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Matthew F. Maury School, 1934-1970: A case study in educational innovation

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educational innovation**

Kalkofen, Dale Christina, Ed.D.

The College of William and Mary, 1988

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**MATTHEW F. MAURY SCHOOL, 1934 - 1970:
A CASE STUDY
IN EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION**

**A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia**

**In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education**

**by
Dale Christina Kalkofen
April 1988**

MATTHEW F. MAURY SCHOOL, 1934 - 1970:
A CASE STUDY
IN EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

by

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The integral historical relationship between public schools and the forces of societal reform in the United States is well documented. At the turn of the century, a sense of mission, characteristic of educators in America since the nineteenth century, led many reformers to join the effort to meet the educational needs of a growing nation. Progressivism, a complex, many-faceted movement to improve the life of the individual, especially of the children, included the reshaping of the American school system to aid in social reform and reconstruction. Progressive education began as part of the humanitarian effort of Progressivism.

Shaped during the first half of the century by the child-centered theorists and the social radicals, progressive education focused attention first and foremost on the child. Later in the movement, faced with "coming to grips" with industrialization, the depression, and two world wars, the reformists viewed the schools as an agent of change facilitating the moving of society toward the ideals of democratic living. The stability of the early child-centered phase of the movement was broken by later reconstructionists who attempted to make the schools more related to the community, more responsive to the masses and dedicated to the ideals of equality. In the 1940's, popular, at times controversial, pluralistic, and experimental, progressive education was referred to as "'modern,' 'good,' or 'new education.'"¹ By the early 1950's, however, the progressive education movement was gone in a

storm of criticism. Critics and supporters alike acknowledge that the movement "transformed the American public school during the first half of the 20th century."²

The effects of the progressive education movement were unevenly felt during the decades of its greatest acclaim. Cremin states that diversity characterized both private school and public school experiments.³ Ravitch indicates that the impact of the educational reforms and innovations of the movement was broadly influential, but whether the ideals took root has never been fully concluded.⁴ Ravitch contends that the impact of progressive education although difficult to define and to determine how widely its influence spread, was documented during the 1930's and 1940's by many dissertations at Teachers College. Many were participant-observer type studies which were valuable in describing public school experiments and the change process in those experiments. School surveys, as well as journal and magazine articles, also provided information about what the schools were like in various localities throughout the country. By virtue of the fact that they were written about, these situations may have been unusual rather than standard practice; and so, the problem remains whether and how the innovative philosophy and practices of progressive education were rooted in the classrooms and schools of America. This question is the basis for the investigation of Maury Elementary School.

In Richmond, Virginia during this period, the Matthew F. Maury Elementary School was unique in its efforts to implement the principles of progressive education and gained widespread recognition for its

practices. The fact that Maury School no longer exists belies the fact that it was once an outstanding example of educational innovation. Maury School was proclaimed by some educators to be one of the very best in the country.⁵ Existing documents on Maury School describe some of the changes that took place in this public school. The significance of the school as a case study in educational innovation during and outlasting the progressive era has not been investigated previously. The problem of whether and how the philosophy and practices of progressive education were rooted in a conservative city not ordinarily supportive of innovation provided an expansion for the basis for this investigation.

The process of change at Maury School furnished material for a dissertation, book, film, and journal articles written by the staff of the school during the 1930's through the 1950's. The evolution of Maury from a traditional to a progressive kind of school was well documented by the contemporaries of the school's prime period of development and acclaim. The new methods that were tried, the values of the staff, and the culture of the school were articulated in the documents which provide a unique resource picturing a school and teachers who were involved with an educational experiment in another era. The staff at Maury School did not call their school a progressive education school nor did they seek local acclaim for the school which evolved as the teachers and principal worked together for several decades to create the best possible learning environment for boys and girls. While the school was regarded as unique in its time, a historical investigation of the school

was conducted to more fully explore the question of how and whether progressive education was rooted at this one elementary school.

Historical and Theoretical Background

Progressive education came to be associated with all the changes that took place in the public schools from the 1900's through the 1940's. The democratization of public education, the development of the worth of the individual, the equalization of the sexes, as well as the pedagogical changes influenced by educators, psychologists, and philosophers converged to create a multi-faceted movement with a long and controversial history. The history and chronological evolution of progressive education in the United States was traced primarily through Lawrence A. Cremin's The Transformation of the School. As Cremin notes, throughout its history, progressive education meant different things to different people. In developing his theory that the social, political, economic, intellectual and historical forces converged to create a movement which transformed the schools, Cremin contends that the history of progressive education is part of the larger social and intellectual history of a nation responding to industrialism.

The new education developed as a promise to cure societal ills. The school was gradually perceived as an agent of social change responsible for meeting the needs of individuals for whom a new ideal of human dignity and progress was envisioned. The concepts of evolutionary change, behaviorism, and human growth and development led the way to thinking of the child as a resource which could be developed for the good of the country.

As the social value of developing schools and individuals gained acceptance, interest in the philosophy and pedagogy of the schools came to be the focus of the progressive education movement. The progressive education movement came to be associated with new, liberal, and non-traditional educational methods. Margaret Meagher, describing the modern public school in Richmond, Virginia in 1936, stated that now it was "a democracy where it once was a monarchy."⁶ Teachers who once sat on platforms above the class now sat in front of the class; and pupils were no longer segregated by sex. She believed that the criticisms of the day of over-standardization at the expense of individuality would not have been viewed as such had the critics experienced schools forty years earlier when the pupil's ego was not considered.⁷ The rigid discipline and management of pupils by teachers in the past were values that some people clung to as the schools evolved during the progressive era.

Public education in the southern states historically lagged behind the northern neighbors where the economic, political, social and intellectual impetus for progressive reform originated. In Virginia, a system of free public education for the citizens was not begun until 1870, after the Civil War, when the Federal government demanded that the states adopt new constitutions. In Richmond however, a system of free public schools city-wide had been established in 1869. Earlier attempts to establish free schools run by charitable organizations had not received social or financial support. After the war when the issue of providing education to all classes and races was Federally mandated, financial and philosophical support for public education in Richmond was slow to

build. In 1897, City Council cuts in appropriations for the public schools almost forced the schools to close for lack of funds. Teachers and principals worked without compensation for two weeks until the beginning of a new fiscal year in 1898.⁸ In the early 1900's, Council appropriations were still below spending levels for other cities of similar size.⁹ The slow to change, conservative tendencies toward public education were paralleled in state actions where social conditions had to change before public education could thrive.¹⁰

The lack of financial support was indicative of the underlying conservatism in the state and city toward public school issues and initiatives. Richmond Superintendent of Schools, William Fox reported in his 1891 message that "Another important element of our success has been, I think, our conservatism."¹¹ He continued that in his nineteen years of association with the system, it had not embraced transitory fads or changes. He questioned, however, whether "we err somewhat in that we are too conservative. That we timidly shrink from change in the fear that we shall damage the smooth action of the machinery."¹² He was unsuccessful himself in urging the School Board to include vocational education in the curriculum.¹³ The underlying conservatism of the state preserved the values of the middle and upper classes of whites in Virginia even when a new progressivism was promoted by adherents in the early 1900's, observed Raymond Pulley.¹⁴

The leading spokesman for progressive education, John Dewey, advocated universal education to improve the lives of all people in society. The democratization of society called for placing the schools in the center

of society. The schools would cease to be an isolated segment of society during the progressive education movement. The social value of educating everyone would only be enhanced through making the curriculum more inclusive of everyday matters rather than limiting it to the traditional studies which were not taught in a manner that related to the experiences of the child according to Dewey. His philosophy of experience, thinking, learning, school, and life would aim to make education psychologically and sociologically relevant to children and to the community.

In the progressive school characterized by John Dewey's philosophy, experimentation was a key factor. Education became an opportunity to experience democracy in action. The school was a social community structured to resemble the community at large. Children learned through participation. The emphasis was on learning through activity. Every day began with the experience of the child and the skillful teacher moved the child from the known to the unknown through purposeful activity. Children were taught to actively solve problems rather than to passively receive information. Learning experiences required knowledge to be continually reorganized. The children worked on projects and through cooperative activity learned consideration for others as well as self-control and self-direction. Motivation for learning in a progressive school was developed intrinsically rather than by focusing on grades and rewards. Inherent in the beliefs of progressive education was the belief that all children wanted to learn and to work in school.

There was not always agreement among theorists or practitioners regarding the philosophy or some features of progressive education. In fact, Cremin suggests there was a merging of theories among some practitioners in experiments such as The Lincoln School. According to Diane Ravitch, the essential features of an educational setting which was considered progressive would generally have included: active rather than passive learning experiences; teachers and students cooperatively planning classroom activities; group participation and cooperation on projects; understanding of and planning for individual differences among students; curricula which related to the needs and interests of students; goals of "effective living"; relating the school program to community life; interfacing curriculum with needs and interests of pupils; use of traditional knowledge and subject matter as needed in activities and experiences; de-emphasis on grades and traditional promotion and retention policies.¹⁵ The new education which stressed cooperation instead of authoritarianism, socialization instead of individualism, and education for all children to improve their lives in the present was described as "democracy in action."¹⁶ Ravitch's summation of the essential features of a progressive educational setting are the features to which the philosophical and practical innovations at Maury are compared. For the purpose of elaborating the concept, other values and characteristics associated with a model of progressive education will be highlighted by considering a prototypical elementary school described by the Educational Policies Commission.¹⁷

In analyzing the progressive education movement, factors which limited the "rooting" and even the initial implementation of the innovations and reforms are considered by several researchers. These limitations enlarge the contextual framework for researching the problem of the implementation of innovation at Maury. Rather than interpreting the progressive education reform movement as "democracy in action," Tyack concluded that in the search for the one best system of education in the urban schools from 1890 to 1940, an "administrative progressivism" was created which had no real impact in reforming the urban schools. For the administrators, the period was a success story, but the consequences of the movement were failure to educate the children of the underclasses and failure to recognize the sociological and economic problems faced by the children. Dewey's model of social learning was difficult to achieve in urban school systems because it required fundamental changes in the hierarchical structure of the systems. Such changes were not readily supported by the administrative progressives whose goal was centralized control of the schools. Tyack contends that schools and teachers were generally not given the autonomy required to develop democratic education as conceived by Dewey and others. He did emphasize that concern and energy by certain individuals changed schools positively for children when the concern was distinguished by action rather than rhetoric.¹⁸

Tyack's analysis of the dissemination of progressive education theory via the curriculum revision movement processes is corroborated by Ravitch who contends that techniques of group dynamics and even

coercion were used to gain visible teacher support for the professional priorities of the professors and administrators who brought the new curriculum to school systems.¹⁹ The theories of both authors on the centralized control and the subordination of teachers provide an additional frame of reference for analyzing the origins of the innovations at Maury and the relationships among the central administrators, principal, and teachers there.

Other limiting factors influencing the implementation of progressive education regarded the type of teacher required to practice the new methods and the extensive demands on the teachers' time. Graham and Ravitch indicate that teachers in progressive schools had to be intelligent, well educated, talented, and even, gifted individuals. Teachers with these attributes were not found everywhere. Cremin indicated that not only were first-rate teachers required to apply the innovations daily, but that the task was demanding on their time and ingenuity as well.²⁰

Against this contextual background, the case study of Maury School as example of educational innovation in which the philosophy and characteristics of progressive education were implemented was developed. The history of the progressive education movement with its many phases and strands coupled with the history of education in the conservative southern state of Virginia provide the foundation of the context. The essential characteristics and values of progressive education schools create a model for assessing the innovations at Maury. The theses of major researchers of progressive education provide the

major points of discussion for the analysis of the case study as an example of educational reform. The issue of autonomy being given or taken by persons interested in change is related to the problem of how educational innovation is rooted in a school. The characteristics of persons who implement innovative practices also relate to the problem of how the change process takes hold in a school.

Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this study is to describe the origins and development of Maury School explaining how in a conservative environment and locality the changes evolved. The issues that relate to change and educational innovation are emphasized. The study will seek to determine if the changes that evolved at Maury School appear to be practically and theoretically illustrative of progressive education. Insofar as the practices at the school represented a departure from the educational norms in Richmond, an explanation of the origins and development of the innovations was sought. The process by which innovations are conceived and implemented in a school and a school system was examined and described. Evolving during the progressive education era, the changes were considered in the context of the history and theory of the movement. The relationship of the changes in the school to those in the movement will be analyzed as the impact of experimentation and curriculum change are considered. Innovations which survived and those that were discarded will be highlighted.

Without a historical perspective, educators find themselves "reinventing the wheel" when trying to determine how the schools

should educate the next generation. For educators in Richmond, the history of one local school is expected to contribute significantly to the understanding of the development and the demise of an educationally innovative school. The study will contribute to an understanding of the progressive education movement insofar as Maury School can be considered an example of progressive education. The study will also contribute to an understanding of how educational theory and reform are diffused and integrated in the classrooms and schools.

Research Questions

In seeking an explanation of the development of Maury School to contribute to a fuller understanding of the diffusion and integration of educational theory, the study answered the main research question: What is the best explanation for the existence of Maury School with the apparent characteristics of progressive education in Richmond, Virginia?

Prior to answering the main question and for the purpose of establishing the theoretical framework, the study examined the contextual questions: What are the history and characteristics of progressive education nationally and locally? How were the theories disseminated and was there a merging of theories in the practice of progressive education? Were the effects of the movement unevenly felt? What were the limitations of the movement that inhibited its implementation and effects as a reform movement?

To contribute to the resolution of the research questions, the study addressed the following instrumental questions: 1) Were the

characteristics of Maury School as an innovation typical of progressive education? 2) Was the staff given autonomy or did it take the power to be self-governing? 3) Does one explain the existence of Maury School by reason of leadership style, personal power, and/or educational networking? or What were the characteristics of the person responsible for developing the school? 4) Why was the school not identified and called a progressive school by the local participants?

As a subsequent question to the study of Maury School, the diffusion and integration of the progressive education reform movement as it effected education in Richmond, Virginia was discussed by asking what did this study contribute to the understanding of educational innovation and to the dissemination of progressive education.

Limits of the Study

The study of Maury School is limited to the years 1934 to 1970. The school was abruptly closed in the summer of 1970 in the midst of a massive school reorganization plan to desegregate the schools in Richmond, Virginia. While the final chapter of the school as an educational innovation was influenced by the court ordered reorganization, the issue of racial desegregation will not be included in the study. Over fifty years have elapsed since the school began to be developed as an educational innovation, and some of the main figures in the development of the school are deceased including the former principal and the author of a book on the school. The effects as an instructionally effective school will not be considered from the point of view of the students, but rather from the point of view of the persons who

worked there and persons in the community who had knowledge of and were involved with the school.

A limitation inherent in the study is the possibility that the evidence generated in the past by the articulate, interested parties involved with the school may not be representative of the larger inarticulate population involved with the school. The conclusions may not shed light on the full impact of progressive education as an educational reform movement, particularly on whether the effects of the movement were unevenly felt.

Methodology

The historical method of research will be used to collect, organize, and interpret the data surrounding the development and evolution of educational innovation at Maury School and its place in the context of national and local reform movement. The data used to develop the history and case study of Maury School were drawn from primary and secondary sources, published and unpublished. The data have been authenticated and have been internally consistent with each other. Oral histories collected from living observers of the events under study were also consistent with published material. Oral histories were recorded and/or transcribed to create permanent records.

Sources of Data

Primary. A Public School for Tomorrow, written by Marion Nesbitt, a Maury faculty member, and her dissertation provide invaluable historical accounts of the change process, the values, culture and practices of the staff at Maury. The film "Report in Primary Colors"

provided a visual as well as a narrative documentary of teachers and students at Maury School. Articles, published and unpublished, by Maury teachers and staff supplemented information in the book and film. Assorted artifacts provided background leads.

Interviews with teachers and students of Maury School provided additional information on the educational process and setting. Oral histories were collected with the consent of the interviewees who gave permission for the information to be recorded on tape and/or by notes at the time of the interview. Records of the School Board and reports of the Superintendent of schools, self-study documents, and other official records provided primary and background information.

Secondary. Secondary sources of information included newspaper and journal articles. Interviews were also conducted with persons who were familiar with the school but who were not teachers or students there. Background information on progressive education was selected from the works of Dewey and Kilpatrick. Major secondary sources on progressive education were: The Transformation of the School by Lawrence Cremin, The Troubled Crusade by Diane Ravitch, The One Best System by David Tyack, and Progressive Education from Arcady to Academe by Patricia Graham. Major secondary sources on education in Virginia were The Development of Public Schools in Virginia, 1607-1952 by Blair Buck and Old Virginia Restored by Raymond Pulley. Other background information on education was selected from definitive works. Information on education in Richmond was collected from official sources.

Organization of the Study

The main research questions provided the organizational framework to guide the collection and analysis of data. The outline of chapters provides an overview of the findings of the research.

Chapter I. The first chapter provides a brief historical background of progressive education and introduces the Maury School as an educational innovation. The study is described in terms of its purpose, significance, questions, methods, and limitations.

Chapter II. This chapter provides a chronological history of progressive education nationally and an expanded theoretical framework of the reform movement nationally and locally against which to view the development and evolution of Maury School.

Chapter III. Introducing the idea of how educational innovation comes into a school environment, the third chapter describes the social, political, historical, and biographical happenings which account for the origins and development of the school.

Chapter IV. In this chapter, the philosophical and practical changes that developed and evolved at Maury School are presented. The relationship of the changes at Maury to the characteristics of progressive education will be developed as the educational innovations are presented. The later years and the closing of the school are included as the issues related to change are discussed.

Chapter V. The fifth chapter presents the analyses and conclusions regarding the educational innovations at Maury School and in

Richmond, Virginia. The patterns and relationships that emerged in the study of the innovations are highlighted.

¹Diane Ravitch, The Troubled Crusade (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1983), p. 43.

²*Ibid.*, p. 45.

³Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961; reprint ed., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), pp. 274-291.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 360.

⁵Henry R. Luce, ed. "Top Elementary School," Life, 16 October 1950, p. 125.

⁶Margaret Meagher, History of Education in Richmond (Richmond: Works Progress Administration, 1939), p. 117.

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 117-8.

⁸Richmond, Virginia, Public Schools, Record, V, p. 120, (hereafter referred to as RPS Record). These documents are stored in the central offices of the Richmond Public Schools, Richmond, Virginia.

⁹The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported (Monday, December 7, 1914) that for cities with a population of 100,000 to 300,000, Richmond only spent \$.53 for every \$1.00 spent elsewhere.

¹⁰Cornelius J. Heatwole, A History of Education in Virginia (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1916), pp. 210-245.

¹¹Richmond, Virginia, School Board, Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Superintendent of the Public Schools of the City of Richmond, Va., for the Scholastic Year Ending July 31, 1891, (Richmond: City Printer, 1892), p. 13, (hereafter referred to as ARS, preceded by the number and followed by the year, e.g. 22nd ARS 1891, p. 13). The ARS documents are stored in the central offices of the Richmond Public Schools and may also be found in the State Library in Richmond, Virginia.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Samuel M. Craver, "Social Attitudes, Vocational Education, and the 'New South' in Richmond, Virginia, 1884 to 1917," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the History of Education Society, Atlanta, Georgia, November, 1985.

¹⁴Raymond H. Pulley, Old Virginia Restored: An Interpretation of the Progressive Impulse, 1870-1930 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1968), p. 155.

¹⁵Ravitch, *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁷Educational Policies Commission and Department of Elementary School Principals, Teach Them All in Elementary Schools (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1948).

¹⁸David B. Tyack, The One Best System. A History of American Urban Education (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974).

¹⁹Ravitch, *Ibid.*, pp. 54-57.

²⁰Cremin, *Ibid.*, p. 348.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

The historical context in which the new approaches in educational philosophy and pedagogy were applied at Maury is important to the main question of the study, namely, "what is the best explanation for the existence of a school with the apparent characteristics of progressive education in Richmond, Virginia." The dissemination and diffusion of the progressive education theories and the processes of educational innovation, in the context in which the school developed and evolved provide the background that illuminates this case study.

The complexity of the contextual background becomes apparent as the social, political and educational aspects of the reform movement of progressivism are considered. In Virginia, as in the South, the traditional ruling classes avidly sought to preserve social patterns and values of the past; here the history of progressivism as a populist movement countering the conservative tradition must also be considered. Within the progressive education reform movement, the number of philosophical phases of the movement, as well as the pedagogical and organizational dimensions of its history, add to the complexity of the background.

The relatively long history of innovation in a public school system where continuity in leadership and teaching staff was a mainstay, and

its innovative climate provide the contextual background for the foundation of an explanation of Maury's existence.

Progressive Education in Virginia

Progressivism was an outgrowth of post Civil War urbanization and industrialism which was altering traditional patterns of life and changing economic, political and social institutions. It has been viewed as a movement driven by the capitalist enterprises and interests.¹ The politicians had lost their independence and became servants to the industrialists. The domestic problems and the threat of loss of the traditional American values created the impetus for the reform movement. The social and economic groups desiring to strengthen the middle class culture and restore order to the troubled country devised regulations and controls to establish peace and harmony. As a national force, progressivism sought to balance the interests of contending economic groups while on the state and local level, the aim was to reform corrupt politics and to restore integrity to the political system.² The progressive movement originated in the desire to restore order, tradition, and familiar cultural patterns to society. The reforms initiated were undertaken to stabilize a society which had been in upheaval since the Civil War. In Virginia the reform impulse was more a result of conserving and reactionary desires than a desire to meet the demands of modern America. The reforms undertaken in Virginia "returned the state to a political and social system as stable and resistant to innovation as any that had existed prior to the Civil War."³

The idea of class and the social value of class in the English backgrounds of Virginians led leadership groups to "fear political innovation and to resist social change."⁴ During the Civil War and Reconstruction, many Virginians turned to the myths associated with old Virginia to emotionally console themselves in a transitional period. While the new constitution adopted in 1869, as Reconstruction ended, created a democratic instrument in government which included a free public school system, the movement for popular democracy was never popular in Virginia. By 1902, the traditionalists had successfully worked to restore the oligarchic state by decreeing a constitution which restored control over the electorate through a poll tax and an educational test. The poor whites and the uneducated blacks in Virginia were disenfranchised as the larger movement to empower the citizens of the nation was developing.

The success of the opponents of the new democracy in Virginia coincided with the progressive era in the history of the United States. During this era between the Spanish-American War and the entry of the United States in World War I, reforms aimed at stabilizing the social, economic, and governmental institutions were undertaken. Little general consensus among historians on the exact nature of progressivism exists. The complexity and plurality of the period is generally acknowledged. One popular explanation of progressivism defines it as a political crusade to deal with corruption in government generated by the expansion of big business. Another concept of the movement as an advocacy movement for the masses of people as opposed

to the politically and economically privileged people dominated historians view of the era for a long time. Later day historians tended to reject the view of the movement as liberals in search of greater democracy and to perceive it as a force aimed at conserving traditional and individual values in a changing society in which a new order was rapidly emerging.⁵ In the search for a new equilibrium among political, social, and economic forces, all Americans sought a new social order. The progressive reform impulse in Virginia was influenced by the desire for a new social order consistent with the old Virginia spirit based on social class. The aim of progressivism in Virginia was not democracy but rather the conservation and strengthening of the old Virginia order.⁶

Outcomes of the traditionalist progressive movement in Virginia that had implications for educational reform were the strengthening of the class system, greater segregation, preoccupation with greater economy and efficiency in government, low funding for public education, and discouragement of social and political conflict. Pulley maintains that "in the final analysis, Virginians were limited in their ability to develop a fully adequate system of public education; the inertia inherent in the state's traditionalist society was simply too strong to be overcome."⁷ Since the controlling powers in the state were the politicians seeking to improve institutions to bring peace and harmony rather than equal opportunity or equity, it is reasonable to assume that educators who desired reform in the schools could have emerged and been unaware of the conflict between their motives and those of the politicians. Educational reforms and the overall improvements in

Virginia's educational system will be presented following the development of the national perspective on the progressive education movement. From the national perspective flows an understanding of how the educational reformer in Virginia was influenced in the face of the regional tendency of conservatism.

The National Perspective on the Progressive Education Movement

In Lawrence A. Cremin's comprehensive and classic history of the progressive education movement, he describes progressive education as part of the larger social and intellectual history of a nation responding to industrialism, population growth, war, economic challenges, and testing of democratic ideals. Cremin states:

Progressive education began as part and parcel of that broader program of social and political reform called the Progressive Movement. Contrary to the widespread misconception that it dates from the advent of the Progressive Education Association in 1919, the idea had its origin during the quarter-century before World War I in an effort to cast the school as fundamental lever of social and political regeneration. It began as a many-sided protest against a restricted view of the school, but it was always more than this; for essentially it viewed education as an adjunct to politics in realizing the promise of American life.⁸

He dates the beginning of the progressive movement in education to 1892 when Joseph Mayer Rice's controversial series on schooling and schools in the United States was published in the New York monthly The Forum. Cremin states that Rice first saw the issues of incompetent teachers hired by political hacks and meaningless instruction based on rote memorization in the classrooms as an educational movement and through his journalism raised the consciousness of the nation. One of Rice's challenges, to enhance the professional spirit and intellectual

competence of the nation's teachers, would become a theme that was woven throughout the movement.

The educational phase of progressivism began with the extension of the mission of the schools beyond providing formal, traditional, and intellectual training to meeting the social and humanitarian needs created by the population growth of the nation's cities. The problems of filth, poverty, tenements, immigration, and corruption facing the nation were challenges to be faced in the local communities through the schools. Urbanization and the transition from farm life to factory life with the accompanying industrialization created many challenges for the educators, politicians, and reformers.

As the educational side of "American Progressivism writ large," Cremin saw the movement "as a many-sided effort to use the schools to improve the lives of individuals."⁹ While he acknowledged that the movement meant different things to different people, the purposes with which he associated the movement in education were:

First, it meant broadening the program and function of the school to include direct concern for health, vocation, and the quality of family and community life.

Second, it meant applying in the classroom the pedagogical principles derived from new scientific research in psychology and the social sciences.

Third, it meant tailoring instruction more and more to the different kinds and classes of children who were being brought within the purview of the school.

Finally, Progressivism implied the radical faith that the culture could be democratized without being vulgarized, the faith that everyone could share not only in the benefits of the new sciences but in the pursuit of the arts as well.¹⁰

The history of the progressive education movement in America is developed chronologically by Cremin. The first wave of the movement

began as groups representing industrial, agricultural, and educational interests banded together to promote vocational education which they believed was the key to industrial progress. At the turn of the century, the movement appealed to intellectuals inspired by new trends and enriched by pioneering work in psychology, social theory, philosophy and pedagogy. These new ideas supported the reforms which progressives desired to improve the ills of society. The movement gathered political momentum prior to World War I which increased with the founding of the Progressive Education Association in 1919. In the history of the movement, the organized teaching profession was unified in support of progressive education through the expansion of the role of the teacher and increased bureaucratic demands for professional preparation. Public and private schools and colleges also felt the pervasive influence of the long history of the movement. The fragmentation during the 1920's and 1930's as the movement lost its unity and the collapse after World War II are part of the complex story of progressive education in America. The complexity of American life as seen through its educational institutions is presented by Cremin as he traces progressive education as an ongoing and changing force from 1876 to 1955.

Although the progressive movement would change after World War I, "the prewar movement and the postwar movement shared, at least rhetorically, a reverence for John Dewey and a spirit of antiformalism."¹⁴ Dewey, philosopher and educator, was regarded as the leading spokesman of progressivism in education. Influenced by the new evolutionary biology of Charles Darwin and the psychology theory of

William James, Dewey began to tell parents and patrons of the Laboratory School in Chicago of the need to change the schools. Three lectures published in 1899 in The School and Society describe the educational process needed to reflect the change in social life which has occurred in the shift from agrarianism to industrialism. The schools were to be made "an embryonic community life" which would reduce their isolation from reality by reflecting the occupations and spirit of the larger community life.¹² Through the effective training of the students, the theme of social reform by the schools was extended by Dewey's vision for he wanted to improve the larger society by making it more "worthy, lovely, and harmonious."¹³ Dewey advocated shifting the focus of the educational process to the child who was viewed as a natural resource to the country. Cremin states that the social reformism advocated by Dewey in The School and Society was new in its recall of the school "from isolation to the center of a struggle for a better life."¹⁴

Dewey went from The University of Chicago to Columbia University in 1904 and continued to be a prolific author at a school which Cremin called "the intellectual crossroads of the movement."¹⁵ He attracted many followers although his style of writing was difficult and complex, making his teachings easily misunderstood. Ravitch believes that this is the reason many of "his disciples proved better at discrediting traditional methods and curricula than at constructing a pedagogically superior replacement."¹⁶ Dewey never intended to cast out traditional educational practices and subject matter, but he rejected the rigid practices of instruction, the uniform curriculum which did not consider

the experiences of the child, the emphasis on passivity of the child and the authority of the teacher, and the reliance on drill and memorization at the exclusion of the personal involvement of the child. Better than anyone in his era, he understood that education was changing pedagogically and in its social function.¹⁷ Socializing functions formerly the domain of the family and community became the school's function in Dewey's philosophy. The aim was to improve the quality of life for children and the community by directing the experiences and activities of children to lead them to higher intellectual, cultural, and social understandings.

The implementation of the philosophy of Dewey was limited not only by the inherent difficulty of comprehending his writings, but by the intellectual, creative, and pragmatic demands on the teachers who were expected to apply the new methods. Cremin maintained that not only did the new methods require teachers of extraordinary ability, talent, creativity, and ingenuity, but that the implementation of the methods required extra time from the teachers, too. In the hands of an average teacher, the progressive methods could lead to chaos. He believed that these requirements for teachers may have led to the demise of the movement.¹⁸ Ravitch also concluded that "extraordinarily talented and well educated teachers" were required to provide effective instruction in a progressive school.¹⁹ Graham concurred, stating that: "The 'progressive method' insofar as it could be determined, emphasized creativity, cooperation, initiative, and adaptability. Such a teaching approach is enormously effective when employed by a creative,

cooperative, independent, and adaptable teacher."²⁰ She concluded that persons with these rare gifts could not be found in all schools that attempted programs based on progressive principles and that the programs with new methods and new subject matter should not have been implemented by mediocre teachers. She stated that "the alternative of traditional education with a teacher of average endowments at least left the pupil with a core of information which, unsatisfactory as it might be, was often missing from uninspired progressive teaching."²¹ She indicated that this problem of application of progressive education contributed to the decline of the movement. The attributes of the teaching staff were a factor in analyzing the application of progressive education principles at Maury School.

After World War I, the larger progressive reform movement lost its momentum, but the progressive education movement took on a new identity as it broke away from the social and political reform movements. The education movement became institutionalized and professionalized and its themes changed in the evolution. The great divide marked by the war developed for a multiplicity of reasons focusing on the revolt against conservatism and the moralizing of the progressives. Fascination with Freud and the arts propelled an avant garde popular movement focused on the individual and self expression. Social reform was eclipsed in favor of the modern creative revolution. The emphases on creative self expression and psychology blended to form the child-centered pedagogy of the twenties.²² In addition to the child-centered pedagogy, the movement became associated with the pretentious use of science and

social efficiency and utility rather than social reform. The movement was also characterized by suspicion of learning from books.²³

The emphasis on the child and the need to build a program around his needs and interests was the focus of the child-centered progressives. This view of progressive education was expressed in The Child-Centered School in 1928 by Harold Rugg and Ann Shumaker. Freedom, activity, and self-expression were the characteristics of the new creative school. Self-expression was the key to the creative modern revolt and the source of meaning to progressivism in education. Rugg and Shumaker proclaimed that:

For the creative impulse is within the child himself. No educational discovery of our generation has had such far-reaching implications. It has a twofold significance: first, that every child is born with the power to create; second, that the task of the school is to surround the child with an environment which will draw out this creative power.²⁴

They wrote that: "The whole child is to be educated. Hence the materials of education are as broad and interrelated as life itself. For experience is not only an intellectual matter; it is physical, rhythmic, emotional."²⁵ The themes that unified the new schools were individuality, personality, and experience.

Another controversial tenet which developed in the midst of progressive education was the scientific direction originating in the work of Thorndike. The educational scientists developed in concert with the testing phenomena and with the growth of the sciences in industrialism. They promised efficiency to the taxpaying public. The appeal to the scientific method was used to justify innovative methods and the use of testing to divide students into ability groups. Social controversy was

generated as a result of the testing phenomena. For several decades, opponents argued that the results were used to restrict educational opportunity. Proponents argued that the test data provided a diagnostic tool or a starting point to begin the educational development of the student. The advocates of testing regarded their pedagogical experiments as law although Ravitch states that few of the so-called "'scientific' findings of the period had any validity."²⁶ Indeed, Tyack concluded that the goal of the new school programs for social efficiency actually used the educational expert to classify and direct students to educational tracks to prepare them for subordinate roles in life.²⁷

Curriculum-making was another phase in the reform movement which emerged in conjunction with the appeal to science. Two trends of curriculum-making appeared; one represented the view that the teaching of traditional subject matter could be enhanced by the findings of educational science. The second was to analyze society to develop curriculum which was aimed at providing the knowledge that prepared individuals for life's activities. Representing this trend is the 1924 work of Franklin Bobbitt How to Make a Curriculum in which "lay the seeds of the life-adjustment theory that proved the final manifestation of progressive education in the years after World War II."²⁸

Another development in the educational and social sciences that was less dominant than the child-centered philosophy in the twenties was the social reformist trend of progressive education. The radicals advocated the removal of the businessman's involvement in the schools, the control of education by the teachers, and the democratization of the

schools. The evils of capitalism and the politics of a capitalistic society were interpreted as impeding progress in creating a more equal society. When the thirties brought the great depression, a significant shift occurred and this radical position with its socially conscious emphasis was once again in the front of the mainstream of pedagogy and politics.²⁹

Bowers examines the influence that these radical educators led by George Counts, William Kilpatrick, Harold Rugg, and John Childs exerted in the depression years. By claiming that they had the right to direct social change, they not only theorized about the goals and methods of progressive education, but also worked to develop support among classroom teachers for their social and political orientation. The twenty year struggle among the leaders of the progressive education movement to resolve the conflicts among the educational and social issues of social reconstructionists and the experimentalists is the focus of the Bowers study.³⁰

The school's responsibility to society was the mission of progressive education in the era between the wars; this emphasis increased as World War II approached. Between the wars, the schools faced a second wave of increasing enrollments that had begun prior to World War I with the law of compulsory attendance. Also, there was increased centralization of policy-making in school districts. By the thirties, the progressive education movement had become institutionalized and professionalized to such an extent that public approval of their programs and ideas was no longer of any concern to the educators. Educational institutions promoted the doctrines of

progressive education. Teachers were more prepared, and more influenced, by professional affiliations with the National Education Association and the Progressive Education Association and a general acceptance of progressive education prevailed.

Tyack questions whether the movement had any real impact on the schools although the profession was filled with the theory and rhetoric of the social reconstructionists and the progressives concerned with pedagogy. He identified another group of "administrative progressives" who, he maintained, had commanded control of urban education, creating systems with layers of bureaucracy based on corporate models of governance. They were concerned primarily with controlling organizational behavior for the purposes of social efficiency and control. He identified this group of reformers with an elitist social-political philosophy focused on promoting industrial-capitalist agendas rather than on improving the lives of children. They relied on expert superintendents and centralized boards to create kindergartens, day-care centers, and other programs which benefited the labor class.³¹ Poor children continued to be systematically failed by the centralized system.

The progressives concerned with pedagogical reform were of little threat to the school managers operating in the hierarchical bureaucracy. As Tyack contends, Dewey's philosophy of democratic education was difficult to implement in an environment where all power was fundamentally concentrated at the top of the organization. The new education brought more red tape, forms, committees, meetings to attend, and educational jargon. The autonomy required by teachers to

implement Dewey's ideal was fundamentally absent in the highly centralized model of school administration. The progressives concerned with the new methods focused on subtle teaching techniques and less overt methods of controlling teachers. By focusing on changing the teacher, the curriculum, and the classroom methods, the administrative hierarchical structure remained unchallenged. Tyack reminds the reader that Dewey had stated in 1902 that the administration and organization of a system ultimately guide and control the impact of instruction on the child.³²

The effects of the reform movement were unevenly felt. There was a diversity of private and public school experiments in progressive education. In some experiments, such as at The Lincoln School, the scientific, child-centered, and reformist strands of progressive education merged in the hands of the practitioners.³³ The theorists could separate their ideas into separate strands, but the practitioners, faced with the task of creating a school that worked, had to combine ideas and deal with inconsistencies. While the theorists were disturbed by inconsistencies and unable to mediate their differences, the theories were blended in the life of the schools. Charlotte Winsor of the Bank Street College of Education noted:

For the purposes of analysis the theoretical streams are visible and can be separated; but for those of us working in the schools, it was easy to be scientific, to be concerned with individual growth and development, and to look to the reform of society at one and the same time. There was so much to be done that we didn't look for neat consistencies; the children were there to be educated, and they seemed more important than logical niceties.³⁴

Cremin stated that: "So it is frequently in the course of reform movements."³⁵

The dissemination and diffusion of the ideas of progressive education that excited the educational leaders reached the schools and the teachers through several professional and institutional mediums. College professors were often the most ardent advocates of the new methods. William Heard Kilpatrick was an "influential proponent of the new education."³⁶ As a professor at Teachers College, Columbia University between 1918 and 1938, he taught an estimated thirty-five thousand students. He was most closely associated with the "project method" in which he advocated that children learn best through their own experiences.³⁷ He believed that good teachers bring in subject matter as needed as part of a student's experience and that good education is "life itself, living now--the opposite of education as a mere preparation for future living."³⁸ Ravitch contends that he combined in his work the "romanticism of the child-centered school, the full-blown scientism of the authoritative pedagogue, and the anti-intellectualism of the social utilitarians."³⁹

In addition to the efforts by colleges and universities and to the activities and publications of the Progressive Education Association and the National Education Association, the progressive education "message" was also popularized through school surveys and local curriculum revision programs. The processes used in curriculum revision programs were described in a discussion of the curriculum revision trend including its limits and effects. Ravitch concludes that

the movement was an effort to professionalize teachers, build group consensus, change the attitudes of teachers, and consciously "denigrate the traditional notion of 'knowledge for its own sake' as useless and possibly worthless."⁴⁰ She maintains that the curriculum revision movement did little to reform education. Also, she asserts that long after the progressive education principles had won acceptance by the professional leaders of the nation, states, and cities, teachers were clinging to traditional academic principles and failing to implement the new principles of progressive education.

Although the progressive education movement was in full bloom in the thirties, Cremin states that the period of its greatest success and notability came in the years immediately prior to World War II. The public still supported the movement and was favorable to the schools. The literature and journals were full of the jargon and language of progressive education and among the professionals the ideas enjoyed support. Although criticism within the movement and the public had begun growing in the thirties, Cremin dates the beginning of the public decline to a 1944 public opinion poll.⁴¹ In 1938, Boyd Bode published Progressive Education at the Crossroads which called for the development of a philosophy of progressive education that included developing democracy in the schools rather than developing individuals unable to function in a democratic nation. He forecast that the movement would be left behind unless this challenge could be met. In less than two decades his prediction was fulfilled.⁴² Growing isolationism, over professionalization, and continuous self-justification

seemed to render the progressives "powerless to respond" to respond to the new challenges and criticisms according to Cremin.⁴³ Ravitch asserts that "the call for democracy, originally intended to invigorate the school and to improve society, by midcentury had come to mean the use of techniques of group dynamics to encourage consensus decisionmaking and to convince others to accept predetermined outcomes."⁴⁴ Graham also noted that isolationism from the academic and intellectual communities as well as an educational institution top heavy with professional educators contributed to the decline of the movement.⁴⁵

The attacks on progressive education in the post-war years were relentless. They were fueled by inflation, shortages of school buildings and teachers, increasing budgets and enrollments, concern over communist expansion, and by the demands of an industrial nation for well-trained manpower. Mortimer Smith's And Madly Teach (1949) is an example of the criticism of progressive education which continued to demand educational reform of a different nature.⁴⁶ The progressives had lost their momentum and appeared unable to change; the most perceptive realized that the movement was coming to a close.

The death of progressive education was not as surprising to Cremin as the rapidity of the end. He cites seven reasons for the abrupt ending of the movement in the 1950's with the most important being the failure "to keep pace with the continuing transformation of American society."⁴⁷ The other reasons he offered were: distortion of the tenets of the movement; negativism inherent in all social reform movements;

demands on the teacher's ability and time; becoming a victim of its own success since many of the reforms were incorporated in the schools; failure to formulate new strategies after initial changes were made; the impact of conservatism; and the failure to cultivate lay support while advancing its own professionalism.

The history of the progressive education movement evolved from a public demanding changes in the traditional schools which were unresponsive to the demands of a changing nation, to the development of child-centered schools, to the advocacy of social reconstructionism, and back to a new demand for training rooted in the academic disciplines. Cremin states that the "balance of forces in education had been transformed in a postwar America that was a different nation than prewar America that had given birth to progressive education."⁴⁸

The progressives failed to deal with emerging issues such as racial segregation, separation of children into academic, general and vocational programs, the need for international understanding, and technological advances.⁴⁹ Indifference to crucial social problems such as problems of the poor and segregation was another reason for the decline of both the progressive education movement and the Progressive Education Association.⁵⁰ Progressive education became irrelevant to the present and future needs of the nation in that it "failed to meet the pragmatic test of 'working' in public schools except as curricular innovations for below-average students."⁵¹ Ravitch does not provide a rationale of how the movement benefited the students of below average ability. The conclusion can be drawn that the benefits were accrued

particularly for these students from what she considered to be the influences of the movement which were integrated into the schools.

Ravitch considered the benefits that derived from the progressive education movement when the following could be observed: intelligent integration of projects, activities, and student experiences into subject-matter, concern for student health and vocational awareness, and awareness of individual differences among students.⁵² Graham concluded that the positive influences of the movement were to encourage a fresh look at the academic disciplines, the development of the child's creative powers, and the goals of education.⁵³ Cremin asserted that progressive education had an impact on the schools by extending educational opportunity by increasing the years of schooling; expanding the curriculum; integrating extracurricular opportunities; introducing guidance programs, flexible grouping, supplementary learning activities and materials; developing a norm for informal, active, mobile relationships among students, teachers, principals, and parents; modifying school architecture; expanding teacher education; and increasing and parent involvement in the schools.⁵⁴ Tyack concluded that none of the strands or phases of progressive education impinged positively on the urban schools because the movement was primarily an administrative movement. Tyack did, however, conclude that "then as now, personal concern and energy could sometimes transform a school and thereby change the lives of children."⁵⁵ He also believed that such educational practices had to be distinguished by more

than rhetoric which, he implied, was a major characteristic of the progressive education reform movement.

Cremin states that at the end of World War II, Dewey's forecast of a day when progressive education would be accepted as good education had come to pass. Educational policy appearing in journals, reports of boards, and publications of state and federal education departments was filled with phrases characteristic of the movement: "recognizing individual differences,' 'personality development,' 'the whole child,' 'social and emotional growth,' 'creative self-expression,' 'the needs of learners,' 'intrinsic motivation,' 'persistent life situations,' 'bridging the gap between home and school,' 'teaching children, not subjects,' 'adjusting the school to child,' 'real life experiences,' 'teacher-pupil relationships,' and 'staff planning.'⁵⁶ The popular phrases noted by Cremin described the same essential characteristics of progressive education as described by Ravitch to which the innovations at Maury will be compared. These included activity, cooperation, participation, acknowledgement of individual differences, curricula to meet the needs and interests of the child and community, and curricula based on everyday experiences.

A general description of a prototype of a progressive education school which combined the characteristics and values of the movement appeared in a booklet published in 1948 by the Educational Policies Commission and the Department of Elementary School Principals of the National Education Association.⁵⁷ The "good elementary school" described in the report stressed the values of independence and initiative

developed in conjunction with the mastery of subject matter and the processes of problem-solving and critical-thinking. The development of the individual's talents, self-respect, and respect for others was to be taught. Social responsibility and cooperative skills were habits of responsible citizenship which should have their beginnings in the elementary school. The teaching of values and the opportunity to participate in the democratic processes essential to change and improvement in the nation were considered major functions of the elementary school. In the ideal elementary school, child growth and development in intellectual, social, and physical skills were planned for in the educational program. Both the daily school program and an after school recreational program were considered essential to the development of social responsibility. The school was expected to establish situations in which desirable behavior was learned and rewarded. Careful planning was considered essential to the development of good schools. In order to develop good schools, "goodwill and good ideas" were not considered adequate without the "skill, experience, vision, [and] leadership" of administrators, teachers, parents, other adults, and children who were "needed to work on the whole problem from the beginning."⁵⁸

The elementary school that would have been considered progressive in 1948 included a philosophy and practices consistent with the theories and literature on progressive education. The school would have a philosophy of education consistent with democratic ideals, would expect students to master a curriculum to develop literacy and critical

thinking, would use methods which were oriented to activities and projects, would value each child as an individual and would be community oriented. The focus would be on teaching children whose psychological, artistic, emotional, and intellectual development was to be considered by the teacher. Pupil-teacher, parent-teacher, and teacher-administrator relationships were characterized by positive relationships which were open, participatory, and respectful. Pupils, teachers, and parents were involved with an administrator who shared the leadership of the school with the participants who were involved with all facets of school life. School life was to be a model of positive living in the community. The belief in the intrinsic worth and value of all human beings was underlying the philosophy and practice of progressive education in the public schools.

The national historical and theoretical perspectives on the progressive education movement provide a basis for understanding the influences on local educational institutions and on the educators seeking to build better public schools during the years of the study. The analysis of factors which contribute to an understanding of the rooting of educational innovation and reform is guided by the framework of history and theory.

The Implementation of Progressive Education in Virginia

Progressive education in Virginia, as discussed by Pulley at the introduction of this chapter, was slow to develop. It was an institution that the politicians allowed to be developed to appease the masses of citizens and to restore familiar sociological patterns to Virginia society.

Lack of funding and lack of momentum inhibited the development of a truly adequate educational system according to his analysis. Nonetheless, school populations had been increasing in the southern states.⁵⁹ Impetus for improving education in the South came from annual regional and statewide meetings of statesmen and educational leaders. During the first decade of the 20th Century, a real fervor developed in Virginia to improve the public schools.⁶⁰ Although funds were not always available to reform the schools as desired by some advocates, agencies such as the Cooperative Education Association, were developed and the educational forces of the state were united by the leadership of prominent men including the Governor.⁶¹

In 1906, the newly elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Joseph D. Eggleston, continued to build favorable support for education. He was able to secure legislation to actualize some of his visions for improving education in the South. Free public education began to be regarded as an investment rather than as a charitable endeavor in Virginia. The period from 1913-1918 was the period of the most widespread public support and interest in public education that had ever been experienced in Virginia. The scientific aspect of the movement gained momentum exemplifying itself through the use of standardized tests; school surveys were used to appraise progress in the expanding state system of public education.⁶²

Two surveys in Virginia were initiated by the General Assembly rather than by the Department of Education. The Inglis Survey was conducted in 1919 and the O'Shea Survey was conducted in 1927. The

course of educational progress in Virginia was further influenced by the results of the surveys. The Inglis Survey recommended many administrative and instructional improvements in the schools.⁶³ The O'Shea Survey noted that educational progress in Virginia was not on par with other states.⁶⁴ While some Virginians believed in adaptation of the educational system, others clung to the aims of education in the past. The report indicated that students spent too much time on "bookish" studies, were habituated to complacency through suppressive teaching practices, and were deprived of participating with things which were active and practical. Curriculum revision was recommended which would emphasize "the real, the practical and the active in life" and which would build "upon the kinds of interests and activities natural to children and adapted to their capabilities" in order to improve education in the urban and rural schools.⁶⁵

The recommendations of the Survey Report also included measures to strengthen supervisory activities, compulsory attendance laws, accounting procedures, development of libraries, and funding for the schools. Additionally, recommendations were made to provide for the appointment rather than the election of the State Superintendent and the transfer of power to appoint local superintendents to city and county boards. The commission recommended that state and local authorities increase their efforts to adapt curriculum and teaching practices to meet the needs of the students currently in the schools. The Governor of Virginia, Harry F. Byrd expressed support for most of the

recommendations to the General Assembly of Virginia in January 1928.⁶⁶

Ironically, the years of the Depression were a period of intensive improvement in instructional programs in Virginia. Under the leadership of State Superintendent, Sidney B. Hall, a Division of Instruction was organized in the State Department of Education. The Department of Education had many opportunities to provide leadership because of the historically strongly centralized relationship with the county and city divisions characteristic of education in the southern states.⁶⁷ The leaders of state-wide programs to improve instruction had to not only face active opposition but had to face the conservatism of the teachers which was "more strongly entrenched than in other states."⁶⁸ Under Hall's leadership, the energies and thoughts of teachers were focused on professional improvement rather than low salaries and other shortages which they faced during the Depression and the beginning of World War II.

The formulation of the new program began in 1931 with a comprehensive plan of meetings, conferences, and strategies to organize teachers, supervisors, and principals throughout the state into study groups to prepare courses of study. Over half the teachers in the state voluntarily participated in the cooperative enterprise of preparing curricula for Virginia's schools. The orientation and organization for the production phases of the revision were far-reaching, encouraged experimentation in the classrooms, and stressed the cooperative approach. A state committee representing various subcommittees and

advisors, which included Dr. Hollis Caswell (who joined the faculty at Columbia Teachers College in 1938 after leaving a faculty position at George Peabody College), prepared the guiding principles and aims that formed the foundation of the program. The six guiding principles were:

1. Schools are agencies of society which should be continuously redefined as society evolves toward more democratic ideals.

2. Interaction between individuals and social groups stimulates growth and changes in both.

3. Individuals grow and develop at different rates and the school should provide different learning experiences to meet the variety of needs among the learners.

4. Human growth and development is a continuous process of reorganizing learning experiences both in and out of school.

5. Experience is the basis for all learning although activity alone does not constitute experience.

6. Human beings tend to repeat experiences which are satisfying and for learning experiences to be continued outside of school, they need to be satisfying and associated with positive feelings.⁶⁹

The concept of learning through experience attributed to Dewey and a major principle of progressive education was included in the Virginia program which was first introduced in Virginia in a 1923 course of study. Buck stated it might have resulted in superior schools had it been followed.⁷⁰ He noted that prior to the initiation of the new program of curriculum revision, the philosophy of John Dewey had

probably helped some teachers enrich pupils experiences, but widespread change had not occurred.⁷¹

Criteria rooted in the philosophy of progressive education for the selection of the aims of the Virginia program were also established. The criteria for selection were that the aims must be democraticizing, able to be realized through meaningful experiences, be an outgrowth of social life, and be flexible. The aims were to be functional intentions based on the the lives, thoughts, and actions of people. The mission was to find aims that contributed effectively to democratic living and that would be used by teachers.⁷² The aims were distributed widely throughout the State to groups and individuals in an effort to validate them. Following the adoption of principles and aims, the divison of scope to further guide the development of courses of study was designed to complete the framework which guided the development of all curriculum produced between 1933 and 1941 for the schools of Virginia.

The elementary curriculum, the Virginia Elementary Course of Study, which proposed an activity-oriented program over a conventional program relying on memorization, underwent several revisions at regular intervals yet remaining essentially unchanged between 1933 through 1943. The program was reported to have had beneficial influence despite criticisms against departing from conventional instructional patterns, was considered reflective of and on par with the rest of the country, and brought an understanding of child growth and education to many educators.⁷³

During the decade dominated by the World War II, from 1941 to 1951, schools in Virginia felt the full impact of war activities and shortages of teachers and supplies. As birth rates rose at the end of the war, teachers left the profession creating teacher shortages. There too were shortages of classroom space and school buildings. In 1944, the Virginia General Assembly established another Commission to study public education. The Denny Commission, unlike the 1919 Inglis and the 1928 O'Shea Surveys, was made up of a volunteer staff. The staff conducted hearings throughout the State at which citizens expressed among other things, dissatisfaction with the schools, need for closer management of schools by the people, need for more effective education in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and a willingness to pay for a better educational program. The Commission's recommendations included giving more emphasis to the three R's and to increase the use of testing to improve the curriculum. The General Assembly endorsed the recommendation to increase emphasis on teaching the fundamentals in a resolution adopted on March 6, 1945. Throughout the remainder of the decade, recommendations continued to be generated from other committees and commissions which supported the limiting of the curriculum to basic fundamental subjects.⁷⁴ As the tides shifted in the larger progressive education movement, similar concerns and demands were favored at the state level.

Development of education in Virginia during the progressive education movement brings another dimension to the study of educational reform and innovation at Maury School in Richmond. The State

Department of Education sought to improve public education by involving teachers throughout the state in curriculum revision. A philosophy of education emphasizing new trends and theories was promoted to educators. Regardless of the conservative political agendas in Virginia, the educational agenda from the state called first for change which was somewhat progressive, at least in theory. Later, the demand for change in the State emphasized the basic subject matter disciplines. The course of the demand for innovations in the State was similar to the course the progressive education movement followed nationally, although the intensity and the origins of the movement were not the same.

Summary

The foundation for examining the existence of, and the rooting of innovative ideas at Maury School is established from the historical and theoretical background of progressive education. Although the conservative environment of the state created social and political resistance to innovation, the philosophy of progressive education was communicated to teachers and administrators through colleges, universities, professional organizations, and the activities of a centralized State Department of Education heavily involved in curricula revision. Administrative progressives desiring centralized control of the bureaucracy of school systems and conservative politicians were inclined to favor school reform focused on changing the teachers, the curricula, and the instructional methods because those changes did not challenge their power. The State Department of Education and the administration of Richmond Public Schools communicated the message that these tenets

and features of progressive education were acceptable and even desirable.

The progressive education movement was characterized by essential features and practices by which a school could be judged to be progressive. In practice in the schools and classrooms, there was the potential for combining or merging theories which characterized the child-centered, social reconstruction, and curriculum reform strands of progressive education. The theories were disseminated through the professional and institutional organizations in the field of education. In the analysis of the progressive education reform movement, it was asserted that the lack of teacher autonomy and the lack of high quality teachers inhibited the movement with the result that it failed to become firmly established in public school education.

The existence of Maury School can be partially attributed to its development during the progressive education movement when the ideas of the movement were not uniformly subscribed to by all schools.

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- 1Pulley, *Ibid.*, p. viii.
 - 2*Ibid.*
 - 3*Ibid.*, p. ix.
 - 4*Ibid.*, p. 2.
 - 5*ibid.*, p. 18.
 - 6*Ibid.*, pp. 21-23.
 - 7*Ibid.*, p. 183.
 - 8Cremin, *Ibid.*, p. 88.
 - 9*Ibid.*, p. viii.
 - 10*Ibid.*, pp. viii-ix.
 - 11Ravitch, *Ibid.*, p. 46.
 - 12John Dewey, *The School and Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1899; reprint ed., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1943), p. 29.
 - 13*Ibid.*
 - 14Cremin, *Ibid.*, p. 119.
 - 15*Ibid.*, pp. 175-176.
 - 16Ravitch, *Ibid.*, p. 47.
 - 17*Ibid.*
 - 18Cremin, *Ibid.*, p. 348.
 - 19Ravitch, *Ibid.*, p. 47
 - 20Patricia Albjerg Graham, *Progressive Education: From Arcady to Academe* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967), p. 160.
 - 21*Ibid.* p. 161.
 - 22Cremin, *Ibid.*, pp. 207-209.
 - 23Ravitch, *Ibid.*, p. 46.
 - 24Harold Rugg and Ann Shumaker, *The Child-Centered School* (New York: World Book, 1928; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), pp. 228-229.
 - 25*Ibid.*, p. 5.
 - 26Ravitch, *Ibid.*, p. 49.
 - 27Tyack, *Ibid.*, pp. 177-198.
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 - 29*Ibid.*, pp. 226-228.
 - 30C. A. Bowers, *The Progressive Educator and the Depression: The Radical Years* (New York: Random House, 1939; reprint ed., New York: Random House, 1969), pp. ix-xi.
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- 41 The National Opinion Research Center of Denver stated in 1944 that while 80 percent of the respondents said they were satisfied with children's education in school, 43 percent suggested changes in the schools and 44 percent of those suggested changes were unprogressive in nature. Cremin, *Ibid.*, p. 324.
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- 47 Cremin, *Ibid.*, p. 350.
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- 49 Ravitch, *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.
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- 53 Graham, *Ibid.*, p. 164.
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- 57 Educational Policies Commission and Department of Elementary School Principals, *Ibid.*
- 58 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- 59 J. L. Blair Buck, The Development of Public Schools in Virginia, 1607-1952 (Richmond: State Board of Education, 1952). The State Superintendent of Public Instruction of Virginia reported that at an educational congress held in Atlanta in 1895, the United States Commissioner of Education indicated that school attendance in the

southern states had increased twice as fast as the population growth in the past twenty years. p. 119.

60Ibid., pp. 122-124.

61Heatwole, Ibid., pp. 312-320.

62Buck, Ibid., pp.140-164.

63Alexander J. Inglis, Virginia Public Schools, Education Commission's Report to the Assembly of Virginia (Richmond: Everett Wadley Company, 1919).

64M. V. O'Shea, Public Education in Virginia. Report to the Educational Commission of Virginia of a Survey of the Public Educational System of the State (Richmond: Davis Bottom, 1928).

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69Virginia State Board of Education, Procedures for Virginia State Curriculum Program, Vol. XV, (Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1932), pp. 11-13

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CHAPTER 3

THE FOUNDATION OF MAURY SCHOOL

The Origins of Maury

The inception and development of the innovative program at Maury Elementary School in Richmond Public Schools began with the convergence of people, ideas, and institutions during the 1930's and 1940's. Prior to 1934, Maury School "reflected the regimentation of the Machine Age," according to Principal Etta Rose Bailey.¹ The new principles of progressive education theory had not yet reached Maury. After her arrival at Maury School in 1934, a process was initiated which would thrust the school into national prominence as an example of educational reform and innovation. The factors which contributed to and influenced the change process will be described in this chapter.

Located south of the James River across from downtown Richmond, Maury School was acquired by the City in 1910 by the annexation of Manchester. Then known as Bainbridge Elementary School, the original three-story school built in 1888, was located on Bainbridge Street between Fourteenth and Fifteenth Streets. The older building was incorporated in 1922 into a larger building which included additional classrooms, an auditorium, and a cafeteria. It was officially supervised by the principals of nearby Powhatan School until 1935.² In 1915, when Bainbridge Junior High School was opened on an adjacent block, the name of the elementary school was changed to Powhatan Number 2. In 1919, the school was renamed for the famed Naval officer

and geographer, Matthew Fontaine Maury. Additional classrooms were built in 1952. This structure housed the Maury School program from 1934 to 1970.³

The Bainbridge community located south of the James River between the Lee and Fourteenth Street bridges was once a community of middle class families, civic groups, churches, and businesses. The growth of nearby industry, transportation routes, and the attractiveness of the property to developers interested in its close proximity to downtown Richmond contributed to the changing nature of the neighborhood. Concerned with developing strong school and community relations and building positive relationships with the families of the students, the school staff considered its mission to build a strong institution to influence the lives of the students and the community. Serving students with wide differences in social and economic backgrounds, the school sought to enhance the self-esteem of all students and parents by creating an environment in which the principles of democratic living prevailed.⁴ The task gradually became more difficult as the population grew more mobile, less stable, and more susceptible to the problems created by poverty. One former Maury student remembers that her family agonized over the decision to move from the neighborhood in the late 1950's. Although she attended Maury for six years and entered Bainbridge Junior High School in the seventh grade, she said that only a few of her former classmates from Maury entered Bainbridge. Many had moved and the populace of the area had become very transient.⁵ The community was generally perceived as a lower socio-economic

neighborhood by the 1950's although it had once been a thriving community.⁶

Prior to 1935, the administration of Maury School had been supervised by the principal of nearby Powhatan School assisted by Etta Rose Bailey for the 1934-35 session.⁷ On May 24, 1935 at the regular meeting of the School Board, it was declared that beginning with the next session, the principalships at Powhatan and Maury would be separated and that Etta Rose Bailey would be acting principal of Maury. Designated as acting principal of Maury beginning in September 1935, she was officially elected principal on May 12, 1939. She remained principal of Maury School until she retired on June 28, 1963. During Miss Bailey's tenure, from assistant, to acting, and to principal proper of Maury School (1934 to 1963), the process of educational innovation began and became associated with the school. Her principalship was a key factor in the development of Maury School.

Prior to the arrival of Miss Bailey, the characteristics of Maury were similar to any school which had evolved in the nineteenth century. Memorization of material from textbooks and recitation to the teacher were considered learning. All students worked on the same assignment from the same book for the same amount of time. Drill was the prevailing instructional method and teachers considered the students as a mass rather than as individuals. Desks were usually bolted to the floor and students only moved as permitted by the teacher.⁸ School was for listening and children learned to obey authority without question. The mind of the child was submitted to the disciplines and his capacity to

think for himself was not a concern of the school.⁹ The teachers gave the students lessons and if they did not master them, they failed. The methods at Maury were quite different from what they would be in the years to come.¹⁰

The change process as envisioned by Miss Bailey began in 1934 with the alteration and improvement of the environment of the school. The process evolved under her leadership as she and the staff interacted with each other, people in the school system and community, ideas, and the educational institutions. The development of the Maury School program began not with the implementation of any particular new programs, but with changing the environment of the school. There were fourteen teachers at the school who had been there for varying lengths of time. Two new teachers came to Maury when Miss Bailey began as assistant principal. No new staff members were chosen to begin the change process. Louise Baker, one of the new teachers who went to Maury with Miss Bailey, described the school as dirty with old dark floors which had been oiled to keep down the dust. The walls were dark brown and the desks were screwed down in rows.¹¹ The moment Miss Bailey walked into that building she was determined to change the teaching environment and within two weeks the atmosphere changed. Miss Bailey's first project was to improve the teachers' room which contained a single table covered with an old oil cloth. The teachers began painting, making draperies and creating an environment conducive to personal growth and development in teachers and students. The teachers then changed the entrance hall, the cafeteria, and the

classroom environments. Miss Bailey described the initial stage of the change process in the "Introduction" of A Public School for Tomorrow. She believed that while adults were resistant to forced change that they were exhilarated by cooperative activity which produced observable changes.¹²

Whatever Miss Bailey initially envisioned for Maury, she did not label the innovations. She disliked the term "progressive" and never referred to the program at Maury as such.¹³ While she was described in local newspapers as being "long known as one of Richmond's most progressive educators," she preferred to describe herself as a "teachers's teacher."¹⁴ She brought anticipation to everyone she encountered in her life. She involved friends in her projects and brought people together to help accomplish her goals.¹⁵ She brought prominent progressive educators to Richmond to lecture at meetings of the Elementary Teachers Association. William Heard Kilpatrick himself lectured to the group as early as February 1938.¹⁶ She did not mind "going to the top" to accomplish her goals.¹⁷

Whether or not Miss Bailey had a vision or long range plan for Maury School was never revealed to her peers and colleagues. She certainly did not communicate her plans to the staff all at once. She had a style of leading discussions and involving people in problem solving that may have led them to reach conclusions that she had already reached. A former teacher indicated that: "She [Miss Bailey] didn't say that she wanted to do thus and so. We would have a staff meeting and all of our innovations would develop there."¹⁸ A former member of the

School Board said: "You felt like you really had learned something when you had been with Etta Rose Bailey, and yet, she had such a nice smooth way of doing things that you didn't realize that she was really informing you."¹⁹

A group process was used to develop ideas and build consensus for the ideas and ideals that were implemented and upheld at Maury. Discussions among the Maury faculty were held at the weekly Thursday staff meetings to which Mrs. Douthat and others referred. The agendas for the meetings were distributed in advance. Routine business items were handled by the secretary of the school. In preparation for the meetings, teachers read books and materials to prepare themselves to participate in the discussions held there. All teachers were expected to share and to contribute to the discussions.²⁰ Teachers led discussions and talked at the meetings until ultimately thinking an idea from the group discussion had originated with them.²¹ Miss Bailey described her views on teacher participation and the change process:

Through efforts to share thoughts and plans freely, to make the business of all the concern of each, to make personal and human the approach to any problem, there developed gradually within the group a vision of a more vital institution and of the relationship between each day's efforts and such a goal.²²

The underlying values and the stages of the change process were also described by Miss Bailey. She believed that school administration existed to provide services and support to lift "spirits of people" and "to keep processes in motion."²³ She saw growth in teachers as a prerequisite for creating a more vital teaching-learning situation. She believed in developing independence and interdependence in teachers

through participation in tasks and development of new relationships. The stages of the change process she initiated were to improve the physical environment, to build group relationships, to enhance motivation through producing results, and to use group problem solving techniques to work on problems effecting the work of the group. She saw the process of improving as an ongoing method of operating which required sustained effort. As the process was refined resulting in increased clarity, discrimination, and attention to details, she felt that more problems of greater intensity emerged.²⁴

Portrait of Miss Bailey

Etta Rose Bailey was a key figure in building the foundation of Maury School. Her patterns of interaction, leadership style, philosophy, and background provide an explanation of the woman who used her power to develop and maintain an innovative school. The attitudes and skills which Miss Bailey developed and cultivated in herself and others were a component of her democratic leadership style. The staff and her associates validated through interviews that they perceived her as operating in the open way just as she described herself as functioning. Her associates indicated that she continually communicated her philosophy through her words, actions, and deeds. She was a dynamic, enthusiastic leader at Maury School and in all organizations in which she interacted. The interviewees stated that she never asked anyone to do anything she would not do herself. They credit her with providing the leadership to make Maury a special school in which to work.

Her brand of leadership and her administrative style of working with teachers can be described further by analyzing the strategies she utilized in interacting with her staff. She was able to meet the needs of teachers by modeling the same style as that which she advocated for teachers to use to meet the needs of students. She worked with teachers in groups and individually. She helped teachers with materials and room arrangements. She had new teachers come to her home for weekly discussion groups to help them adjust and solve the problems new teachers face. The regular weekly Thursday staff meetings were always partially social as well as oriented to staff growth and development. Committees were developed across grade levels and the teachers had a crucial role in developing the programs in the school. The belief that each person had special talents was behind her ability to guide each teacher and parent to work in areas where they could make the greatest contribution. The faculty participated in an annual retreat to plan for the upcoming year prior to each new school session. These retreats were often held at Roslyn Conference Center. She encouraged continuous academic preparation among teachers, often taking classes with her staff or taking them to a college or university where she would teach a summer course. John R. Clarke, former teacher who later became an elementary principal in Richmond, rode to Teachers College with her for four consecutive summers. He reported that on these trips they talked about school for the entire travel time and that it was always an exciting event.²⁵

She continually engaged in conversation about schools and teaching with her colleagues. She was a catalyst according to John Mapp, educator, friend, and colleague at Virginia Commonwealth University. Whenever she worked with a group of people, she could build teams. This was true in her church and professional activities, as well as in her school.²⁶

The leadership style of Miss Bailey was developed over her twenty year career with Richmond Public Schools prior to becoming principal of Maury. Miss Bailey had been elected to teach in Richmond Public Schools in September 1914 and was assigned to William Fox School. Born in Sussex County, Virginia on June 19, 1892, she attended State Normal School and Longwood College in Farmville prior to June 1913 and taught fourth grade at Montpelier High School in 1913-14. She taught at John B. Cary, Robert E. Lee and Richmond Normal Schools in Richmond before going to Madison School in 1933.

Experimentation was a familiar process to Etta Rose Bailey. During the 1933-34 year as assistant principal at Madison School, she was credited with being responsible for the successful experimental work integrating classroom work and the industrial arts laboratory newly installed and operated for sixth grade pupils. It was stated that "with another year of experimenting and revising it is believed that this work at Madison would serve as a most excellent example of the type of industrial arts most suitable for the elementary school."²⁷

While teaching in Richmond, she took two furloughs for study at Teachers College, Columbia University in the 1923-24 session and from

September 1927 to February 1928. She earned her bachelor and master's degrees there.²⁸ While at Teachers College, Columbia University, Etta Rose Bailey studied the philosophy and educational theories of John Dewey as interpreted by William Heard Kilpatrick. Believing that children should be educated as individuals by creative methods and not by rote or as a mass, Miss Bailey put Dewey's principles into practice at Maury School beginning in 1934 soon after her arrival. The innovations established then would remain throughout the history of the school. Later, Dr. Kilpatrick would attribute the success of Maury to "the penetrating educational insight which has from the first guided those in control."²⁹ The insights which he believed shaped the program at Maury were the ideas of development of the whole child, the belief in the inseparability of living and learning, and the belief that the school must be a quality place for living.³⁰

The educational philosophy underlying the changes Miss Bailey originally envisioned and produced at Maury was presented in an address she delivered to the graduating class of Collegiate School in Richmond, Virginia in 1951. In that year, criticisms of educational practices were on the rise; however, she began by telling the audience that while participation by the public in education was desirable, some criticisms were destructive and aimed at undermining the public schools. Given the history of education in Virginia and the volume of criticism of public education generated over the shifting of the national philosophy from progressive to more fundamental, the caution to the

audience was probably a mild urging to listen to an educator of considerable experience.

In this address, she cited educational trends based on research in child growth and development that she believed were very significant. She shared her belief that the entrenched, standardized educational practices of mass education in which all children were taught with the same methods and materials had a negative impact on the learning process. The five trends which she presented were the backbone of her philosophy of education, and were actually practiced at Maury, although in this speech she did not refer to Maury School. The trends and the applications were offered for insight into educational problems.

The first trend was "the acceptance of wide individual differences among children and reconstruction of educational practices to meet the demands of the situation." She believed that it was not enough to only know that children differ from one another. Policies for schools must be developed to demonstrate the recognition of the belief in individual differences. She believed in using differentiated materials and assignments in order to individualize education to meet the needs of the learner. This was standard practice at Maury School. Textbooks were only used to supplement other learning materials. Teachers were expected to use a wide variety of books and learning activities to meet the needs of the individual. Individual differences among students and teachers were accepted at Maury.

The second trend mentioned was the "recognition that methods, and patterns of procedure, and administrative policies, are not ends in

themselves but means to be evaluated in terms of educational goals." She believed that methods of instruction and instructional practices should be developed as strategies to meet goals rather than be continued through habit. She believed in an open, laboratory approach to learning where many types of experiences were provided. At Maury, the staff was continually involved in the evaluation of their goals, strategies, and activities.

The third trend mentioned was "recognition (with the willingness to act upon it) of the basic need of every child for love and affection" which she considered a condition for normal growth and learning in a school. She believed that the activities of the teachers and the school must contribute to the development of the self-esteem of each child. The emotional development of the child could not be left entirely to the home. At Maury, the teachers worked with the parents to attend to the development of the whole child. Children were valued for who and what they were by teachers who believed that growth and development did and would occur.

The fourth trend was described as "the reflection in educational practices of a deepening insight into laws governing children's learning." She believed in creative teaching to build motivation, responsibility, self-discipline, application, transfer of learning, and life-long learning. Children were active participants in the creative learning process practiced at Maury. All children were considered capable of learning at a deep level. Teachers were expected to use creativity to

develop learning experiences which led children to learn on intellectual and emotional levels.

The fifth trend was that "school practices are growing more and more sensitive to good personal relationships." She believed in cooperative relationships and democratic practices, and disliked authoritative and competitive practices. At Maury, positive, open communication among the leaders, teachers, students, and parents was the goal and the norm as described by many people.

Miss Bailey believed that all children must be served in the schools by accepting them as individuals and by using individual methods and practices to assure that they would be successful. She believed that this was an increased standard of professional service. She also believed that due to study and reflection, teachers were able to evaluate the practices in the classroom and to continually improve education. She suggested that a well informed public would lend support to teachers with these goals and characteristics.³¹

Characterized as being a strong and dynamic leader, Miss Bailey extended her skills to provide service and leadership to the larger Richmond Public Schools community as well as to Maury School. She was continually involved with committees and with the development of policy for the elementary schools and the school system during her career. She served on a special committee of administrators to study the kindergarten/first grade situation during her first official year as acting principal of Maury. The committee proposed a plan for pupils to begin school that would reduce school failure by deferring the kindergarten

entrance to age 5 1/2 and deferring formal reading instruction until age 6 1/2.³² Miss Bailey's leadership was also applied to heading a committee to study English programs at the elementary and junior high levels in 1937-38.³³ From this Committee the Book Fair project in Richmond Public Schools began. During the 1938-39 year, Miss Bailey was chairman of the Committee on Supplies which compiled recommendations from teachers, principals, and supervisors on purchasing and distributing classroom supplies. She continued to serve the system on curriculum committees, PTA committees, and as a member of the Elementary Teachers Association, the local affiliate to the Virginia Education Association, and the National Education Association throughout her career. Teachers and colleagues reported that she never missed a meeting. One former teacher who became an elementary principal himself credits her with developing professionalism among teachers because of the role model she provided as a professional educator.³⁴

The leadership of Miss Bailey also included community service. She received the first Jane Addams Centennial Award from the Central Virginia Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers for recognition of her work for children as a board member of three welfare agencies, The Children's Aid Society, Memorial Guidance Clinic and Southside Day Nursery, and in the Maury School Community. Her award was given for what was considered "preventive medicine," given to the hundreds of children living in South Richmond. On this occasion, she was proclaimed as a highly praised educational leader in the

community who had promoted education for individuals by creative methods long before others. Although educated by rote methods herself, she did not believe that children should be educated en masse or by rote and crusaded against those methods.³⁵ The devotion of her life to work by using her "school as an instrument for community betterment" did not go unnoticed in her lifetime.³⁶

Considered somewhat ahead of her time by many, some persons considered Etta Rose Bailey to be in tune with current educational philosophy and practice. The Richmond Times-Dispatch stated in Miss Bailey's obituary that Miss Bailey had "sharply criticized mass teaching as assembly-line methods" in 1942 and that she was considered ahead of her time in her methods.³⁷ In the 1930's, when the philosophy of Richmond Public Schools began to shift and it was stated that the work in the elementary schools was based on the philosophy that children have the right to be happy in school and to not be subjected to "meaningless repetitions and drills," Etta Rose Bailey had already been exposed to contemporary educational theory at Teachers College.³⁸ When, in 1937, the Assistant Superintendent reported that the challenge of the current times was to develop programs suited to individuals' needs and abilities, Miss Bailey had already begun to demonstrate that she had heard the challenge.³⁹ Among professional educators she would have been considered in tune with the theories of the progressive education movement. Her philosophy was derived from the philosophies of Dewey and Kilpatrick. She had the first-hand opportunity to learn of the ideas of the modern education at Teachers College. She considered her heroes to

be Dr. Kilpatrick and Dr. Thomas Hopkins also from Teachers College.⁴⁰ Both of these men visited Richmond and Maury School on a number of occasions to lecture.

The philosophy of modern education was shared with Miss Bailey not only at Teachers College, but locally through the activities and publications of the Virginia Department of Education and Richmond Public Schools. The principles and aims of the State curriculum imbued with Deweyan ideas were also compatible with the the ideas of Miss Bailey which would be translated into the essential features of Maury School. Within Richmond Public Schools, the new ideas about education were also theoretically promoted by the professional activities of the central office administrators who were responsible for creating the institutional culture in which she found herself.

Other Key Figures in the Development of Maury

Other teachers who were key figures in the history of Maury School also began their tenure there in the 1930's. The careers of Louise Baker, Eleanor Douthat, and Marion Nesbitt spanned the decades of Maury's history. While Miss Bailey was certainly a leader in originating and developing Maury, her impact was maximized by the teachers who worked there. Her relationship with the teachers and their interactions with each other created a human dynamic that had a most positive effect on the school.

Louise Baker went to Maury the year Miss Bailey arrived. Miss Baker's background was in early childhood education and reading. She believed that she was the only teacher in Richmond Public Schools at that

time with a masters degree in reading that she had earned from Columbia University. She had graduated from Normal School, taught, gone to William and Mary for two additional years to earn a Bachelor of Science degree, went back to Harrisonburg Normal School for a teaching degree and taught in Hopewell City Public Schools. She began developing a library in her first grade class in Hopewell with books from the Richmond Public Library. She indicated that she was severely criticized because her first graders were reading above a second grade level. She decided to attend Columbia University and there through her studies with Roma Ganz, her interest in reading was transformed from a testing approach to an individualized reading approach. From there she carried her philosophy that children learn as individuals with individual vocabularies to Maury School.⁴¹ Miss Baker exerted her influence in developing the individualized reading program for which Maury became well known. In 1941, the Progressive Education Association published a pamphlet on the Maury reading program written by the Maury teachers.⁴² The individualized approach to reading and an emphasis on reading was maintained throughout Maury's history. Miss Baker remained at Maury until it was closed in the summer of 1970, then transferred to Blackwell Elementary School with the faculty of Maury and retired in 1972.

Eleanor Lewis Douthat was assigned to Maury School upon coming to Richmond Public Schools and taught junior primary there until 1965 when she became a consultant teacher and elementary supervisor in Richmond. She did her undergraduate studies at The

College of William and Mary and Florida State College for women where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in education. Her graduate work was completed at Teachers College, Columbia University where she received a Master of Arts degree. In April 1954, she was featured as "School Personality of the Month" in the Richmond News Leader after being selected by her colleagues in the League of Richmond Teachers. She had served for two years as president of the Richmond Elementary Teachers Association and had provided leadership city-wide in numerous capacities including the Book Fair Committee.⁴³ The Book Fair originated under Miss Bailey's leadership and was maintained under the guidance and leadership of Maury's teachers. The event was a source of positive publicity for Richmond Public Schools. She was a teaching assistant in summer classes at Teacher College, Columbia University and at Pennsylvania State University where she and Louise Baker taught.

Another prominent educational leader at Maury School was Dr. Marion Belt Nesbitt who wrote her doctoral dissertation at Teachers College, Columbia University on Maury School in April 1952. The paper was later published as a book titled A Public School for Tomorrow by Harper and Brothers in 1953 and reprinted by Dell in 1967. She also authored books on Virginia history for students.

Born in South Boston, Virginia on December 28, 1907, Dr. Nesbitt attended Harrisonburg Normal School and returned to South Boston to teach during the 1920-21 session. She was appointed to teach at Barton Heights Elementary School in Richmond in September 1921 and taught

at J. E. B. Stuart Elementary School and Richmond Normal School before being assigned to Maury in September, 1939. She was assigned to Richmond Normal in 1926, the same year in which Miss Bailey was assigned there. Both women received furloughs from September 1927 to February 1928 to study. Dr. Nesbitt had two additional study furloughs for half of the sessions in 1949-50 and 1950-51. She received her B.S., M.A. and Ed.D. degrees at Teachers College, Columbia University.⁴⁴

During her career as a teacher and elementary supervisor, Dr. Nesbitt authored articles in educational journals, taught summer sessions at colleges and universities throughout the United States and delivered numerous speeches at professional meetings. She taught at Maury until June 1957 when she was appointed consultant teacher in Richmond. In September 1960, she became an elementary supervisor and she retired from that position in June 1968. In Richmond Public Schools she was also known for her leadership in the annual city-wide Book Fair held at Miller and Rhoads Department Store.

The relationship between the Maury staff and the Richmond Public Schools central office staff developed in the early years and was another factor which contributed to the development of Maury. The Maury team built a relationship with the central office staff and provided service to them and to the teachers in Richmond Public Schools. Additionally, they built relationships with college and university personnel. They used their expertise, involvement, and commitment to build a collective power base which allowed them to function autonomously and independently. This pattern of interaction with the

leadership of Richmond Public Schools continued throughout the history of Maury.

The Relationship Between the Maury Staff and
the Central Office Staff in Richmond Public Schools

Within the institutional culture established by the leaders in the central office of Richmond Public Schools, the theoretical basis from which the staff at Maury operated was established in the 1930's and early 1940's. The role of the principal and the issue of autonomy of the school principal was addressed through formal documents by the central office staff. The attitude and position of the administration toward the activity movement and other new social and instructional practices was expressed. The point of view toward teacher participation and other expectations for the performance of the teachers were stated in the Annual Reports. The perceptions of the Maury staff toward the institution's theories and expectations were cited and attest to the positive relationship which appeared to exist between Maury and the central office staff.

In the organization of Richmond Public Schools, the role of the principal as essential to the development and functioning of the school was considered important. The performance of the teachers and students was dependent on the principal's instructional leadership. In 1935, Assistant Superintendent Forbes H. Norris "concluded that the key person [in the school] is the Principal" and that "truly the principals must lay the foundation stones. Every school bears its principal's stamp or lack of stamp."⁴⁶ A few years later, Norris emphasized again that in the elementary school, the principal occupied the key position. He stated

that "just as pupils reflect to a great extent the teacher, so does the school reflect the principal."⁴⁶ This philosophy continued to dominate the administrative point of view although supervisors were also expected to work with teachers. When a new assistant superintendent for elementary schools assumed his duties in August 1943, he stated that "no school can ever be much better than its principal. Therefore, every effort has been made to enhance the dignity of the principalship and to impress upon the principal his responsibility as the director of the educational program."⁴⁷

The principal was responsible to the superintendent for the successful operation of the administration and the instructional program in his school. He was expected to develop rapport with teachers, students, parents, and the community and to join with them in planning and implementing all phases of school life. He was expected to make classroom visits and observations and to provide assistance to teachers. He was also expected to conduct studies to improve instructional procedures. Finally, the principal was expected to carry out all administrative policies.⁴⁸

A former chairman of the School Board of Richmond also stated that schools in Richmond operated "generally, according to the way the principal wanted them to operate."⁴⁹ She added that autonomy was the norm. She perceived that each principal operated differently with his or her own teachers and that there was not much comparing among the schools. Regarding the issue of autonomy for Miss Bailey personally, Mrs. Crockford believed that the upper level administrators from the

central office were only at Maury for special events, if at all, and that "she [Miss Bailey] was a law unto herself and [that] they didn't buck her too much."

The particular area in which Maury was located had special needs. By recognizing the needs of the community and organizing the people in the community in a cohesive force, Miss Bailey's effort was acknowledged and rewarded by the school system for meeting the needs of the people in the area, which Mrs. Crockford considered no easy task. Mrs. Crockford believes that the rules would have been relaxed a little sometimes when that kind of positive action was taking place in a school and in a community. She thinks other communities could have done the same thing if they had wanted except for the fact that few principals lived for their schools as Miss Bailey lived for Maury. "That was the main part of her life."⁵⁰

The perceptions of Miss Bailey, Dr. Nesbitt, and the Maury staff toward the way the administration viewed the operation at Maury were that they were permitted to have the autonomy required to develop their school. It was stated:

Within this larger total city picture, Maury School operates within its own individual school framework. An individuality of school operation is possible because of a far-seeing, understanding school administration which has a fundamental belief in the individualized quality in education, faith in sincerity of effort and in integrity of purpose, and confidence in the lasting values of education.⁵¹

Also, they perceived the Superintendent and School Board as being willing to work with each school individually in a way which released the creative powers of the people in that school. "Each school is

empowered to develop a program that is conceived as best for its community."⁵² The general direction which came from the school administration was acknowledged, and the administration was perceived as supportive rather than as authoritative.

The relationship with the Virginia Department of Education and the Maury staff was also considered as supportive by the Maury staff. Drawing on the resources of the Department, including library materials, publications, audio-visuals, and personnel, the State Department was perceived as a source of strength rather than as a hindrance. It was not considered as a regulatory agency to whom the staff had to defend or explain its program.⁵³

The point of view of the Richmond Public Schools administration would have contributed to rather than thwarted the development of Maury School. The basis for the educational innovations that would extend for four decades was stated in the official philosophy of Richmond Public Schools in the 1930's and early 1940's. Philosophical positions and specific instructional expectations which were expected to be implemented by the school principals are presented in the following section.

The Philosophy of the Central Office Administration

The philosophy of the central office administration in Richmond Public Schools had been gradually changing in the 1930's as indicated by the statements in the Annual Reports of the School Board of the City of Richmond. The educational programs suffering from declining revenues as well as from declining enrollments at the elementary level

in the 1920's evolved in spite of all in the early 1930's. In addition to *emphasizing research, experimentation, and curriculum development*, an activity program was encouraged to replace regimentation in the lower elementary grades.⁵⁴ The elementary schools were credited with supporting a new philosophy of education in the Annual Report for 1934-35. Called the "new spirit in education," the school was to be considered a happy place for joyous activities. The role of the teacher was to assume responsibility for each pupil's progress in the context of the pupil's personality and ability. An increase in pupil promotions was considered an indication of a change in philosophy. The new philosophy considered failure of the pupil to be the failure of the teacher.⁵⁵ Throughout the 1930's and early 1940's, the activity movement was advocated by the administration.⁵⁶ The strong points of the movement were emphasized not only for enrichment and individualization of instruction but for improving learning and raising the literacy level.⁵⁷

For several years while the administration advocated the activity movement, it also issued cautions against extremism. It was noted early that some practitioners had strayed and were engaging in "activity for activity's sake," while others achieved greater learning with the method. The actions and remarks of some educators seemed to indicate a conflict between student growth and achievement. The administration considered this erroneous. The schools were obligated to assure that the things done in the elementary school had educative value for the pupils to achieve, each according to his or her mental ability. The implication was that some educators in Richmond were embracing the new trends

too wholeheartedly without balancing them with the old methods and values of the institution.⁵⁸

Other key ideas parallel to the progressive education theories were advocated by the administration in the early years of Maury's development. Themes that would be found throughout the history of Maury School appeared in the Annual Reports of the School Board from 1936-40. The philosophy of Richmond Public Schools advocated that the new school or the modern school was more than a place to go. School was described as a place where every phase of education and life contributes to intellectual and social development.⁵⁹ The belief of educating children for a "cooperative social order" by emphasizing development of self-esteem, success, and the process of growth were upheld to the teachers. Teachers were urged to emphasize individual improvement and growth rather than group competition.⁶⁰

Reading was considered to be the core subject not only because it was essential to all other subjects, but because it was the basis for developing thinking skills, acquiring information, participating in democracy and safeguarding leisure time.⁶¹ The improvement of the reading and language programs was considered to be dependent on providing additional opportunities in the classroom for engaging in and enjoying language experiences. It was recommended that books, materials and furnishings be arranged in the classrooms to encourage participation.⁶² The Book Fair initiated by the English Committee headed by Miss Bailey and later sponsored by the Elementary Teachers Association was recognized and supported by the administration as an

outstanding event to promote reading.⁶³ The development of libraries in the elementary schools was recognized by the administration as essential to the elementary school long before resources were appropriated.⁶⁴

Teacher participation in the development of the school was promoted. After a committee on Policies of the Elementary Teachers Association met with the administration, it was concluded that teachers sharing in policy making with administrators would provide the model for democratic pupil-teacher relationships. For the good of the democratic system, the practices of cooperation, sharing, and participation should be utilized. Teacher discussions in faculty meetings on instructional and administrative matters, as well as teacher participation on committees were recommended as strategies for increasing participation.⁶⁵ Teacher involvement and participation in study committees was emphasized and implemented by the administration of Richmond Public Schools. Group discussions among teachers were considered one of the best methods of promoting professional growth.⁶⁶

The importance of the classroom environment as a "powerful supplement to the activities of the class" was also mentioned by the administration. The physical attributes of the classrooms and the emotional tone of the atmosphere were important aspects of enhancing the educational environment.⁶⁷

The philosophy of educating the whole child by providing a rich and varied program and individualizing instruction to meet the needs of

the pupils was stressed. Teachers were also cautioned against "doing away with standards," not meeting the needs of superior students, and not basing promotions on achievement.⁶⁸ It was also reported that compatible with the individualization of instruction was the informal home report which was receiving a favorable response from parents.⁶⁹

The growth of the individual and the instruction of children as individuals were also advocated by the administration.⁷⁰ The desirability of developing cooperation between the school and the community was included as an expectation for all elementary schools.⁷¹ Field trips in the community, the use of art, music, rhythms, and constructions as teaching strategies, and the use of radio and television in instruction were supported.⁷²

These expectations and administrative positions were communicated and disseminated not only through formal documents, but through formal and informal communication channels. Principals attended monthly meetings; teachers and principals attended professional association meetings, study committees, city-wide PTA meetings, and interacted with the administration and its designees throughout the school year. The principal and teachers at Maury School were totally involved and participated in all study groups, committees, and professional activities.

Combined with their knowledge of the theorists on progressive education, their academic affiliations, and their professional inclinations, Miss Bailey and her staff had all the encouragement they needed from the school administration in their formal statements of

philosophy to create a school which combined modern theories and educational practices. As the Maury staff focused on the needs of the students, they implemented the recommendations of the central administration, either prior to or concurrently with the statements of position by the school administration.

The general organization of Maury Elementary School was similar in many ways to all public elementary schools in Richmond. The school calendar, the length of the school day, school entrance age, class size, appropriations of finances, services, and personnel conformed to guidelines for all schools. Factors that could be controlled within the confines of the school were determined by the principal and teachers. Children were grouped heterogeneously by age and usually remained with the same teacher for several years. Teachers and children planned the daily schedules to meet the needs of the group. Parents were involved in the activities of the school in formal and informal ways. Teachers, parents, and children worked on committees. Collegial and friendly relationships were developed. The school was considered an environment of high quality personal living. Personal growth rather than competition was emphasized. School was always open on Tuesday evenings for parent visits and activities. Report cards were replaced by conferences and visits. Textbooks were only used as supplementary materials. The goals of the school were reevaluated annually and plans were made to meet the needs of the particular situation under study. Large school events were held annually and were considered part of the curriculum. The teachers discussed values and ideals and cooperatively

planned to meet the needs of children to keep an "effective motion" going at Maury.⁷³

Although constantly being evaluated and revised, the program at Maury was solidly defined in its early years. The innovations advocated by the administration and implemented at Maury outlasted the cycle of change that would occur in the institution and in the progressive education movement itself. Originating in a deep belief shared among teachers who provided continuous service and stability to a school, the ideas practiced at Maury were not phased out as new trends emerged. The staff at Maury persisted in their mission of refining their practices and increasing their expertise in dealing with the more subtle aspects of educational problems. Problems were pursued with greater sophistication and new expertise, but new trends did not replace practices which worked.

Social and Institutional Changes Surrounding Maury

As the historical forces shifted, new forces were brought to bear upon Maury School. Within the Richmond Public administration, disagreements emerged. The values of the institution and the organizational units within the institution were not always aligned. A Survey Commission report was supportive of innovations which had been put in place, but the administration became more and more concerned about all schools having the same philosophy. As the changes developed, the existence of Maury as a site of educational innovation was potentially at risk.

During the 1940's, the war affected all aspects of Richmond Public Schools. Shortages of materials, resources, and teachers developed. Students and teachers withdrew to enter military service adding to the already declining enrollments. Teachers and pupils engaged in war-time activities and activities of a patriotic nature. A Defense Committee to the League of Richmond Teachers was organized as part of the war effort. Eleanor Douthat of Maury School was a member of this committee.⁷⁴ The war efforts increased interaction between government and civic organizations and brought more adults into contact with the schools, teachers and students. As the war years passed the curriculum was modified to meet the vocational social and personal needs of the students and the community.⁷⁵

In the first half of the 1940's, a conflict emerged in Richmond Public Schools which would be overshadowed in the post-war years by a reshaping of the philosophy of the school system under the administration of a new Superintendent, Henry Willett, appointed on January 1, 1946. In addition to the new Superintendent arriving in Richmond, the School Board consisting of nine members selected by districts was changed to a five member board appointed from the city at large by the City Council.⁷⁶

The suggestion of a conflict between the philosophy and practices of some teachers and/or administrators in the school system with the goals, philosophy and suggested practices of the administration was noted as early as the 1940-41 Annual Report.⁷⁷ The administration and School Board indicated that liberal promotion policies were

inappropriate, that promotion would be contingent upon achievement and mastery of appropriate skills, and that all schools would be required to use the standard report card form supplemented with letters or home visits (rather than replaced by). It was also reiterated from the 1939-40 Annual Report that the goals of the activity movement to provide enrichment opportunities and to meet individual needs were to be balanced with providing tools for increased pupil achievement.⁷⁸ In the 1941-42 Annual Report, the need for balance in the activity movement was mentioned for the third consecutive year. The perception of Assistant Superintendent Norris and the supervisors was that more teachers were balancing their teaching procedures to meet pupil needs, enrich school life and to efficiently provide the prerequisite skills for learning. All supervisors were working with teachers to secure a readjustment.⁷⁹ During that year, on December 19, 1941, a school survey was commissioned to study the Richmond Public Schools at the request of the School Board.⁸⁰

The Survey Commission published its report in May of 1943. The Commission, appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, studied the schools in view of the stated purposes of the system after reviewing numerous records and observing in schools and classrooms. The major purpose of public education in Richmond Schools was concluded to be formal learning; however, the members of the Commission also quoted a statement by an Assistant Superintendent which indicated that the activity movement was to be considered not only as a means of enrichment but as a technique to enhance learning. The

Commission found that in Richmond there were indicators to show that both the goals of formal learning and the use of new methods of teaching and supervising were considered important purposes.⁸¹

In studying the instructional program in the elementary schools in Richmond, the Commission Report concluded that there were only "scattered situations in Richmond elementary schools in which there is recognition of the concepts fundamental to a good program of education as outlined in this study."⁸² A good program of study was considered to be one in which:

1. The different capacities of children due to background and personal problems were considered in relationship to readiness for learning. Children were to be seen working in a variety of activities where repetition was avoided.

2. Instruction was individualized and it allowed for individual choice.

3. The value of creative expression in art and music was demonstrated by student work.

4. The opportunities for problem-solving, the development of personal and social judgement, and the discovery of deeper meanings existed in the instructional program. Cooperative group planning between the teacher and students was advocated as an important activity and the close identification of the students with school life was considered desirable.

The study did not mention specific schools or teachers in citing examples of appropriate educational practices. Test scores were listed in

the report for selected grade levels but no relationships were formulated between test scores and effective instructional practices. In applying the criteria of effective practices to the elementary schools, it was observed while examples of the desirable practices were limited, there were examples of work that met the needs of students from lower socio-economic groups. There were also examples that demonstrated effective interaction between the teachers and the school community "for analyzing problems of living and acting upon the analysis for the good of the children."⁸³ The report concluded that most of the schools "operate as a collection of rooms" rather than as a collective group.⁸⁴ One school was cited as having:

Children, teachers, and principal work together continuously on the problem of having a well-kept and artistically decorated school building. There are many opportunities in this kind of work for children to see the purposes for doing things, to experiment with suggestions, to evaluate, and to draw conclusions.⁸⁵

The Report also stated that the individual school must relate effectively to the system and to its school community. The value and importance of close home-school-community relations in the enterprise of developing the whole child was extolled. The Report indicated and supported a philosophy of community relations that identified the school as a community center for the child and for adult development in order to provide the quality of life for everyone in the community. There was some evidence that some schools were extending their services to deal with community problems.⁸⁶

In the Annual Report for the school year 1936-37, special recognition was given to Maury School for programs to establish greater

contacts between the community and the school. The evening opening every week for the parents to meet the teachers and principal was mentioned in addition to other evening programs and social service programs.⁸⁷

Regarding the administration and organization of the schools, the conflict of the purposes of some of the elementary principals in Richmond was noted. The commission stated that the lack of unity of purpose between the progressives (or liberals) and traditionalists (or conservatives) was pronounced and was underlying the organization and administration of the elementary schools.⁸⁸ The commission recommended that a plan be developed to bring the different groups to a common understanding of how to meet the needs of their pupils and communities without sacrificing the values of either philosophy.

It was recommended that the initiative of principals not be thwarted by adopting restrictive policies in the interest of uniformity for achievement. Specifically, it "recommended that ample opportunity be given to principals to adapt the program to the specific needs of their respective schools as those needs are determined through teacher, patron and pupil experience and cooperative study."⁸⁹ In order to achieve the "best adaptation of instruction and teaching," all persons involved in practices were recommended to participate in the determination of policies.⁹⁰

In the final chapter, the Commission presented a proposal of organization for the administrative staff of the Richmond Public Schools which was considered to cost "remarkably little to administer,"

according to the consultant Henry H. Hill.⁹¹ An assistant superintendent responsible for the administration and supervision of elementary education was recommended. In addition to having leadership and personality, the commission noted that "he should be broadminded and willing to cooperate and advise in experimental work designed to contribute to an improved and unified instructional program for the entire school system."⁹² The report had noted in a previous section the need for "strong, city-wide leadership" to guide principals and to disseminate "the results of excellent programs of work developed by individual schools or teachers."⁹³

The Survey Commission Report had been submitted to the School Board in May 1943. The proposed administrative organization of including an assistant superintendent for elementary education was immediately adopted. A committee of the School Board studied the Survey Report and proposed recommendations to the Board for adoption.⁹⁴ Some of the recommendations adopted follows:

1. Courses of study or outlines for each grade and subject should be provided.

2. Double sessions in junior primary classes should be discontinued.

3. Spelling instruction should be improved.

4. The general policy of instruction which was to be implemented by the administration was based on the exact language in the Report: Growth in skills and knowledge, consideration of individual differences in ability and personal problems of the child, use of the physical and

cultural environment of the child, and emphasis on developing "judgement in living."⁹⁵

5. Increased cooperative planning.

6. Reduction of general supervisors with main responsibility for supervision of instruction resting with the principals.

7. The development of all schools as community centers.⁹⁶

One statement of the Survey Commission met "with the hearty approval of the School Board: 'A plan should be developed to bring the different groups in the elementary schools, with their diverging philosophies, to a common and practical understanding of the needs of the pupils and the best way of meeting such needs in the different school communities.'"⁹⁷ No plan of action or specific strategies accompanied that remark which was presented in the form of a recommendation.

In the postwar years, the emphasis was on adjusting the fundamental purpose of the school to meet the needs of educating students to function effectively in a democratic society.⁹⁸ A curriculum revision began in the summer of 1946 and resulted in a revised course of study designed "to meet the changing needs of children and their community."⁹⁹ Curriculum study, revision, teacher workshops, and in-service opportunities were emphasized once again after the focus of helping with the war was no longer required. The emphasis in the instructional program was on improving the quality of the programs to assure pupil success in school. The emphasis was not only on seeing child development as a wholistic process, but on seeing "the role of each department in relation to the overall purposes of the total school

program."¹⁰⁰ In order to unify learning and to make learning experiences meaningful, cooperative action was encouraged.

The themes of cooperative action and democracy were stressed by the school administration in the early 1950's when democratic ideals were threatened by perceived destructive forces. Civic education beginning in the elementary grades was considered essential to the continuation of the democratic experiment. A democratic school was considered the proper setting and appropriate environment for the formation of democratic attitudes. The emotional climate of the school and the daily activities were vehicles for showing children that democracy works. While individual worth was still mentioned, it was now balanced by an "emphasis upon the common good."¹⁰¹ Concern for the group, responsibility, and an attitude of service were virtues to be developed in the children in a democratic school. Instruction and subject matter were also chosen to develop specific attitudes. Instruction in the fundamentals was considered important to provide an educational foundation for developing thoughtful citizens.

Maury School was often cited as an example of a school where democratic education was practiced. This trend was compatible with the innovative educational practices at Maury which had been ongoing since the 1930's. In future years, the practices at Maury would not always be aligned with the constantly changing trends of the school system's administration.

Developing and Maintaining Maury in the Later Years

The challenge to maintain Maury in the later years did not appear to involve a struggle or battle in order to preserve the innovative practices there. The mission remained that of meeting the needs of students. Certain changes were inevitable; some adaptations were necessary; and some new trends were rejected by the educators at Maury.

Miss Bailey retired in June 1963, and she continued to visit the school for many years after her retirement. The new principal, Elizabeth Wall Noel, was chosen from the faculty. Continuity in the practices was consciously or unconsciously provided for in the choice of the new leader. The school secretary and many of the teachers who worked with Miss Bailey also remained at Maury.

In the reprint of A Public School for Tomorrow in 1967, Dr. Nesbitt discussed the changes that had taken place at Maury. The neighborhood was considered more mobile and transient. The student body and the faculty were integrated. In the curricula, emphasis on science and new math were added. Foreign language instruction was provided and educational television was available. The faculty had gradually expanded to include the assistance of a nurse, social worker, and part-time specialists in art, music, and physical education.

In the post-Sputnik years, the philosophy at Maury had remained focused on humanism as the staff sought to adapt the school to a changing society. Rejecting the subject-centered approach to education, the psychology of learning which the Maury teachers still practiced was a creative, wholistic approach to learning. Drill and practice,

conditioned-response learning, and testing were not considered substitutes for higher level teaching and learning. The internal involvement of the learner was still the goal of instructional program at Maury. Teachers were expected to bring "scholarship, imagination, and creativity" to the school to fulfill the expectations for teaching at Maury which involved teaching higher order thinking skills and teaching to the affective as well as the cognitive domains.¹⁰²

In 1966-67, Maury School was involved in a Self-Study which culminated in a review by a visiting committee from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The reports prepared by the Maury faculty and validated by the visiting committee provide additional insights on the changes that had occurred and the innovations that had lasted at the famous site of educational innovation. The school community was by then considered culturally and socio-economically deprived. The challenge for working with the children and their families was great, as the needs were profound. An emphasis on positive school-community-parent relationships still prevailed. The faculty considered the school to be an active force of positive influence to the community. The PTA remained active and the school involved all community agencies willing to participate in the activities of the school designed to meet the needs of children. A compensatory education program for four year olds had been added to the school as had the position of school community coordinator. The faculty still maintained the practice of opening the school on Tuesday evenings for parent

visitations. Home visits and frequent conferences with the parents were promoted.

The philosophy of teaching and learning continued to be focused on enriching the lives of all persons who came in contact with the school, including children, teachers, parents, and friends. A positive approach to learning which emphasized intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development; close relationships among students, teachers, and parents; and a relaxed atmosphere were considered desirable. The emphasis was always on growth and development as opposed to the correction of deficiencies in learners. Active, experiential learning activities were considered a strength. Within the wholistic approach, the needs of the learner were considered. Creativity and an emphasis on beauty in daily living were valued.

Traditional events such as June Breakfast, family picnic, Carnival, and Thanksgiving, and Christmas celebrations remained part of the culture. The Thursday faculty meetings were oriented to high level professional concerns and were considered opportunities for in-service, problem solving, and cooperative planning. Although the building needed many improvements, the children had many needs, and new teachers had joined the faculty, the strengths and essential features of Maury were still in place.¹⁰³

The visiting committee in February 1968 found the reports prepared by the Maury faculty to be adequate in all areas: purposes, program, personnel, facilities, school-community interaction, and coordination. The conferences and observations during the visitation

allowed the committee to certify that Maury School met the standards for accreditation with the exception of deficiencies in square footage in the classrooms and the acreage of the school grounds.¹⁰⁴

The committee commended the staff of Maury on the "sensitivity of the school's program in a changing society," indicating that the atmosphere created by the staff enhanced the learning environment.¹⁰⁵ The school staff was also commended on their open door policy for parents and on the practice of holding Tuesday evening conferences. The excellent rapport between the principal and teachers and the atmosphere which promoted the exchange of ideas were recognized. In spite of the age and limitations of the building, the appearance of the school and the arrangements for school functions and staff meetings were considered strengths. The staff was recognized as being oriented toward self-improvement and the staff meetings were considered to promote professional growth. The staff was cited as working together harmoniously and the principal was considered a guiding influence for the total program. The committee observed that the Maury program met the social needs of the child and worked with children individually. While the development of children's verbal abilities and the library program were considered strengths of the Maury program, a recommendation was made to focus instruction on behavioral objectives from the scope and sequence of subject matter. The findings of the visiting committee indicated that the program at Maury had continued to be focused on the innovations which developed during the progressive education movement.

The innovative program at Maury continued to function under Wall's leadership through the 1969-70 school year. In the summer of 1970, the school was closed as an elementary school. As a result of civil litigation, Bradley v. The School Board of the City of Richmond, a court ordered desegregation plan for Richmond City Public Schools was submitted and approved in August, 1970. The plan called for the desegregation of all elementary schools and the strategies to accomplish the desegregation included school consolidation and rezoning.¹⁰⁶ Maury was consolidated with Blackwell Elementary School and Wall was named principal of Blackwell. The Maury teachers were transferred to Blackwell. According to Wall, the move was hastily accomplished without any advanced planning or time for organizing.¹⁰⁷ Wall remained at Blackwell until her retirement in 1974. The Maury teachers retired, transferred, and regrouped. On an individual teacher basis, the innovations were maintained, but Wall indicated that the Maury program was not replicated in the new historical and sociological context.

Summary

The change process at Maury School began with the initiative of principal Bailey in 1934. Believing that cooperative activity motivated adults to change, she began the process with the alteration of the environment. Teachers and patrons were involved in the process through group discussions, problem-solving sessions, projects, and activities. Individual relationships were also nurtured to promote personal growth and change. Change was considered an ongoing

process through which problems of greater subtlety and complexity were gradually and continually revealed and tackled.

The principalship of Bailey was a key factor in the development of Maury. Her leadership style was non-authoritative and democratic. She believed that administration existed to support teaching. Her philosophy of teaching and learning was based on principles of child growth and development and on the teachings of John Dewey. The school was the focus of her life for three decades. She was considered an outstanding role model by teachers and colleagues. A people-oriented person who believed in and developed talents in others, she built teams and networks among her staff, parents, friends, and colleagues. She had a dynamic personality; she developed status in the profession; and she used her personal and professional power to influence the development of the school.

The innovations at Maury were established and maintained by principal Bailey, her successor, and the teaching staff. Continuity in tenure among principals and the teachers provided a basis for maintaining the innovations. High academic, professional, and personal expectations for the Maury teachers were a contributing factor to the existence of the program.

The policies of Richmond Public Schools regarding the role of its principals permitted principal Bailey to develop a school which incorporated practical and philosophical innovations. The school system allowed her the autonomy which she sought. Miss Bailey also considered the school administration as supportive of the Maury

program in its effort to operate with individuality to meet the needs of the community. The policies and practices of the Virginia Department of Education were also considered supportive to the development of innovation by Bailey.

The philosophical and practical expectations disseminated to principals and teachers by the Richmond Public Schools administration formally promoted the incorporation of the essential features of progressive education theories in Virginia's schools during the 1930's and early 1940's. In the post World War II years, the philosophy was refocused on democratic education and student achievement in a subject-centered curriculum. Philosophical and practical expectations which had been adopted in the Maury program were not explicitly excluded in the new educational rhetoric.

¹Etta Rose Bailey, Introduction to A Public School for Tomorrow, by Marion Nesbitt (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), p. ix.

²Powhatan School was located on the corner of Eleventh and Bainbridge Streets and was also acquired in the annexation of Manchester in 1910. It was erected in 1907 and was used until 1951 when it was condemned and vacated. The 150 pupils assigned there were transferred to Maury.

³From 1888 to 1915, another school located at 1600 Everett Street in south Richmond and also acquired in the annexation of Manchester in 1910, was known as Maury School. In 1915, it was named Dunbar and in 1951, it was renamed Blackwell. As part of the desegregation plan for Richmond Public Schools in the summer of 1970, the second official principal of Maury and the staff were transferred to Blackwell Elementary School. The Maury building was operated as an annex to Bainbridge Middle School beginning in 1970. From 1974 to 1979, it was again opened as an elementary school for students in the third through the fifth grades. The building was closed in 1979.

⁴Marion Nesbitt, A Public School for Tomorrow (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953).

⁵Interview with Nancy Brown, Woodbridge, Virginia, 18 January 1988.

⁶The area has continued to decline and is plagued by problems of teenage pregnancy, unemployment, and truancy. Poverty and crime characterize the area; it has never been rehabilitated and has steadily declined. The Richmond News Leader, 9 June 1987, p. 30.

⁷The School Board Record indicates that Miss Bailey was assigned to Powhatan for the 1934-35 session. The Personnel Record indicates that she was assigned to Maury. She was not officially designated as the assistant for Maury although it is known that the principals of Powhatan officially supervised Maury from 1910 to 1935. School Board Personnel Records indicate that she began as assistant principal at Maury in 1934. A former teacher and colleague who went to Maury the same year as Miss Bailey indicated that they began in 1934.

⁸Bailey, Introduction to A Public School for Tomorrow, p. ix.

⁹Helen Hay Heyl, "The Two Extremes," Journal of Education CXV (7 November 1932): 602.

¹⁰"Vast Strides Noted." Richmond Times-Dispatch, 28 August 1955, p. F-3.

¹¹Interview with Louise Baker, Richmond, Virginia, 5 November 1987.

¹²Bailey, Introduction to A Public School for Tomorrow, pp. x-xi.

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- 15 Interview with Virginia Robinson, Richmond, Virginia, 11 November 1987.
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- 19 Interview with Virginia Crockford, Richmond, Virginia, 16 November 1987.
- 20 Interview with Frances Bellman Haddock, Richmond, Virginia, 20 November 1987.
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- 25 Interview with John R. Clarke, Richmond, Virginia, 19 November 1987.
- 26 Interview with John Mapp, Richmond, Virginia, 21 November 1987.
- 27 65th ARS 1935, p. 62.
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- 29 William H. Kilpatrick, Foreword to A Public School for Tomorrow, by Marion Nesbitt (Harper & Brothers, 1953), p. vii.
- 30 Ibid., p. viii.
- 31 Etta Rose Bailey, "Graduation Speech" presented at Collegiate School, Richmond, Virginia, June 1951.
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- 33 69th ARS 1938, p. 53.
- 34 Interview with Clarke.
- 35 Richmond News Leader, 16 April 1960.
- 36 Marjorie Webb, "South Richmond Principal Gets Jane Addams Centennial Citation," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 20 April 1960.
- 37 She died on November 1, 1971. Richmond Times-Dispatch, 2 November 1971.
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- 39 68th ARS 1937, pp. 36-37.
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- 42Marion Y. Ostrander, ed., Teaching Reading in the Elementary School (New York: Progressive Education Association, 1941).
- 43Richmond News Leader, 28 April 1954.
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- 4566th ARS 1935, p. 29.
- 4671st ARS 1940, p. 49.
- 4775th ARS 1944, p. 27.
- 48Richmond, Virginia School Board. Richmond Public Schools Rules and Regulations of the School Board. Adopted September 15, 1947. pp. 16-17.
- 49Interview with Crockford.
- 50Ibid.
- 51Nesbitt, A Public School for Tomorrow, 1953, p. 7.
- 52Ibid., p. 18.
- 53Ibid.
- 5461st-66th ARS 1930-1935.
- 5566th ARS 1935, pp. 18-19.
- 5668th ARS 1937, pp. 46-47.
- 5771st ARS 1940, p. 46
- 58Ibid.
- 5968th ARS 1937, p. 51.
- 6070th ARS 1939, p. 74.
- 61Ibid., pp. 51-53.
- 6269th ARS 1938, pp. 77-78.
- 6371st ARS 1940, p. 37.
- 6472nd ARS 1941, p. 36 and 77th ARS 1946, p. 41.
- 6569th ARS, pp. 50-51.
- 6671st ARS 1940, p. 37.
- 6769th ARS 1938, pp 52-53.
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- 69Ibid., pp. 69-70.
- 7068th ARS 1937, p. 30 and 69th ARS 1938, pp. 75-78.
- 7168th ARS 1937, p. 21.
- 7271st ARS 1940, p. 45.
- 73Nesbitt, A Public School for Tomorrow, 1953, p. 22.
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- 7576th ARS 19, pp. 13-14.
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81Richmond, Virginia School Board, Survey Commission to Appraise Work of Richmond Schools, 1942-43, p. 17.
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¹⁰⁵Gertrude W. Kerr, Chairman, Visiting Committee, "Report of the Visiting Committee Matthew F. Maury Elementary School, Richmond City Public Schools, Richmond, Virginia," February 1968. (Typewritten and bound report in the Department of Planning and Development, Richmond Public Schools, Richmond, Virginia).

¹⁰⁶School Board Minutes, 20 August 1970.

¹⁰⁷Interview with Elizabeth Wall Noel, Richmond, Virginia, 27 March 1987.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROGRAM INNOVATIONS AT MAURY

The innovations which transformed Maury School from a regimented institution with its nineteenth century philosophy of education into a school that was considered an outstanding elementary school by educators and journalists in the 1940's and 1950's create a picture of a school that exhibits the essential characteristics of the progressive education theories. These innovations were described in magazines, journals, newspapers, a book, a doctoral dissertation, and a film on the school written and produced by members of the school staff, other educators, and journalists. Oral histories taken from staff members and persons associated with the school have provided additional details.

The changes that occurred at Maury did not go unnoticed as evidenced by the written documents and oral histories, but the innovations were not labeled as progressive by the teachers working in the school, by the principal, or by the Richmond Public Schools administration. Although some persons were aware that something different was happening, others did not consider it unique. Eleanor Douthat, a longtime teacher, reported that she perceived that Maury already had a "reputation" when she went there in 1938. Miss Bailey, however, disliked the label "progressive" and the term was not used by the faculty members although they were aware that other educators

applied it to their work at Maury.¹ Mildred Reed and Frances Bellman Haddock went there in 1948 and they perceived that the school was well established.² However, Virginia Crockford, PTA leader and later Chairman of the Richmond School Board, did not believe that local lay people or PTA members from other schools knew that anything different was happening at Maury. She said you would never have known about it unless you visited it. She added that you would have never heard about the school from Miss Bailey and that it was never talked about by the school administration. "It was one of those silent gems," she noted.³ However, beginning in the 1940's, the Maury School program received national and international attention; and although labeled in the local newspapers as a "progressive school," the greatest recognition of the program came from people and sources outside Richmond.⁴

Publicity on Maury School

The earliest publicity about Maury School appeared in the newspapers.⁵ Later, a book and a film would be printed and produced. The information on the program innovations provided by this material provides evidence of the existence of the practices and some of the intangible qualities of the school as viewed by visitors and educators who were not associated with the school. The innovative practices described at a particular time were observed to have existed throughout the history of the program. Following the section on publicity, a composite portrait of the program at Maury is presented. Publicity regarding other activities and events is included in the discussion of the particular activity.

The library program was one of the first innovative programs to be publicized in the newspaper. Libraries in the elementary schools were a new development around the turn of the twentieth century. The educational value of libraries in the elementary schools in Richmond was recognized long before the idea was supported administratively or financially.⁶ Elementary library collections were gradually built with State money in the 1940's.⁷ The earliest library at Maury was in a classroom and was maintained by the teachers and volunteers. With the addition of new classrooms and the renovation of the cafeteria, a library-cafeteria combination went into operation in the fall of 1953. The only one in the city and believed to be one of a few in the nation, the combination created an informal atmosphere which was attractive to the students.⁸ A librarian was not placed in the school until the 1950's; however, an article on the uniqueness of the Maury School library appeared in the newspaper in 1949.⁹ There were approximately 5000 books in the Maury library, some of which had been authored and made by the children themselves. Considered to be part of the language arts program at Maury, the bookmaking process included writing, illustrating, designing and binding books. The author noted that almost every student in the school had written one book and that they were proud of them. The review indicated that the books compared favorably with published books for children which were for sale and that a misspelled word had not been found in any book. In addition to applying their language arts skills, the students also revealed themselves to their teachers through their writings. Inexperienced and young children

were helped with bookbinding by committees of teachers and older children after school.

In December 1941, the photo of twelve year old Maury student Young Yuen Bong, a Chinese refugee, was photographed in the Richmond Times-Dispatch with one of the books he had written at Maury.¹⁰ His books "Chinese Fishing Boat," "I Came to America," and "Chinese School" were written in Chinese with ink and brush with the English translations by the student typed and included in the book. He wrote of his experiences during the China war, of his journey to America and of his recollections of school in China.

By the 1940's, Maury School was receiving visitors from throughout the United States and other countries who were being directed there by the United States Office of Education.¹¹ Accounts of the visits appeared in local and national newspaper and magazine articles. Thirteen Washington, D. C. principals visited Maury during November 1945 to see "what democracy in education can be" reported the group to Superintendent Jesse H. Binford.¹² In their written report, they stated that "the group had heard of Maury School as one of the few educational centers where children and teachers live together in the ways all modern educators hold essential in developing boys and girls for life in a democracy." They spent several days at Maury discussing the underlying philosophy of the school that education is a way of living. They reported that they were strengthened in these convictions by their visit. The article reported that Maury School was considered "the only

one in the city which is conducted entirely on the philosophy of the so-called 'progressive education.'"¹³

In Woman's Home Companion (December 1945), an article on the disagreements among parents over old-fashioned and new progressive education urged parents to visit and inspect schools before judging them. The author was sent throughout the country to visit schools and to report to the parents of school children in America. In many places she found chaos and lack of discipline where ill-informed school personnel were trying to incorporate or implement new educational theories. However, she also found successful programs based on progressive principles. Directed to visit the "famous" Maury School by a former principal from New Jersey, she noted that here was a school implementing the new principles of education that received visitors from all over the United States. She reported finding a positive school environment at Maury School where she was "struck by the freedom, the spontaneity and the lovely manners of these children; and by their kindnesses to one another."¹⁴ She also interviewed parents of Maury students who reported having positive feelings about the school and the academic progress of their children. She refuted the opinion held by some that Maury students could not spell.¹⁵

In the October 16, 1950, special issue of Life on schools in the United States, Maury School was featured in a four-page picture story and called "Top Elementary School." Although noted to be a school with poor facilities, the article called it "modern," and stated that it was considered to be one of the "best public elementary schools in the

country."¹⁶ The imaginative teaching methods which were independent of time, space, or money were considered the key to the success of Maury. These methods were being used by alert teachers to create new learning experiences daily. A local newspaper informed the citizens of Richmond that Maury was the subject of praise in the article in Life.¹⁷ The standard criticism of not teaching the children to read in the modern schools was not observed to be true at Maury. The emphasis on the importance of the parent school relationship was captured in the article: "By getting to understand the school's aims, parents are able to carry on the job of education at home with the result that Maury becomes a round-the-clock institution."¹⁸

Other visitors proclaimed the merits of Maury School in newspaper articles. Dr. Albert Arrega, Chairman on Education of the National Congress of Guatemala, had been urged by the Office of Inter-American Affairs in Washington to visit Maury during his two month inspection of schools in the United States in 1949-50. He stated that Maury School was "one of the best schools I have seen in the United States."¹⁹ Visitors still traveled to Richmond to visit Maury School in 1956. The Sentinel Herald in Lucas County, Ohio reported that two teachers from Sylvania Elementary School visited Maury to meet Dr. Marion Nesbitt after reading A Public School for Tomorrow. The teachers were favorably impressed with the concept of education, particularly with the level of parental involvement. The philosophy of learning by experience was observed by the teachers who incorporated some of the techniques in their classrooms upon returning to Ohio. The

teachers noted that at Maury experiences were the basis for learning rather than learning from memory.²⁰

The Maury teachers and principals published articles and books describing the philosophy and activities of the school. Dr. Marion Nesbitt, a long-time staff member, wrote her doctoral dissertation on Maury School in 1952; it was published as a book a year later.²¹ In 1953, amidst the educational debates and reappraisal of the so-called new and liberal teaching methods, A Public School for Tomorrow was published with a foreword by William Heard Kilpatrick, then Professor Emeritus, Teachers College, Columbia University. The descriptive study of the Matthew F. Maury Elementary School provided an inside, vivid, positive account of the philosophy, characteristics, methods, and activities of a public school nationally recognized for the successful implementation of modern educational principles. Intimately involved in the creation of the school program since her arrival in 1939, Dr. Nesbitt provides background on the development of the program and the philosophy which guided it.

Written in the plural "we," the book describes how the educational process was approached as a series of lessons in living by a cooperative staff and community. Another former Maury teacher Louise Baker related that the book itself was actually a collaborative effort by the Maury faculty. For two years, many of the Thursday staff meetings were devoted to discussing educational aspects of Maury which became chapters in the book.²² Another teacher stated that "Miss Nesbitt had the quality of writing. The teachers talked at the staff meetings and she

wrote."²³ A brief rationale or the underlying educational principles conclude each of the chapters of the book which give details on the school experiences, learning activities, and attitudes which characterize Maury.

Reviews of A Public School for Tomorrow appeared in several publications. In Saturday Review, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, pioneer educator and author of Children in Our Schools, inferred that "life at Maury is full of experiences, all of which are regarded as opportunities for learning," and that "the teachers are sensitive to the children's interests."²⁴ She questioned whether planning was an integral part of the educational process at Maury and she cautioned the reader against the misinterpretation of concepts as described by popular slogans. She also observed from the book that "active, cooperative human relationships" sustained the life and educational process at Maury.²⁵

Recognizing that the faculty at Maury School was "notable for its self-examination" and believing that criticism would come as no surprize to them, reviewer Jeannette Veatch of the School of Education, New York University, stated in The American Teacher that the social studies curriculum might be superficial and wondered why children so prone to philosophical investigation never questioned segregation. She believed that the school was one of the better schools in the United States and one in which important strides had been made in democratic education. The process of creating a good school was attributed to the administrative ability of Principal Bailey who was dedicated to improving

the lives of children. Veatch welcomed the recognition of a "school that is proud of belonging to a public school system."²⁶

The book A Public School for Tomorrow was reprinted in November 1967.²⁷ At a meeting of the Department of Elementary, Kindergarten and Nursery Education of the National Education Association in 1966, Rodney Tillman proposed that the book be reprinted. Dr. Nesbitt was contacted and asked to negotiate with the publishers. Tillman suggested that the book could provide assistance to schools with lower socio-economic populations. Since it had become impossible to secure a copy of the book, it was felt that widespread dissemination would be desirable. The new paperback edition was published by Dell with a foreword by Dr. Tillman.

In the foreword, Dr. Tillman, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education, reminded the readers that while many programs had been designed for learners with special needs during the 1950's and 1960's, providing for individual differences by adjusting the curriculum to the learner had been and continued to be the approach of Maury School. He suggested that the philosophy and approaches provided in the description of Maury School would challenge readers to evaluate their beliefs.

In Dr. Nesbitt's introductory statement, she noted that increased student mobility, (racial) integration among students and faculty, and a leadership change with a new principal, Mrs. Elizabeth Wall, were among the changes at Maury. Although these and curriculum changes and adjustments continued to occur, humanism was still the "basis for

action" at Maury. Guided by human values and interests, the direction of the school toward democratic processes had remained.

In 1951 an educational film, designed to be used for in-service with adults, on the arts programs at Maury School was produced by the Virginia State Department of Education. "Report in Primary Colors" was said to be a "planned but unstaged film report" filmed in the classrooms and halls of Maury School. The purpose of the film was to show the art expressions of the children and the contributions the arts make to child growth and development, the curriculum, and the life of the school. Etta Rose Bailey states in the film: "Art is not a separate subject. It's an integral part of all the things we do."²⁸ The art program at Maury was documented as an integral part of all the activities of school life. Creative expression was valued as a means of relating learning to the child's world. The creative expressions shown in the film were visual (painting, constructions, crafts), written (stories, books, cards, charts, invitations), and kinesthetic (creative movement, rhythms, and dramatizations). The cooperative aspects of the Maury program were emphasized as children worked together to enhance the daily life of the school.

Visitors and insiders alike observed that the new theories of education were incorporated in the Maury program. Learning was activity oriented and involved the experiences of the child. The principles of democratic living were incorporated in an educational setting where parental involvement was considered essential. Group participation and cooperation in developing the curriculum and activities was observed.

Informal, cooperative relationships among students, teachers, and parents were considered desirable and were cultivated. Humanistic values were the foundation for action.

Program Developments in the Evolution of Maury School

For the purpose of developing a comprehensive picture of the innovative practices at Maury School, the program developments and the relationships of one component of the program to another are summarized in this section. Program developments which have been mentioned previously are summarized here to provide an encompassing descriptive profile of the school. The developments and practices which are described herein were characteristics of the program from its early beginnings throughout its existence.

The changes and innovations at Maury School that evolved into program developments can be broadly grouped in the following categories: philosophy and purpose of the school, environment for learning, administration and organization, the curricula and creative methods in the curricula, and the culture of the school. The philosophy and purpose of the school describe the mission of the staff and the underlying beliefs and values behind the daily activities and actions of the staff. The environment for learning indicates that the physical and psychological attributes and the emotional atmosphere developed created a climate for learning. The administration and organization of the school describes the roles of the principal and teachers, the design for instruction, the patterns of interaction established for the school to function, and the home-school-community relations. The curricula and

creative methods in the curricula provide an overview of the instructional program and categorize the innovative practices and instructional techniques. The culture of the school describes the daily and annual events and activities that contributed to the unique identity of the school.

Philosophy and Purpose

The mission of the staff at Maury School was to meet the needs of the individual child by providing quality learning experiences in the best learning environment for children. A belief in the worth and dignity of each child was an underlying value in the philosophy of the staff. Dr. Nesbitt stated: "There is a common bond by which all in this school are held together. It is the acceptance of each individual, in a feeling for people, a love for humanity, that all are bound together."²⁹ At Maury School, the teachers accepted the philosophy of working with the individual child.³⁰ Their philosophy included the belief in the potential and desire for growth in all human beings. The teachers studied child growth and development. They understood the concept that all children do not learn in the same way or at the same rate. They believed in developing self-esteem in children. Special education students from other schools were sometimes placed at Maury by the directors of special education because the teachers there were successful in working with children that were exceptional or different. Eleanor Douthat said that a child was never refused [admission] at Maury: "We took children from other schools and the ones we had with special needs and tried to keep challenging them."³¹ Louise Baker reflected: "The marvelous thing

about it was that we were very concerned with the needs of individual children. That was the basis of our philosophy really: how children learn as individuals; what their needs were as individuals."³²

The needs of the individual at Maury were defined broadly to include the social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs. At Maury, the philosophy of teaching and learning meant working with the "whole" child and the child's family. Virginia Crockford stated: "It seemed to me that her [Etta Rose Bailey's] philosophy was [that] you have to educate the parents in order to educate the children."³³

The teachers at Maury were influenced by the philosophy of Miss Bailey. People who worked there seemed to catch the spirit of humanism. The values and attitudes exemplified by Miss Bailey and in the culture of the school were uplifting to the staff. Teachers remember the days at Maury with pride, fondness, and happiness. They believe that they were personally and professionally fortunate to have taught there and to have known Miss Bailey. Some students recall the experience as dignifying and enhancing to their self-esteem.³⁴ The emphases on meeting the basic needs of the people associated with the school and then on meeting the higher order needs for such intangible qualities as beauty, harmony, understanding, balance, truth, and love were communicated to everyone associated with the school by the words and actions of Miss Bailey herself and then by her staff.

The Learning Environment

At Maury School, a learning environment was developed for children and teachers based on the belief that the environment

influences human growth. Maury was considered to be a cooperative community of teachers, students, and parents living and learning together. Dr. Marion Nesbitt stated that the school environment should be planned as an opportunity for living and learning and for feeling respected and accepted.³⁵ The social philosophy underlying the school climate was described by Nesbitt:

Teachers must love and understand children; they must be alert to what is revealed as children participate in school life; they must be keen to life and to those forces that impinge upon it; they must keep abreast of professional research and make changes accordingly. There is a humility, an open-mindedness, that sees the other person's point of view however different it may be. Non-conformity is nourished and cherished, that its power for good may not be lost.³⁶

Improving the physical attributes of the school and classrooms was considered essential to providing the best possible learning environment. Teachers painted rooms, bought rugs and rocking chairs from their own funds, and made curtains to create beauty in the classrooms. Miss Bailey had a bottle collection of beautiful glass figures and bottles placed in high windows above the main staircase at the entrance of the school. Parents planted flowers and landscaped the school yard. Miss Bailey herself built a mosaic pond in the courtyard. A former student recalled seeing her there on the weekends working on that project.³⁷ Teachers and students worked on art committees to display children's art work to introduce other elements of beauty and order in the environment. The principles of art in the environment were considered essential to improving the quality of living in the school.³⁸ As evidenced by the film produced by the Virginia Department of Education

on art in the environment at Maury, the school was well known for its emphasis on the quality of the visual appearance of the school.

The learning environment also included the emotional environment, atmosphere or school climate which was created by cooperation, interaction, and open behavior.³⁹ Good relationships among staff members, students, and parents were an essential component of creating this kind of school environment. Miss Bailey emphasized democratic principles of living. Authoritative practices were not considered acceptable and were not the norm. John R. Clarke, retired elementary principal and former Maury teacher, stated that there was a good quality of life at Maury and that a real family feeling existed among the teachers. He said that the positive approach was always emphasized at Maury and that although you had to work hard and go to school frequently, there were no headaches from being criticized and that there were no feelings of threat or being uptight. He said that the environment was relaxed, open, and permitted people to follow some of their own interests.⁴⁰ Virginia Crockford stated that "the atmosphere was half the school. She [Etta Rose Bailey] actually created a family atmosphere with the parents, the children, and with the teachers. And you could tell it. You could sense it the minute you walked into that school so you never felt at a loss when you were there."⁴¹

The Administration and Organization of the School

The themes of participation and cooperation permeated the administration and organization of Maury School. The role of the principal as the leader of the school was clearly defined by policy and

laws of governance, however, Miss Bailey was not only considered the authority figure but the spiritual and cultural leader by the staff. Miss Bailey was the "leader in building, modifying, renewing, and evaluating every phase of the program."⁴² The concept of shared leadership was practiced at Maury. The individual talents and expertise of the teachers were utilized to enhance the effectiveness of the organization. Responsibilities were shared according to the task to be performed or the problem to be faced. The mechanisms for this pattern of interaction were the weekly staff meetings, meetings for new teachers, committee work, and responsibilities for certain functions and activities in the life of the school. There were also annual retreats held at a time before that type of in-service was instituted. Planning began for the year ahead and the meetings were considered enjoyable and special by the teachers.⁴³

The teachers interacted across grade levels for work on committees. Effective group dynamics were developed where everyone assumed an active role because that expectation was established and practiced. Teachers were developed at Maury through their experiences. Mr. Clarke said there were many opportunities for teachers at Maury and that many teachers never had this kind of opportunity. Problem solving and conflict resolution techniques were practiced routinely and advance planning was a routine process. Eleanor Douthat stated: "Planning was involved in all phases of everything you did at Maury. You couldn't accomplish anything without planning. In planning for the whole school, each teacher would find her niche of what she was comfortable doing."⁴⁴

The organization for learning at Maury was flexible and described as "organic" by Nesbitt.⁴⁵ The students began school at age five and remained through grade four until 1953 when a new wing was completed to provide classrooms for the fifth and sixth grades. The enrollment of the school ranged between 400 and 500 students during the period of the study. The students were heterogeneously grouped by age and usually stayed with the same class of peers and the same teacher for several years. Students seldom had more than two teachers in the first five years of school. Children worked in groups in their classrooms and with children from other classrooms. They worked on committees and individually on tasks and jobs around the school which were considered an integral part of the curriculum. Movement by children throughout the school was part of the normal activity and was not considered disruptive.⁴⁶

The organization or plan for home-school-community relationships at Maury was considered innovative. The philosophy of the school as a social agency as well as an educational institution was underlying the plan for this component of the school. Virginia Crockford stated that: "It [Maury School] was a very positive force in the community," and "she [Miss Bailey] took that community and really built it into a cohesive force."⁴⁷ The Maury parents were encouraged to visit the school at anytime. There was an open door policy at the school. The philosophy of working with parents was explained to parents of new junior primary students in the handbook. The parents were urged from the beginning to participate in the life of the school by providing their

services to the school. They were encouraged to know the staff personally and to believe that the success of the child depended on the cooperation between parents and teachers. The themes of cooperation, participation, involvement, and positive expectations for the children were stressed. Every Tuesday night was Parents' Night at Maury School. The Tuesday night conferences with parents were a staff effort to establish better contact between parents and teachers who might help each other work with the child.⁴⁸ Traditional report cards were not used at Maury. There was no formal written reporting to parents because parents were continually involved in the educational process. If the parent did not come to school, then in addition to home visits, written comments on pupil progress were sent home. In the later years, a summary report card with specific comments was given to parents twice a year. That method was continued when Wall was principal.⁴⁹ Parent involvement and volunteerism were encouraged continuously by finding activities for adults in the school. Parents helped with routine and special events which became part of the culture of the school.

The theme of parent involvement continued to be a basis for action throughout the history of Maury. The traditions of emphasizing early registration of new students, frequent visits by parents, inviting family members for lunch, home visits, and Tuesday night conferences were strategies still used by Maury teachers in 1968 to develop parental support. The tradition of cooperation between parents and teachers, the importance of valuing each other, and the underlying humanistic belief in the goodness and worth of all people were emphasized there. Wall

stated: "Parents are accepted as they are, the cooperative ones and the difficult ones. All must be regarded as co-workers in the joint venture of educating children. This way of working is not easy. It takes time and more time, as well as continuous effort to maintain those relationships."⁵⁰ The work with parents was an ongoing reflection of the belief that educating children was a joint effort with parents.

The school provided services to the Maury children's families. A clothes closet to which parents could go without supervision was provided. Assistance was given in securing eyeglasses and free lunches were provided with money donated by the Lions Club. The teachers and principal involved themselves with the parents by making home visits, having an open door policy for parent visitation, and by remaining open on Tuesday evenings. The involvement was enhanced by having sensitive attitudes which were considered essential to alleviating tensions and social pressures which many children and parents faced.⁵¹

The relationship between the school and the community was an integral part of the program at Maury. The staff worked to be unified with the community.⁵² The school staff saw themselves providing service by helping parents and children relate better, by strengthening contacts between parents and teachers and parents and other parents, and by modeling behaviors of reaching out to others for parents and children. Nesbitt stated: "So the Maury community comes to the school, feeling at one with the community, goes out to meet it, to explore it, to learn from it."⁵³

The Maury School Parent Teacher Association was affiliated with the city-wide Parent Teacher Association. Miss Bailey attended all meetings of the city-wide organization which was very strong at the time. Virginia Crockford stated that the PTA was very parent oriented and that principals felt fortunate when they were asked to participate in a leadership role in the organization. Miss Bailey would always chair the elementary education or the early childhood committee which assured her an opportunity to be involved with the leaders of the PTA. Mrs. Crockford stated: "This would put her [Etta Rose Bailey] on the executive committee and she would come and voice her opinions there. She was very active and I don't think she ever missed a meeting because she was anxious to get her ideas across. She was very parent oriented."⁵⁴ The network of Maury parents and parents from other schools active in the city-wide organization was considered a resource for enhancing the planning process at Maury.⁵⁵

The relationship of Maury School and the greater south side community was cultivated and also considered an important asset to the school. Nesbitt stated:

Museums, churches, civic clubs, social agencies, business, and industry are ready and willing to merge their plans for the welfare of children with those of the school. It is at the point of their plans for children that Maury School meets them, for here we are as one in meaning and understanding. The cooperation of these groups and agencies is both amazing and heart-warming. The more the school's plans for the welfare of children widen and deepen and expand the easier it is to relate its plans to those of the community.⁵⁶

Melvin Elderidge, a former community leader in the Bainbridge neighborhood and President of the Lions Club remembered Etta Rose

Bailey as a "mover." He stated that the Lions Club helped with projects at Maury School and the officers of the club attended special events such as June breakfast. He also recalled, humorously, how Miss Bailey once spent money from the Lions Club which had been donated for a film projector on a very large aquarium for the front hall after she had successfully persuaded the Richmond Public Schools administration to purchase the film projector. He said she was successful at achieving her goals for the school ⁵⁷

The administration and organization of the school was directed by the principal in conjunction with the teachers. Leadership was shared. The principal and staff perceived that they had the autonomy to control the program practices at the school within the general guidelines of the the school division. The staff did not perceive that they were inhibited by the general administration of Richmond Public Schools or the Virginia Department of Education.

The Curricula and Creative Methods in the Curricula

The goal of providing quality learning experiences for students through individualizing learning opportunities at the appropriate developmental level for the child was practiced at Maury. The curriculum was based on the experiences of the child. The experiences were the basis for building new knowledge, and the teachers structured the experiences to be meaningful and engaging for each student. The traditional subjects were interfaced with the needs and interests of the students to build the curricula for living and learning. An overview of

the curricula highlights the traditional subjects which were integrated in the activities and experiences at Maury:

- Language Arts:** Individualized Reading Program
 Creative Writing
 Bookmaking
 Listening, Speaking, Dramatizations
- Social Studies:** History of Civilization
 Values Education
 Democratic Principles
 Economics
 Geography
- Mathematics and Science:**
 Concepts and Hypotheses
 Experimentation
- Creative Expression:**
 Music and Rhythms
 Art
 Dance and Movement
 Dramatizations

In all subject areas, teachers planned activities which led children to make connections between the concrete and the abstract and between themselves and knowledge.

The children were actively involved in all aspects of Maury life. They participated in daily housekeeping and management of equipment and activities. They worked individually on activities and cooperatively

on committees to meet the needs of their school. They learned responsibility and independence through practice. There was an emphasis on the quality of living.

Real life problems were also turned into opportunities for learning. The process used to involve children, teachers, and parents in solving the problem of students arriving at school too early in the morning was described by Miss Bailey. The teachers approached their study of the issue by trying to understand how social groups were inspired to work on a common problem as they worked on the early arrival problem itself. The children used interviewing and observing techniques to make decisions about the issue. The students favored a peer system of monitoring the children who arrived too early rather than reporting the problems to the parents.⁵⁸ The process of working cooperatively on day to day issues or problems was among the creative methods in the curriculum at Maury. Democratic values were taught through the deliberate structuring of group processes and activities.

Creative methods were utilized by the teachers who developed an activity oriented curriculum. The language arts program was an outgrowth of the program of daily living within the school. Writing, reading, and speaking about school life were techniques used to involve all children in reading. Typewriters were used in the classrooms so that children could type notes before they had mastered the free hand writing skill. Social living involved continuous communication and students used language skills to solve problems, make plans, and communicate the plans to other children. The philosophy behind the activity oriented

curriculum valued the everyday experiences of the child, focused on enjoyment, and was grounded in the belief that the purpose of learning was to improve the quality of life.

The reading program was described in detail in a booklet written by the Maury staff and published by the Progressive Education Association in 1941.⁵⁹ The learning style of each student was considered the basis for the teaching of reading. No one book or method was considered appropriate for all children. Designations of books by grade levels did not exist. Text books were available to meet the needs of individual children. Library books were available for every type of interest. There was no distinction between reading for pleasure and reading for information. Children were taught to love books, to find adventure in books, and to see books as part of daily life. They were familiar with stories, poems, and other content, as well as authors, illustrators, and book making.

Reading in the elementary school was considered a continuous process. As the children developed deeper interests and their personalities emerged, the reading program was guided by the teachers to assist the children in reading for the purposes of enjoyment or inquiry to find answers to their own questions. Reading was considered the means to help the children explore the complexity of life and subject matter. The reliance on textbooks was considered a way to dull curiosity and to limit the children's ability to read more difficult materials. It was considered an obligation of the teacher to know the reading levels and interests of the children and to guide the less advanced child as well as

the advanced child to find suitable materials. It was considered the responsibility of the teacher to keep the interest and desire of the slow learner alive and not to deaden their interest and discourage them with drills. To guide the child developmentally in reading, a record was kept of what the child read. Teachers sought to share with children the joys of learning for life; reading was one of the joys shared.

The areas of mathematics, science, and social studies were also taught through creative teaching activities based on the experiences of the children. Concrete experiences and daily activities were the starting points from which symbolic and abstract learning developed. The challenge in educating students at Maury was not considered a matter of instructing them to master facts, but to get them to be delighted in the hypotheses and meanings as well as the facts. Man-made and natural objects of everyday living, resources in the community, audio-visuals, and books were used to enrich the learning environment. In addition to classroom projects and activities, school-wide activities which became part of the culture of the school were an integral part of the curriculum.

Music, art, and dance were subjects that received daily emphasis in the Maury program. As described in the film Report in Primary Colors, the arts were considered basic to the learning process at Maury. The arts were not only a means of self-expression, but a vehicle for communicating the historical, cultural, and artistic heritage of other cultures. The relationship of the artistic principles to daily living and the value of beauty in the environment were taught through the learning

opportunities provided. The significant cultural events that evolved included activities and celebrations which involved the arts.

The Culture of the School

The daily routines and annual events which became part of Maury contributed to the culture of the school. The leadership and personal power of Miss Bailey, the talents and professional behaviors of the teachers, the formal and informal relationships and patterns of interaction among the staff, parents, and students, and the values and norms of the school were other components of the culture. The aspects of the organization and environment which have been discussed previously will be mentioned only to the extent they they were connected to the daily routines and annual events.

The goal of effective daily living was the basis for planning for the growth of students at Maury. Playing, eating, resting, and helping experiences were considered learning experiences. The development of children was dependent on the integration of all growth processes; therefore, the teachers at Maury worked to meet the many and varied needs of children on a daily basis.

Discipline was considered the foundation of educating for citizenship in a school focused on developing principles of democracy in students. The social structure was built around the children. There was a permissiveness which encouraged children to be themselves. Miss Bailey once told her successor Elizabeth Wall that she could never stand to see children walk in straight lines.⁶⁰ Informality was the aim at Maury. The children were taught to develop self-discipline and to

understand the relationship of rules to the well being of all individuals in a group. Teachers approached individual student problems by working in teams with each other and parents and by emphasizing the positive aspects of any situation.

Considered necessary for growth and development, play was known to be restorative, therapeutic, and a relief from tension.⁶¹ Outdoor play periods were scheduled throughout the day usually for one class at a time. Sometimes two groups were scheduled for play period regardless of age. Children participated in formulating rules, structuring the play, and in being responsible for equipment. They were guided in solving group and individual problems and were taught models of inclusion of all children in play by the models of relating that they learned from their teachers.

Eating was considered a socializing process. The cafeteria at Maury was a happy, joyful place filled with light, plants, cut flowers, and murals. Children sat wherever they desired. If children had guests such as parents or grandparents for lunch, they made a place card and mat for the guests and sat with them at a special table. Mothers under the direction of the school secretary served as lunch room hostesses so that teachers had no routine responsibility for this activity. A menu was printed and read daily in each classroom by student helpers. Students helped with many routines and projects at Maury. Daily rest period was another part of the socialization and routine at Maury. Following eating or playing, students would straighten and organize the rooms and either rest on rugs or in other comfortable places. While younger children

might sleep after the teacher read a story, older children often read silently during this period.

Weekly events which became part of the school included a hall sing on Friday mornings. Children stood in the hall to sing and parents were invited to join this activity. The school also had a choir which met twice a week and which was open to any child in the older grades. Children went to rhythms and art classes with specialists weekly in the later years of the school; additionally, art, music, and movement were part of the daily routine in the classroom.

In the fall months, celebrations of holidays were occasions for child, parent, and school interaction. For Halloween children dressed in old clothes and paraded in the school. A Thanksgiving service in which every child took part was partially written and presented by the children. Patriotic and religious practices such as response readings and prayer were included in the activities. Local ministers often participated in the services. A Christmas service and a community tree lighting were held annually. After gathering around a decorated tree on the school grounds to sing carols, children, relatives, friends, and teachers went into the candlelit cafeteria for hot chocolate and cookies.

The school carnival was an activity held in the fall each year, usually in late October. Sponsored by the Parent Teacher Association, the event involved parents, community members, students, and teachers in the preparations and in the activities of the event. Considered one of the main community events of the season, carnival consisted of concessions, games, and a show featuring musical and dance acts

presented by students and parents. Teachers considered carnival another opportunity to provide learning opportunities in language arts, mathematics, and economics.⁶² Students also assisted in making props and decorations, publicizing the event with signs and posters, and writing letters to parents, merchants and others who contributed to the success of past events. Parents, teachers, and staff evaluated carnival each year to improve the event and the process for conducting it.⁶³

In the spring, the school choir presented a concert. The highlight of the year, however, was an annual pageant called June Breakfast. Written by the teachers and principal and presented by the students, the productions involved music, dance, creative dramatics, speaking, designing, costuming, staging, and directing. The pageants were based on themes that emphasized social meaning, cultural understanding, and beauty. The program itself became the curriculum of the school for several months. Students, teachers, and parents worked together to prepare for the pageant and the breakfast. Parents, school officials, and dignitaries attended the annual event which began in 1938. Performances of the pageant were given on succeeding days since all guests could not be accommodated in one performance.

The event was highly regarded for the quality of the children's performances and for feeling tones which the children conveyed in the programs. In 1946, the program entitled "The Children of the World" was reviewed by a visitor from the United States Department of Education. The pageant focused on children from different countries representing the ideals of their country to the United Nations

representatives. The author praised the quality of the pageant and considered the children's performances to be unusually beautiful, expressive, and authentic.⁶⁴

The event was often attended by professors and educators from Teachers College and other universities and organizations. In 1948, the pageant theme was of displaced children of the world being comforted by American children who had a vision of hope for harmony and understanding among the people of the world. Dr. Hazel Davis, associate director of research for the National Education Association, and Dr. Edwin Ziegfeld, head of the department of fine arts at Teachers College, praised the event highly.⁶⁵ Mrs. Crockford, former Richmond School Board Chairman, said everyone should have been able to experience June Breakfast. The relaxed performances of the children in the meaningful programs indicated to her that the children at Maury were learning.⁶⁶ A former teacher said that June Breakfast was an important culminating event because it enabled the entire school to end the year on a high note.⁶⁷

Another significant event which was held city-wide in the early spring which involved Maury students and staff was the Children's Book Fair at Miller and Rhoads Department Store. Begun in 1937 by Miss Nesbitt as directed by a committee on English chaired by Miss Bailey, the fair was held to improve the understanding of literature in the schools and to dramatize the enjoyment of books. Through the cooperation of teachers and the parents' association, the program brought books and authors prominently before children, teachers, and parents. Two Maury

teachers, Nesbitt and Douthat, were members of the Book Fair Committee for decades. Nesbitt often chaired the committee.

Books were publicized in the news media, stores, and schools. Elementary children from area schools were given the opportunity to dramatize their favorite books for audiences in the department store. The grand finale was always the Book Parade in which children from many schools dressed in costumes to represent book characters and stepped through a gigantic book before a large audience of children. The event was popular and much publicized in local newspapers. It became a tradition and continued through 1964.

The special events and celebrations at Maury were learning opportunities in which students were emotionally involved. The content of the activities was always related somehow to the experiences of the children. The involvement and participation of the students, the emotional impact of the events, and the relationships to learning combined to create part of the culture which was valued for its tradition, beauty, and opportunity to be a part of meaningful activities.

The Characteristic Features of Maury and Progressive Education

The features of an educational setting which were considered essentially progressive as defined by Ravitch were interwoven in the innovative program at Maury.⁶⁸ Although not labeled as progressive education by the Maury staff, the characteristics of the school were like those described by Ravitch. The details regarding the Maury School program were described in the previous sections of this chapter. The following is a comparative summary of the characteristics of progressive

education as defined by Ravitch and the features of the Maury program:

1. Active learning experiences were provided children. At Maury, the curricula and the school culture included active learning experiences.

2. Cooperative planning between teachers and students existed. Maury School was a cooperative community of teachers, students, and parents living and learning together.

3. Group participation and cooperation on projects were integral to progressive education. Teachers, students, and parents interacted and worked with one another in classroom activities and on projects at Maury.

4. Understanding of and planning for individual differences were key features. The mission at Maury was to meet the needs of the individual child.

5. Curricula related to the needs and interests of the pupils. At Maury, the needs and interests of children were starting points for building a wholistic curricula.

6. Interfacing of the curricula needs and the interests of the pupils was developed. Creative methods were used at Maury to bridge the curricula needs with the interests of the pupils.

7. Integration of traditional knowledge and subject matter with activities and experiences of pupils was a characteristic of progressive practices. Traditional subject matter was connected to pupils' activities and experiences at Maury. Teaching there emphasized moving from the concrete to the abstract.

8. Goals of "effective living" were specified. The Maury program was based on the goal of effective daily living with an emphasis on the principles of democratic living.⁶⁹

9. Relating the school program to community life was a feature of progressive education. The Maury School program related to home, business, civic, and educational communities; the school program itself was an example of community living.

10. Grades and traditional promotion and retention policies were de-emphasized. Traditional reporting procedures at Maury were replaced by home visits, conferences on Tuesday nights, and a continuous progress philosophy.

Ravitch stated that the new education stressed cooperation instead of authoritarianism, socialization rather than individualism, and a democratic spirit of educating all children to improve their lives.⁷⁰ At Maury, a spirit of humanism characterized the school which was described as a community of cooperative learning. The principles of democratic education prevailed and there was not a hint of authoritarianism in the design for learning or the administration. The purpose of the school to provide a model of living to improve the lives of children was the essence of the new education.

Summary

Although the innovative practices at Maury School were not labeled as progressive education practices by the principal or staff responsible for their development, the school was considered unique by the participants. Within Richmond Public Schools, the administration

did not label the school progressive and did not seek acclaim for the school; it was not publicly acknowledged that the school was in any way different from the others. Visitors and educators from outside the system considered Maury to be an outstanding example of progressive education.

A description of the program developments at Maury revealed that the essential features of progressive education were established in the practical and philosophical functions of the school from 1934 until the school was closed in the summer of 1970. The philosophical foundation of the school was built on an acknowledged belief in the principles of democratic education, human growth and development in all individuals, and a humanistic value system. Although the school was housed in an old building, the environment for learning was deliberately developed to be physically, aesthetically, and psychologically appealing. Positive human relationships were cultivated among students, teachers, and parents. Cooperation and participation were generated, developed, and realized among children and adults. The organization for learning was flexible and de-emphasized grades and traditional report cards. Home, school, and community partnerships were developed. The activities of the school were related to the experiences of the children and their relationships with home and school. Learning experiences were activity oriented. The needs and interests of the children were the basis for planning the daily activities. Interests among children were also cultivated by the dynamic school program. Education at Maury was purposefully directed at making learning psychologically and socially

relevant to the children. The culture of the school was deliberately developed to give expression to the values and philosophy in which the staff believed. It was demonstrated and otherwise communicated to the students with the aim to have the students fully adopt it in their own lives.

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- ¹Interview with Douthat.
- ²Interviews with Mildred Reed, Richmond, Virginia, 12 November 1987 and Frances Bellman Haddock, Richmond, Virginia, 20 November 1987.
- ³Interview with Crockford.
- ⁴Richmond News Leader, 3 December 1945.
- ⁵Lucile Wheeler, Richmond Times-Dispatch, 23 December 1941.
- ⁶72nd ARS 1941, p.36.
- ⁷74th ARS 1943, p. 32.
- ⁸Dolores Lescure, "School Combines Library, Cafe," Richmond News Leader, 16 December 1953.
- ⁹K. Lewis Warren, "Maury School Library Unique; Pupils Among Authors," Richmond News Leader, 7 November 1949, p. 22.
- ¹⁰Lucile Wheeler, Richmond Times-Dispatch, 23 December 1941.
- ¹¹A guest book from Maury School archived at The Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia, include 159 signatures of visitors from foreign countries, other states, and various colleges, universities, and public school systems during the 1948-49 school year.
- ¹²Richmond Times-Dispatch, 8 November 1945.
- ¹³Ibid.
- ¹⁴Vera Connolly, "When Parents Disagree," Woman's Home Companion, December 1945, p. 36.
- ¹⁵Richmond News Leader, 3 December 1945.
- ¹⁶Luce, "Top Elementary School," Ibid., p. 125.
- ¹⁷Richmond News Leader, 13 October 1950.
- ¹⁸Ibid. p. 128.
- ¹⁹Richmond New Leader, 25 January 1950.
- ²⁰"Two Sylvania Teachers Visit 'Public School for Tomorrow,'" Lucas County (Ohio) Sentinel Herald, 12 January 1956.
- ²¹Marion Nesbitt, "A Critical Analysis of Education in Maury School, Richmond, Virginia (Wings for Their Flight)" (Ed. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1952).
- ²²Interview with Baker.
- ²³Interview with Douthat.
- ²⁴Lucy Sprague Mitchell, review of A Public School for Tomorrow, by Marion Nesbitt, in Saturday Review, 12 September 1953, p. 32.
- ²⁵Ibid.
- ²⁶Jeannette Veatch, review of A Public School for Tomorrow, by Marion Nesbitt, in The American Teacher, November 1953, p. 18.
- ²⁷Nesbitt, A Public School for Tomorrow, 1967.

- 28JArt Education Service and Division of Instruction. Report in Primary Colors (Virginia: State Department of Education, 1951).
- 29 Nesbitt, A Public School for Tomorrow, 1953, pp. 3-4.
- 30Interviews with Baker, Douthat, Haddock, and Reed.
- 31Interview with Douthat.
- 32Interview with Baker.
- 33Interview with Crockford.
- 34Interview with Brown. Interview with Jenna Dalton, Richmond, Virginia, 23 November 1987.
- 35Marion Nesbitt, "The Elementary School of Tomorrow Faces an Exciting Challenge," paper presented at Syracuse University, Syracuse, N. Y., 1954.
- 36Nesbitt, A Public School for Tomorrow, 1953, p. 21.
- 37Interview with Brown.
- 38Nesbitt, A Public School for Tomorrow, 1953, pp. 80-92.
- 39Ibid, p. 22.
- 40Interview with Clarke.
- 41Interview with Crockford.
- 42Nesbitt, A Public School for Tomorrow, 1953, p. 20.
- 43Interview with Clarke.
- 44Interview with Douthat.
- 45Nesbitt, A Public School for Tomorrow, 1953, p. 5.
- 46Ibid, pp. 7-9.
- 47Interview with Crockford.
- 48 [Etta Rose Bailey], "Handbook for Junior Primary Parents," Richmond: Maury School, 1947.
- 49Interview with Noel.
- 50Elizabeth Wall and the Maury Staff, "Parents Are Educators," Childhood Education 44 (March 1968): 412.
- 51Nesbitt, A Public School for Tomorrow, 1953, p. 17.
- 52Marion Nesbitt, "We Want to Be at One with Our Community," Educational Leadership 10 (January 1953): 204-213.
- 53Ibid.
- 54Interview with Crockford.
- 55Nesbitt, A Public School for Tomorrow, 1953, p. 19.
- 56Ibid.
- 57Interview with Melvin Elderidge, Richmond, Virginia, 7 November 1987.
- 58Etta Rose Bailey, "Johnny-Come-Early," Childhood Education 33 (February 1957): 252-256.

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- 59Ostrander, ed., Teaching Reading in the Elementary School.
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- 66Interview with Crockford.
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- 68Ravitch, *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.
- 69*Ibid.*
- 70*Ibid.*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The investigation of Maury Elementary School in Richmond, Virginia addressed the establishment of a non-traditional school in a conservative city not ordinarily supportive of education or innovation. In general, educational development in Virginia and other southern states had lagged behind their northern neighbors. The new progressive theories of education derived from the theories and related philosophies of evolution, behaviorism, expressionism, and psychological development seemed unlikely to become part of the educational practices in the south. The preservation of the economic and political privilege controlled by a minority of the citizens was the overriding concern among the politicians. Efforts to improve education were perceived as a threat to the old social patterns until schooling for the masses began to be considered a strategy for appeasement. Schools emphasizing democratic principles and focusing on the needs of the individual appeared to be an anathema in the southern states.

The study specifically sought to answer the main question of what was the best explanation for the existence of Maury School with the apparent characteristics of progressive education in Richmond, Virginia? Maury School was considered by nationally recognized educators and journalists to be an example of educational innovation in which the philosophy and characteristics of progressive education were

implemented. The study provided a description of the origins and development of the school in a conservative locality. The process by which the innovations were conceived and implemented in a school was found to contribute to an understanding of how educational theory is diffused and integrated into schools and classrooms.

The history of progressive education nationally and locally provided the best general explanation of Maury School and for determining that the changes implemented were practically and theoretically illustrative of progressive education. The progressive movement originated from the desire to restore order, tradition, and familiar cultural patterns to a society which had been disrupted by the Civil War and by the migration to and industrialization of the cities. The humanitarian appeal to reform education to be more psychologically and sociologically relevant to the individual made the movement attractive to many followers. Envisioning the school as an arm of society to improve the quality of life for children and the community, the reformers sought to direct school experiences to develop higher cultural, intellectual, and social understanding.

The philosophy and theories of progressive education were disseminated through teachings of Dewey and Kilpatrick via academic institutions such as Teachers College, Columbia University. The educational program attracted many students among whom were the principal and key teachers of Maury. In the course of the movement, the professionalization of teachers contributed to the exposure and potential adoption of the theories. Locally, the administration of Richmond Public

Schools sanctioned the progressive education philosophy and principles through its formal rhetoric on what was considered appropriate education. The Virginia State Department of Education also advocated the progressive principles of education and disseminated them widely through the curriculum revision movement. The state and local administrators attempted to balance new trends with the traditional educational values. The form of progressive education which was advocated in Richmond and in the state focused on changing the teachers, curricula, and teaching methods. These changes were condoned by the administrators in charge of school systems because they did not seem to challenge the centralized control of the schools which, as Tyack contends was the main goal of the progressive administrators. At Maury, the recommended teaching methods and curricula had already largely evolved.

The theories of progressive education from the social reform, child-centered, and curriculum revision strands could potentially be combined by the practitioners at the schools. The history of the progressive education movement was complicated by the proliferation of theories and conflicting groups of leaders vying for control of the movement. In an analysis of the movement, Ravitch lists the characteristics of progressive education. The school where those features could be observed was considered to be practically and philosophically illustrative of progressive education. The features of Maury School were found to be identical to those characteristics identified by Ravitch.

Selected theorists contend that the rooting of the progressive education movement was limited by a lack of autonomy for teachers, the political agendas of administrators, and the demands on and for high quality teachers. Tyack contends that a lack of autonomy for teachers and principals prohibited them from implementing Dewey's principles of democratic education. The practices of progressive education made intellectual, creative, and practical demands on teachers; high quality teachers capable of meeting these demands were not available in all settings. At Maury, teachers were academically prepared; they shared their time and talents to develop and sustain the school. The Maury program made many demands on the teachers; yet, a spirit of cooperation and a sense of purpose were developed among the staff. High quality teachers were attracted to and remained at Maury for many years. The teachers and principal at Maury devoted personal resources, energy and commitment to develop Maury School. The mission and focus were to create the best possible learning environment for children, and their concern for children may have overridden any desire to promote a specific professional platform or agenda associated with progressive education. In Richmond, the administration of the system provided a structure which allowed the Maury staff to be self-sufficient, consequently, allowing them the autonomy to create an innovative program.

Maury School was not identified or labeled a progressive education school by the principal, teachers, or Richmond Public Schools officials. While the persons may have purposefully disassociated Maury School

from the label "progressive," they incorporated the features of the movement which they considered appropriate strategies to meet the intellectual, emotional, and social needs of the children. The staff did understand that they were doing something unique. The deliberate lack of labeling may have helped to preserve their autonomy and assure their ability to be self-governing and independent.

Whether the principal and teachers were permitted to be self-directing or whether they cultivated a position of control with the central administration through their collective power was not fully determined. The staff took advantage of the opportunity to create an innovative school which attracted national attention. The principal's professional qualifications, years of service, personality, and commitment gave her the power to launch an experiment without having to propose, explain, or defend the implementation of innovative practices. In later years, the power and influence that the staff developed through the national reputation of the school, their academic affiliations, and their professional commitments and service to the system assisted them in continuing an innovative program at a time when demands for a different kind of educational reform abounded.

The principalship of Etta Rose Bailey was a key factor in the origin and development of Maury School. In addition to the power base which she developed, her leadership skills and administrative style were instrumental in building Maury. Her service, expertise, and experience gave her credibility and power among her colleagues. She inspired personal and professional commitment among teachers and other

patrons of the school. Her authenticity and devotion to the school made her a very believable role model. Teachers worked diligently and purposefully, and without supplemental extrinsic rewards, for the satisfaction of fulfilling the school's mission. Parents were encouraged, inspired, and eventually instructed by Bailey and her staff as she used her ability to involve others to create projects and programs which worked. Friends, associates, and community members were also involved in the network of people she wove together to meet the needs of Maury School. The main focus of her life was Maury for the entire twenty-nine year period which she served the school. The continuity in leadership was a factor in sustaining the innovations which had been implemented early in the development of the school.

Conclusions

Based on the investigation and the findings, the best explanation for the existence of Maury School was found to be an interrelated set of factors:

1. The principalship of Etta Rose Bailey and the concomitant leadership characteristics were a major force in initiating, developing, and sustaining the innovations. Combining experience and education, personal and professional power, Miss Bailey developed a vision, involved others in executing a plan, and used her expertise and resources to develop an innovative school. She devoted her personal energy, time, and talents to the development of the school and inspired others to do the same. The long tenure of her principalship was a sustaining force and a powerful influence in the rooting of innovation.

2. The teachers at Maury had the personal, creative, and educational qualifications necessary to implement progressive education principles. They met the high expectations for professional performance and development at Maury. The teachers were committed to the purpose of the school. For them, teaching at Maury was synonymous with personal involvement; it was more than a job; it was a lifestyle.

3. A belief in the purpose or mission of the school was shared among all participants. There were shared values that were articulated by the staff members. The staff worked through a developmental process as a group to examine, confirm, and value the innovations which were incorporated at Maury.

4. The school had an identity which was cultivated and which separated it from the school system. Possibly influenced by the philosophy of the administration of the school system and the state from which it evolved, its development was also influenced by educational backgrounds of the principal and teachers. Their educational and professional activities provided a source of information outside the system from which they originated.

5. The needs of the students in the community and the needs of the community were given major consideration by the Maury staff in planning the innovative program. The school system's administration and the community perceived that the needs of the students and the community were met by the Maury staff and program.

6. The innovations were not labeled as progressive education traits by the Maury staff. The avoidance of identification with the movement

enabled them to outlive the movement itself. They did not have to defend their innovative programs and practices when criticism of the movement peaked.

7. The innovations were recorded and documented by the Maury staff and others which led to recognition of the accomplishments. The recognition of the program perpetuated the power of the staff to regulate and control the school's program.

8. Recognition for the innovative work at Maury was provided by experts with academic and professional qualifications valued by the Maury staff. Persons whom the Maury staff valued reinforced the accomplishments of the Maury teachers by visiting the school, writing of their practices, and inducing others to visit there. Teachers from Maury were invited to teach and lecture at colleges, universities, and professional meetings.

9. A unique school culture was developed and sustained by the ceremonies, events, and activities, as well as by the positive relationships among principal, teachers, students, and parents.

Analysis

Public education in Virginia and in the south was not provided to all citizens until the Federal government demanded it. An underlying conservatism toward public school issues and initiatives prevailed in Richmond. Dewey's urge for universal education to improve the lives of all people was an ideal of progressive education which was not accepted as intrinsically worthwhile by all politicians, citizens, or educators in Richmond. Although selected statesmen and educational leaders'

motives for improving the schools may have been based on altruistic or pure ideals, most politicians and citizens did not favor educational equality. When progressive reforms were initiated in Virginia, the political leaders acquiesced, realizing that some changes were inevitable. At that point, education was considered as a token concession to appease the masses in an effort to restore familiar, conservative social patterns. New trends were balanced with traditional values and were considered nonthreatening to the political power structure since they dealt with teachers, curricula, and instructional practices rather than administrative control, finances, or politics. While the implementation and establishment of the progressive education philosophy and practices was no doubt inhibited by the conservative sociological, political, psychological, and historical background of Richmond, the opportunity to establish a unique school based on progressive ideals did exist and was seized by the principal as revealed in this case study of Maury. Through the initiative, leadership, and perseverance of an educational leader, Maury School became and remained for thirty-six years an example of educational innovation in a city which had not developed a definite plan of action to implement progressive education reforms.

Factors which could have inhibited the implementation, or limited the life of the school, were ignored or manipulated by the individuals responsible for the development and maintenance of the school. The philosophies of the administrators at the local and state level were favorable toward progressive education ideals in the early years of Maury, but no specific action or plan to implement experimental or

innovative schools came forth from this level. The centralized administrators appeared to be more concerned with rhetoric than action. Provided the principals and teachers did not precipitate controversy by their actions, they were given the freedom to direct their schools as they saw fit.

The opportunity to create a unique school was seized by Principal Bailey who maintained her power and relied on the success of the school itself to build credibility to keep it going. She satisfied the demands of the system sufficiently and by not labeling the school as experimental, innovative, or progressive, the staff was able to focus on their mission of creating the best possible learning environment for children without attracting local controversy. The principal and staff never put themselves in the position of having to defend or justify their program in order to maintain it; the staff maintained the ability to be self-controlling throughout its history.

Internally, the principal operated the school with a democratic leadership style. The teachers were empowered to develop, grow, share their talents, and integrate their professional and personal lives through their teaching careers. The experience of teaching at Maury sustained many teachers whose years of service at Maury attested to their commitment. The teachers contributed energy and time to create and maintain the project. They were capable and willing to meet the intellectual, creative, and pragmatic demands of applying the innovative methods of progressive education.

The principal, staff, students, and parents developed a unique culture at Maury which contributed to the maintenance of the innovative program. The culture of the school represents the totality of the patterns of living and operating in the school. Cultural forms that express or represent the life of the school are observed in shared values, heroes, rituals, ceremonies, stories, and the cultural network operating in the school.¹ The principal and teachers at Maury cultivated an ethos which guided their actions as they directed the school. The principal was regarded as a spiritual leader as well as the authority figure designated to control the school. The principal and teachers were considered the moral authorities on child development and were held in great esteem by parents and children alike. The staff accepted the responsibilities of teaching the positive values of strong character and good behavior. The individual instructional practices and the prevailing emphasis on positive relationships led to strong attachments among the principal-teacher-student-parent complex. These close human relationships were further reinforced through the rituals and ceremonies that symbolized the values and philosophy of the school and outlasted the existence of Maury. The school simply was a place where people wanted to be.

From the case study of Maury Elementary School inferences are drawn regarding the effects of the progressive education reform movement on education in Richmond, Virginia. As was seen, educational innovation can be a local phenomenon limited to one school. The innovation can exist independent of the general reform movement; it can have a life and a place of its own. The innovative school or

organization may conform, extend, or be drastically different than the general movement. It can thrive or perish independent of the proceedings around it. Neither the success nor the demise of the innovation are guaranteed as a result of its existence in the context of the general movement. The innovative organization may never get off the ground; it can exist for a long time; it can eventually merge with the system, be discontinued, or fail. The existence of the innovation can be unaffected by the general trends of the reform movement.

A reform movement based on theories, professional activities, and rhetoric does not guarantee the implementation of innovations in the classrooms or schools. The case study of Maury suggests that the establishment of innovation is contingent upon the adoption and maintenance of the reforms by principals and teachers. Whether or not progressive education practices were rooted in the classrooms and schools in America can only be determined by seeking evidence of the characteristics in teaching/learning situations.

The innovation can be internally effective as an organization yet fail because of external, unrelated organizational events. As shown, Maury flourished as an educationally innovative school under the leadership of principal Bailey and continued to thrive under a new principal. It was not allowed to reveal continued success (or eventual failure) since it was possibly eliminated from the school system because of unrelated external events.

A retrospective study into the long-lasting effects of this type of education on the children would provide insight into the continuing

question of what to teach to whom. More historical inquiry into the process of educational innovation would be useful in order to determine if innovation can be self-sustaining without the continuity of strong leadership provided by a key figure at the location of the innovation.

As concerns have changed to provide educational equity and quality for all children and in a climate of new demands for educational reform, it is worthwhile to remember the history of education. The challenges that the staff at Maury School posed for themselves during the progressive education era were basic challenges, and not that different from the challenges urban educators face today. Meeting the educational, social, and emotional needs of students, providing them the most educational opportunity in the best possible learning environment, and instilling values which seek to improve the quality of life for the students and community are goals which remain. The task today is perhaps further complicated by the proliferation of administrative bureaucracy which emanates from the local, state, and federal levels, by the demands of special interest groups, by the cultural diversity in communities, and by the changing patterns in the family. The basic goal of improving the quality of life in society through improving the educational attainment for the individual may be aided significantly by the experiences of small educational organizations, such as Maury, where common values were shared among students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

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ABSTRACT

MATTHEW F. MAURY SCHOOL, 1934-1970: A CASE STUDY IN EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

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The College of William and Mary in Virginia, April 1988

Chairman: William F. Losito, Ph.D.

The investigation of Maury Elementary School in Richmond, Virginia addressed the establishment of a non-traditional model school in a conservative city not directly supportive of progressive education ideology. A case study approach was taken to investigate the interrelated questions of explaining the success and longevity of Maury School and of determining to what extent Maury School was a faithful implementation of the tenets of progressive education.

The study contributes to an understanding of the development of an innovative school, to progressive education, and to the diffusion and integration of educational theory and reform. Historical methodology was used; data were drawn from both published and unpublished primary and secondary sources and oral histories.

The progressive education movement was characterized by essential features and practices by which a school could be considered to be progressive. A description of the program developments at Maury revealed that the features of progressive education were established in the practical and philosophical functions of the school from 1934 until the school was closed in the summer of 1970.

The best explanation for the existence of Maury School was found to be an interrelated set of factors. The effective leadership of Principal Etta Rose Bailey was a key factor in the origin, development, and maintenance of the school. The long tenure of her principalship was a sustaining force in rooting and maintaining innovation. The school had an identity which separated it from the school system. The hierarchical structure of the system allowed the principal and the staff the autonomy to develop an innovative program. The innovations were not labeled as progressive education by the Maury staff, which enabled the program to outlive the movement itself. A unique culture was developed and sustained by the programs and practices.

From the case study of Maury Elementary School, where educational innovation was a local phenomenon limited to one school, inferences may be drawn regarding the effects of the progressive education reform movement in Richmond, Virginia. Additional study is recommended to determine if innovation can sustain itself without the continuity of strong leadership provided by a key figure at the location of the innovation.