	31,841	34,843	31,871
Southern States.....	10,173	16,317	36,415	97,494	120,110
Western States.....	1,447	2,530	3,261	3,295	2,496
United States.....	135,369	172,544	218,876	297,929	310,458
Massachusetts.....	43,512	61,246	75,544	92,085	88,033
Rhode Island.....	16,745	21,174	24,576	21,823	21,917
Pennsylvania.....	12,730	9,879	12,666	15,567	13,789
North Carolina.....	1,453	3,232	8,515	30,273	36,356
South Carolina.....	1,123	2,018	8,071	30,301	37,271
Georgia.....	2,846	6,215	10,314	18,283	24,130
Alabama.....	1,032	1,448	2,088	8,332	11,430
<b>Percentage of children of total number of wage earners:</b>					
New England.....	14.5	14.1	6.9	6.7	6.0
Middle States.....	22.0	21.4	12.6	12.4	8.7
Southern States.....	23.0	25.1	24.2	25.0	22.9
Western States.....	31.1	21.7	13.2	8.9	11.6
United States.....	16.9	16.4	10.7	13.4	12.9

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<sup>69</sup> Chas P. Neill, *Summary of the Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage Earners in the United States, December 1915* (G.P.O., 1916), 231-232. There was a decrease in the number of children working in the United States from 1870 to 1905, however, there were still tens of thousands of children under 16 working in 1905. It is important to note that Neill highlights the likelihood that some of that numbers are inaccurate because many employment records did not include ages (234).

Despite widespread support and multiple attempts, there was no sweeping success at the national level to limit child labor during the Progressive Era. Most Americans agreed that child labor was wrong, but the economic need of families, the opposition from employers, and Supreme Court, as discussed in the conclusion, ultimately held them back. These changes were not just from the laws but rather the societal pressures imposed by groups like the NCLC.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> It is important to note that census data around children, whether its school attendance or as a part of the workforce, are notoriously inaccurate. This is due to children no being counted, the lack of records, like birth certificates, and corporations providing false data because they felt pressure from society to report a certain way. Carolyn Moehling, "State Child Labor Laws and the Decline of Child Labor," *Explorations in Economic History*, 36 (1998), 73.

## Conclusion

### *Successful Legislation on the National Level (1915-1940)*

Though often stymied in their efforts to stop child labor at the state level, and the distrust many Americans felt towards the federal government, reformers refused to give up on getting American children out of the factories and into school. The problem persisted into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 1910 US Census reported that there were about 2 million children ages 10 to 15 who were employed, so clearly child labor continued, despite most states having laws to limit it.<sup>1</sup> The National Child Labor Committee pursued two strategies: first, persuading states to adopt “uniform laws” so that all states would have the same restrictions and second, lobbying Congress to adopt a federal ban on child labor.<sup>2</sup> The first solution was more palatable to those Americans who worried about giving the federal government too much power and to those who insisted that the Constitution limited how far Congress could go in regulating working conditions within states. Many people feared that state autonomy would be undermined by allowing national regulation of labor and education. They firmly believed that the Constitution left control over child labor to the states, as it conferred no explicit power to the federal government to regulate working conditions or education. Progressive reformers, advocating the federal strategy of the NCLC, countered that the Constitution was a living document which should respond to changing conditions. It gave Congress broad, implied powers to regulate the economy through the

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<sup>1</sup> Walter I. Trattner, *Crusade for the Children: A History of the National Child Labor Committee and Child Labor Reform in America* (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 159.

<sup>2</sup> William Graebner, "Federalism in the Progressive Era: A Structural Interpretation of Reform," *The Journal of American History*, 64, no. 2 (09 1977), 335, 337, 343-344.

interstate commerce clause, the taxing power, and the necessary and proper clause.<sup>3</sup> And only the federal government could attain the ultimate objective of eliminating child labor. Eventually, the Progressive reformers would succeed in securing a federal ban, but not until the New Deal and only after overcoming substantial resistance.<sup>4</sup>

The NCLC endorsed the Palmer-Owen Bill passed by the House of Representatives 233 to 43 on February 15, 1915. This bill proposed a ban on children under 14 working in factories, workshops, and canneries and those under 16 working in mines and quarries across the nation. Additionally, it proposed a limit on the number of hours children ages 14-16 could work. The bill did not pass in the Senate and, although he supported the end of child labor, President Wilson did not think the bill was constitutional.<sup>5</sup>

Reformers were determined and, with lots of support from groups like the NCLC and unions, they pushed another labor bill through Congress in 1916. President Wilson then signed it, turning the Keating-Owen Act into law and making it illegal to sell items made by children across state lines. The law was cause for celebration because it was the first successful national child labor law. However, two years later, the Keating-Owen Act was struck down by a closely divided Supreme Court in *Hammer v. Dagenhart*. In a 5-4 decision, the majority argued that the act exceeded Congress's power under the interstate commerce clause. Child labor occurred *within* state borders and thus was subject only to state laws, in the opinion of five of the nine

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<sup>3</sup> William Draper Lewis, "The Federal Power to Regulate Child Labor in the Light of Supreme Court Decisions," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review and American Law Register* 62, no. 7 (1914): 504.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Schuman, "History of Child Labor in the United States—Part 2: the Reform Movement." *Monthly Labor Review* (Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 2017), 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> Schuman, "the Reform Movement," 12-14; "The Needed Child Labor Federal Law," *Journal of Education*, 81, no. 16 (1915), 430-431.

Justices.<sup>6</sup> The powerful dissent by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., gave reformers some reason to hope change remained possible. “If there is any matter upon which civilized countries have agreed . . . it is the evil of premature and excessive child labor,” insisted Holmes, as many European countries, most notably England, had outlawed child labor in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>7</sup>

A coalition of reformers succeeded in engineering the passage of a second federal law in the wake of the *Hammer* decision, though not all proponents acted primarily from a concern for the child worker, as the NCLC did. Rather, they worked to control and eliminate foreign influences, especially as World War I raised alarm about the great diversity of peoples living in the U.S. The calls to end child labor unified groups with diverse motives. During WWI, xenophobia reached new heights as many in the nation demanded “100% Americanism,” especially from foreign-born Americans. As nativism peaked after the war, so, too, did efforts to “Americanize” the children of immigrants through public schools. The American Protective Association wanted to defend “true Americanism” and fought for free public education, especially for immigrant children. At the same time the Bureau of Naturalization and the Bureau of Education sponsored national bills for “Americanization” through public education from 1918 to 1920.<sup>8</sup> The only way to ensure these children were “Americanized” through education was to get them out of the workforce first.

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<sup>6</sup> Schuman, “the Reform Movement”, 14-15; Novkov, Julie, “Historicizing the Figure of the Child in Legal Discourse: The Battle over the Regulation of Child Labor,” *The American Journal of Legal History*, 44, no. 4 (2000), 373-374; Boone, Graham, “Labor Law Highlights, 1915–2015,” *Monthly Labor Review* (10, 2015), 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Hamer v. Dagenhart*, 247 U.S. 251 (1918), 280.

<sup>8</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 2002); 83, 254, 259.



Residents of New Hampshire also saw public education as a way to guarantee that the children of immigrants were taught American beliefs and values and people, making the schools a battleground in larger national debates about American identity and immigration restriction. With the high rate of immigration in Manchester in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the prejudices and biases people felt were pushed into education legislation. Discrimination against Franco-Americans and other non-English-speaking ethnic groups were common. The *Amoskeag Bulletin*, a company paper, published an article on October 1, 1919, titled “Must Learn English, In Order to Keep at Work Some Must Go to Night School.” This article was about the new law that went into effect that day, requiring that “no person or corporation shall employ any person between the ages of 16 and 21 who cannot read or speak the English Language,” which meant many immigrants could only work if they have an attendance certificate for night school.<sup>9</sup>

Together, a wide coalition of advocates continued to seek federal solutions, especially as the problem of child labor persisted. The 1920 U.S. Census showed that there were 1,060,858 children between 10 and 15 working in the U.S., despite 40 of the 48 states having laws banning children under 14 working. That same census also reported that a total of 2,221,364 children between 7 and 15 were not in school in the U.S.<sup>10</sup> One of the bills supported by the coalition of reformers was the Child Labor Tax Law of 1919. It included the same labor protections as the Keating-Owen Act but enforced it by placing a punitive tax on companies that continued to employ children. Under this law, companies that employed children under 14 had to pay a 10% excise tax on net profits they made each year. Following the pattern set by the previous attempt

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<sup>9</sup> Gary Samson, *Manchester: The Mills and the Immigrant Experience*. (N.p.: Arcadia. 2000), 88, 93.

<sup>10</sup> Novkov, "Historicizing the Figure of the Child in Legal Discourse," 373-374; Owen R. Lovejoy, "Child Labor and Education," *The Journal of Education*, 97, no. 24 (1923), 656, 658.

to limit child labor at the national level, in 1922, the Supreme Court declared the law unconstitutional in the *Bailey v. Drexel Furniture Co.* case.<sup>11</sup> Once the Child Labor Tax Law of 1919 was declared unconstitutional, Congress immediately introduced an amendment to the Constitution giving Congress the power to limit or prohibit children under 18 from working. This amendment was passed by both houses of Congress in 1924 and went to the states for ratification but received support from only 28 of the 36 states it needed.<sup>12</sup> In 1925, the New Hampshire state government rejected the ratification.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the resistance to federal child labor laws, New Hampshire saw a decline in child labor and an increase in school attendance by the 1920s. In addition to stricter laws and enforcement at the state level, the textile mills in Manchester were seeing a decline in business, especially as Southern textile mills surged ahead, using child labor more freely, due to their less restrictive state laws. The 1920s brought strikes and shutdowns at the Amoskeag Company. In February of 1922, wages decreased 20%, while hours increased from 48 to 54.<sup>14</sup> It is plausible that with the lack of employment opportunities in the city, children turned to school, but it did not solve all the education and child labor problems in Manchester. The 1930 US Census reported that 49,929 children, ages 10-15 living in New Hampshire, of that 5,852 were still working. While Manchester had 9,058 children ages 10-15 and 172 of them were still working during a time where it was illegal to be employed under the age of 14 in the state. The same

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<sup>11</sup> Boone, "Labor Law Highlights," 2; Novkov. "Historicizing the Figure of the Child in Legal Discourse," 373-374.

<sup>12</sup> Novkov, "Historicizing the Figure of the Child in Legal Discourse," 373-374.

<sup>13</sup> James J. Kilpatrick, *The Constitution of the United States and Amendments Thereto*, Virginia Commission on Constitutional Government. (1961). 68–69. New Hampshire later ratified the amendment in May of 1933.

<sup>14</sup> Samson, *Manchester*, 71.

census also reported that there were 17,976 school-age children residing in Manchester in 1930.<sup>15</sup> The Manchester School Reports show 10,714 students were enrolled in public school in 1930. It is likely that a high number of children were also enrolled in the city's parochial schools. If the numbers are accurate, only 7.6% of school-age children were employed in Manchester in 1930, some of whom were over age 14 and could legally obtain employment. There were still children working in Manchester, but through societal pressure, shifting norms, and enforced legislation, the number of children regularly attending school instead of working or causing trouble on the streets greatly increased.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Enrolled for School Year</b>	<b>Average Attendance for School Year</b>	<b>Annual Attendance Percentage from previous columns</b>	<b>Daily Attendance Percentage reported by Superintendent*</b>
<b>1915</b>	7454	6224	84%	93.40%
<b>1920</b>	8076	6697	83%	91.30%
<b>1925</b>	10280	8644	84%	94.60%
<b>1930</b>	10714	9317	87%	96.30%
<b>1935</b>	10138	8665	86%	95%
<b>1940</b>	8273	7230	87%	98.60%

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It was not until the New Deal, under President Roosevelt, that federal child labor legislation was finally passed and upheld by the Supreme Court. The Great Depression, and the New Deal that responded to it, changed many Americans' views of the federal government and made them more receptive to national regulation of the economy as necessary to the prosperity and security of all. In 1936, the Public Contracts Act required boys to be 16 and girls to be 18 if they worked

<sup>15</sup> United States Census Bureau, "Chapter 6. Children in gainful occupations" 1930, generated by Amy Sherr, using data.census.gov, <<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1930/population-volume-5/41129379v5ch6.pdf>> (30 April 2021); United States Census Bureau, "Chapter 12: School Attendance" 1930, generated by Amy Sherr, using data.census.gov, <<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1930/population-volume-2/16440598v2ch15.pdf>> (30 April 2021).

<sup>16</sup> Compiled from the *Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester*, 1915-1940. For full chart, see Appendix.

for a company with a contract with the federal government. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 set the minimum age at 14 for working outside of school hours and 16 during school hours. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 was the first national law tying labor to education.<sup>17</sup> Most people supported the end of child labor in theory, but when faced with the choice between what was morally correct or economically beneficial, people tended to pick what was economically beneficial. When it was no longer economically beneficial to support child labor, legislation passed. This finally happened in the United States in the 1930s. The Great Depression led to a change in the role the federal government played and the acceptance of society to allow New Deal legislation to be enacted. Additionally, there were the rise of unions and a shift in societal norms to push for the male to be the sole breadwinner in the family. With the Great Depression in full swing and many people without employment, Americans preferred men to have jobs over children, so those children went to school.<sup>18</sup>

This study has analyzed the broad, theoretical beliefs about public education in industrial cities and applied it to a specific city during the Industrial Revolution. It found that successful education reform legislation was not enough to compel large numbers of children to attend school regularly when there were still other viable options for them in Manchester. This study

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<sup>17</sup> Boone. "Labor Law Highlights," 2; John A. Fliter, *Child Labor in America: The Epic Legal Struggle to Protect Children* (University Press of Kansas, 2018), 41; United States Department of Labor, *The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended*. [Washington, D.C.]: Wage and Hour Division, <http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo24709>.

<sup>18</sup> Viviana A. Zelizer, "From Useful to Useless: Moral Conflict over Child Labor." In *The Children's Culture Reader*, by Henry Jenkins (New York City, NY: NYU Press, 1998), 81; Carolyn Moehling, "State Child Labor Laws and the Decline of Child Labor." *Explorations in Economic History* 36 (1998), 73.

supports the findings of historians, like Michael Katz, who argue that school legislation alone was not enough to compel children to stop working in the factories and attend school instead.

It took almost 100 years for reformers in Manchester to restrict child labor and expand children's education. Many laws were passed over the years, yet the problem continued, due to several factors, including societal values, economic interests, and enforcement issues. Initially, society did not view child labor as a bad thing and encouraged children to work. Additionally, there was industrial opposition to limiting child labor, both from the owners and families, especially immigrant families. The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company gave lip service to supporting child labor yet continued to hire child workers as Lewis Hine's powerful photos revealed. New Hampshire's superintendent of public instruction, Henry C. Morrison, sent a letter to William Parker Straw, superintendent at the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, to explain his understanding of the new certification clauses contained in the 1911 law. After receiving the letter, Straw told his overseers that "persons whose ages are considered doubtful, and who are unable to procure the proper evidence of age as noted above, can thereby continue at work only at the risk of penalty for illegal employment." However, there were still children employed in the mills and Truant Officer Curtis Davis of Manchester had issued 794 certificates by August of that year.<sup>19</sup> Many families also chose the economic need of their family over the educational opportunity. This choice revealed poor wages that led to unions pushing for a "living wage" for men. They believed that children working "depressed wages and worsened labor conditions" and

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<sup>19</sup> Robert Macieski, "'Before Their Time': Lewis W. Hine and the New Hampshire Crusade against Child Labor," *Historical New Hampshire* 55, no. 3 (2000), 104-105.

argued “if children could not be employed, men and women would have to be, at fair pay.”<sup>20</sup>

Lastly, there were continuous issues with the existing laws that rendered them ineffective.

The need for workers and the lack of enforcement prolonged the success of child labor and compulsory education legislation in Manchester. Eventually, the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company declared bankruptcy and closed its doors in 1936.<sup>21</sup> The closing of the mills effectively ended child labor in Manchester. By then, average public-school attendance was over 85%. Even today Manchester does not have 100% of school-age children regularly attending schools. During the 2016-2017 school year, the attendance rate for the middle and elementary schools in Manchester was 93.2%, which tells us that despite federal legislation with proper enforcement officers, there are still children that are truant.<sup>22</sup>

The study of school attendance in Manchester, N.H. from 1845 to 1940 is a place to start but, by no means, should it be the end of examining campaigns for compulsory education in industrial cities. This investigation raised many questions about the role industry played in education and politics in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. There were numerous laws enacted at the city, state and federal level during this time that greatly impacted both child labor and compulsory public education in Manchester. It would be enlightening to see how Manchester compares to other industrial cities during this time. There is a lack of studies done on specific industrial cities regarding both compulsory public education and child labor that historians must

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<sup>20</sup> Macieski, “Before Their Time”, 98.

<sup>21</sup> Tamara K. Hareven, *Family Time & Industrial Time: The Relationship between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 352.

<sup>22</sup> "About," District - SAU 37, <http://www.mansd.org/msd-history>; "NH School and District Profiles," NH Public Schools | NH Department of Education, <http://my.doe.nh.gov/profiles/profile.aspx?s=21555&year=2017&tab=student>.

not overlook. Without detailed data and research from these cities, the empirical, broad studies done by past historians cannot be proved or disproved. Historians today cannot take the work of prior historians at face value.

Collecting and compiling primary source data for a local history or case study is rewarding but challenging. On the one hand, plenty of data was found, but the researcher was left wanting more as questions came up. For example, the school reports provided insight to the working of the public schools in Manchester, however, data on the private and parochial schools was not readily available, and may not exist. Additionally, when examining the success of child labor legislation and its enforcement, knowing how many children were actually employed by the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company would be useful. Unfortunately, to gather that information, one would have to look at each individual employment card and tally up how many children were there for each year.

Another key finding of this study is that the data available to historians must be treated with great care and can be misleading. The data collected by many of the state officials and school committees was not reliable. As with any census data collected, there are people who are not counted and those who provide inaccurate information about themselves. In the case of children working or attending school, it is well documented that the parents, employers, and the children were known to lie about age. Additionally, this was a time when records were not uniform. This, in turn, made enforcing laws based strictly on age challenging because of all the possible loopholes. The fact that even some of the data was collected tells us that reformers knew that information was power. The school reports were used at the time to push for further regulations. That same data is used today to determine the success of those reforms.

How data like this is documented can lead to different results. Therefore, there exists a need to study these inconsistencies and try to determine why they exist. Case studies, like this one of Manchester, New Hampshire, allow for historians to recognize the flaws of cherry-picking sources and data because it does not show the full picture. Some of the data collectors and reporters had bias or motive behind providing data which skewed the actual results into something in their favor. Manchester, New Hampshire was not the only industrial city in the United States that struggled with child labor and compulsory education. An in-depth study of other cities would likely find similar results, that the individual cities and states attempts to curb child labor and educate children were not fully successful until the passing of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

Manchester, New Hampshire was a diverse industrial city that had a long history of pushing for compulsory education. Initially, the focus was to keep children out of trouble. As waves of immigrants moved into the city for work, people became more concerned over the future civic duty these immigrant children would hold. This led to calls for uniform education to ensure common beliefs continued, which meant they could not work in the mills. Additionally, the poor working conditions of these children came to light and people called for an end to child labor in general. It was logical for the children to attend school instead. All of the reasons for children to attend school were valid and led to the passing of multiple laws, however, the economic benefit of children working and the struggles with enforcement of such laws meant that children in Manchester continued to work for 90 years after the first child labor law was passed in New Hampshire.



## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: New Hampshire Child Labor and Education Laws<sup>23</sup>

- 1846: Children between 12 and 15 could not work unless they completed at least 3 months of schooling a year. Children under the age of 12 could not work unless they completed at least 6 months of schooling a year. A certificate of completion was required from the teacher.
- 1847: Statue revising 1846 law limiting children under 15 from working more than 10 hours a day unless there was consent from a parent or guardian.
- 1851: Law to create the state Reform School for children to attend.
- 1853: Children between the ages of 6 and 16 are to be in school or at work during the day.
- 1871: Children ages 8-14 must attend school for 12 weeks a year, 6 of which must be consecutive. Children under 10 are not allowed to work. Children 10-14 must attend school 6 months a year to be able to work. Children 14-16 must attend school 3 months a year to be able to work.
- 1891: Women and children cannot work more than 60 hours a week. Children under 10 are not allowed to work. Children 10-16 must meet the required amount of time in school set by the 1871 law, be able to read and write, and obtain a work certificate from the school with a parent or guardian signature to show proof of age.
- 1893: Law establishing the state Bureau of Labor.
- 1901: Children under 12 are not permitted to work. Children 12-16 must be able to read and write in English.
- 1907: Children cannot work more than 58 hours a week.
- 1911: Children under 12 could not work. Children ages 12-16 could only work when school was not in session. Children 16 and older could work at night. In order to work, children over 12 needed to provide multiple forms of identification to show age, verification from the school to show attendance and the ability to read and write in English. Expanded the authority of the Truant Officers.

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<sup>23</sup> Samuel Colcord Bartlett, "The History of Education in New Hampshire" in William T. Davis, *New England States, Their Constitutional, Judicial, Educational, Commercial, Professional and Industrial History* (Boston, D.H. Hurd & Co, 1897), 1611; Henry C. Morrison, "Enforcement of Child Labor Laws in New Hampshire." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 35, no. 2 (1910), 103-10; Chas P. Neill, *Summary of the Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage Earners in the United States, December 1915* (G.P.O., 1916), 238, 246-248, 259-260; New Hampshire Bureau of Labor. *Compiled Labor Laws of the State of New Hampshire by J.S.B. Davie, Commissioner of Labor, 1913* (R.W. Musgrove, 1913), 33-39; New Hampshire Department of Public Instruction. *Laws of New Hampshire relating to public schools: compiled from public statutes and session laws of 1891-1917 inclusive* (J.B. Clarke Company, 1917), 85-98; Robert Macieski, "'Before Their Time': Lewis W. Hine and the New Hampshire Crusade against Child Labor." *Historical New Hampshire* 55, no. 3 (2000): 90-107; *By-Laws of the School Committee of the City of Manchester, and the Regulations for the Government of the Schools in the City* (Manchester: Power Press of Abbott, Jenks & Co., 1853), 1-9; *Laws of the State of New Hampshire, Passed June Session, 1852*. "Chapter 1278" (Concord: Butterfield and Hill Public Printers), 1852.

## Appendix II

<b>Table 1: Manchester, N.H. Yearly Public-School Attendance<sup>24</sup></b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Enrolled for School Year</b>	<b>Average Attendance for School Year</b>	<b>Attendance Percentage from previous columns</b>	<b>Attendance Percentage reported by Superintendent**</b>
<b>1844</b>	399 from all but District 2 (1249 total)	244 from all but District 2	61% from all but District 2	-
<b>1845</b>	1618	908	56%	-
<b>1846</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>1847</b>	1492*	1046*	70%	-
<b>1848</b>	2005*	1285*	64%	-
<b>1849</b>	1873*	1248*	75%	-
<b>1850</b>	2073*	1469*	71%	-
<b>1851</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>1852</b>	1823*	1373*	75%	-
<b>1853</b>	4608*	2165.25*	47%	-
<b>1854</b>	2954*	1168*	40%	-
<b>1855</b>	3836	1748	46%	-
<b>1856</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>1857</b>	2490	1590	64%	-
<b>1858</b>	3823	1919	50%	-
<b>1859</b>	2043*	1472*	72%	-
<b>1860</b>	3246	1591	49%	-
<b>1861</b>	3309	1797	54%	-
<b>1862</b>	3552	-	-	-
<b>1863</b>	4020	-	-	-
<b>1864</b>	3861	1895	49%	-
<b>1865</b>	4309	2352	55%	-
<b>1866</b>	4525	2628	58%	-
<b>1867</b>	4655	2310	50%	-
<b>1868</b>	4371	2654	61%	-

<sup>24</sup> Compiled from the *Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Manchester*, 1844-1940. See bibliography for full list of sources. If data was not found, the corresponding cell in the chart was left blank.

1869	2259	1969	87%	-
1870	3200	1987	62%	-
1871	3200	1911	65%	-
1872	3500	2110	65%	-
1873	3779	2284	60%	-
1874	3123	2318	74%	-
1875	3519	2295	65%	-
1876	4567	2379	52%	-
1877	3607	2413	67%	-
1878	3515	2348	67%	-
1879	3798	2648	70%	-
1880	4136	2727	66%	-
1881	4235	2602	61%	-
1882	4095	2712	66%	-
1883	4062	2612	64%	-
1884	3918	2645	68%	-
1885	3806	2430	64%	-
1886	3632	2475	68%	-
1887	3670	2468	67%	-
1888	3712	2500	67%	-
1889	3787	2581	68%	-
1890	3814	2536	67%	90.70%
1891	4071	2689	66%	91.50%
1892	4298	2837	66%	90.60%
1893	4775	3111	65%	-
1894	4975	3336	67%	-
1895	5206	3499	67%	-
1896	5382	3651	68%	-
1897	5501	3826	70%	-
1898	5802	4070	70%	92%
1899	5399	3978	74%	90.40%
1900	5462	3998	73%	91.80%
1901	5808	4127	71%	90.50%

<b>1902</b>	6123	4480	73%	91.90%
<b>1903</b>	6013	4338	72%	90.80%
<b>1904</b>	5920	4483	76%	91.70%
<b>1905</b>	5841	4412	76%	91.60%
<b>1906</b>	5703	4531	80%	92.30%
<b>1907</b>	5974	4589	77%	91.70%
<b>1908</b>	5994	4795	80%	92.90%
<b>1909</b>	6391	4936	77%	92.50%
<b>1910</b>	6521	5100	78%	90.20%
<b>1911</b>	6303	4946	79%	91.80%
<b>1912</b>	7009	5469	78%	92.50%
<b>1913</b>	6679	5309	80%	93%
<b>1914</b>	6867	5578	81%	92.60%
<b>1915</b>	7454	6224	84%	93.40%
<b>1920</b>	8076	6697	83%	91.30%
<b>1925</b>	10280	8644	84%	94.60%
<b>1930</b>	10714	9317	87%	96.30%
<b>1935</b>	10138	8665	86%	95%
<b>1940</b>	8273	7230	87%	98.60%

\*= School terms averaged to find whole school year

\*\*These percentages were reported by the superintendent of schools for the city of Manchester in his annual reports. They show the number of percent of children enrolled in school that year out of the number of school age children in the city. It does not indicate if those enrolled children attended school regularly. Looking at the differences in percentages, one can surmise that it was not the case. Those same reports also prove the number of students enrolled in Manchester schools and the average attendance for the year, which is how I found my percentages. The reports do not give the number of school-age children living in Manchester each year. Since it was widely known at that time that not all school-age children were even enrolled in school, it is reasonable to assume that the school attendance rates were lower than what has been reported. These numbers do not include private or parochial schools in the city.

## Appendix III

<b>Table 2: Census Data- Population<sup>25</sup></b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>City of Manchester Population</b>	<b>Hillsborough County Population</b>	<b>New Hampshire Population</b>	<b>United States Population</b>
<b>1830</b>	877	37,560	268,977	12,866,020
<b>1840</b>	3,235	42,361	284,304	17,069,453
<b>1850</b>	13,932	57,478	317,785	23,191,876
<b>1860</b>	20,107	62,140	325,858	31,443,321
<b>1870</b>	23,530	64,238	318,090	39,818,449
<b>1880</b>	32,630	75,634	346,638	50,189,209
<b>1890</b>	43,983	93,247	376,175	62,947,714
<b>1900</b>	56,987	112,640	410,938	76,212,168
<b>1910</b>	70,063	126,072	430,376	92,228,496
<b>1920</b>	78,384	135,512	442,716	106,021,537
<b>1930</b>	76,834	140,165	465,293	123,202,624
<b>1940</b>	77,685	144,888	491,524	132,164,569

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<sup>25</sup> Compiled from the *US Census Bureau 1830-1940*; generated by Amy Sherr; using data.census.gov. See bibliography for full list of sources.

# Appendix IV- Map of Manchester, NH 1850<sup>26</sup>



<sup>26</sup> Historic American Buildings Survey, Creator, Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S Grant, and Theodore Roosevelt. *Amoskeag Millyard, Canal Street, Manchester, Hillsborough County, NH*. Hillsborough County New Hampshire Manchester, 1933.

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Hine, Lewis Wickes. photographer. *Name: Little girl 48 inches high work in Amoskeag Mfg. Co., Manchester, N.H. She seemed to be 11 or 12 yrs. old. Photo taken at noon. Location: Manchester, New Hampshire. United States New Hampshire Manchester, 1909, Photograph.* <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018675164/>.

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