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THE SOLDIERS' ORPHAN SCHOOLS OF PENNSYLVANIA, 1864-1889.

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THE SOLDIERS' ORPHAN SCHOOLS

OF

PENNSYLVANIA

1864-1889

by
O. David Gold

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of the University of Maryland in partial fulfillment
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APPROVAL SHEET

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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: SOLDIERS' ORPHAN SCHOOLS OF PENNSYLVANIA, 1864-1889

O. David Gold, Doctor of Philosophy, 1971

Thesis directed by: Dr. Gladys A. Wiggin, Professor of Education

The Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania were something new in the history of the United States. This was the first time a state government had undertaken the education and care of children made orphaned by war. For twenty-five years (1864-1889), soldiers' orphans between the ages of four and sixteen were reared in twelve special orphanages located throughout the Commonwealth. During this time over fifteen thousand children passed through the schools at a cost to the state of over ten million dollars.

The schools were founded largely because of the efforts of Andrew Gregg Curtin, governor of Pennsylvania. Curtin seemed to be guided by political motives to do this act of charity. He saw here a way to have the electorate more readily accept his close ties with the most powerful economic force in the state, the Pennsylvania Railroad. A $50,000 gift from the railroad got the schools underway. The governor also saw this aid program as a way to successfully

prosecute the Civil War. Curtin did many things to stimulate the morale and patriotism of the fighting men. Having the state care for their children was but another aspect of Curtin's program of military relief.

After the Civil War and Governor Curtin's retirement from office, a different motive guided the operation of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools. They were rationalized in terms of how they were helping to preserve the order of society. The children were being prepared to become law-abiding and hard working future citizens of the Commonwealth. Practically everything that took place within the schools was directed towards the goals of obedience, discipline and order. In this respect, the educators who administered the schools were reflecting a primary concern common to schoolmen of the era.

In 1889, the state decided to close the Soldiers' Orphan Schools. Three factors contributed to the failure of the institutions. First, the schools failed to provide a satisfactory program of industrial training for their students. Those who administered the system seemed to be more interested in developing moral character than teaching modern work skills. The transfer of the soldiers' orphans to an industrial training schools wholly owned by the state signified the failure of the original schools to fulfill the need for industrial education.

The schools also failed because of their organizational structure. They were private schools under central, state

supervision. However, the state inspectorate failed to keep a strict surveillance of the schools. Moreover, the proprietors of the private institutions were more interested in making profits than serving the needs of their wards. The eventual establishment of a single school under direct state operation suggested that the original half-private, half-public system of orphan relief was at odds with the growing tendency in the latter nineteenth century for the state to take over more control of such relief projects.

Thirdly, the schools came to an end beca they unfortunately became involved in the partisan essures of Pennsylvania state politics. Members of the Republican party were closely associated with the school. In the gubernatorial election year of 1886 the Democrats sought to take advantage of this identification of the GOP with the system. The Democrats charged the Republicans with neglecting the welfare of the soldiers' orphans. In turn, the Republicans accused the Democrats with playing politics with innocent children. Eventually both sides backed off from what became a distasteful political issue. But the damage had been done. There seemed to be just enough truth in the scandalous revelations of the Democrats to call for an end of the system.

But the schools had charted a new course in child care. Other northern states emulated the Pennsylvania effort and three still do. The present state facility for veterans'

children at Scotland, Pennsylvania is a direct descendant of the original Soldiers' Orphan Schools. Here, five hundred soldiers' orphans continue to receive the aid of the state of Pennsylvania.

PREFACE

This is the first study of the public care of a particular type of dependent child--the soldiers' orphan. The Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania were something new in the history of the United States. This was the first time a state government had undertaken the education and care of children made orphaned by war. For twenty-five years (1864-1889), soldiers' orphans between the ages of four and sixteen were reared in twelve special orphanages located throughout the Commonwealth. During this time over fifteen thousand children passed through the schools at a cost to the state of over ten million dollars. The primary purpose of the study is to explain the origin, extent and failure of this pioneering effort in child welfare.

Because any institution is a reflection of the more general attitudes of society, the story of these Pennsylvania schools illustrates the strength of certain social, economic and political forces of the latter nineteenth century. War-time patriotism largely gave the schools their birth. The rationale of social order sustained their existence for twenty-five years. The schools came to an end when they failed to meet the challenge of a rising industrialism,

the demands for centralization of welfare services, and the pressures of partisan state politics.

Thus, the aim of the study is twofold. It traces the rise and fall of the initial state plan for the care and education of veterans' children. Secondly, as a microcosm of the larger community, the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania mirrored the importance of certain national trends.

In gathering materials for the dissertation, the author received valuable help and many courtesies from the staffs of the following manuscript depositories and libraries: the Library of Congress, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Historical Society of York County, the Chester County Historical Society, the Susquehanna County Historical and Free Library Association, The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and the Pennsylvania State Library.

The author is endebted to Dr. Richard Farrell who read the manuscript and offered valuable suggestions for its improvement. In particular, the author wishes to acknowledge the encouragement and aid of Dr. Gladys A. Wiggin, under whose direction this study was undertaken and completed. She spent many hours editing the manuscript. Finally, the author expresses his deep gratitude to Barbara Louise Gold for her understanding and cooperation during the completion of the study.

O. David Gold

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CHAPTER I

GOVERNOR ANDREW CURTIN AND THE ORIGIN OF THE SOLDIERS' ORPHAN SCHOOLS

In considering aspects of the Civil War, most historians include a chapter entitled "On the Home Front," "Behind the Lines." To offset the effect of speculative profiteering and shoddiness common in American life between 1861 and 1865, some writers attempt to demonstrate the sacrifices of the civilian populace back home. It was, supposedly, one of the great moments in the nation's history.

The smoke had hardly cleared at Fort Sumter before the people of the North rushed to the aid of the soldiers in the field. Ladies Aid Societies were organized in most towns and hamlets. Responding to the call, "come girls get your knitting needles," patriotic women made bandages and sewed clothing for the troops.[1] Practically every issue of the contemporary press mentions the worthwhile activities of these local societies. Private efforts in behalf of the armies were also demonstrated by the activities of the United States Sanitary Commission. This organization spent millions setting up military hospitals and distributing medical supplies to the men at the front.

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[1] Undentified Reading (Pa.) newspaper quoted in Sylvester K. Stevens, Pennsylvania, Birthplace of A Nation (New York: Random House, 1964), 203.

The work of the Young Men's Christian Association provides another example. Besides Bibles and song books, the YMCA passed out supplies of food and clothing to the fighting men in the Union armies--supplies which had been collected from the civilians back home. Clearly the people of the North responded to the needs of the men at the front. When compared with any earlier conflict in the nation's history, the amount of volunteer, non-combatant relief services in behalf of the Union soldiers during this war was unprecedented.

In addition to the efforts made on behalf of the troops in the field, historians also have been impressed with the relief programs organized for the dependent families of the servicemen. Seemingly, as much time and money was expended on aiding widows and orphans as for the soldiers themselves. Reference is made to the pensions paid by both the federal and state governments to the widows of those killed in battle. Enlistment bounties paid to the volunteers frequently found their way into the hands of the needy dependents. Orphanages were set up by the various state governments for the orphans of those killed in battle.[1]

Modern writers also point to acts of private philanthropy. Community and state wide relief organizations showered gifts on the needy families of the soldiers. In rural areas farmers brought wagon loads of farm produce and firewood into town for suffering homefront survivors.[2]

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[1]Robert H. Bremner, American Philanthropy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 79; Emerson D. Fite, Social and Industrial Conditions During the Civil War (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishers, 1963), 287-289, 298.

[2]Bremner, 79; Fite, 288.

On the question of federal pensions, however, there is no clear picture of who the widows were who actually received such public aid and how extensive the pensions really were.[1] In the case of state pensions to soldiers' widows, an examination of one state makes it clear that such help was not widespread. Between 1861 and 1863 the state of Pennsylvania failed to provide any financial assistance to widows of deceased soldiers.[2]

Bounties were paid to the Union volunteers but it is only speculation that any of these funds actually found their way into the hands of the soldiers' wives.[3] It will probably never be known how much of the bounty payments really constituted charitable relief.

Similarly an examination of the sources at the local level, in this case of the press of Pennsylvania, reveals no outpouring of either spontaneous or solicitated aid for the homefront dependents. One newspaper of the Commonwealth at the beginning of the war in 1861 anticipated that local, volunteer groups would come to the aid of the families of the soldiers.[4] Later issues of the journal, however, made no mention of any private, charitable efforts. This does not eliminate the possibility that some philanthropic citizens aided the soldiers' families. It simply means that a reading of the journals of the state between the years 1861 and 1863 has failed to uncover evidence

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[1] Fite, Social and Industrial Conditions, 288.

[2] The Legislative Record, Containing the Debates and Proceedings of the Legislature of Pennsylvania, 1861-1863. Cited hereafter as Leg Rec.

[3] Fite, 288.

[4] Harrisburg Telegraph, May 10, 1861.

The Care of Orphans in Pennsylvania Before 1861

Prior to the Civil War the public response to the welfare of orphaned children was represented by eleven private orphanages built in the Commonwealth.[1]

TABLE 1

ORPHANAGES OF PENNSYLVANIA IN 1861

Name	Location	Church Affiliation	Type	Number of Children in 1861
Northern Home	Philadelphia	Episcopal	co-ed	125
St. Paul's Asylum	Pittsburgh	Catholic	co-ed	50
Protestant Asylum	Pittsburgh	Presbyterian	co-ed	100
Orphans' Home	Germantown	Lutheran	co-ed	25
Church Home	Philadelphia	Episcopal	co-ed	40
St. James Asylum	Lancaster	Episcopal	girls	15
Childrens' Home	Lancaster	none	co-ed	20
Industrial School	Philadelphia	Catholic	girls	75
St. John's School	Philadelphia	Catholic	co-ed	200
St. Vincent's Home	Philadelphia	Catholic	co-ed	150
Emmaus Orphan House	Harrisburg	Lutheran	co-ed	15

It is only speculation as to whether these eleven institutions represented an adequate response to the problem of homeless children in Pennsylvania before the Civil War. No one knows how

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[1] Seventh Annual Report of the Northern Home for Friendless Children, Philadelphia, Pa. 1860, 6; James Laughery Paul, Pennsylvania's Soldiers' Orphan Schools (Philadelphia: Claxton and Remson, 1876), 169-517. Cited hereafter as Paul, SOS; Third Annual Report of the Board of Public Charities of Pennsylvania, 1873, 44-97; U. S. Commissioner of Education, Report For the Year 1876, 816.

many orphans there actually were in the state in 1860 and of this number how many really needed aid. The care of less than nine hundred children in a state with a total population of close to three million in 1861, however, does not seem like a particularly overwhelming charitable response.[1]

The total number of children aside, there are other facts shown by the foregoing statistics that mitigated against the relief efforts of these eleven orphanages. First, with one exception, all were sectarian institutions. This meant that only children of a particular denomination were admitted. Moreover, in the case of some of the Protestant orphanages, preference was given first to children of deceased ministers.[2] Most of the church-affiliated institutions also limited admission to members of the faith from that particular area of the state. The Orphans' Home in Germantown, for example, only accepted children from Lutheran churches centered around Philadelphia just as St. Vincent's Asylum was maintained largely for the members of the German Roman Catholic congregations of Philadelphia.[3] Lastly, on the question of religion, four of the eleven orphanages, including two of the largest ones, served only Catholics

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[1]U.S. Bureau of the Census, Prelimenary Report of the Eighth Census, 1860, 22. For the year ending June 1, 1860 the mortality rate for Pennsylvania was 30,214 or one death for every 95 persons in the state.

[2]Thomas M. Yundt, A History of the Bethany Orphans Home (Reading, Pa: Daniel Miller, 1888), 37.

[3]Paul, SOS, 368, 516.

despite the fact that the majority of Pennsylvanians in 1860 were Protestant.

A second drawback was that two of the eleven institutions enrolled only orphaned girls. Thirdly, all of the institutions, with two exceptions, were located in the state's two largest cities. Obviously, they served an urban clientele. There were no orphanages in the rural areas of Pennsylvania.

Thus, when Civil War started, a Catholic girl from Philadelphia whose father was killed in action stood the best chance of finding shelter in an orphanage. Even if nine hundred children were a high figure, there were still all of these discriminatory factors that must have kept many needy and deserving orphans out of the few orphanages that did exist in Pennsylvania in 1861.

Soldiers' Orphans in Pennsylvania, 1861-1863

What was done for orphans generally before the Civil War continued to be the response for the new and special class of orphans created by the conflict. If they had the facilities, the eleven existing orphanages admitted the children of deceased soldiers. The Northern Home in Philadelphia, for instance, supposedly opened its doors to over 100 soldiers' orphans between 1861 and the latter part of 1863.[1] During the same time period, the Catholic orphanage in Pittsburgh cared for twenty-six children of those killed in battle.[2]

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[1] Annual Report of the Superintendent of the Soldiers' Orphans of Pennsylvania for the Year 1871, 306. Cited hereafter as Annual Report of the Pa. SOS.

[2] Paul, SOS, 339.

In addition three new and nonsectarian orphanages were built in the state between 1861 and 1863.[1]

TABLE 2

ORPHANAGES ESTABLISHED IN PENNSYLVANIA, 1861-1863

Name	Date	Location	Type	Capacity
Home For Children	1861	Pittsburgh	co-ed	75
Childrens' Home	1862	Wilkes-Barre	co-ed	20
Bethany Home	1863	Philadelphia	co-ed	12

Of these three new institutions, the one in Wilkes-Barre was supposedly organized to meet the specific needs of soldiers' orphans.[2] Altogether, it is estimated that about five hundred soldiers' orphans were taken in by the fourteen private orphanages of Pennsylvania between 1861 and 1863.

Again, as with the number of ordinary orphans cared for before the war, it is only speculation as to whether this number represented an adequate response to the problem of fatherless children created by the Civil War. Approximately 35,000 Pennsylvanians lost their lives in the war--probably 10,000 by the end of 1863.[3] If a third of this number had children, it would have meant that there were approximately three thousand soldiers' orphans by the end of 1863. In 1866 an official of

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[1] Ibid., 376, 426, 447.

[2] Ibid., 426

[3] Dudley Miles (ed.), Photographic History of the Civil War, Vol. X (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1957), 146.

one of the private orphanages stated that there were four thousand soldiers' orphans in Pennsylvania.[1]

Thus, the matter resolves itself into this question: Did the fact that one out of every six soldiers' orphans who found their way into a private orphanage by the end of 1863 demonstrate that the state of Pennsylvania had satisfactorily met this new problem created by the Civil War?

Evidence that the question should be answered in the negative is the opinion of the general public towards the welfare of the soldiers' orphans. The rhetoric of the local press makes it clear that most Pennsylvanians really gave little thought to the care of soldiers' orphans. As with their silence about the welfare of widows of the soldiers, the contemporary journals took even less notice of the needs of the children of deceased soldiers. Not a single newspaper reference relating to soldiers' orphans has been found in the press of Pennsylvania before December, 1863. When the three new orphanages opened their doors between 1861 and 1863, the local newspapers had nothing to say about the event. Even if there were a few expressions of concern about the orphans of the war, this overwhelming evidence of silence about the soldiers' orphans seemingly shows that most people in Pennsylvania were either unaware or unconcerned about the care of this particular class of friendless children.

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[1] Thirteenth Annual Report of the Northern Home, 1866, 6.

Origins of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools

Public indifference to the welfare of the soldiers' orphans before 1863 makes all the more significant the instituting of a system of orphan schools in the period 1864 to 1867. This development could hardly have been anticipated from what had been done for dependents, either of veterans or otherwise in prior years, and justifies an inquiry into the origins and nature of the schools.

The first apparent newspaper reference to the needs of soldiers' orphans was made in early December 1863. On December 4, 1863 the Philadelphia Inquirer described the events of a public meeting the preceding evening in Philadelphia where the governor of Pennsylvania, Andrew Gregg Curtin, called upon all citizens to come to the aid of children made orphaned by the war.[1] These few remarks of Governor Curtin seem to be the initial statement made on behalf of the soldiers' orphans of Pennsylvania.[2]

This announcement by the governor was made at a public reception for the famous minister, Henry Ward Beecher. In his introduction of Beecher, Governor Curtin took the occasion to mention the children of deceased soldiers. The governor did not offer any specific plan of relief. All he claimed was that something had to be done for this particular class of fatherless children.[3]

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[1] Philadelphia Inquirer, December 4, 1863.

[2] James Wickersham, A History of Education in Pennsylvania (Lancaster: Inquirer Publishing Company, 1886), 587.

[3] Philadelphia Inquirer, December 4, 1863; Samuel P. Bates, Martial Deeds of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: T.H. Davis, 1875), 965-966.

A month later the governor presented a more formal declaration of intention to the state's lawmakers. In his annual message, Curtin urged the legislature of Pennsylvania to establish a state system of relief for the children of the fallen veterans.[1]

These two short gubernatorial messages constituted the genesis of what became the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania. Until the governor of Pennsylvania rose on the stage of the Philadelphia Academy of Music, no one in the state had expressed any public concern about the welfare of soldiers' orphans. Until Governor Curtin made his recommendation to the legislature of the state, no one had publically suggested that the state government should look after these children. Seemingly, a contemporary was not far from the truth when he later claimed that "to Andrew Gregg Curtin and he alone, belongs the honor of being the father of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools."[2]

Curtin's Explanation For the Establishment of the Schools.

But why was Andrew Gregg Curtin, alone among the citizens of the Commonwealth, so anxious to help these particular children? The governor claimed that the original inspiration for the schools came from a chance meeting with two of the soldiers' orphans. As the governor later related, on Thanksgiving morning, 1863 as he was about to leave for church, he heard a knock

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[1] Leg Rec, 1864, 15.

[2] James Wickersham, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1871, 307.

on the front door of the executive mansion. Curtin opened the door. There stood two small children, a boy and his sister, clad in rags, shivering and timid. They were begging food. They said that their father had been killed in battle and that their mother had just died. "Great God," so Curtin said he exclaimed, "is it possible that the people of Pennsylvania can feast this day, while the children of her soldiers who have fallen in this war beg bread from door to door."[1] Two weeks later in Philadelphia he asked the people of Pennsylvania to come to the aid of hundreds of others like these two helpless orphans of the soldiers.

The other explanation the governor gave for starting the Soldiers' Orphan Schools concerned a pledge he supposedly had made early in the war. He had told the departing soldiers that the state would care for their loved ones. Now, in 1863, was the time to honor that pledge.[2]

The only difficulty with both of these explanations is that they were made after the fact. They were offered a number of years later to explain actions already taken. The first mention by Curtin of the Thanksgiving Day meeting, for instance, was made three years after the episode supposedly took place.

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[1] "Speech of Governor Curtin to the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, March 16, 1866," Leg Rec, 1866, 567; "Speech of Governor Curtin to the Sixteeners Convention," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXX (Oct., 1881) 161. The Sixteeners were alumni of the schools who organized a statewide fraternal organization in 1880.

[2] "Speech of Governor Curtin at the Philadelphia Academy of Music, December 3, 1863," quoted in Bates, Martial Deeds, 965; "Speech to the General Assembly, 1866" Ibid.

Moreover, both of the reasons were given when the governor was making public and emotional appeals on behalf of the orphans. Most likely both explanations were given for their dramatic effect as well as to illuminate Curtin's reasons for wanting to help these children.

The governor's statement in 1863 concerning the pledge he made to the soldiers in 1861 is particularly suspect. Supposedly, his promise to take care of their widows and children was made at a military review of the Pennsylvania troops in September, 1861.[1] But an examination of Curtin's speech to the soldiers fails to reveal any mention of either women or children.[2] Curtin two years later referred to a promise which, in all probability, had never been made.

Since both of these explanations by Curtin are of questionable validity, it is necessary to find the underlying rationale for the governor's actions on behalf of the soldiers' orphans.

The Political Motives of Governor Curtin.

Perhaps a clue to the origins of the schools can be found in Curtin's political career. The life of Andrew Curtin, a lawyer by profession, was a series of political successes and failures. From the age of twenty-three when he made his first campaign for public office until his death in the 1890's as a United States Congressman, Curtin was one of the dominant and

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[1]Bates, Martial Deeds, 962; William H. Egle, Andrew Gregg Curtin (Philadelphia: Anvil Printing Co., 1895), 54.

[2]Harrisburg Patriot, September 12, 1861.

important figures of nineteenth century Pennsylvania politics.

In 1863, Curtin was in the final year of his initial term as the first Republican governor of Pennsylvania. In his attempt to succeed himself, Curtin faced a determined challenge from the Democratic opposition. The Democrats pictured the Republican governor as a dangerous radical, a "fanatical abolitionist" who was seeking to overturn the personal liberties of the citizens of the state.[1] In reply, Curtin and his partisans stressed the wartime patriotism of the Republican incumbent. The voters were called upon to express their confidence in a chief executive who had pledged the entire resources of the state to the crushing of the rebellion.[2]

In particular, the electorate was reminded of how the governor had earned the title, "The Soldiers' Friend." Curtin was doing everything within his power to support the soldiers in the field. He visited them, sent them supplies, and brought their bodies home for proper burial. "Governor Curtin," claimed one political supporter, "has devoted his whole energies to the defenders of the Union . . . He has made their cause his cause. There is scarcely a soldier whose heart does not leap with emotion and gratitude at the mention of the honored name of Andrew Gregg Curtin."[3]

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[1]"Address of Democratic State Central Committee, July 30, 1863," quoted in Stanton Davis, Pennsylvania Politics, 1860-1863 (Cleveland: Western Reserve University, 1935), 305.

[2]Erwin S. Bradley, The Triumph of Militant Republicanism (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), 178.

[3]Franklin (County) Repository, September 30, 1863.

Curtin, the skillful politician, was trying to transfer his good deeds for the soldiers into a majority at the ballot box. As election time drew near the soldiers at the front would acknowledge the efforts that the governor was making in their behalf. At least the Democrats professed to be worried about Curtin's appeal to the so-called "soldier vote." By practicing his "wily acts of flattery," by his "pretended interest" in their behalf, Curtin, "to get the soldiers' vote," was claiming "the honor of being the soldiers' special friend."[1]

Most historians maintain that his appeal to the soldiers' vote in 1863 was the principal factor in Curtin's reelection. The federal War Department cooperated by furloughing thousands of Pennsylvania soldiers to return for the election. Their votes combined with those of a sympathetic civilian electorate supposedly gained Curtin his narrow victory.[2]

It is obvious how Curtin's championing of the interests of the soldiers' orphans in 1863 would have furthered the political design of the Republican candidate. At least one historian claims that Curtin's announced intention in 1863 of having the state care for the soldiers' orphans was one of the campaign promises that got him the veterans' vote.[3]

An examination of the campaign rhetoric of both Curtin and his supporters in 1863, however, fails to reveal any mention of

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[1] York Democrat Gazette, August 18, 1863.

[2] Davis, Pennsylvania Politics, 315; Bradley, Militant Republicanism, 178.

[3] Davis, 209.

soldiers' orphans. Curtin's first public statement on behalf of the children of the soldiers was not made until December 3, 1863, nearly three months after the October 14 election. Before the election, while the GOP orators extolled the efforts being made for the soldiers in the field, they seemingly said nothing about aiding either widows or orphans. Thus, until some reference is found connecting Curtin with a political campaign statement about soldiers' orphans, it can only be concluded that he did not seek to make political capital out of this particular appeal.

On the other hand, there is evidence that there was a more subtle political consideration that prompted Curtin to come to the aid of this particular group of children. It involved the governor and one of the most powerful economic forces in the Commonwealth, The Pennsylvania Railroad.

Such a charge of collusion can be made because it is a well known fact that on more than one occasion in the nineteenth century, the Pennsylvania Railroad sought by political means to further its own special interests in the state.[1] One such occasion was the repeal of the Tonnage Tax by the Republican dominated legislature in 1861.

To protect its state-owned canal system from the competition of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the state beginning in 1846 had required the railroad to pay a special tax on the freight it carried during the season when the canal was in operation.

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[1]Bradley, Militant Republicanism, 138; Frank B. Evans, Pennsylvania Politics, 1872-1877 (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1966), 43.

This tax amounted to about $400,000 annually. Even after the railroad purchased the canal in 1857, it still continued to pay the tax.

In 1861 the railroad appeared to be in a favorable position to eliminate the canal-tonnage tax. The new governor, Andrew Gregg Curtin, was an acknowledged supporter of the railroad's cause and a close personal friend of Thomas A. Scott, president of the road.[1]

During his first administration, Curtin pressed the legislature to repeal the tonnage tax. The opponents of repeal predictably cried corruption. Although Curtin and Scott got their way in the legislature, the repeal of the tax aroused the anger of the taxpaying voters. In the legislature elections of 1861, every lawmaker except one who had voted for repeal was defeated for reelection.[2] Since a Republican-dominated legislature had approved the repeal, this was the party that suffered the most at the polls. The new legislature of 1862 was overwhelmingly Democratic.

The Republican governor the next year nearly suffered the same fate as the Republican legislators. The Democrats labeled Curtin the "shoddy candidate," the one who had really robbed the state's taxpayers when he assisted in the repeal of the tonnage tax.[3] While Curtin won reelection, he and the railroad evidently

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[1]Rebecca G. Albright, "Civil War Career of Andrew Gregg Curtin, Part III," Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, XLVIII (April, 1965), 160.

[2]Albright, "Civil War Career, Part I," XLVII (Oct, 1964), 338.

[3]Bradley, Militant Republicanism, 142, 174.

realized that something had to be done to save Curtin's reputation and counter the charge that the railroad had "no soul."

In July 1862, just after the disastrous Peninsula campaign, the governor announced that he had received a grant of $50,000 from the Pennsylvania Railroad, to pay bounties to raise troops for the defense of the state. Curtin sensed that it would be difficult to gain legislative approval for this plan. He would be accused of accepting a bribe from the railroad so that the corporation could secure armed protection for its valuable properties in southern Pennsylvania.[1] In reply to Curtin's request for guidance on the matter, railroad executive Scott and his board of directors suggested that Curtin might use the $50,000 to establish a soldiers' home somewhere in the state.[2] Curtin proposed such a plan to the state legislature in his annual message of January, 1863.[3]

The suggestion died in committee in a Democratic-controlled legislature. The Democrats in this gubernatorial election year did not want to improve the tarnished reputation of either the Republican governor or his ally, the Pennsylvania Railroad.

It was a different matter in 1864 when the legislature was dominated by Curtin's own party. With the approval of Tom Scott and the railroad, Curtin in his annual message of January, 1864, again suggested that the $50,000 be put to a charitable use. This time, however, it was promised that the children of the

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[1]Paul, SOS, 34.

[2]Thomas A. Scott to Andrew Gregg Curtin, December 23, 1862, Meredith Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.

[3]Leg Rec, 1863, 12.

soldiers be the recipients of the railroad's beneficence.

As Curtin and the railroad officials undoubtedly intended, contemporaries of the governor saw this use of the $50,000 as a "most unselfish and purely beneficent act."[1] "It is most evident, " said one defender of Curtin and the railroad, "that there is one corporation that has a soul."[2]

Later writers take a different view. The railroad gift was a bribe to the state to soften the blow of the loss of the tonnage tax. "The $50,000," says one historian, "was a grant from the Pennsylvania Railroad possibly in return for the repeal of the Tonnage Tax. It was a token payment for the repealed duties."[3] Both the railroad, by its unsolicited act of giving and Governor Curtin by his suggestion that the money be used to help orphan children, profited from the resulting favorable opinion.

But if Curtin wanted to improve his and the railroad's reputation, why did he specifically fix upon the soldiers' orphans as the recipients of the $50,000 gift? Why, for instance, did he drop the plan for a soldiers' home and turn his attention

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[1]Paul, SOS, 34.

[2]Elizabeth E. Hutter, "Report of the Inspectress," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1870, 28; see also Huntingdon (Pa.) Journal, n.d. Quoted in Pennsylvania School Journal, XIV (March, 1865) 213; James Wickersham, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1871, 306.

[3]Albright, "Civil War Career, Part I," 339; "Part III," 160.

to the children? Was he perhaps aware that the federal government was planning to build a system of homes for the disabled volunteers throughout the country?[1] All of his contemporaries stated that it was the governor, and not the railroad executives, who finally decided in 1864 to use the $50,000 for the welfare of the soldiers' orphans rather than for the veterans themselves.[2] Perhaps there was more than politics that prompted Curtin to do this apparent act of kindness.

The Motive of Wartime Patriotism

Anyone who has ever had anything to say about Andrew Curtin always notes a more restricted but certainly more positive aspect of his public career. Politician though he was, Curtin still is admired and aclaimed as the greatest governor in the history of Pennsylvania.[3] He has earned this tribute because of the ability and zeal which he displayed as governor of the state during the Civil War.

Among all the chief executives of the northern states, none more strongly supported the Union cause than the governor of Pennsylvania. "The heroic role of Andrew Gregg Curtin," writes the dean of modern historians of the state, " stands head and shoulders above all the others among the governors of loyal

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[1]Fite, Industrial and Social Conditions, 287.

[2]Paul, SOS, 34; James Wickersham, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 306.

[3]Stevens, Pennsylvania: Birthplace of A Nation, 204; Wayland A. Dunaway, History of Pennsylvania, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1948), 416.

states as a tremendous wartime leader."[1] No particular friend of President Lincoln, Curtin is nonetheless recognized as one of the President's most active war supporters.[2]

One of the governor's more important activities during the was was the procurement of troops for the Union armies. This was certainly no easy task. When the war broke out, Pennsylvania was considered a coubtful, border state. Because of its Quaker and German secterian pacifist heritage, there was considerable anti-war sentiment in the Commonwealth. Moreover, certain mercantile centers in the state, like Philadelphia and York, because of their commercial contacts with the south were known to be lukewarm about the coming conflict. Finally, there were many in the opposition party--the so-called "Copperheads" of the Democratic Party--who were opposed to the war.

Curtin, however, energetically pursued the task of raising thousands of troops for the northern armies. In the early months of the war he issued proclamations and addresses exhorting the men of the state to dedicate themselves to the preservation of the Union.[3] By the end of the first year of the war, Pennsylvania had contributed over 50,000 volunteers to the northern armies, more than any other state.[4]

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[1]Stevens, Pennsylvania: Birthplace of a Nation, 204; For a similar but contemporary estimation of Curtin in the war see Harpers' Weekly, June 6, 1883, 362.

[2]Albright, "Civil War Career, Part II," (January, 1965), 18.

[3]Ibid., "Part III," 156.

[4]Dunaway, History of Pennsylvania, 420.

After the first flush of wartime enthusiasm and as the casualty lists began to mount, the response to Curtin's appeal for volunteers all but ceased in the state. A bounty system was resorted to but this in time became a scandal since numerous "bounty jumpers" took advantage of the payments to fill their pockets and often never served in the ranks at all.[1]

After 1861, the main effort in Pennsylvania to raise troops, as in the rest of the north, was the draft. This policy was fiercely resisted in many parts of the state. In the coal regions the "Molly Maguires" not only refused to be drafted but forcibly prevented trainloads of draftees from proceeding to the front. Equally serious opposition was met in Philadelphia among the impoverished workers who believed, and rightly so, that the draft was unfair to the poor. Men of wealth and property could excape the draft by paying for a substitute but a poor man could not.[2]

The governor of Pennsylvania could do little about easing the problem of raising troops. Whether by using the dispised draft or the unsatisfactory bounty system, the ranks of the army had to be filled. But he could do something to ease the life of the soldiers of Pennsylvania once they were inducted into the ranks. Thus, one of the great contributions Andrew Gregg Curtin made to the Union war effort was in the realm of the psychological. Curtin by his acts of kindness on behalf of the men at

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[1]Dunaway, History of Pennsylvania, 420.

[2]Robert Fortenbaugh, Pennsylvania (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Book Service, 1940), 260-261.

the front further inspired their patriotism and loyalty to the Union cause.

A special state agency was set up in Washington, D.C. to look after the needs of Pennsylvanians serving in the federal armies. Other agents were sent by Curtin into the field to make sure the sick and wounded received proper care in the army hospitals. He instituted the practice of returning the bodies of the dead soldiers to the soil of their native state. It was also the Pennsylvania governor who proposed that the states and the federal government establish a national cemetery at Gettysburg.

Besides overseeing all of these worthy projects, Curtin personally saw to the needs of the troops. He often was in the front lines with the Pennsylvania regiments and made it a practice to visit the wounded in the hospitals. Hundreds of letters from the soldiers and their relatives crossed his desk requesting his aid in finding a job for a wounded veteran or securing an extended furlough for a son at the front. Many of these letters were answered personally by the governor or by his secretary. His office became a clearing house for the complaints and needs of Pennsylvanian soldiers.

These ostensible acts of kindness had the desired effect. The governor won the devotion of the Pennsylvania troops. He was hailed as "The Soldiers' Friend."[1] It was the "soldiers' vote" that won Curtin reelection in 1863.

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[1]Bates, Martial Deeds, 962; Sanford Higginbottom and W. A. Hunter, Pennsylvania and the Civil War (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1961), 61; William B. Hesseltine, Lincoln and the War Governors (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 344.

Perhaps these deeds had a more positive purpose. They were part of Curtin's contribution to the winning of the war. The men at the front certainly believed that their government had not forgotten them. War might be hell but the governor of Pennsylvania was doing his best to alleviate some of the misery and anxiety of the common soldier.

After the war, even his Democratic opponents recognized the contribution Curtin had made to the final victory. "In his devotion to the soldiers, in supplying their wants," hailed the editor of the York True Democrat, "there is no man in our country who can claim to have done anything like as much as Governor Curtin." "Yea, more," added another contemporary admirer. "This great heart also had a place for the soldiers' orphan."[1] Thus, what Curtin did for the orphans of the fighting men was apparently but another aspect of the pattern of helping the soldiers of Pennsylvania--perhaps the final stage in this all inclusive war effort of the governor.

In his 1863 annual message to the legislature, for instance, the governor in order noted (1) how he had instructed the Surgeon General of the state to care for the wounded in the field, (2) asked the legislature for funds to bring the wounded back to hospitals in the state, (3) requested an appropriation to return the bodies of the dead to the state for burial, and (4) sought the approval of the lawmakers to use the $50,000 railroad grant to set up a Soldiers' Home.

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[1]York True Democrat, July 12, 1865; L. S. Shimmell, A History of Pennsylvania (Harrisburg: R. L. Myers, 1890), 300.

[2]"Messages of the Governors, 1858-1871," Pennsylvania Archives, fourth Series, Volume VIII, 462-465.

Similarly, the next year the governor in a comprehensive presentation asked the legislature for (1) an appropriation to fund the sending of supplies and uniforms to the troops, (2) money to help establish a national cemetary at Gettysburg, and (3) approval to use the $50,000 "for the relief of the poor orphans of our soldiers who have given, or shall give their lives to the country during this crisis."[1]

These requests were designed to stimulate the patriotism, loyalty and valour of both the fighting men and the civilians back home. Curtin acknowledged this aim at the conclusion of the 1864 message to the legislature (the one which included the reference to the needs of the soldiers' orphans):

> My one paramount duty is to help speedly crush this unnatural rebellion, to vigorously support our Government and the soldiers in the field. To the full extent of my official and individual ability, this aim shall be supported. I am ready to encourage all proper measures to strengthen the men who give it [the Union] their personal service, to themselves and their families, in every mode to invigorate their action.[2]

Certainly not the least of these wartime "modes" of Governor Curtin was his plea on behalf of the children of the veterans.

Most likely Curtin would not have come to the aid of these particular orphans unless they had been soldiers' orphans. There was nothing in his previous career to suggest that he had any humanitarian concern for the plight of homeless children. Undoubtedly the work "soldiers" meant more to Curtin than the word "orphans." In all of his speeches on the subject, the governor

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[1] "Messages of the Governors, 1858-1871," Pennsylvania Archives, Fourth Series, Volume VIII, 519-521.

[2] Ibid., 530.

always emphasized the anxiety of the fathers rather than the plight of their children. "Let us now at once lay the foundation of a systematic and continuous work," said Curtin in his first public statement on the matter in December 1863, "which will enable the defender of the Constitution to know as he paces weary vigil that the justice of the country has provided for his helpless survivors."[1]

The Legislative Establishment of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools

Once Governor Curtin made known his desire to help the soldiers' orphans, the actual founding of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools was anti-climactic. There was never much doubt that the lawmakers of the state would give their approval to the governor's proposal which was both popular and patriotic. Opposition resulted from how the program would be administered rather than whether the orphans of the soldiers would indeed receive the help of the state.

The legal establishment of the schools proceeded according to plan. In 1864 the General Assembly of Pennsylvania gave Governor Curtin approval to aid the soldiers' orphans provided no state funds were used. Curtin could place the children in private institutions, the Soldiers' Orphan Schools, but the funds for their support had to come from the $50,000 Pennsylvania Railroad grant. In 1865 just before the legislature adjourned for the year, it approved an appropriation of $75,000 to continue the system of relief set up the previous year. Similarly in

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[1]"Curtin's Speech At the Philadelphia Academy, December 3, 1863," quoted in Bates, Martial Deeds, 965-966.

1866 the lawmakers passed an appropriation of $300,000 to pay for the upkeep of the children. Finally in 1867 the Soldiers' Orphan Schools in Pennsylvania received the official sanction of the legislature through a law stating the conditions under which the new system would operate. This act continued the use of private institutions to house the soldiers' orphans. It also gave formal sanction to a new state agency which the governor had set up to supervise the private schools. These officials of the so-called "Superintendency of the Soldiers' Orphans of Pennsylvania" would continue to develop regulations for the schools and visit them to make sure the mandates of the state were being carried out.[1]

The importance of the legislature of Pennsylvania in the establishment of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools must not be over emphasized. The most interesting and revealing feature of this legal establishment of the schools was how the guiding hand of the governor could be seen in all of this legislative action. Between 1864 and 1867 Curtin intervened time and again in the legislature on behalf of his special charity. Each January, in his annual message to the lawmakers, Curtin made a strong appeal for support of the orphans. On at least three occasions he intervened directly in the legislative process. An April 14, 1864 after the legislature failed to act on his original suggestion of January of that year, the governor had his own plan for the soldiers' orphans introduced on the floor of the General Assembly.

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[1]Leg Rec, 1867, cccxli-cccxlii.

This proposal, the so-called "Curtin-Wickersham Bill," in time become the basis for the aforementioned 1867 law. James Wickersham, an educator from Lancaster County, wrote the bill but the ideas were Curtin's.[1] The day before this plan was presented to the legislature, Curtin sent a special message to the General Assembly exhorting the members to come to the aid of the children.[2] In 1866 when the lawmakers were reluctant to appropriate funds for the system's continuance, Curtin spoke directly to a special, joint session of the legislature. He threatened to call them back into special session unless they voted the needed funds for the schools.[3]

At other times the governor often called members of the legislature into his office to explain the merits of his plan. "Governor Curtin went to the utmost of his authority," explained one contemporary. "He gave the full weight of his personal and official influence to win over those who opposed and strengthen the friends of his cherished plan [sic]."[4]

More than one lawmaker admitted that they had no desire to incur the displeasure of the most popular governor in the history of the state. The legislative critics of the governor's plan for the soldiers' orphans were quick to explain that their opposition did not come from any "unfriendly feeling towards the Governor." Similarly, those who supported Curtin had too

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[1]Paul, SOS, 36; James Wickersham, A History of Education in Pennsylvania, 588.

[2]Leg Rec, 1864, 644.

[3]Leg Rec, 1866, 567.

[4]Paul, SOS, 39.

much confidence in his judgment to change his plan for the orphans.[1] When the troops had departed for the front the governor had told them that the state would care for their children. Now was the time to fulfill "this solemn duty." "It would be a burning shame upon the honor of Pennsylvania," said one legislative supporter of Curtin, "if she permitted these children to go destitute after the great sacrifice their fathers made for their country."[2]

Thus, the evidence points to Andrew Gregg Curtin as being the originator and prime mover for this new type of public welfare service. Governor Curtin was the first person to suggest that state government should come to the aid of the soldiers' orphans. Two motives seemed to have guided his actions. First, it is possible that Curtin saw political profit to be made from this humanitarian effort, particularly in making more palatable his alleged ties with the Pennsylvania Railroad. Secondly, and more reasonably, there is evidence that Curtin saw state aid for the soldiers' orphans as another in a multitude of efforts made on behalf of the men fighting in the Civil War. Curtin's devotion to the Union cause took many forms not the least of which was his plan for the soldiers' orphans.

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[1] Leg Rec, 1865, lxv, 716; Ibid., 1866, 644.

[2] Ibid, 1865, lxiii, lxiv, lxi.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL ORDER AND THE MAINTENANCE OF THE SCHOOLS

Andrew Gregg Curtin, who must be given most of the credit for establishing the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania, ended his official association with the schools in 1867 when his term as governor ended. However, his interest in the schools continued. In 1876 he wrote to a Philadelphia book publisher seeking assistance for the author of an historical account of the schools.[1] Five years later at a reunion of graduates of the institutions, a correspondent reported that "tears again and again coursed down the cheeks of Governor Curtin as he looked upon the faces of those he had found in cellar and garret."[2] But Curtin could no longer exert any political influence upon the conduct of the schools.[3] Others would have to carry forward the official responsibility for what he had begun.

Every Pennsylvania governor after Curtin professed his

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[1]A.G. Curtin to R.S. MacKenzie, November 20, 1876, Simon Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[2]Pennsylvania School Journal, XXX (October, 1881), 161.

[3]Curtin's archrival in the Republican Party, Simon Cameron, became the acknowledged chief of the GOP after 1867. In 1872, Cameron read Curtin out of the majority party of the state after the former governor had supported the unsuccessful Liberal Republican candidate for President, Horace Greely. From then on, Curtin had little political influence in the Commonwealth.

sympathy for the schools. Each cited the familiar pleas of patriotism and humanitarianism to justify the continuation of this state supported system of public welfare. But except for ceremonial visits to a particular school on a special occasion like a national holiday or an end of the year graduation exercise, most of the governors after Curtin took no particular interest in the schools. They acknowledged the system's existence but exercised little direct authority over its administration. Their lieutenants, appointed and otherwise, ran the schools largely free of interference from the Executive Mansion.

Organization of the Schools

A well-defined hierarchy of officials regulated the lives of the soldiers' orphans. At the top of the pyramid was the State Superintendency of the Soldiers' Orphans. The Superintendent, who headed this five-member department, prescribed rules and regulations, approved the admission of children into the institutions and visited the schools.[1] Two other members of the department, a man and woman, were inspectors. They visited the schools to see if the superintendent's mandates were being carried out. In the central office at Harrisburg there were two male clerks who kept the record books and audited the

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[1]James Wickersham, History of Education in Pennsylvania, 591; Leg Rec, 1867, ccxli-cccxlii; Paul, SOS, 112, 124; Eleanor J. Flynn, "Public Care of Dependent Children in Pennsylvania, 1676-1901," (unpublished PH. D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1936), 112, 114.

financial accounts of the schools.[1]

The personnel in direct contact with the orphans were those who worked at each of the institutions. These were headed by the owner-principal of each school who had all the powers and duties associated with the head of any private school. Subject to the general regulations of the state department of the soldiers' orphans, he fixed the details of the education and care of the children, hired and fired the staff and purchased all supplies.[2]

The proprietor usually employed five teachers to instruct the 150 to 200 students in his school. Since a teacher usually taught more than one grade, there was one teacher for the first and second grades, one for the fifth and sixth grades and one for the seventh and eighth grades. Most of the orphans were in the third and fourth grades. Thus, there were two teachers for these two grades.[3]

There were also non-professional employees who usually included a male and a female attendant to supervise the children

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[1]Columbus Cornforth, "Report of the Inspector," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1869, 28; Elizabeth Hutter, "Report of the Inspectress," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1870, 29; Leg Rec, 1879, 1927; Leg Rec, 1883, 1423, 3548; Paul SOS, 47, 72-78; Thomas Burrowes, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1866, 158.

[2]James Wickersham, "Circular of Instructions of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1878, 105; Principal of the White Hall Soldiers' Orphan School, "Report," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1886, 86; Principal of the Mansfield SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1880, 37; Paul, SOS, 128.

[3]Mt. Joy Star, July 29, 1875; Principal of the Harford SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1887, 80; Leg Rec, 1887, 3010, 3040, 3118, 3124.

outside of school hours, a cook, a seamstress, a wash woman and a handyman.[1]

The Need to Justify the System

But how did these state and local supervisors conceive the purpose of their task? How did these officials justify the continuance of this extensive and costly program of state aid?

The official records of the schools are full of praise for the institutions. Practically every page of every report contains a glowing testimony to the advantages of the schools.[2] Some of the praise can undoubtedly be attributed to the desire to defend a system with which the officials were so closely identified. At the same time there was a more practical reason to defend the schools. Between 1874 and 1885, the state legislature passed six acts relating to the Soldiers' Orphan Schools. Each time the original intent of the 1867 law was amended. These six laws changed the initial Curtin-Wickersham Bill in three significant ways.

First, the law of 1867 did not specify when the system would come to an end. Practically all of the later acts set a time limit for closing the schools. In 1874 the legislature decided

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[1]Paul, SOS, 90, 99, 190, 220; Principal of the Uniontown SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1888, 44; Principal of the Loysville SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1888, 58; Interview with Ida O'Brien, Montrose, Pennsylvania, September 6, 1968.

[2]Principal of the Soldiers Orphan Institute, "Report," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1874, 61; Principal of the Phillipsburg SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1871, 349; Columbus Cornforth, "Report of the Inspector," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1872, 32.

to close the system in 1879. Later this was changed to 1885 and still later to 1890.[1]

Secondly, the original act of 1867 had specified that only children born before 1866 would be cared for by the state. As of 1874 the birthdate did not matter. All that was required was that the father had served in the war and that he was deceased.[2]

Lastly, the later laws allowed non-orphans to be admitted to the schools. After 1875 surviving Civil War veterans who had incurred service connected disabilities were entitled to enroll their children in a Soldiers' Orphan School.[3]

These three changes encountered considerable opposition in the General Assembly where there were always a handful of legislators who voiced disapproval of the proposed changes and additions to the system. Likewise on each of the six occasions, a few newspaper editors in the state were quick to point an accusing finger at the sponsors of the increased state aid.

The opposition, whether legislative or journalistic, cited three serious drawbacks to the new state laws. First, it was argued that the changes did not agree with Governor Curtin's original intent. Supposedly Curtin had set up the schools only for children whose fathers had been killed in the war. Now, not only were orphans of fathers who had died after 1865 being allowed to enter the schools, but the children of soldiers still living

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[1]"Laws Regulating the Schools," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1889, 89-92.

[2]Ibid., 89.

[3]Ibid., 90.

were also being supported by the state.

Secondly, what was intended to be a temporary enterprise was, according to the critics, being extended indefinitely. Four times the closing date had been changed. Seemingly, each time the schools were due to expire they gained a new lease on life.

The final and perhaps most serious criticism was that the original law was being changed for reasons bordering on the devious and unethical. It was suggested that the lawmakers were forced to bow to the demands of a powerful pressure group, the influential Grand Army of the Republic. Furthermore, there were indications that the Grand Army was really being used by the proprietors of the schools themselves. These owners, to keep their profitable enterprises going, were also trying to exert pressure upon the members of the General Assembly. Lastly, it was claimed that there was deception being practiced in the state department of the soldiers' orphans itself. After all, argued the opponents of the schools, everyone knew that practically all of these six laws were drawn up in the office of the state official directly responsible for the welfare of the soldiers' orphans.[1]

The defense against these charges of favoritism and collusion came from the same types of sources as the accusations.

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[1]Leg Rec, 1874, 1262; Leg Rec, 1875, 406, 1148; Leg Rec, 1878, 975, 1930; Leg Rec, 1883, 3313, 2802; Harrisburg Daily Patriot, May 23, 1883; Liverpool Sun, June 21, 1883; West Chester Daily Local News, February 15, 1883.

Obviously, most members of the state legislature were anxious to prove their support for this generally popular program.[1] Only a brave legislator was willing to risk his political future by offending the thousands of soldier voters who belonged to the powerful Grand Army of the Republic. A Democratic legislator was as quick as a Republican to show his loyalty and prove his "gratitude by taking care of these children."[2] Moreover, the press was generally lavish in its praise of the system. Few editors had the courage to criticize a patriotic enterprise that was considered to be one of the outstanding examples of public philanthropy in the history of the state, indeed of the whole nation.[3]

Finally there was a new source of support that had not been present when the system had originally been implemented. Those now directly concerned with the administration of the schools came to their own defense. The annual reports of the state superintendent of the soldiers' orphans, his two inspectors, and the individual school principals are full of the apologia which these officers evidently felt was necessary to justify the continued existence and extension of the system . Their remarks give a clue to another rationale that was used to explain the purpose of this state system of public relief.

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[1]Leg Rec, 1878, 1930; Leg Rec, 1881, 1474; Leg Rec, 1883, 2802.

[2]Leg Rec, 1881, 1475.

[3]For examples of this positive attitude see Lancaster Daily Express, July 25, 1872; Lancaster Daily Intelligencer, May 19, 1883; Shenango Valley News, June 22, 1882.

The administrators cited all the standard arguments. Although the war had long been over, they argued that the state had a continuing, patriotic duty to care for the homeless offspring of the deceased and disabled veterans.[1] But as the schools persisted on into the 1880's such appeals were fewer. Memories of the war began to fade. It was more difficult to justify a state welfare scheme in terms of a father's supreme sacrifice when the fathers of one-third of the children in the schools were still alive.[2] As the superintendent of the system quoted a critic in 1880, "Is not the system being perverted from its original purpose?"[3]

A similar problem of credibility detracted from the agrument based upon the ideal of humanitarianism. As late as 1885, the schools were being upheld by officials in charge of them as a "scheme of benevolence without parallel in the history of the nation," as "one of the greatest shemes of human charity."[4] But such appeals to human need had a hollow ring appearing to have been included more for effect than as a substantial, rational argument. They were rhetorical flourishes uttered without much sincerity. None of the administrators of the schools were known as sincere humanitarians. There was nothing in their backgrounds to suggest that they had at heart the welfare of the children under their charge. Instead these officials were hard-headed,

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[1]Elizabeth E. Hutter, "Report of the Inspectress," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1871, 328.

[2]James Wickersham, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1880, 3.

[3]Ibid., 2.

[4]Wickersham, History of Education in Pennsylvania, 596, 599.

practical professionals who, for all their pious statements, were interested in showing that the schools were a practical benefit to society. After 1874 it was neither patriotic fervor noe humanitarian concern that was used by those connected with the schools to explain their continued existence. Like a continuing refrain, the officers of the system time and again explained how the schools were helping to preserve the social order.

Social Order and Nineteenth Century American Education

Perhaps it was logical for these Pennsylvania officials to rationalize the Soldiers' Orphan Schools in terms of law and order. With few exceptions, all of the men and women responsible for the education and care of the soldiers' orphans were professional educators. They held in common with other schoolmen of the nineteenth century certain beliefs about public education. One of these common ideals concerned the social utility of a public school education.[1]

Administrators and teachers alike argued that education would establish a middle-class utopia where morality and property would be preserved, and crime and poverty abolished. The public schools, established and controlled by the representatives of the middle and upper classes, were helping to maintain the social order. Here the young of the dangerous classes were learning to

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[1]Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators (Patterson, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams, 1965), 197, 199, 203-260; Rush Welter, Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America (New York: Columbia Univ Press, 1962), 3-5, 94-102, 116-123, 157-158; S. Alexander Rippa, Educational Ideas in America (New York: David McKay, 1969), 293-301; Edgar B. Wesley, The NEA: The First Hundred Years (New York: Harper, 1957), 49, 55, 117.

take their proper place in society.

Michael Frank, a leader of educational reform in Wisconsin, spoke of education in terms of "the security of life and the safety of property." Henry Barnard reminded the Rhode Island legislature that civilized men had to decide for the urban poor how best to raise them from barbarism.[1]

The foremost spokesman of this conservative argument was the most famous American educator of the middle nineteenth century, Horace Mann. Mann seemed to be genuinely worried by the disruptive tendencies of the Industrial Revolution. The introduction of machinery and the growth of cities meant to Mann "new exposure to error . . . new temptations to dishonesty."[2] The results of these degenerative influences were most certainly "revenge and madness of the poor." Mann mirrored the fears of the conservative classes, "the wanton destruction of the property of others,--the burning of hay-ricks and corn-ricks, . . . the sprinkling of vitriol on rich dresses."[3]

Mann's answer to this threat to the status quo was education. It would prevent the masses from overturning the society of their betters. In the school, the child of the poor would learn "self-control, a voluntary compliance, natural obedience and the laws of duty."[4] He would be taught to avoid all violence.

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[1]Robert Wiebe, "The Social Functions of Education," American Quarterly, XXI (Summer, 1969), 148, 153.

[2]Quoted in Michael B. Katz, The Irony of Early School Reform (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968), 41.

[3]Quoted in Lawrence Cremin, Horace Mann, The Republic and the School (New York: Teachers College Press, 1957), 87.

[4]Ibid., 57.

The "true business" of the schools was the same "as the great interests of society," the controlling society of the middle and upper classes.[1] "Train up a child in the way he should go," went toe credo of Horace Mann, "and when he is old he will not depart from it."[2]

The Officials of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools as Educators

The officials in charge of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania had, then, a strong tradition to follow as they argued their point of social order. In the state department of the soldiers' orphans, three of the four men who served as inspectors during the twenty-five year history of the system were, as one contemporary noted, "teachers of long experience."[3] Two had been county superintendents of schools. One of the clerks in the Harrisburg office supposedly had "large experience in school affairs."[4]

Even more striking was the background of the head of the central state agency, the superintendent of the soldiers' orphans. All four men who filled this post were veteran educators. Thomas Henry Burrowes, the first superintendent (1864 to 1866) and James Wickersham who served from 1871 to 1881 were probably the most famous educators of their day in Pennsylvania. Back in the 1830's Burrowes as first state superintendent of the common schools had

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[1]Quoted in Masine Greene, The Public School and the Private Vision (New York: Random House, 1965), 23.

[2]Quoted in Cremin, Horace Mann, 100.

[3]Wickersham, History, 596.

[4]Ibid., 592.

organized the public school system of the Commonwealth. Wickersham is given credit for founding the first normal school in the state. He was also a well known author of books on pedagogy. Both men were active in professional organizations, Burrowes serving as vice-president and Wickersham as president of the National Teachers Association in the 1860's.[1] Both were also editors of the infuential educational journal of the state, the Pennsylvania School Journal.

The two other superintendents, while not as famous as Burrowes and Wiskersham, were well-know in Pennsylvania educational circles. George McFarland, superintendent from 1867 to 1870, was a long-time proprietor of a boys academy near the state's capitol. Elisha Higbee, the last head of the system (1882 to 1889), founded and had been president of the Reformed Theological Seminary in Lancaster, Pa. In all respects, it is clear that the four men who headed the Soldiers' Orphan Schools were important in the field of education in post-Civil War Pennsylvania.

Just as significant was the fact that practically all of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools were owned and operated by educators. They were under the control of former college presidents, academy headmasters, school teachers, or county superintendents. They were owned by individuals cut from the same cloth as a Superintendent Burrowes or Wickersham. This fact was important because

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[1]Robert L. Mohr, Thomas Henry Burrowes, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1946), 124; Wesley, NEA, 391.

now the system could operate within a single frame of reference--that of the professional educator.[1]

In fact, there is evidence that the children were placed in an institution that came to be known as a Soldiers' Orphan School largely because it was operated by an educator. Thomas Burrowes, the first superintendent and the educator who selected most of the institutions that would house the orphans, looked for men like himself to take care of the soldiers' orphans.

Because of the confusion of the Civil War, at the outset Burrowes could find very few private school owners to accept the children. Most of the academies in Pennsylvania ceased operations during the war. Thus, Burrowes had to turn to the charitable orphanages. But he always considered the use of the secterian orphanages as only a temporary arrangement.[2] Beginning in 1866, the superintendent made strenuous efforts to transfer the soldiers' orphans from the orphanages into bona fide boarding schools run exclusively for the wards of the state. He made trips throughout the Commonwealth to confer with principals of academies.[3] He wrote to fellow educators suggesting that they purchase academies and turn them into Soldiers' Orphan Schools.[4] By 1871, most of the soldiers' orphans were out of the orphanages and into the fifteen private Soldiers' Orphan Schools. Educators

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[1]Only two of the fifteen schools were exceptions to this fact. One was run by a minister and the other was part of a private orphanage in Philadelphia.

[2]Paul, SOS, 108.

[3]Pennsylvania School Journal, XIII (June, 1865), 285.

[4]Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1878, 41; Paul, SOS, 326.

were destined to guide the care and training of most of the orphans.

It is understandable why the officials who ran the Soldiers' Orphan School, both at the state and local level, emphasized the argument of social order. It was due to their professional background. While they had no monopoly on this conservative argument, the educational leaders of this state system were perhaps the most ready to accept its rationale as a way to explain the continued existence of their schools.

The Argument of Social Order

The comments by officials of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools about social order followed a common line of reasoning. Generally, they stressed three points.

First, seemingly to prove that the community was truly in danger, it was necessary to demonstrate that the soldiers' orphans were a social menace. They were pictured as coming from an environment of "neglect and want . . . from homes of ignorance and vice."[1] Fathers were drunken brutes who abused their wives and children.[2] Mothers were heartless and disreputable.[3] Most were too poor to send their children to school or find them employment.[4] One widow in York was accused of keeping a house of ill-fame. After it was raided by the police, she deserted her

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[1]Principal of the McAlisterville SOS, "Address, " Leg Rec, 1866, 561; Principal of the Titusville SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1871, 66.

[2]Record Book C of the York Home, MSS Box 69, York County Hist. Soc.

[3]Pennsylvania School Journal, XIII (December, 1865), 127.

[4]Pennsylvania School Journal, XXX (August, 1881), 45.

three orphans and went to a similar establishment in Philadelphia.[1] As Superintendent Burrowes claimed, it was a sound policy that indicated "the child's entire removal from the influence of a home thus corrupting and degrading."[2]

No wonder the children arrived at the schools in such a lowly and miserable state. Most were covered with vermin and infected with disease.[3] Some had no shoes.[4] They were "ignorant, very dull and stupid." Nine year olds still had not mastered the alphabet, and eleven year olds were trying to get through the "First Reader." Some, especially those from the rural, German areas, could scarcely speak English let alone read the language.[5]

Worst of all was the moral character of the new arrivals. They possessed all of the "moral deformities common to their class--disobecience, quarrelsomeness, lying, idleness and kindred vices."[6] Practically all used foul and course language and some were even adicted to tobacco.[7] School records referred to individual delinquents. Two sisters, while attractive children,

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[1]Record Book A of the York Home, MSS Box 69, York County Hist. Soc.

[2]Thomas Burrowes to Peter Williamson, November 21, 1864, The McPherson Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[3]Principal of McAllisterville SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1865, 561.

[4]Pennsylvania School Journal, XIII (January, 1865), 147.

[5]Record Book A and C of the York Home, MSS Box 69, York County Hist. Soc.

[6]Principal of the McAlisterville SOS, "Address," Leg Rec, 1866, 561.

[7]John Greer, "Report of the Inspector," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1888, 40.

were "untrue and dishonest."[1] One boy was "insubordinate." Another was known as a "Pittsburg [sic] rat, the most unpromising of boys."[2]

The educators never rejoiced at the lowly condition of their wards when they arrived at the schools nor did they waste tears on the unfortunate soldiers' orphans. "It is unfortunate," said Superintendent Burrowes, "that these children are rude, very filthy and ragged. But," he continued in a significant and very revealing sentence, "these are precisely the evils that the State seeks to remove."[3]

Having proved, at least to their own satisfaction, that the soldiers' orphans were in desperate circumstances, the authorities moved to the second part of the argument. What would happen to the orphan and the community if the unfortunate child did not continue to receive the saving grace of the Commonwealth?

The work was "crime." Like many educators of the latter nineteenth century, these educators of Pennsylvania were fascinated by the apparent connection between poverty and crime. They were convinced that a child of the lower classes, particularly a homeless child, if left to his own devices would grow up not "a plague to himself but a nuisance to society."[4] They would

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[1]Record Book A of the York Home, MSS Box 69, York County Hist. Soc.

[2]Pennsylvania School Journal, XV (March, 1867), 248.

[3]Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1864, 123.

[4]James Wickersham, "Our Lost Children Saved," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXIX (August, 1873), 33.

probably end up "on the gallows." In the meantime the whole community would suffer from his criminal actions.[1] "Now if the reader will estimate for himself," cautioned ex-Superintendent Burrowes in 1870, "the injury to the Commonwealth which would result if just half of these children went out in ignorance and want, idleness and vice, he will, to some extent, realize the amount of evil from which these schools have protected the community."[2]

To the authorities of Pennsylvania, the facts seemed to be conclusive. Superintendent Wickersham was always citing statistics showing how neglected orphans increased the crime rate:

> Of 11,510 convicted criminals in New York, 62% were orphans or half-orphans; in Pennsylvania 515 out of 962 or more than 50% were virtually orphans. In Maryland, out of 537 convicts, 260 were orphans.

"These are startling facts," concluded the superintendent, "and we tremble to think what might have happened if they the soldiers' orphans had not been snatched from danger by the benevolent hand of the State."[3] The point was, as Wickersham argued ten years later, that the state was being spared an epidemic of lawlessness. "Not two per cent of them," said the superintendent, "have turned out badly." As of 1881 only one soldiers' orphan out of nearly

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[1]Elisha Higbee, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1884, vi.

[2]Pennsylvania School Journal, XVIII (March, 1870), 238.

[3]James Wickersham, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pa. SOS, 1872, 27-28.

9,000, "No. A-351 of the Eastern Penitentary," had been put behind bars for bad conduct and his case was extraordinary since he had only been in one of the schools for a short time.[1]

Further, there was the economics of law enforcement. Although thousands of dollars were being spent on the orphans this was a small expenditure compared with the millions that the Commonwealth was saving on police protection and institutional internment.[2] If it had not been for the Soldiers' Orphan Schools, the state would be spending "ten times over" on jails and penitentiaries.[3] Certainly it was better to spend the money on educating the children to become good citizens rather than for crime prevention.[4]

The mention of citizenship brought the officials to the third and concluding part of their argument. The primary purpose of the state's welfare program, as the official spokesmen reminded their listeners time and again, was to prepare the soldiers' orphans to become "intelligent citizens and useful members of society."[5] Orphans were

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[1]"The Sixteener," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXX (October, 1881), 160.

[2]James Wickersham, "Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1872, xviii.

[3]Wickersham, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1872, 28.

[4]Hutter, "Report of the Inspectress," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1878, 31.

[5]"Plan of Thomas A. Burrowes Under the Act of 1864," quoted in Paul, SOS, 46.

being saved not so much for their sake but for the sake of society. "The character of the Commonwealth itself must be elevated," believed the official historian of the system, "when the influence of the thousands of children she has nurtured is felt upon society. These reflections, uniformly more than the fact that the widow's burdens are lightened and orphan's wants supplied, give importance and grandeur to the Soldiers' Orphan Schools."[1]

Superintendent McFarland said, "Pennsylvania will reap a rich harvest from the seed she is now sowing so wisely and well."[2] No soldiers' orphan would become a burden to society as a dangerous criminal. The training the orphans were receiving was ensuring respectful and lawabiding adults. Society would not only be preserved, it would be improved.[3] The careers of the soldiers' orphans would be far different and more noble because of their life at the schools. Here, they grew into upright young men and women, the state's "richest harvest."[4]

One official even admonished the graduates of the schools to remain in Pennsylvania so that the state could recoup some of the funds she had spent on them as a special

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[1]Ibid., 159.

[2]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1867, 23.

[3]Cornforth, "Report of the Inspector," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1871, 333; Principal of the McAlisterville SOS, "Address", Leg Rec, 1866, 561.

[4]Wickersham, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1878, 105.

class of children. "We think we have invested in you," said Superintendent Higbee. "You owe it to Pennsylvania to give her your citizenship instead of giving it to other states; it belongs to the state which educated you."[1]

Again, using the favorite persuasive weapon of Superintendent Wickersham, it was all a matter of facts and figures. If less than two per cent of the soldiers' orphans became criminals, nine in ten became useful citizens. In 1873, of the 2750 children who had gone out into the world, ninety-eight per cent were reported as "doing well."[2] Eight years later the results were even more startling: "Ninety-nine out of every hundred of them become good citizens behaving themselves properly and earning a livelihood by a respectable calling."[3]

The value of the schools to all of society was summed up by Mrs. Elizabeth Hutter, an inspector. Like all of her contemporaries she knew that the late war had been the greatest calamity in the nation's history. Thousands had been killed and even more wounded. But at least there was one compensation for the suffering and death. The Civil War had saved many children from the clutches of poverty and sin! "It is my deliberate conviction," said Mrs. Hutter,

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[1]Higbee, "Address," Proceedings of the Third Annual Reunion of the Soldiers' Orphan Sixteeners of Pennsylvania, 1883, 4.

[2]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1873, 27.

[3]Wichersham, "The Sixteener," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXX (October, 1881), 160.

"that many of these children fare better under the State's fostering care than they would have if their fathers had not died since their fathers lacked the means and the opportunity to elevate their children."[1]

Everyday Life Inside the Soldiers' Orphan Schools

In an effort to support their purpose, the officials of the schools went to great lengths to illustrate how the very care and training of the soldiers' orphans tied in with this concern for the social order. With one or two exceptions, all of the schools were located in rural areas. Although they were named for the closest settlement, most of the schools were six or seven miles from the nearest farm hamlet. A few were perched on mountains. Such bucolic arrangements were, of course, justified in terms of fresh air and pure water. But there was another reason why the institutions were far from civilization.

Like many political, religious and commercial leaders of the day,[2] the educators in charge of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools were convinced that the real danger to society lay in the cities of the Commonwealth. In the alleys and streets of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Scranton and other cities of the

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1872, 42.

[2]Robert Wiebe, The Search For Order, 1877-1920 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 44-75; Blake McKelvey, The Urbanization of America, 1860-1915 (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ Press, 1963), 87; Charles Glaab and A. T. Brown, A History of Urban America (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 95, 231-233, 246.

state were dangerous and criminally inclined elements of society.[1] Since many of the soldiers' orphans came from these large towns, and since the general policy was to remove them from such a degrading environment, it made sense to establish the schools in the country areas. Fortunately, there were already well-established private schools at these locations.[2] Here the boys and girls could be "guarded from the temptations of a large city," "from the unfavorable influences of large places."[3]

Once a soldiers' orphan made his way to one of these isolated institutions, he knew he had entered a well-regulated existence. Every waking moment was mapped out by his superiors. He got up at 6:00 A.M., ate at seven, was in school or doing chores at eight, ate at noon, returned to studies or work at 1:00 P.M., ate supper at five, played from six o'clock until seven-thirty, and then, after a short worship service, was in bed by 8:00 P.M.[4] "Everything is done by the tap of a bell, "commented one impressed visitor, "that is obeyed with soldier-like precision."[5]

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[1]Principal of the McAlisterville SOS, "Address," Leg Rec, 1866, 561.

[2]Burrowes, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1865, 21.

[3]Principal of the Uniontown SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1874, 74; Hutter, "Report of the Inspectress," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1874, 61.

[4]Paul, SOS, 155; Industrial School News, February 13, 1896.

[5]Harrisburg Telegraph, July 21, 1875.

Much of the regimentation was justified in terms of running the schools. Educators, whether in charge of orphanages or schools, have always been impressed with the need for administrative efficiency. But, there was a more important purpose for the regulations. "Leaving the time and place to the student's own caprice and chance," said Superintendent Burrowes, was not the best way to train the future adults of the state in the habits of obedience and self-discipline.[1] For Superintendent Wickersham, regulations were necessary to teach "order and punctuality."[2]

Every soldiers' orphan was impressed with the need to lead a well-disciplined existence.[3] If he did not learn this essential truth through the ringing of bells, there was always the stick across the seat of the pants. "Our discipline has been strict," underlined one principal.[4] While some of the authorities protested the use of corporal punishment, most of the principals freely admitted that they made frequent use of the pine paddle.[5] After all, many of

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[1]"1866 Instructions of Superintendent Burrowes," quoted in Mohr, Burrowes, 199.

[2]Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXI (August, 1874), 52.

[3]Teacher at the White Hall SOS, quoted in Harrisburg Daily Patriot, May 19, 1886.

[4]Principal of the Phillipsburg SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1876, 57.

[5]Hutter, "Report of the Inspectress," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1874, 72.

these children were "mean and vicious," "malicious and devilish." They pulled hair, fought and knocked down teachers.[1] Sometimes "in terrorem" was the only way to teach these future citizens respect for authority and obedience.[2] According to the principal of one school, his success as a disciplinarian was his greatest accomplishment as an administrator. "The want of the age," he claimed, "is the spirit and letter of obedience, not only in society and the State, but in all departments of life. Hence if this want is not met, there is insubordination and failures in business and society. We have tried to train our children to obviate these difficulties." He then told of how a recent graduate of the school had returned to thank him for teaching this supreme fact of life: "I was a bad boy at school and hard to manage; but I am better now and I am successful and I owe all my success to your restraints and instruction." This, noted the principal, was "a great comfort to a disciplinarian."[3]

There was more to this rigorous existence than routine and discipline. The soldiers' orphans were also made aware of the need for order in their everyday habits. For the first time in their lives most of them regularly used a

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[1]Principal of the Mercer SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1878, 50; Leg Rec, 1887, 3057.

[2]Burrowes, "Editorial," Pennsylvania School Journal, XVI (August, 1867), 29.

[3]Principal of the Phillipsburg SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1876, 29.

bar of soap, a towel and washcloth. The orphan learned how to take care of his clothes and where to hang them when not in use. At meal time he ate in silence, did not grab for the food, and learned the proper use of knife and fork.[1]

This training plus the comforts provided by the principals, it was claimed, would result in a healthy and well-behaved adult. The board of fare, sanitary facilities and clothing provided at a Soldiers' Orphan School were supposedly far superior to that which the children had at home. But the authorities were quick to point out that they were not rearing a snobbish elite. One inspector, under the heading of "Pernicious Talk," reported that certain well-meaning persons around the state were telling the children that the state would always look out for them, that the state would ensure their future success in life. "This kind of bosh," said Inspector Cornforth, could only make the orphans insubordinate and give them false ideas of their own worth.[2]

The educators in charge of the system time and again emphasized that the soldiers' orphans were trained to live as commoners and never as pampered wards. "No priviledged or superior class is thereby to be created," was the dictum laid down by Superintendent Burrowes. The rule was that the orphan was being maintained in the same way as if his father was still performing the duty.[3] They would eat the food and

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[1]Interview with Ida O'Brien, September 6, 1968.

[2]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1879, 27.

[3]Pennsylvania School Journal, XVIII (January, 1865), 176.

wear the clothing which was suitable for their class. Very seldom did a soldiers' orphan get candy or fruit.[1] The boys did not wear underclothing or nightclothes. All went barefoot in summer. And all of this plainness was justified in terms of teaching the child his proper place in society. He was being prepared for that "medium condition of life" which was also, claimed Superintendent Burrowes, "the condition of most utility and happiness."[2]

The Formal Education of the Soldiers' Orphans

This emphasis upon preparing the orphan for an ordinary life carried over to their intellectual training. One superintendent was fond of stating that it was simply a matter of providing the same type of education the child would have received if the father was still alive.[3] Very few of these children would aspire to higher vocations or go on to college. As the children of the common people, all they really needed was a good common school education, one that would help them earn a living as laborers or household servants.[4]

The soldiers' orphans received an "ordinary English education."

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[1]Interview with Ida O'Brien, September 6, 1968.

[2]Pennsylvania School Journal, XIII (January, 1865), 176.

[3]Pennsylvania School Journal, XIII (January, 1865), 178.

[4]Hutter, "Report of the Inspectress," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1885, 21.

[5]Paul, SOS, 159.

Most of the children went through the first four grades but in each they studied the same thing. According to one graduate, it was the same thing she had studied in her former public school: "We had reading, writing, spelling and history."[1] She could have also added arithmetic.

The inclusion of history was unusual. At a time when the study of history was only beginning to be made a part of the curriculum of the public schools, it was a standard subject in most of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools.[2] It had two parts, history and civics. History was almost entirely American military history (the battles and leaders of the nation's wars, particularly of the late Great Rebellion). Civics was, as one official noted, the study of the "laws of the U.S." or The Constitution.[3]

There were three reasons for justifying the inclusion of these studies in the curriculum. First, here was obviously another way to produce law-abiding, orderly citizens. This generation of soldiers' orphans could not help but assume their full prerogatives of citizenship as the "due respect for their rulers, obedience to constituted authority and strict adherence to law" was instilled in

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[1]Anna Williams to Erma Heffern, May 15, 1967, Susquehanna Hist. Soc.

[2]Wickersham, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1872, 27; Higbee, "Rules and Regulations of the Soldiers Orphan Schools," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXIV (April, 1886), 415.

[3]"Interview with Inspectress Attick," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXVI (April, 1888), 418.

their minds. Moreover, the study of men like Columbus and Washington would give the children examples of good character to emulate—perseverance, purpose, "the reliance upon Him who is the director of all events."[1]

A second reason for these studies was the matter of patriotism. "Pure exalted patriotism," Superintendent McFarland called it, "which teaches our youth to venerate their country second only to their God."[2] The schools had been founded in the midst of war and were sustained by the hatred of "domestic foes and foreign enemies." The fathers had proved their patriotism in death. Their sons and daughters should learn the same high principle through their studies.[3] Certainly if the nation was ever threatened again, the patriotic training which the soldiers' orphans were receiving would be a good guarantee that they would be among the first to rush to its defense.[4]

Finally, the educators of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools saw the teaching of history and government as a way to offset the adverse effect of foreign immigration. Thousands of aliens from the non-English speaking countries of Europe

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[1]Inspector W. L. Baer, "U.S. History," Pennsylvania School Journal, XIV (April, 1866), 234.

[2]McFarland, "Speech at PSEA Convention," Pennsylvania School Journal, XIII (Sept., 1864), 84.

[3]Cornforth, "Report of the Inspector," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1872, 34.

[4]McFarland, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1867, 22.

were pouring into America carrying with them strange and often radical political doctrines. The officials of Pennsylvania were worried about this alien threat to the domestic safety. This influx of foreigners, claimed Inspectress Hutter, made it necessary "to imbue their [the soldiers' orphans] minds with a just appreciation of American institutions, methods of government and ideas of freedom."[1] To another inspector it was a matter of controlling the country upon the principles of "our American fathers." The educators responsible for the schooling of the soldiers' orphans would not fail to impart these native ideals to their young wards.[2]

Closely tied to the intellectual training in patriotism and citizenship was the emphasis on military drill in the schools. Every institution had its corps of cadets who, once or twice a week, went through maneuvers on the school's parade ground. If the nation were again threatened by internal rebellion or foreign invasion, these "liliputian" soldiers would rush forward to defend their country.[3] America was a peace loving country where the arts of war were "much forgotten and neglected."[4] It was important that the soldiers'

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1885, 19.

[2]John Greer, "Report of the Inspector," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1889, 40.

[3]Hutter, "Report of the Inspectress," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1881, 22.

[4]Ibid., Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1880, 28.

orphans be drilled to face any future threat to the nation's security. If the need should arise, they would be ready to respond as their fathers had done just a few years previously. During the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 much was made of how the graduates of the schools, as members of the Pennsylvania National Guard, helped put down the riots at Pittsburgh and Scranton. "The drill received at the orphan school," claimed one principal, "fitted them to defend their State."[1]

Furthermore, it was argued that military drill helped instill that sense of order which was desperately needed by all of these children. Obeying commands encouraged obedience and acquiescence to authority later in life. Drills taught politeness, faithfulness and the ability "to resist the influence of evil." Practically all of the disciplinary virtues needed in later life, it was claimed, could be gained out on the parade ground.[2]

The Primacy of Character Education in These Schools

In the March 1874 issue of the Pennsylvania School Journal, editor James Wickersham (who was also currently superintendent of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools) wrote an article on the recent books of Herbert Spencer. Wickersham

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[1]Principal of the Soldiers' Orphan Institute, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1877, 47.

[2]Inspector William Baer, "Military Drill," Pennsylvania School Journal, XIV (May 1866), 260; Principal of the White Hall SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1883, 43.

found Spencer making "rash generalizations." The Englishman's ideas were "narrow" and "based upon false theory. Spencer was a proponent of utilitarian education. He had little time for training in conduct. Spencer held that one could not be taught right and wrong since what one did came from his feelings. This revolutionary view was too much for Superintendent Wickersham. "All teachers hold," said Wickersham, "that knowledge and intellectual culture tend to virtue, purify taste and elevate the ideal of duty." Knowing came first and feeling afterwards. "The truth is," concluded Wickersham, "that all moral teaching must begin with precepts."[1]

Here in this book review was a clue to the educational philosophy of the head of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania, indeed to the thinking of all the officials who were responsible for the education of these particular children.[2] The primary purpose of the schools was summed up in one word, "character." Time and again the officials justified what they were doing on the basis of this single concern. What the first superintendent of the system said in 1866 was phrased equally well by Superintendent Wickersham, Inspectress Hutter or other official spokesmen

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[1]Wickersham, "Editorial," Pennsylvania School Journal, XIX (March 1874), 280.

[2]Just a few months earlier, former Superintendent Burrowes had called Spencer a "most dangerous and heretical philosopher." Quoted in James Mulhern, History of Secondary Education in Pennsylvania (Lancaster: Science Press, 1934), 527.

for the schools. "The feelings aroused, the habits formed, and the life direction imparted," admonished Superintendent Burrowes in his original instructions, "in a word the character built up, must be regarded as more important than all else."[1] Orphans should learn to read and write but, as Superintendent Wickersham exclaimed, "I deem it more important to train the children right than to instruct them well."[2] It was better to be good than intelligent if one could not be both.[3]

Everything that went on in the schools, from the care of clothing to drill on the parade ground, was to add to the formation of character. Character was all important because here, obviously, was the key to the molding of those future God-fearing and law-abiding citizens who would preserve the order of society. Humility, obedience, and self-discipline was what the concept of social order was all about.

The primary purpose of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools was a noncognative one. The educators in charge of these schools were only secondarily interested in teaching learning skills. Their main purpose was the inculcation of norms and attitudes which they believed were essential

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1866, 158.

[2]Paul, SOS, 140.

[3]Principal of the Chester Springs SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1887, 78.

to an orderly society. In this respect, as professional educators, the men and women in charge of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania reflected a common concern of most nineteenth century American educators.

CHAPTER III

THE FAILURE OF THE SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

Those in charge of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools succeeded in arguing the merits of their task. Justifying the schools in terms of social order struck a responsive chord among the people of the state. For over twenty years, the schools were described as one of the most successful and popular philanthropic undertakings in the history of the Commonwealth.

Educators, historians, legislators—all commented favorably on the system. Teachers in convention in 1867 resolved to express their gratification towards the benevolent enterprise.[1] The author of a popular history of the state noted the advantages accruing to the whole community: "A body of well-instructed and morally trained young men and women will be given to their Commonwealth . . ."[2]

Remarks made in the legislature when the life of the schools was extended invariably dwelt upon the positive

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[1]"PSEA Convention," Pennsylvania School Journal, XVI (September 1867), 89.

[2]William C. Armor, Lives of the Governors of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: James K. Simon, 1873), 462.

contributions of the system. In 1878 a legislator claimed that no state system had given so much satisfaction to the people of the state.[1] Three years later the legislature learned how the soldiers' orphans were "fast becoming the most useful citizens of the State."[2] In 1883, the horrors that the schools had spared the state were described:

> Why if only one, if only a half dozen, if only a dozen of these children would be cast out and become vagabonds and useless to society and addicted perhaps to vice and crime, it would be enough of an impulse to continue the schools.[3]

The state's newspapers vied with each other in extolling the virtues of the schools. Every spring correspondents from the local press attended the-end-of-the-year examination exercises at the institutions. They came away convinced that the young scholars were equal to any in the common school system of the state. The examinations were always a grand success since the orphans answered all questions promptly and correctly.[4] The military drill on the parade ground exhibited the moral and physical training necessary for the "battle of life."[5] Most of all, the correspondents were impressed with the order and discipline that permeated

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[1]Leg Rec, 1878, 1930.

[2]Leg Rec, 1881, 1474.

[3]Leg Rec, 1883, 2802.

[4]Carlisle Herald, July 24, 1879; Mt. Joy Star, July 29, 1875.

[5]Philadelphia Inquirer, July 14, 1877; Shenango Valley News, July 2, 1881.

these institutions. Good behavior was the mark of a well-regulated school:

> We are more convinced than ever that the military discipline as shown at The White Hall Soldiers Orphan School is the best method of managing schools as it teaches the boys and girls obedience, promptness, order, system and every other quality from which come live men and women.[1]

All of this approbation was not lost on the officials of the schools. They noted with much satisfaction the numerous and friendly notices in the press of the state.[2]

Why, then, with all of this favorable opinion behind them, did the Soldiers' Orphan Schools come to such a sudden end in 1889? How was it possible that one of the most popular institutions in the 1880's came to be only an historical curiosity by the early 1890's?

The End of the System

February 22, 1886 marked the beginning of the end of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania. On that date the tabloid Philadelphia Record headlined the storm that was about to break over the heads of the soldiers' orphans:

> SOLDIERS' ORPHANS
> A SYNDICATE'S TRAFFIC UPON HUMANITY
> Official Corruption, Neglect, Discrimination-
> Bathing Orphans in Pickle Barrels-
> A Furnace Cellar For a Playroom-
> Crowded Three and Four Children Into One Bed-
> Forcing Them To Wear the Same Clothing
> In Winter and In Summer

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[1]Harrisburg Telegraph, July 22, 1872.

[2]Paul, SOS, 132; Corforth, "Report of the Inspector," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1872, 32.

The rest of the article, which took up nearly all of the front page, described how the once "grand purpose" of Pennsylvania was being "prostituted" for the sake of human greed and callous neglect. The "children of the state" received little schooling since they were forced to spend most of their time "scrubbing floors and peeling potatoes." Sleeping quarters were foul smelling, poorly ventilated garrets. Profits as high as $50,000 a year were being rolled up by the private owners as they fed each of their charges for as little as three cents per meal. John Norris, author of the exposé, claimed it was the infamous Dotheboys Hall come to life. Like Squire Squeers of Dickens' fictional English boarding school, the proprietors of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools in their lust for money had turned a state's pride into "pestholes."[1]

The reaction to this revelation was instantaneous. There were words of outrage on the front pages of practically every daily in the Commonwealth. The schools were a "State's Disgrace," a "Humiliating Revelation." The perpetrators of these crimes must be brought to justice. Imprisonment was not good enough for them. The present system of state aid had to be changed and most, if not all of the schools, should be closed.[2]

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[1]Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886.

[2]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, Lancaster Daily Intelligencer, Philadelphia Times, Harrisburg Telegraph, Wellsboro Agitator, February 23, 1886; Philadelphia Press, March 13, 1886; Connellsville Courier, March 26, 1886.

Just as vehement was the indignation of the thirty-five thousand members of the state's Grand Army of the Republic. This organization, while it had never had any official connection with the schools, had always taken an active interest in the institutions and had come to feel it had a special duty to protect the welfare of the children of the fallen comrades. Practically every one of the four hundred posts in the state passed resolutions condemning the alleged outrages.[1] On February 24, only two days after the original charges had appeared in the Record, the state commander of the GAR announced that he was setting up a five man committee to investigate the schools.[2] "The Grand Army Marches Against the Plunderers of the Orphans," heralded one newspaper. "When the Conspirators Learn of the Veterans' Movement Their Hearts Will Seek Their Boots."[3]

Except for an informal questioning of the state officials connected with the system, however, the GAR committee never undertook an inquiry of the schools. Instead, the official investigation was conducted by the governor of the state, Robert E. Pattison. Between March 5 and 26, 1886, Pattison and his Attorney-General visited ten

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[1]Philadelphia Record, March 13, 1886; "Resolution of March 2, 1886," Minuite Book of GAR Post 33, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

[2]Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Pennsylvania, Proceedings of the Annual Encampment, 1886, 4 (Hereafter cited as GAR); Harrisburg Daily Patriot, February 25, 1886.

[3]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, February 25, 1886.

of the schools, questioned over one hundred witnesses and took seven hundred pages of testimony. This tour was reported in detail in the state's newspapers. The national press published descriptions of the official probe.[1] The influential weekly, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, printed "graphic" pictures showing what Pattison had found at one of the schools. On April 15, 1886, the results of the gubernatorial probe were made public:

> The facts proved by the testimony . . . unhappily establishes the substantial truth of the Philadelphia Record's charges. The testimony shows a most pitiful, cruel and inhuman neglect of the children as well as suggestions of depravity and immoral practices that are too vile for enumeration . . . The entire system shows inhuman greed, speculation and heartless bargaining.[2]

Pattison, although he fired the two inspectors of the central state agency and requested the resignation of the state superintendent of the system, claimed he could do nothing about the conduct of the schools since they were the creation and responsibility of the state legislature. Like most political assemblies, however, it took the legislature a long time to grind out the inevitable conclusion to the whole sordid affair. The fate of the schools was not decided until March, 1889.

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[1]New York Daily Tribune, April 16, 1886; New York Times, March 7, 15, 17, 1886.

[2]Robert E. Pattison to Lewis Cassidy, April 15, 1886 quoted in Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 16, 1886.

Gradually the controversy dropped from the pages of the state's press but the issue was kept alive at the annual encampments of the Grand Army of the Republic. In 1887 a committee of the GAR suggested the cessation of state payments to the proprietors of the schools until they were cleared of all charges of malfeasance and neglect.[1] The following year another Grand Army committee suggested that the best solution to the whole unfortunate situation would be the establishment of one central school under the direct control of the state.[2] Finally, at the February encampment of 1889, the members of the Army were informed by the state commander that a delegation from the state GAR had been meeting with a joint-legislative sub-committee for the purpose of revising the twenty-five year old system of state aid to the soldiers' orphans.[3] In late March of that year, both houses of the legislature by a unanimous vote approved the results of these deliberations with the Grand Army. The new law changed the original plan of Governor Curtin in two significant respects.

First, the old state department, The Superintendency of the Soldiers' Orphans, was abolished and an eleven man Commission consisting of the governor of the state, five legislators, and five Grand Army men was set up to administer the system. Secondly, the individual schools would still be

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[1] GAR, 1887, 13.

[2] GAR, 1888, 281.

[3] GAR, 1889, 238.

used to house the orphans but they would be under the direct control of the state. They were no longer private institutions receiving state funds. They were now public institutions. The commission would rent the facilities, purchase all supplies and hire and fire the principal, teachers, and attendants.[1]

The latter provision proved to be only a temporary expedient, however. In July 1889 the new commission closed five of the schools and transferred the pupils to the six remaining institutions. This action received the endorsement of the state's press. While it was a move long overdue, the decision of the commission was "too good to be true."[2] Between 1890 and 1892, three more of the schools were closed.

The real intent of the state was revealed in 1893 when a law establishing a State Industrial School for Soldiers' Orphans passed the legislature. This training school, built and wholly owned and operated by the state, opened in 1895 and as its facilities were expanded the remaining original Soldiers' Orphan Schools were phased out of existence. The last transferred its children to the Industrial School in 1912.

In brief, this is how the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania came to an end. This closing story began with

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1889, 92-95; Leg Rec, 1889, 973, 1234-1235, 2162, 2187.

[2]Philadelphia Record, July 30, 1889; Harrisburg Daily Telegraph, July 30, 1889; Philadelphia Public Ledger, July 31, 1889; Lancaster Daily Intelligencer, July 30, 1889.

the sensational charges of February 1886 and ended, to all intents and purposes, with the establishment of the state commission in 1889. It was a story of scandal, charge and counter-charge, and emotional appeal. More, however, was involved in the demise of Governor Curtin's plan than the muckraking exploits of a Philadelphia newspaperman, the indignant cries of disbelief and horror by the citizenry of Pennsylvania, the wounded pride of a veterans' association and the determination of an embarrassed governor and legislature to make amends for a bad situation. Three trends, characteristic of the era generally, conspired to weaken this first state plan of aid to dependent children.

The Industrial Revolution in Pennsylvania

Between 1865 and 1890 the United States underwent a significant economic transformation. At the end of the Civil War America was still a country of farmers; manufacturing, while important, did not approximate that of the major powers of Europe. By 1900 the United States had become one of the dominant industrial nations in the world surpassing the production of the older countries of the Continent. The value of manufactured products rose from 1.8 billion dollars in 1859 to over thirteen billion dollars in 1899. In 1900 industrial products were worth almost four times as much as farm products. Two and one-half times as many persons were now engaged in manufacturing as in agriculture. In less than fifty years the United

States had become the world's greatest example of industrial progress.[1]

The state of Pennsylvania was deeply involved in this transition. Although farming continued to play an important role in the economy of the state, by 1870 its importance was fast losing out to the rising tide of industrialization. Blessed with an excellent geographic location and endowed with rich mineral resources, Pennsylvania since 1850 had gone through the initial stage of the Industrial Revolution. An impressive and new industrial complex emerged based upon the iron, steel, coal and oil industries, all bound together by an extensive network of railroads. By 1874 Pennsylvania produced almost one-half of all the pig-iron in the country. The nation's largest steel mills were at Pittsburgh, Johnstown and Bethlehem. Pennsylvania led all the other states in the production of anthracite coal and produced by 1880 almost fifty percent of the bituminous mined in the country. By 1887 almost two-third's of the state's labor force was engaged in manufacturing, trade, transportation and mining. Only New York surpassed Pennsylvania in capital invested in manufacturing and in the number of manufacturing establishments. With some

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[1]John Garraty, The American Nation (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 499; Ray Ginger, Age of Excess (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 39; Sidney Fine, Laissez-Faire and the General Welfare State (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956), 24.

justification, it has been said that Pennsylvania was passing through the period of its "greatest relative dominance as an industrial state."[1]

Industrialization and the Education of the Soldiers' Orphans

The implications of this industrial progress upon the education of the state's youth were enormous. Pennsylvanians like most Americans had always demanded that going to school pay some practical dividends, that it be tied to the economic concerns of life. Now in the latter nineteenth century, what had passed for learning when most Pennsylvanians and the rest of America were farmers no longer seemed to satisfy the needs of a modern, industrial society.

One group of educators that had to face this new problem of industrial training were the officials in charge of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania. What their attitudes were towards industrial education and how they attempted to meet its challenge explains, in part, the eventual failure of their schools.

Like most of the state's children, the soldiers' orphans returned to the lower class status of their fathers after their schooling. Very few of the orphans, it was claimed, would aspire to become professionals or try to

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[1]Sylvester K. Stevens, "Century of Industry in Pennsylvania," Pennsylvania History, XXII (January 1955), 60; See also Ibid., 49-68; Sylvester K. Stevens, Pennsylvania: Titan of Industry, I (New York; Lewis Publishing Co., 1948), 295-319; Stevens, Pennsylvania: The Heritage of a Commonwealth, 501-541; Dunaway, A History of Pennsylvania, 563-629; Fortenbaugh, Pennsylvania, 423-447: J. Cutler Andrews, "The Gilded Age," Pennsylvania History, XXXIV (January 1967), 11-12.

achieve a more superior social position. "These children," Superintendent Burrowes reminded his principals, "are not to be trained up under the impression that they are exempt from the necessity of labor for their bread."[1]

The problem, as the authorities realized, was that the qualifications needed previously by a worker were no longer sufficient for the new age of industrial specialization. A strong back and willing hands was not enough to operate the intricate machinery of the modern factory. "I can obtain plenty of laborers," Superintendent Wickersham quoted a Philadelphia manufacturer, "to do the common kinds of work about the factory, but I cannot obtain a sufficient number of skilled workmen."[2]

Simply putting some tools in the hands of a child and hoping for the best was no longer a guarantee of job success. The market, claimed the principal of one school, was full of so-called "mechanical mechanics" or jack-of-all-trades. They no longer could get a job. Instead, the times demanded intelligent and skillful mechanics.[3] The soldiers' orphans had to receive an education which would better qualify them to enter the machine shops and other

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1864, 778.

[2]Pennsylvania School Journal, XXII (September, 1873), 51.

[3]Principal of the Soldiers' Orphan Institute, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1885, 33.

places of industry in Pennsylvania.[1] "What we want and what we must have," exclaimed Superintendent Wickersham, "are more schools where boys can be trained in the sciences which are involved in everyday life."[2]

This need for job preparation was closely tied to a second problem--the threat of foreign competition. Educators were aware of the great numbers of foreigners coming to America. They were worried, however, not about the masses of untrained aliens, but about the thousands of highly skilled mechanics arriving from the more advanced, industrial countries of Europe. "How few American boys and girls learn a trade," lamented Inspectress Hutter of the state department of the Soldiers' Orphans. "We are obliged to send to Europe for our trained workmen in the various crafts while native born citizens have been compelled to occupy lower positions and consequently to receive lower wages, for lack of this trained skill." She called upon the owners of the private Soldiers' Orphan Schools "to wake up" to the necessity of their charges being taught trades, of the soldiers' orphans receiving a thorough training in the mechanical arts. Only in this

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[1]James Wickersham, "Governor Hartranft on Industrial Education," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXVII (December, 1878), 214.

[2]Pennsylvania School Journal, XXII (September 1873), 51.

way could the graduates of the schools avoid being "crowded out" of the good jobs by the foreign craftsmen.[1]

Mrs. Hutter was deeply concerned about the thousands of foreigners who were pouring into Philadelphia and other parts of the state. Not only were they taking away jobs, but these aliens, speaking an unintelligible tongue and exhibiting strange customs, were also a political menace. The foreign and often radical beliefs which they brought with them were a potential threat to the safety of the Republic. This fear was what Mrs. Hutter probably had in mind when she claimed that the young boys in the Soldiers' Orphan Schools had to receive an industrial education so that "we Americans--a nation of freemen--need not go to Europe for our skilled workers."[2] The dangerous aliens could be kept out if the demand for their technical skills was negated.

The corollary to this professed danger of foreign radicalism was the fear of the domestic Left. Like most spokesmen of the upper-classes, the officials in charge of the soldiers' orphan were highly critical of the rise of organized labor. As a protest movement against the status quo, the banding together of workers suggested anarchism and socialism. Unions and all forms of labor protest were condemned. In her Report of 1878, Mrs. Hutter congratulated

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[1]Annual Report of the Northern Home, 1883, 15, 17; Hutter, "Report of the Inspectress," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1880, 31; Ibid., 1884, 20; Ibid., 1885, 19.

[2]Annual Report of the Northern Home, 1883, 15.

the "bravery and decision" of the governor of Pennsylvania for sending the National Guard into the large cities of the state to quell the Great Railroad Strike of 1877. While the threat to the public order had been silenced this time, Mrs. Hutter was sure that the "railroad troubles" had "certainly showed the people what communism means."[1]

Mrs. Hutter even accused the despised labor unions of adding to the unemployment problem. Under the traditional apprenticeship system, many "selfish and badly managed trade unions" refused to allow master craftsmen to take on more than one or two apprentices. This, claimed Mrs. Hutter, deprived many young Americans of a training in the mechanical trades which, of course, was another reason why skilled foreigners had to be imported.[2]

But the most serious problem, again, was union radicalism and the threat of labor violence. According to Mrs. Hutter and her colleagues, one of the reasons the workers were turning to organized labor was their inability to find jobs. They were the unskilled rejects at a time when the pressing need seemed to be for workers possessing technical skills. "The workers strike," said Superintendent Wickersham, "when they see no other way to remedy their wrongs."[3]

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1878, 31.

[2]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1880, 31.

[3]Pennsylvania School Journal, XXVI (February 1878), 278.

In the end, the educators in charge of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools always came to the same regrettable conclusion about the problem of providing their clients with the needed skills for the new industrial age:

> This complaint [said Superintendent Wickersham] is a universal one. The demand must be met. The people will before long manifest their wishes in this matter in such a way that those in authority will find it unsafe to resist them.[1]

The Apprentice System

In an attempt to meet the challenge of industrialization, officers of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools first turned to what Superintendent Burrowes called "the regular manner" of acquiring a job skill, the apprentice system.[2] First outlined in the initial Curtin-Wickersham Plan of 1864 and made part of the 1867 law officially establishing the system, the superintendent of the system was given the authority to bind out a soldiers' orphan to a master craftsman. The master would teach the child a useful trade and see to his formal education.[3]

The educators of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools soon realized, however, that too much faith had been placed in this traditional method of job training. By the late 1860's in Pennsylvania, as in the rest of the nation, the apprentice

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[1] Pennsylvania School Journal, XXII (September, 1873), 51.

[2] Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1864, 278.

[3] "Act of 1867," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1889, 88.

system was rapidly disappearing. According to Superintendent James McFarland it was very difficult to persuade employers to take on even the best and brightest of boys as apprentices. Such a task was both too expensive and arduous for the modern factory owner. He could more cheaply train an adult mechanic.[1] Moreover, the claimed restrictive policies of the labor unions plus the arrival of the skilled foreign craftsmen tended to freeze the soldiers' orphans, like most children, out of the existing apprentice arrangements. Finally, Superintendent McFarland believed that it was almost impossible to enforce the punitive provisions of the old involuntary labor system. The ability to compel boys to serve out a relatively long period of indenture was becoming more apparent than real. "They tire of restraint quite too easily," noted McFarland, "and abscond to avoid restraint and punishment."[2]

In the end, the planned indenture of the soldiers' orphans was a complete failure. McFarland admitted that neither he nor his predecessor, Superintendent Burrowes, ever bound out a soldiers' orphan.[3] There is no record that any of the superintendents of the system used this method to secure job skills for their wards.

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[1]James McFarland, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1869, 38.

[2]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1867, 21.

[3]Ibid.

Industrial Training in the Soldiers' Orphan Schools

Admitting that the apprenticeship system was a dead issue, the officials in charge of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools turned to the only alternative method open to them--the instruction of the soldiers' orphans in manual skills inside the institutions themselves. In fact, the same 1867 law that anticipated the apprentice system, mandated that each school proprietor provide "the greatest variety possible of mechanical employments."[1] At one time or another, each of the schools had some kind of small manufactory attached to it where the orphans supposedly received an industrial education. At one school the wards of the state were "fitted to make a living" by learning the cabinet making trade.[2] At another, "the industrial system was [being] tested with good results," as the boys learned the brick making trade in a recently erected kiln.[3]

Some of the schools had more than one such factory. At the Dayton school a separate building was built with a shoe shop on the first floor employing ten boys and a knitting and sewing shop on the second floor for girls.[4]

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[1]"Act of 1867," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1889, 86.

[2]Principal of the Mansfield SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1885, 29.

[3]Paul, SOS, 198.

[4]Principal of the Dayton SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1879, 35.

The Titusville Morning Herald suggested that the local Soldiers' Orphan School was conducted under the industrial plan prescribed by the state since quite a few of the pupils were learning the printing and shoemaking trades.[1]

These claims of success to the contrary, it is evident that the use of these shops was of no more value for the industrial training of the soldiers' orphans than the ill-fated and antiquated apprentice system. Inspector Columbus Cornforth, of the state superintendent's office, was a particularly severe critic of the schools and their prevailing method of manual training. He stated that "in regard to learning trades, there has been considerable fine talk but very little accomplished." There simply were not enough facilities available for the orphans to learn a trade. Two or three shops making brooms and shoes, employing not more than ten or fifteen orphans, scarcely sufficed for the industrial training of the hundred and fifty to two hundred children found in each institution. Even where most of the orphans were employed, Cornforth doubted if they were learning very much. About all they were doing was developing a "fearful propensity to tinker—to become masters of nothing." The orphans had, he claimed, no particular trade in mind for a future job choice.[2]

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[1]Titusville Morning Herald, March 13, 1871.

[2]Columbus Cornforth, "Report of the Inspector," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1870, 26; Ibid., Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1871, 341; Ibid., 1873, 32; Ibid., 1874, 34.

Inspector Cornforth's assessment of this lack of real industrial training seemed to be seconded by his superior. In a circular of instructions issued in 1871, Superintendent Wickersham informed the principals that they had to set up a more organized system of employment for the orphans: "Mere JOB or CHORE work does not furnish the acquired industrial discipline."[1] Wickersham further warned the proprietors that specimens of the students' manual labor would be called for at the next end-of-the-year examination.[2] There is no evidence, however, that the principals ever complied with the state superintendent's directive.

Even the local press was unsure about the job training that the orphans received. A reporter who visited the Chester Springs school in 1883 was "greatly pleased with everything, with one exception, namely, the boys should receive instructions in skilled labor."[3]

Finally, the principals of the schools themselves revealed the total inadequacy of the industrial training. They recognized that such old-fashioned and insufficient establishments were really a facade for honest industrial education. One principal confessed that the jobs at his school were not diversified enough. There was shoe and broom making and the mending of clothing, but he admitted

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1871, 383.

[2]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1878, 104.

[3]West Chester Daily Local News, April 14, 1883.

that such tasks enjoyed no great degree of success. Ten years later the same owner confessed that not even these trades were being pursued any longer.[1] Another principal said there were quite a few boys who seemed to have a flair for mechanics and who would in all probability make good mechanics. Unfortunately, the opportunities were not available to teach them such industrial skills.[2]

The failure of the soldiers' orphans to receive an adequate education in the requirements of the new industrial age was freely admitted. "It is a matter of regret," said the principal of the Mt. Joy Soldiers' Orphan Schools in 1878, "that it has not been within the power of the management to provide that diversity of labor which is desirable . . ."[3]

Academicism and the Failure of Industrial Training

Three factors worked against the development of a bonafide industrial training program in the Soldiers' Orphan Schools. First, the attitudes of the educators in charge of the system reflected the more general and continuing debate in national educational circles over the respective merits of the traditional, cultural studies versus those that were supposedly practical. The allegiance

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[1]Principal of the Mercer SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1873, 51; Ibid., 1883, 33.

[2]Principal of the McAlisterville SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1871, 345.

[3]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1878, 51.

of the officers of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools was clearly to the former. These men were academicians of the old school who believed that a useful education was a cultural education, that the teaching of trades would subvert the primary goal of a common education.

Superintendent Burrowes, who set up the system for Governor Curtin in 1864, claimed that to learn to work was as much a part of a boy's education as the study of algebra. He admitted, however, that the one was subordinate to the other. Burrowes ridiculed the demands of the workers of America for "bread and butter sciences" to be included in the curriculum of the common school systems of the nation. Only the ignorant, he said, could denounce the truly "practical" subjects--"the classics and languages."[1] As far as the soldiers' orphans were concerned, in his "General Rules for the Soldiers' Orphans," the state plan that remained in effect for over twenty-five years, Burrowes stated the official philosophy towards the mixing of the intellectual and manual training of the wards of the state:

> Inasmuch as in this complicated process there must be a starting point of instruction to which all the others must be subsidiary, and inasmuch as the custom and wisdom of our ancestors have decided the instruction of the mind to be that starting point,--
> I. The regular education of these orphans in the school room is hereby recognized and declared to be that department which is to have precedence . . . This rule is without exception.[2]

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[1]Burrowes, "Speech to PSEA Convention, 1869," quoted in Mulhern, Secondary Education in Pennsylvania, 531.

[2]Quoted in Paul, SOS, 90.

That this admonition did become the rule can be seen in the fact that all of the schools seemed to follow a daily routine of six hours in the classroom and two hours at work.

The officers in charge of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools did not feel that it was necessary to defend this position. Only in the late 1880's when the system came under attack and it was obvious that the schools were going to be turned into industrial training institutions, did they argue the primacy of the traditional studies. Most of the orphans arrived at the schools between the ages of twelve and fifteen with little prior schooling. Practically all of the orphans' time, claimed their mentors, had to be taken up with the more vital common studies. Not only was an industrial training program impractical, but it would be positively harmful to the future welfare of the "children of the State."[1]

Closely tied to this stand on the supremacy of intellectual studies was the belief, also common at the time, that it did not matter if a student failed to understand what he was doing, if he succeeded in the performance of the task. Attitudes brought to bear upon the problem were important. The aim of the educators in charge of the schools was essentially non-cognitive. They were not interested in teaching learning skills. Their primary concern was character. Time and again the words "discipline"

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[1]Greer, "Report of the Inspector," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1888, 66.

and "self-discipline" appeared in their rhetoric. The duty of the teacher was to inculcate the correct norms and attitudes believed necessary for an orderly society.

This ideal naturally carried over into their opinions on industrial training. The principal goal of all industrial education, said Superintendent James Wickersham speaking as head of all the schools of the state in 1877, was to "form habits of industry and create a taste for work." Only to a "degree" was it designed to teach a skill.[1] This attitude became the aim of the manual training program of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools. The key outcome was the development of character, "the discipline," as Charles Deans, principal of the Chester Springs school put it in 1867, "in the habits of punctuality, promptitude and attention to details as in school room work."[2] "The education of the military orphans is to be one of moral culture," said Superintendent Burrowes in the same issue of the state's professional education magazine, "rather than fitness for the responsibilities of life."[3]

The essential failure of industrial training in these schools was not that the children did any work. They worked—probably more than the two hours allotted in the daily schedule. The problem was that the work they were

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[1]Quoted in Mulhern, Secondary Education, 534.

[2]Charles Deans, "Relation of Manual Labor to Education," Pennsylvania School Journal, XVI (September 1867), 95.

[3]Pennsylvania School Journal, XVI (September 1867), 80.

doing was not giving them the skills needed for a future job in an industrial economy. As a soldiers' orphan later testified, "While I was there I learned how to make brooms. When I went home to Philadelphia, of course, there was no use for my services at all so I drifted into another state and finally came back and started in another business entirely."[1] All did chores around the schools. The boys chopped wood and carried coal ashes. The girls made the beds and swept the floors.

The officials of the schools, however, professed not to be worried about the absence of a meaningful industrial education for their clients. Skills in the technical operation of modern machines were unnecessary. What counted for job success was self-reliance, industry and perserverance,—or "pluck" as Superintendent Wickersham called it.[2] Inspector Cornforth might lament the lack of facilities for teaching industrial skills. But in the same breath he stated the obiter dictum of the day: "Yet much is done in forming habits of industry and in instilling correct views of labor."[3]

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[1] Leg Rec, 1889, 2565.

[2] Lancaster Daily Express, July 19, 1873.

[3] Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1873, 32.

Agrarianism and the Failure of Industrial Training

This academic lack of interest for teaching industrial skills was closely related to a second factor that worked against the establishment of a realistic industrial training program in the Soldiers' Orphan Schools. The schools were rural institutions. Even though many of the orphans were from urban centers (in 1866, for example, of the twelve hundred soldiers' orphans admitted into the schools, half of them came from five of the more populated counties of the state[1]), they were all lumped together under the same, general designation of farm children. "It is not intended," said Superintendent Burrowes three years after the system had been established, "that the children should be taught trades or sent forth prepared by the schools in mechanical pursuits. Instead they are exercised in those domestic pursuits to which their fathers would have provided them."[2] This was the same old rationale that the orphans were being prepared for their common station in life—in this case as farmers. They were being prepared, not for the new industrial age, but for the fast disappearing age of the agrarian frontier.

Economics and the Failure of Industrial Training

Costs was a further factor that worked against the introduction of industrial training. The schools were

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[1] Leg Rec, 1867, CCXXIV

[2] Burrowes, "Speech to PSEA, 1867," Pennsylvania School Journal, XVI (September 1867), 80.

generally far removed from the industrial centers of the state. They would have had to purchase their own machinery and hire special instructors for a bonafide training program. In light of what they were paid by the state, this, said the principals, was prohibitive.[1] Some professed to see the income producing possibilities of manual training. Most of the principals, however, believed the possible sale of products made at the schools was only wishful thinking. The children with only two hours of industrial instruction and work each day would never be able to manufacture products which could compete in the open market. Against "the products of skilled labor," the efforts of the soldiers' orphans would only be that of "unskilled apprentices, necessarily crude and unworkmenlike."[2]

Furthermore, the principals recognized the unpleasant facts of automation. In the case of industrial education, it seemed to be the law of diminishing utility. One proprietor claimed that if he put more machines in the school, the fewer proportionately the number of children who could really be trained. Consequently, this proprietor abandoned the idea of setting up an industrial education program and substituted instead a "farming project."[3]

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[1]Principal of the Mansfield SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1871, 344; Ibid., 1878, 45.

[2]Principal of the White Hall SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1887, 101.

[3]Principal of the Mansfield SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1878, 45.

All of the officials, however, said they were willing to spend the funds for a bonafide manual training curriculum if the state could guarantee the permanency of this system of governmental support. The proprietors professed to believe that the schools were temporary institutions. Five times the legislature had extended the life of the system. This evident indecision on the part of the state seemed to indicate that there was no assurance that the Commonwealth would continue to aid the soldiers' orphans. The unpleasant possibility that the state might end the whole enterprise prematurely caused the principals to argue that it was unreasonable to ask them to make a great outlay of funds on manual training for so short a probable period of time.[1]

This argument of permanency seemed to become particularly valid after the sensational revelations of 1886 and the beginning of the end of the schools. It would cost, said one principal in 1887, five thousand dollars to buy the equipment necessary for a bonafide industrial education program. Since the schools were scheduled to close in 1890, this he claimed, was too much money to spend for machinery that would soon be standing idle in a vacant school.[2]

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[1]Principal of the Mansfield SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1871, 344; Cornforth, "Report of the Inspector," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1874, 34.

[2]Principal of the White Hall SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1887, 101.

Even Superintendent Higbee said it would be foolish to undertake such a program using existing facilities at the schools. "Still wilder," the state superintendent continued, "and more chimerical is the thought that, on the threshold of closing the schools, these proprietors could in any way be induced to do it."[1]

Thus, to the educators in charge of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools, state and local, manual training was an impossible and confusing goal. Tradition and economics told them to go slow. The demands of a new age made such industrial training imperative. There was, as Inspector Cornforth realized, a deficiency in the education of the soldiers' orphans that had long been felt, but "how," he asked, "shall it be supplied?"[2]

The Movement for a State Industrial School

One solution could have been the establishment of one or more actual industrial training schools. But until the so-called Scandal of 1886 broke there was little interest expressed by those in charge of the welfare of the orphans for a system of job training wholly sponsored by the state. Only Superintendent Wickersham seemed to be concerned about what he called a "polytechnic system of education."[3] In his

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1871, 332.

[2]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1871, 332.

[3]Pennsylvania School Journal, XXII (September 1873), 51.

annual report of 1872, he called upon the state legislature to establish industrial schools in the state for the soldiers' orphans: "Perhaps, as our state has done so much for her soldiers' orphans, she might as well do it all."[1] While the state assembly failed to act on his suggestion, Wickersham still believed such state-owned schools should be set up in connection with the present quasi-private system. "The success of the state normal school for the training of teachers," he said, "proves the value of it."[2]

Sensing that the legislature would not listen to his request, Wickersham turned to the governor of the Commonwealth for aid. In his annual message to the legislature in 1873, Governor John Hartranft said that not enough was being done for the soldiers' orphans. The children were being "thrown out" at the age of sixteen unprepared to earn their livelihood. Perhaps, said the governor, the state should establish special industrial schools where, between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, these young people could be instructed in the trades.[3] As a result, a special legislative sub-committee was set up to investigate this possibility. Although nothing

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1871, 24.

[2]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1873, 28.

[3]Quoted in Paul, SOS, 149.

concrete resulted, for committee members at least expressed their sympathy for the governor's scheme.[1]

In the next decade, similar proposals were made for the establishment of a state industrial institute supplementary to the regular schools. An unidentified writer in the Pennsylvania School Journal in 1885 suggested that the manual training of the orphans would be both a "blessing and a profit to the Commonwealth."[2] Likewise a committee of the state's GAR "viewed with some anxiety the absolute lack of industrial departments" in the schools. While the orphans were receiving a good, formal education, they were "altogether deficient in a knowledge of the handicrafts of industry by which they can earn their living." This committee of the Grand Army proposed that the regular Soldiers' Orphan Schools establish industrial departments and keep their charges until the age of eighteen. As an alternative, the state could set up a special school somewhere in the Commonwealth for the final two year course in manual training.[3]

The amazing developments of 1886 finally gave the industrial education program its real impetus. The sensational revelations of Governor Pattison, reporter Norris,

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[1] Leg Rec, 1878, 1032.

[2] A.K.M., "Editorial," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXIII (February 1885), 320.

[3] GAR, 1885, 243.

and the host of other critics of the existing system pictured the schools in the worst possible light. In the eyes of the investigators, the 1867 law specifying special instruction in the industrial sciences was clearly being broken.[1] The principals admitted under cross-examination that neither industrial nor mechanical pursuits were taught at their institutions.[2] There were no shops or tools for such instruction.[3] The male attendants who were charged with this part of the education of the orphans confessed that they had no "mechanical ability."[4]

Worse yet, claimed Governor Pattison, was the passing off of chores as industrial education. "Yes, Sir," replied one proprietor, "the manual training of the boys is doing chores about the farm, paring apples and potatoes and baking, and helping in the washroom." According to another principal there were such "industrial departments" as washing, scrubbing and chamberwork.[5] Such statements, claimed Governor Pattison, were sheer hypocrisy. What was called manual training was really the use of the children as "unpaid servants."[6]

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[1]Harrisburg Daily Express, April 3, 1886.

[2]Governor Robert Pattison to Attorney-General Lewis Cassidy, April 15, 1886, quoted in Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 16, 1886.

[3]Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886.

[4]Leg Rec, 1887, 2979, 3027.

[5]Leg Rec, 1887, 3050, 3107.

[6]Pattison to Cassidy, April 15, 1886.

While the investigators made no recommendations on how to alleviate the unfortunate situation, it soon became evident what would be the real result of these charges of educational neglect. The state superintendent of the schools in a letter to the governor now revealed that he had misgivings about the existing facilities for industrial training. "I am unwilling," said Superintendent Higbee, "to take the whole responsibility of these schools as regards their adoption to the work required. I had to take them as I found them." Higbee suggested combining all the schools in the western part of the state into one institution using the abandoned state-owned naval hospital at Erie. For the outlay of seventy-five thousand dollars this facility might be turned into a school for "full industrial training."[1]

The following year Higbee was even more emphatic in his support for a single, state-owned training school. He noted that when the system had originally been set up it was not the purpose of the state to establish a large industrial school. Thomas Burrowes, the first superintendent, had to find schools, any kind of schools, to take in the soldiers' orphans. But, claimed Superintendent Higbee, this twenty-three year old system of quasi-private schools had always been regarded as "temporary and unsatisfactory." Since there were over sixteen hundred children

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[1]Elisha E. Higbee to Robert E. Pattison, April 23, 1886 quoted in Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXIV (May, 1886), 455.

to be cared for when the schools were due to close in 1890, perhaps now in 1887 was the time for the legislature to consolidate all the orphans in one industrial school under direct state control.[1]

Significantly, however, persons other than those directly connected with the system were destined to lead the final drive for a state owned training school. Governor Pattison's successor, James Beaver, seemed particularly interested in the advantages of industrial education. In his inaugural address of 1887, Beaver did not specifically allude to the soldiers' orphans but he devoted over two pages to a discussion of manual training. He saw no reason why a plan of manual training could not be started in the public school system of the state.[2]

The next year, Governor Beaver suggested an industrial training program for the soldiers' orphans. A conference of normal school principals was discussing the feasibility of setting up a program of industrial education for the future teachers of the state. Beaver steered the subject towards the soldiers' orphans claiming that it was not wise to continue the present system of Soldiers' Orphan Schools. The governor suggested special model schools housing the soldiers' orphans be established in conjunction

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1887, 6, 33, 44; Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXV (March 1887), 371.

[2]Journal of the Pennsylvania Senate, 1887, 88-89.

with the normal schools. Here the children could receive both an academic and industrial education. Evidently there was little enthusiasm by the schoolmen for the governor's proposal since it elicited no discussion from those attending the meeting.[1]

A few months later Beaver officially made known his wishes for the soldiers' orphans. The governor noted that the schools were due to close in 1890. Perhaps now was the time to set up a system of education that would truly fit the wards of the state "for their legitimate place in practical everyday life." A separate industrial school seemed to be the best answer to their needs.[2]

As a first step, the old system had to be abolished. Evidently Beaver took a direct hand in the action. It has already been noted how the GAR-legislative committee which eventually wrote the law dissolving the twenty-five year old system met with the governor in early 1889 and reported they had his support for the impending action.[3] Superintendent Higbee, who until recently had expressed little enthusiasm for such a plan, likewise had reconciled himself

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[1]Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXVIII (February 1889), 272-273.

[2]Wellsboro Agitator, January 8, 1889; Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXVIII (February 1889), 272.

[3]GAR, 1889, 238.

to the intent of the governor. "I shall be fully satisfied," Higbee wrote in April 1889," whatever he [Beaver] may do."[1]

The Grand Army of the Republic also pressed for a program of industrial education although it was unwilling to go as far as Governor Beaver. A resolution approved by the annual encampment of 1888 said that each of the private schools should be required to set up a separate industrial department, "a completely equipped workshop in some department of mechanical skilled industry." Furthermore, it was the duty of the state to appropriate the needed funds for this new program.[2]

In 1892 success finally came to those who had been agitating for the establishment of a separate, state-owned industrial school. The new Soldiers' Orphan Commission made up largely of Grand Army men sent to each GAR post in the state a recommendation calling for the establishment of a single industrial school. Sixty-two of the sixty-three replies were in the affirmative.[3] On December 15, 1892 the commission recommended to the legislature that a manual training school be established at a central location in the state for the soldiers' orphans, "there to be taught the trades that will equip them to go into the world and maintain themselves."[4]

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[1]Elisha E. Higbee to Dr. Philips, April 23, 1889, Chester County Historical Society.

[2]GAR, 1888, 255.

[3]GAR, 1892, 216.

[4]Annual Report of the Commission of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania for the Year 1892, 9, 10.

Such a law was passed in May, 1893, and the state Industrial School for Soldiers' Orphans at Scotland in the south-central part of the state received its first students in 1895. In time the soldiers' orphans from the remaining and original Soldiers' Orphan Schools were gradually transferred to this new, state-owned and operated facility.

Public reaction to the new program was positive. The opinion of the Philadelphia Press was typical:

> The scheme proposed by the Commission is very certain to meet with wide commendation throughout the State. The plan for a manual training school is very desirable. The State is able to afford this experiment and if it succeeds it will do a great deal of good.[1]

The Scotland Industrial School undoubtedly surpassed the fondest dreams of those who had long advocated such a plan of manual training. By 1904 the institution possessed printing, tailoring, and wood working departments. The Soldiers' orphans were being taught the intricacies of electricity, telegraphy and typewriting. There was a machine shop and an engine room.[2]

The new school had seemingly succeeded where its predecessors had failed. The tragedy of the old schools was that they had failed to meet the challenge of the new age. Part of the trouble was organizational. The schools were rural institutions lacking both the desire and the financial capability to provide an adequate industrial

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[1]Philadelphia Press, December 17, 1892.

[2]Annual Report of the Commission of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1904, 5.

education. The rest was an administrative failing. The educators who ran the system were too traditional in their approach. Morality not work skills was their aim. Believing in the primacy of academic studies, they failed to see the need for a truly useful, more socially adaptable type of education.

CHAPTER IV

THE FAILURE OF THE SYSTEM TO RESPOND TO THE GROWING CENTRALIZATION OF WELFARE SERVICES

The demise of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania can be traced to their failure to provide an adequate industrial education for their clients. The establishment of a single and wholly state owned industrial training school was a testimonial to this inadequacy.

But there were two other important reasons why the schools came to an end. One of these failings had to do with organizational structure. A system of public relief largely administered by private owners seemed to be at odds with the growing tendency in the latter nineteenth century for the state to take over more control of such relief projects.

The Tradition of Local-Private Relief

Much of this eventual difficulty can be traced to the origin of the schools. When it was first suggested in 1864 that something be done for the soldiers' orphans, two alternative plans were presented to the legislature of Pennsylvania. One of these proposed that the agencies of the local community should control the care of the soldiers' orphans.

There was a good reason for such a suggestion. In 1864, the state was still largely a land of farmers. Two out of three of its citizens lived in the rural areas of the Commonwealth. It was, as David Riesman would say, a "traditional-directed" society of the older agrarian way. The lives of most Pennsylvanians were still controlled by the values of the village, the conventional and long standing beliefs in self-sufficiency, frugality, and efficiency. Each person was to see to his own destiny without the aid of government. The best government, it was believed, was the government that did the least. It was also the least expensive government.

If a person did need help, it was usually forthcoming from his neighbors. Even since the colonial era in Pennsylvania as in the rest of the nation, the emphasis had been upon the establishment of voluntary associations. Whether it was a library, a fire department, a hospital--or an orphanage, the response was the same. Together, individuals could do what they could not do singly. Where government as a last resort was called to render assistance, it was almost always provided by the local organs of officialdom. Local government, it was argued, was the government which was closest to the people, knew them best, and was most sympathetic to their problems.

In the area of education in Pennsylvania in 1860, control rested with the local school board. This group had

the authority to set the tax rate for the educational program, determine the suitability of textbooks, and certify the teaching ability of prospective instructors.

In the field of social welfare, the "Poor Law" psychology inherited from England was still the basis of governmental relief. The local commissioners of each county were responsible for maintaining the local jail for the criminal and the insane, the almshouse for the poor and the orphaned, and for providing outdoor relief for the infirm and handicapped. In Pennsylvania in 1860 there were no state institutions for the deaf and dumb, the insane, the orphaned or any other of the unfortunates of society. All of these services were provided on the local level. If the state did provide any assistance, it took the form of subsidies to private institutions. In Pennsylvania between the years 1745 and 1870, the state contributed over $370,000 to orphanages, asylums and hospitals throughout the Commonwealth.[1] But the state never exerted any control over nor inquired into the use of these funds. The local authorities used the money free of any state interference or supervision.

A Proposal of Local Relief for the Soldiers' Orphans

With these precedents before them, it is not hard to realize why many legislators in the Pennsylvania General

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[1] "Report of the State Board of Charities," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXIII (May, 1875), 347.

Assembly between 1864 and 1867 championed a plan of local relief for the soldiers' orphans. The community had always taken care of its orphans and it would continue to do so.[1] Who could better determine the needs of the child than the citizens of his own locale?[2] It was the responsibility of the "enlightened men" of each community to administer such a program for the soldiers' orphans.[3]

Early in the session of 1864, George Wells, a representative from Susquehanna County, one of the less populated and more remote counties in the state, put these traditional views into legislative form. The Wells Bill, which was introduced in one form or another at every session of the legislature between 1864 and 1866, proposed to give authority over the soldiers' orphans to the local and already existing district school boards in the state. The members of these boards, "almost universally the best men of the community," were the proper officials to administer a program of child welfare. They served without pay and so could spare the taxpayers any additional expense. Moreover, under the traditional but seldom used method of outdoor relief, they could board out the orphans in the local community for as little as thirty dollars a year per child. No other officials would be needed since any

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[1] Leg Rec, 1864, 966.

[2] Ibid., 937.

[3] Ibid., 967.

additional administrative duties could be easily handled by the state's superintendent of the common schools. The superintendent traveled throughout the state and it would be a simple matter for him to check on the welfare of the orphans.[1]

The popularity of this traditional approach to social relief was demonstrated by the history of the Wells bill. In 1864 it was narrowly defeated by a vote of forty-one to thirty-five in the House of Representatives. Only nine representatives from what can be called the thinly populated, rural counties voted against it.[2] In 1865 the Wells bill passed the House unanimously but was defeated in the Senate by a coalition of partisans for state aid and representatives of the big cities of the state. The following year it was again approved by the House, fifty-five to thirty-three. It was even reported that the Senate, until this time strongly against the measure, would accept the Wells bill.[3]

As they pressed their plan for local control, these traditional-minded legislators vehemently denounced any broader and more centrally controlled program. Any state system, they claimed, would undoubtedly call for the establishment of nine or ten schools throughout the state. Such a method of aid was denounced as immoral. It was

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[1]Leg Rec, 1864, 965-966.

[2]Ibid., 968.

[3]Wickersham, History of Education in Pennsylvania, 596.

wrong to take a child from the "bosom of his friends" to a distant neighborhood where his peculiar wants were not understood.[1] "The people of the various counties," cried one legislator, "will not allow their children to go and live with strangers."[2] Moreover, the state officials who would have to administer such an all inclusive program would be far removed from each of the individual communities. How could these functionaries sitting in the state capitol know what type of care each of the soldiers' orphans would need?[3]

Just as bad would be the expense of this added state service. The representatives of rural and small-town Pennsylvania argued that a program run by the Commonwealth would mean additional expense to a state already burdened with a huge war debt.[4] New buildings would have to be erected and old facilities refurbished to house the thousands of prospective state wards.[5] The state would have to pay the salaries of the officials needed to oversee the whole affair. In sum, it was claimed that any state plan would eventually equal the cost of the entire public

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[1]Leg Rec, 1864, 967.

[2]Ibid., 966.

[3]Ibid., 966.

[4]Paul, SOS, 150.

[5]Leg Rec, 1864, 967.

school system of the Commonwealth--$300,000--or almost as much as had been paid in subsidies during the last 125 years to private charitable institutions.[1]

The fears of the advocates of local responsibility were well represented in the legislative debates over the soldiers' orphans. In the eyes of many legislators, a central system was a step in the wrong direction. Too many state departments already existed. This attitude of rural Pennsylvania was summarized by a representative for the remote and small county of Mercer:

> I am opposed to the creation of any new departments. If we continue the system of multiplying we shall have one at every fence corner in the Commonwealth with a half dozen state clerks.[2]

Despite the continuous debate in the legislature over a three year period, little notice was taken in the state's press. In particular, little was said about the proposed program based upon local control. A check of the state's newspapers shows only one reference to this side of the controversy. But it is a revealing editorial. The editor of a newspaper in rural Bloomsburg, Columbia County in 1866 was outraged at the request of Governor Curtin for $300,000 to fund a state system of aid for the soldiers' orphans:

> Shoddy has become proverbial and notorious. The suckers are going to the Legislature to ask an appropriation of hard earned taxes. Everyone of these children could have been as well

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[1] Ibid.; Leg Rec, 1866, 8.

[2] Leg Rec, 1864, 968.

> schooled in his own district without a single dollar of addition to the appropriation for "common school" purposes. Has there ever been a greater outrage or a more sublime humbug. School these children by all means but school them with the other children in their proper districts where they belong.[1]

The Post-Civil War Movement Towards State Centralization

The other proposal concerning the soldiers' orphans was tied to state control. From the very beginning, it was evident that this was the wish of the principal advocate of such a relief project, Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin. In his initial charge to the legislature in 1864, the governor was quite emphatic about the desirability of state as opposed to local sponsorship: "In my opinion, the maintenance and education of the soldiers' orphans should be provided by the State."[2]

Like the plan tied to local control, there seemed to be a logical explanation for why state government should assume this particular responsibility. Not tradition but the times supported the position of those who advocated a centralized welfare plan. While it still might have been considered an agrarian state, Pennsylvania in 1864 was rapidly being changed by an industrial-urban revolution. Within six years, approximately one of every three

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[1] Columbia Democrat, January 27, 1866.

[2] Leg Rec, 1864, 15.

Pennsylvanians would be living in the fifteen largest cities of the state. Philadelphia alone would account for twenty per cent of the state's population.[1]

Most Pennsylvanians, like most Americans, still believed in the principles of laissez-faire individualism. But increasingly after 1864, they came to realize that new and more complex economic, social and political questions were defying individual solutions. Neither the individual, voluntary associations nor local government had the resources to cope with the disruptive tendencies of industrialization and urbanization. They did not want to, but local and traditional minded Americans realized that they had to turn to a larger, more centralized political unit for help. There would have to be an extension of government at the state level to bring order to this rapidly developing dislocation of society. In a word, a centralized state bureaucracy would take over many of the functions of local government. The post-Civil War period in Pennsylvania, as in the whole nation, witnessed a very definite trend towards the absorption by state government of many of the services formerly performed on the local level.

The states became increasingly active in the field of education. By 1900 most state legislatures had passed compulsory attendance laws (Pennsylvania in 1895). The

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[1]Evans, Pennsylvania Politics, 2.

principal educational officer of the state was now given the authority to require the teaching of certain subjects, to certify teachers and to license county superintendents.[1]

Just as impressive was the increased role of state government in social welfare. Institutions for the insane, the deaf and dumb, juvenile delinquents and others were built and maintained under the direct supervision and control of the state. In Pennsylvania the first such example of centralization was a state hospital for the insane founded in 1863. Five similar institutions were built by 1885. Pennsylvania also built general hospitals, the first one at Ashland in 1879 to serve the miners of the coal regions.

In the late 1870's two boys' reform schools were constructed at Pittsburgh and Huntingdon. The mentally retarded received care with the establishment of a state school at Polk in 1897. In 1885, the legislature authorized the building of a soldiers' and sailors' Home at Erie for infirm and disabled veterans of the Civil War.

Practically every state (Pennsylvania in 1871) established a state board of charities to inspect all institutions receiving state funds. Like many other states, Pennsylvania in 1885 organized a state board of

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[1]The Superintendent of the Common Schools of Pennsylvania, Report For 1871, xx-xxi; Eugene M. McCoy, "History and Development of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction to 1945," (unpublished Ph.D dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1959), 186, 200.

health to investigate sanitary facilities particularly in urban areas. All in all, after 1860 in Pennsylvania as in the other states of the Union, the provisions of the traditional "English Poor Law" were giving way before the state's assumption of more responsibility for the wards of society.

The Proposed State System of Aid for the Soldiers' Orphans

The original state plan for the soldiers' orphans, the Curtin-Wickersham bill of 1864, reflected this trend towards state centralization. To be sure, already existing private institutions (orphanages or academies) would be paid one-hundred dollars annually by the state for the care of each soldiers' orphan. Following the dictates of tradition, the orphans would be placed in local-private institutions.

Rather, it was the other provision of the Curtin-Wickersham bill that suggested state control. The bill emphasized the powers and duties of a new state official who would oversee the private institutions. This Superintendent of the Soldiers' Orphans, responsible to the governor and the state senate, would select the private institutions to house the orphans. He would set the standards and rules governing their operation. He and his subordinates in the new state department would inspect each of the schools. The superintendent could cancel the state's contract with a school if it was found negligent in following his mandates.

All applications for admission into the schools would be approved by the superintendent.[1]

In the legislative debate that followed, the strengths of the latter provision were time and again emphasized by the advocates of state control. A new state officer was needed to supervise this task involving thousands of children.[2] The details of such care would be too much for the already heavily burdened state superintendent of the common schools and the directors of the local school systems as proposed in the alternative Wells bill. The Wells bill would produce confusion and inefficiency in both the educational and social welfare programs of the Commonwealth.[3]

Defenders of the Curtin-Wickersham bill, in particular, were concerned about using school board members as administrators. Were they as well qualified as advocates of local control said they were? "That much cannot be said in behalf of the directors of the school boards of Philadelphia," claimed one Curtin supporter, "nor, if what we hear be true, of similar officers in other cities."[4]

Furthermore, was there any assurance that all of the directors in the twenty-five hundred school districts

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[1]Leg Rec, 1864, 337-338.

[2]Leg Rec, 1864, 337.

[3]Ibid., 967.

[4]Ibid., 967.

throughout the state had at heart the interests of the soldiers' orphans? What would become of the children if the local officials lost interest in their charges? The risks were too great to place such an important task in the hands of the many school board directors. The locally inspired Wells bill represented the old fault of "what is everybody's business is nobody's business."[1] No, claimed the followers of Governor Curtin, the continual attention of a well-qualified and sympathetic state officer was required to oversee the care of the soldiers' orphans. Instead of hundreds engaging in the task, "one experienced captain,"—a superintendent appointed and directly responsible to the governor was needed to look after the welfare of the soldiers' orphans.[2]

Two rival bills and the debate they aroused reflected the larger political conflict of the times. On the one hand, the supporters of the Wells bill sought to preserve the authority of the small community. Conversely, the partisans of the Curtin-Wickersham bill believed that it was necessary to extend the power of the state. In microcosm, this was a conflict between the old and the new ideals of government, between local autonomy and state bureaucracy, between the old virtues of agrarian individualism and casual cooperation, and the new concepts of regularity and system.

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[1] Leg Rec, 1866, 400.

[2] Leg Rec, 1866, 397, 400.

The Final Compromise Plan

The result of this political controversy was a partial victory for the advocates of state control. The act of 1867 which was destined to serve as the legal blueprint for the schools for the next twenty-two years largely followed the ideas contained in the initial Curtin-Wickersham bill of 1864.[1]

A state Department of the Soldiers' Orphans headed by a superintendent and staffed by two inspectors and two clerks was designated as the Commonwealth's watchdog of the new system of state relief. The superintendent, as outlined in the Curtin-Wickersham bill of 1864, was given authority to select institutions to house the soldiers' orphans, regulate their operations and close them if they proved derelict in their duty.

At the same time, the act was a compromise since a number of important concessions were made to the proponents of local authority. The approval of the local school board had to be secured by a child's guardian before the orphan could be enrolled in a school. The members of the board were also to assist the state department in the surveilance of the institutions.

Moreover, there was a provision for outdoor relief. The payment of thirty dollars annually for home care was a clear denial of the basic spirit of the law since the state

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[1]Ibid., 1867, clxxxi-clxxxii.

had no control over the use of the funds. However, this provision of the 1867 act never became a significant feature of the system. In no one year were more than seven or eight children cared for in private homes. Of the fifteen thousand orphans who passed through the system by 1889, only ninety received outdoor relief.[1]

Instead the use of private institutions proved to be the most important concession to the spokesmen of local control. Years later the defenders of the state system attempted to explain this negation of state authority. Schools were not built and operated under the direct control of the state since the founders of the system had regarded it as only a temporary enterprise. Furthermore, at a time when post-war inflation made prices prohibitive, the state was spared the expense of erecting buildings and purchasing supplies. When the system ended, there would be no need to sell state property at a loss.[2]

But this explanation was offered years later to explain an earlier decision. Once the schools were established, they were considered permanent institutions. In his first public announcement of the plan, Governor Curtin

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1889, 12.

[2]Higbee, "The Orphan Schools," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXIV (April, 1886), 399-400; James P. Wickersham to Louis Wagner, March 23, 1886 in Pennsylvania School Journal, Ibid., 403.

said that it was not a "spasmodic effort" but a "systematic and continuous work."[1] In 1866, Superintendent Burrowes was sure the schools could be "regarded as permanent."[2] The next year they were on a "definite basis."[3] Another member of the state bureaucracy believed that the permanency of the Soldiers' Orphans Schools could be likened to certain developments on the federal level: "The Soldiers' Orphan Schools are as much a part of State government as West Point and Annapolis are of the national government."[4]

This compromise public-private system of child relief was the one that operated between 1864 and 1889. It was the method used as Pennsylvania for the first time provided public aid for dependent children in institutions. The question is, however, just how well did this half and half plan work? In particular, how successful was the state department in its efforts to regulate the private schools?

The Schools as Profit Making Concerns

The first question was economic in nature. Were the schools non-profit or profit making enterprises? Evidently the legislature of 1867 believed that the former was true.

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[1]"Academy Speech of Governor Curtin, December, 1863," quoted in Bates, Martial Deeds, 965.

[2]Pennsylvania School Journal, XIV (May, 1866), 250.

[3]Pennsylvania School Journal, XV (May, 1867), 276.

[4]Hutter, "Report of the Inspectress," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1878, 32.

Along with the act that legalized the system, the lawmakers also approved a measure exempting the schools from local and state taxes. This was done on the twin assumptions that the institutions were charitable (non-profit) concerns and part of a state-public system.[1] However, the legislators were the only ones who ever followed this kind of logic. Almost everyone connected with the schools considered them to be private and non-charitable. As such, they were free to make a profit.

Superintendent Burrowes early stated the case for capitalistic enterprise in explaining why private academy owners were unwilling to enroll soldiers' orphans. He noted that the proprietors thought little money could be made from running a Soldiers' Orphan School. All of them expressed a willingness to help the soldiers' orphans but most held back because of this concern over "pecuniary profits."[2] There was, as another state official phrased it, "not a very great inducement from a worldly point of view to furnish every necessity for $2.80 a week."[3]

Most of the state authorities saw nothing wrong with the private owners cutting down on expenses to increase profits. Few service employees had to be hired since the children were used as non-paid labor. Food raised by the

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[1]Paul, SOS, 136.

[2]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1864, 772.

[3]Paul, SOS, 189.

boys found its way to the school's dinner table, reducing the proprietor's grocery bill. The establishment of the little shops manufacturing brooms and shoes was rationalized in terms of possible sales on the open market.[1]

Furthermore, the profit-making propensity of the men who ran the schools should have been expected. The educators who owned the schools were hard-headed, practical and down-to-earth. Many of them were engaged in other enterprises. More than one was extolled as "a man of wealth, a true businessman."[2] Some were editors of local newspapers. Others operated stores and farms. Rev. A. H. Waters, principal of the Uniontown school, was undoubtedly a typical owner. Waters, a minister turned educator, besides seeing to the needs of 165 soldiers' orphans, preached to the local Lutheran congregation, was an assistant United States postmaster, operated a farm of 150 acres, ran a flour mill and owned a small clothing factory.[3] While admittedly on a small scale, these proprietors were examples of the hard-working, energetic "Captains of Industry" characteristic of the post-Civil War Era.

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[1]Burrowes, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1864, 780; Principal of the Cassville SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1872, 46; McFarland, "Soldiers Orphan School," Pennsylvania School Journal, XVI (September, 1867), 80.

[2]"Professor Fordyce A. Allen," History of Tioga County (New York: W. W. Munsell, 1883), 899.

[3]Philadelphia Record, March 23, 1886.

The Problem of Profits

It was one thing, however, to justify the making of profits and something else to face what admittedly became a real problem. What, for instance, was a fair monetary return for a proprietor? How much of the $150 per child paid by the state should the owners actually spend on the orphans? Most important of all, should the quest for profits really be the prime motive of the principals? Did they not have a responsibility to put the charitable welfare of their charges ahead of dollars and cents? Such questions as these early came to the attention of the public officials who had the responsibility for the conduct of the schools.

Inspector Cornforth, no particular admirer of the principals, publicly questioned their humanitarian sincerity: "These professional philanthropists, in order to hide their greed for gain, make loud and constant proclamation of their self-sacrificing love and yet possess not one drop of the genuine milk of human kindness."[1] Superintendent Wickersham, usually a stanch defender of the owners, seemed to be equally worried about their "extra exertions" to keep the schools full of paid clients. In the late 1870's, Wickersham reported that rumors had reached him concerning the employment of paid agents by the owners to find eligible soldiers' orphans.

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1875, 40.

While he had no proof of such practices, Wickersham warned the school boards to scrutinize all applications of admission made in behalf of the orphans.[1]

But except for these two negative reactions, no one officially connected with the system ever questioned the financial motives or practices of the proprietors. Instead, criticism came largely from those outside the system. On at least two occasions, members of the state legislature charged the owners with financial improprieties. In 1871 a state senator claimed that a soldiers' orphan was being fed and clothed for only ninety dollars a year while a principal received $150 for him from the state. "This," he believed, "[was] an enormous profit to somebody."[2] Four years later another legislator questioned whether non-orphans should be admitted since he believed the proposed law was largely designed to further enrich the proprietors of the schools.[3]

A similar concern was expressed in 1883 by a Harrisburg newspaper editor. He was sure the owners of the schools were behind the movement to extend the life of their institutions: "If the parties who profit have their way, the schools will never close."[4] Likewise, a committee of

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1873, 4; Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1877, 2; "Circular of Information," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXVIII (October, 1879), 159.

[2]Pennsylvania Legislative Journal, 1871, 47.

[3]Leg Rec, 1875, 1138.

[4]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, May 23, 1883.

the Grand Army of the Republic in 1881 was worried about the owners skimping on the welfare of the children simply to make more money.[1]

During the whole history of the schools there was always some kind of concern being expressed about the financial arrangements between the individual owners and the state. A few observers recognized the problem of paying ambitious entrepreneurs out of the public treasury.

Profiteering and the Scandal of 1886

However, there were only these few open criticisms of the alleged greed of the private school owners. As a later critic of the institutions noted, all of the early attempts to expose conditions of improper and undue gain evoked the countercharge of disloyalty to the memory of the children's fathers. It was a brave legislator or newspaperman who took issue with anything connected with the popular, patriotic enterprise.[2]

Not until 1886 did the proprietors feel the sting of these charges of financial impropriety. As with all the other deficiencies of the institutions, the problem of profits finally surfaced in the spring of 1886.

One of the most sensational charges that came out of Governor Pattison's investigation was undue profiteering. All that had been suggested formerly was now charged in

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[1]GAR, 1881, 63.

[2]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, February 24, 1886.

the strongest possible terms. Most of the state's press was convinced that the schools were operated only as business enterprises. "Money making," claimed one editor, "seems to have been the chief aim of the management." The care of children had become a matter of monetary speculation.[1]

And what profits! The owner of the Uniontown schools supposedly made as much in one year as he had originally paid for the property. At the Dayton school, it was an annual profit of nine thousand dollars on an initial investment of fifteen thousand. One irate taxpayer informed the governor that this school was being run in the interest of the stockholders without regard to the welfare of the children. Supposedly, some of these joint owners held contracts to supply the Dayton school at a higher rate than that bid by other retailers. There was even the tale of an owner who bragged that he made over forty thousand dollars in three years. He was reportedly in Europe, far from any possible legal proceedings that might be brought against him.[2]

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[1]Lancaster Daily New Era, February 22, 1886; Ibid., February 24, 1886; Connellsville Courier, March 26, 1886; Harrisburg Daily Patriot, March 24, 1886; Shenango Valley News, April 9, 1886.

[2]Harrisburg Telegraph, March 20, 1886; Leg Rec, 1887, 3092; Samuel Skillen to Robert E. Pattison, March 11, 1886, Executive Correspondence of Governor Robert E. Pattison, Pennsylvania Historical Commission, Division of Public Records. (Hereafter cited as Pub Rec) West Chester Daily Local News, March 4, 1886.

Details of how agents were employed to keep the schools filled finally came to light. According to the investigative report of the governor, the rivalry of the owners for profits was so intense that they paid the agents handsome premiums for recruiting soldiers' orphans. One informant wrote that the owners through the agents offered glowing inducements to the mothers of the children. Under cross examination the principal of the Dayton school admitted that in 1865 he had paid an agent five dollars for each child he procured. Fifteen orphans had been enrolled in this manner. Another proprietor said he paid a public school teacher a like amount for four children.[1]

One of the more interesting references to the use of agents was contained in a fictionalized newspaper serial based on the disclosures of 1886. In one episode of "Only a Soldiers' Friend," the German principal of the Mt. Olivet school (the fictional name for the real Mt. Joy Soldiers' Orphan School) meets his agent in a local hotel and in gutteral tones asks, "Vell, how many you got?" "Two, a brother and a sister," replied the agent. "The darkest day for the family of Jim Jones (the dead veteran)," concluded the author, "was the day when the agent of Public Munificence entered their lives."[2]

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[1]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 16, 1886; Dr. V. M. Beachley to Robert E. Pattison, March 10, 1886, Executive Correspondence, Pub Rec; Leg Rec, 1887, 3109, 3011.

[2]Carlisle American Volunteer, April 21, 1886.

Even worse than the practice of using paid agents was that the owners seemed to be skimping on the welfare of their charges in order to squeeze every cent of profit out of the state's payment. When a child outgrew his suit, threadbare or not, it was passed on to a child smaller in size, "so much in the manager's pocket." To save money, the proprietors packed their students into small, stifling and poorly ventilated dormitories and classrooms. For practically nothing (three cents per child per meal) the owners kept their charges alive on a steady diet of cornmeal and molasses. On and on went the details of these economies.[1]

But with the financial immoralities out in the open, there was general agreement that the days of the profiteers were numbered. "The traffic in the necessities of little orphans," claimed one editor, "will cause an uprising among the people of Pennsylvania that will end in the discomfiture of the men who put money in their purses while neglecting their duty." The attorney-general of the state was even more specific: "Gentlemen, if you will not provide for these children, you are going out of business."[2]

Even if the critics overstated their case, it is clear that the income of the private school owners was much in excess of their expenditures. Later when the state took

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[1]Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886; Melissa Wagner to Robert Pattison, March 12, 1886, Executive Correspondence, Pub Rec; Kittaning Times, March 26, 1886.

[2]Harrisburg Telegraph, March 6, 1886; Kittaning Times, March 26, 1886.

over complete operation of the schools almost $100,000 less was spent annually for the same service provided formerly by the private owners. In 1889, the last year of the old system, it cost the state $300,000 in subsidies to the individual school proprietors. The next and first year of total state control, expenses were reported at less than $200,000.[1]

The Syndicate

Four of the schools, those at Mercer, Mt. Joy, Chester Springs and McAllisterville, seemed to be the worst of all. What these four had in common was their ownership.

The abhorrence of nineteenth century America towards economic combination is well known. The portrayal of corporate businessmen as warlike brigands cheating and plundering their way to millions was characteristic of the period. The domination of a particular economic activity by a "Ring," "Trust," or "Syndicate" seemed to contradict the most basic of American virtues--individual competition and free enterprise. One man could win his way to wealth but not a combination of men. There seemed to be something sinister about a few men banding together in a single corporation to profit at the expense of the public.

It was no wonder that the revelation of a "Soldiers' Orphan Syndicate" aroused the anger and indignation of the people of Pennsylvania. A monopoly-minded business arrangement

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1890, 2.

was robbing the public treasury and making money from the starving bodies of children. The tone was set by a critical newspaper in the western part of the state:

> We read of coke syndicates, and oil syndicates and railroad syndicates, but we don't remember ever having heard of a soldiers' orphan school syndicate. It seems, however, that such a syndicate does exist. Its object is to speculate off of the noblest charity the state ever knew.[1]

The leader of the "Soldiers' Orphan Syndicate" was George W. Wright, an ex-state senator from Mercer County. In 1874, Wright and three partners purchased the Mercer Soldiers' Orphan School. However, according to their later critics, Wright and his confederates were out for bigger game. They aimed to control all the schools that had the most children. By 1885 they owned the four largest institutions in the system.[2]

Wright and friends never served as the actual principals of their schools. They employed others to run the properties, hired caretakers who supposedly had little interest in the welfare of the orphans. Wright and his fellow owners were the business managers of the schools. As such, they employed the same efficient techniques as their more famous counterparts on the national level. A central purchasing office in Mercer bought and distributed supplies to the four schools. Unlike individual owners who secured their supplies in small

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[1] Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, n.d., 1886 in Scrapbook of Scotland Industrial School; Carlisle American Volunteer, March 3, 1886.

quantities from local merchants, the syndicate owners purchased in large amounts from wholesale dealers as far away as Cleveland and Philadelphia.[1]

But critics of the syndicate never noted these legitimate techniques of decreasing costs. Instead attention was called to more disreputable developments. Wright and his partners really abused the use of agents. The other owners paid five dollars a head; Wright supposedly went as high as twenty dollars per child.[2] The syndicate went their competitors one better in skimping on the orphans. Most of the owners furnished at least fifteen towels in the washroom of their schools. Wright saved money by putting out only four at his Mercer school. Three cents a meal was bad enough. Feeding children on a penny a meal was criminal.[3]

In January 1884, two years before the scandal broke, syndicate boss Wright sent his manager of the Mt. Joy property some coffee supposedly far superior to that usually served the orphans. This, Wright informed his employee, was being done because there was soon going to be an encampment of the state's Grand Army of the Republic at the neighboring city of Lancaster. The principal was cautioned to expect visitors at that time.

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[1]Carlisle American Volunteer, March 3, 1886.

[2]Leg Rec, 1887, 2938, 2972.

[3]Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886

But manager Hipple was not to throw out the poor coffee. After the veterans left, he was once again to go back to the standard fare.[1]

But this economy was supposedly in keeping with the character of syndicate leader Wright who was described as being "parsimious and stingy," "a sharp and shrewd business-man."[2] The individual owners made "profits," the syndicate, "inordinate profits." The others made money, Wright, "piles of money."[3] According to the final report of the Pattison investigating committee, the annual profit of the syndicate on the four schools was seventy thousand dollars. The rate at the Mt. Joy school alone was calculated at thirty-three per cent or twelve thousand dollars a year. Wright supposedly had grossed enough to buy a hundred thousand dollars worth of property in his home county.[4] Obviously, the members of the syndicate were the worst of the "Almighty Dollar Patriots."[5]

Practically everyone in the state, from the governor to the local newspaper editor was convinced that the syndicate had to go, that this system of corporate ownership

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[1]George W. Wright to J. P. Hipple, January 30, 1884, Leg Rec, 1887, 3142.

[2]Harrisburg Daily Telegraph, March 9, 1886; Pittsburgh Commercial Gazetter, n.d., 1886, Scotland Scrapbook.

[3]Pittsburgh Dispatch, March 8, 1886.

[4]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 16, 1886; Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886; Greenville Advance Argus, March 11, 1886.

[5]Scranton Truth quoted in Harrisburg Daily Patriot, March 13, 1886.

had to be broken up. If any further evidence was needed about its unsuitability in the field of social welfare, it came from the head of the system himself, the superintendent of the soldiers' orphans. Superintendent Higbee had invariably defended the owners of the schools against the charges of fraud and neglect. In March 1886 he noted that just because several schools were under the control of a syndicate was no reason why they should be considered any worse than the rest. He at least saw how they could be operated more economically.[1] Two months later, however, the superintendent had second thoughts about the wisdom of this form of combined ownership. To the machinations of the syndicate, Superintendent Higbee traced the current difficulty of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools:

> It is an unwise policy and has been so from the beginning that there should be an combined ownership in these schools. It is out of this single element in this situation that the possibility of the present excitement, with all of its attendant misrepresentation and mischief, could alone have arisen.[2]

Similarly, practically every observer in the Commonwealth believed that all of the owners, corporate or individual, had gone beyond what should have been a reasonable profit. For this kind of charitable business, the profits of the owners were too large and they were growing

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[1]Elisha E. Higbee to Robert E. Pattison, March 6, 1886, Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXIV (April, 1886), 411.

[2]Higbee, "The Orphan Schools," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXIV (May, 1886), 444.

rich too rapidly.[1] Superintendent Higbee summed up the opinion of most citizens in the state:

> But whatever else may be certain, one thing is sure; the management of a patriotic charity should be of such character as naturally to preclude the thought of large profits. If the profits of any owner or manager have been so large as is claimed in certain quarters, it is a fraud upon the public faith and an outrage upon the generous instincts of our common humanity.[2]

At the same time, no one denied the private owners their right to make money. At a time when the belief was general that the profit motive was a reliable incentive for action, it was too much to expect any of the school owners to donate his property and services free of charge.[3] "These proprietors would be marvels of perfection and public spirited beyond degree," said one editor, "if they refuse to accept what the State gives them for taking care of the orphans."[4] After all, this was a contract system and those who held contracts had the perfect right to make something out of them.[5] Call it temptation or just

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[1]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 16, 1886; Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886; Greenville Advance Argus, March 11, 1886.

[2]Higbee, "The Orphan Schools," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXIV (May 1886), 444.

[3]Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886.

[4]Greenville Advance Argus, March 4, 1886.

[5]Leg Rec, 1889, 2565.

good business sense, the opportunity to make some money--a lot of money--was too strong to be ignored.[1]

In the end, the real fault, it was realized, lay with the whole system of relief itself. The real mistake had been made in the 1860's when the care of the soldiers' orphans had been given to the private school owners. Some of the newspapers in the state professed to be surprised that the frauds had continued for so long without exposure. A system of relief that was set up on a contract basis was almost sure to attract dishonest men. "A system which permits the farming out of children at a given price per head," said Governor Pattison, "is radically wrong and necessarily productive of evil results." The tragedy of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools seemed to be inevitable.[2]

The Failure of Central, State Supervision

As the details of high profits and penny pinching came to light in 1886, many Pennsylvanians indeed asked how these faults had escaped detection for so long. Why was it necessary for the governor of the state following the lead furnished by a newspaper reporter to expose the financial improprieties of the schools?

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[1]Philadelphia Public Ledger, March 8, 1886; Connellsville Courier, March 26, 1886.

[2]Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly Newspaper, March 27, 1886; Harrisburg Daily Patriot, February 24, 1886; Robert E. Pattison to Lewis Cassidy, April 15, 1886, Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 16, 1886; Philadelphia Press, April 17, 1886.

According to the 1867 law that regulated the schools, the supervisory power of the state was in the hands of the state superintendent of the soldiers' orphans and his two inspectors. One of the three was supposed to visit each school every three months, staying at least twenty-four hours. If on these four yearly inspections, the institution was found deficient in following the regulations laid down by the state department, the contract between the school and the state could be annulled at once. As a lesser punishment, the inspecting officials could refuse to sign the pay vouchers of the owners until the irregularities were corrected.[1]

Until 1886 no one questioned how well the state supervisors were performing these tasks. The officials themselves claimed that they always made thorough inspections and that they tolerated no deficiency or abuse. The visits, they said, were always unannounced.[2] The state's press seconded these appraisals. Superintendent Wickersham was "thorough and frank" during his inspections while Inspectress Hutter was described as a "very capable officer of long experience."[3] On numerous occasions, friendly legislators

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[1]"Act of 1867," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1889, 85, 87.

[2]Hutter, "Report of the Inspectress," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1870, 29; Cornforth, "Report of the Inspector," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1869, 28.

[3]Titusville Herald, July 10, 1884; Altoona Tribune, August 16, 1883.

explained how the inspectors were constantly traveling about the state checking on the welfare of the soldiers' orphans. The superintendent and his two lieutenants were pictured as conscientious and hardworking stewards who never allowed a proprietor to send in a bill unless his school was in an acceptable condition.[1]

But for all these avowals of efficiency, there was only one case in the twenty-five year history of the system where a school was closed for failing to follow the standards prescribed by the state. In 1867 Superintendent McFarland announced that "criminal conditions" (improper education, poor food and uncleanliness) existed in some of the schools. He said he would not hesitate to close a school if the principals did not correct the abuses.[2] Evidently McFarland had in mind the Orangeville school in Columbia County because the next year he closed this school and transferred its students to other schools in the system.

There were some powerful legislators in the state assembly from that area, however, who did not look with favor upon this action. A Soldiers' Orphan School was considered an asset to a community particularly to a small farm hamlet like Orangeville. Not only was it a matter of prestige and pride but there were also financial benefits

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[1]Leg Rec, 1879, 1927; Leg Rec, 1881, 616; Leg Rec, 1885, 604.

[2]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1867, 17.

from having a school located in a village. Most of the supplies were purchased and employees came from the local area.

Predictably, a legislative committee appointed to look into the closing of the Orangeville school reported that Superintendent McFarland had erred in his action. He had not inquired thoroughly enough into the difficulties of the institution and had been hasty in closing the school without allowing its owner to sell his property. The legislature awarded the offended owner ten thousand dollars for the loss of his contract with the state.[1]

More seriously, the following year the senate refused to reconfirm McFarland to his post as superintendent of the soldiers' orphans. One of the reasons for McFarland's dismissal, as a defender later observed, was that he "differed seriously with the Legislature with regard to the details of the management of the Orangeville School. . ."[2]

Obviously any future superintendent would now have second thoughts before he attempted to censure the owner of a Soldiers' Orphan School. McFarland's successor, James Wickersham, stated this hands off policy that would guide the future action of the state department. "Our orphan schools as organized," realized the new superintendent, "are very difficult to manage." The schools were private

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[1]Leg Rec, 1869, 1102.

[2]Pennsylvania Leg Journal, 1871, 55.

institutions and so the state could not dismiss inefficient employees or order the building of new facilities. The only way the state could punish a principal, said Wickersham, was to close his school. This, however, based upon the experience of Superintendent McFarland, would undoubtedly lay the state open to a claim for damages and the subsequent censure of the state superintendent of the system.

The state, concluded Wickersham, had only a "short lever" of control. If the state owned the schools the difficulties could be solved at once. But that was past history. Wickersham still believed the existing system was the best possible one that could have been established in the 1860's. Wickersham was simply answering any future critics who might expect him "to build up and pull down, to put in and take out, to give orders and to enforce obedience with the rapidity of a general in command of an army."

Moral suasion rather than military obedience would guide the relations of the superintendent towards the private school owners. He would have to be careful not to antagonize them. The success of the system depended entirely upon their "unselfish interests." Possessing no real disciplinary weapons, Wickersham realized that he would have to trust the principals. Upon their fitness, integrity, and high motives lay the survival of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools.[1]

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1871, 32-33.

The reports of the state superintendent and his inspectors from 1871 to 1886 reflected this optimistic faith in the good intentions of the private owners. The principals and the operation of their schools were seldom condemned. In their statistical reports, the inspectors revealed this tendency to evaluate the institutions in the most favorable of terms. While made at the time of the 1886 expose, Inspector Sayers admitted that this numerical summary was typical of his findings during the ten years he had been associated with the state department. It is interesting that except for one entry, the inspector said everything was "very good" or "good" at these four particular schools.[1]

TABLE 3

REPORT OF INSPECTOR SAYERS, 1886

1-Very good 2-Good 3-Tolerably good 4-Middling 5-Rather good 6-Poor 7-Very poor	Chester Springs Feb. 23, 1886	McAllisterville March 6, 1886	Mansfield March 13, 1886	Mt. Joy March 15, 1886
Grounds: Condition	2	2	2	2
Culinary Department: Cleanliness	2	2	2	2
School Rooms: Cleanliness	2	2	2	2
Dormitories: Cleanliness	2	2	2	2
Beds and Bedding	1	2	2	2
Health of the Children	2	1	2	2
Clothing: Quantity	2	3	2	2
Clothing: Quality	2	2	2	2
Institution As A Whole	2	2	2	2

[1]Leg Rec, 1887, 3158-3160.

Charges Against the State Inspectorate

The only trouble was that at almost the very time Inspector Sayers was commending the efforts of the owners of these four schools, most observers in the state were convinced that the institutions (three of which were owned by the syndicate) were a blot on the name of the Commonwealth. Less than three months after the foregoing evaluation, Louis Wagner, Sayer's successor as inspector, gave a far less complimentary picture of the same three syndicate schools (the Mansfield school was not a syndicate institution).[1]

TABLE 4

REPORT OF INSPECTOR WAGNER, 1886

1-Very good 2-Good 3-Tolerably good 4-Middling 5-Rather good 6-Poor 7-Very poor	Chester Springs June 8, 1886	McAllisterville June 15, 1886	Mansfield May 24, 1886	Mt. Joy June 1, 1886
Grounds: Condition	4	3	3	5
Culinary Department: Cleanliness	2	2	1	3
School Rooms: Cleanliness	3	3	1	3
Dormitories: Cleanliness	2	2	3	3
Beds and Bedding	4	5	2	3
Health of the Children	3	3	2	2
Clothing: Quantity	2	4	1	5
Clothing: Quality	3	5	2	7
Institution As A Whole	5	5	3	6

[1]Louis Wagner, "Report of the Inspector," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1886, 52, 55-56, 58.

Allowing for exaggeration by the new inspector, it was evident that the schools were not in the flourishing condition depicted by his predecessor. In fact, as the gubernatorial investigators of 1886 made their tour of the schools more than one principal admitted that the former inspectors had been less than thorough during their visits. One teacher testified that the staff was informed two or three days in advance of the inspector's impending arrival. Immediately the school was prepared for the occasion. Beds were fixed, new straw was put in the matresses, and the whole institution was given a good scrubbing. A carriage was sent to the railroad station for the distinguished arrival and a special meal prepared in his honor. This latter development was eagerly anticipated by the children: "Here comes Mrs. Hutter, she'll bring some butter."[1]

Nor did the inspectors always stay the required twenty-four hours. Most would arrive by the morning train and leave in the afternoon. According to one former pupil, the inspectors only had enough time to go once through the school, share a meal with the children and "make a little speech to us to be good and we might be President of the United States."[2] There was also evidence that the inspectors

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[1]Leg Rec, 1887, 3099; Robert E. Pattison to Lewis Cassidy, April 15, 1886; Williamsport Sun and Banner, n.d., 1886 in Scotland Scrapbook.

[2]Nathan McGrew to James Loar, n.d. quoted in Leg Rec, 1887, 3155; Leg Rec, 1889, 2566; Leg Rec, 1887, 2926.

sometimes failed to visit each of the schools the specified four times each year. The principals claimed that three visits, sometimes only two, were not uncommon.[1]

Governor Pattison summed up these charges of neglect and incompetence against the official inspectors. Even before they arrived at the schools, the two seemed to be "well disposed" to accept things in the best possible terms, "anxious to see merits and blind to all faults." "Their reports," continued the governor, "are of the most general character and invariably present the schools in the most favorable light." The governor was convinced that he would have found the schools in a much better condition if the two inspectors had faithfully performed their duties.[2]

Most of the state's press now came down hard on the male and female inspectors of the schools. They had allowed serious abuses to creep into the system. All these years they had been "rattling around" in a forest of eloquent but worthless rhetoric. It was "The Gospel of Gush, OILY GAMMON; A Great Eruption of Natural Gas; You Tickle Me and I'll Tickle You."[3] Even journals sympathetic to the plight of the inspectors had doubts about their conduct. It seemed

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[1]Leg Rec, 1887, 2926.

[2]Robert E. Pattison to Lewis Cassidy, April 15, 1886, Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 16, 1886.

[3]Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886; Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 14, 1886.

to be a case of the state having inspectors who did not inspect.[1]

Probably the most astute evaluation of the role of the inspectors came from one connected with the system. The principal of the Dayton school felt sorry for Inspectors Sayers and Hutter. But no one should ever charge the two with being insincere about the welfare of the soldiers' orphans. If the two officials had any failing, it was their inability to perform their tasks: "We feel that their mistakes, if any, were of the head and not of the heart."[2]

Criticism of the Superintendent of the System

Ultimately, however, most of the charges against the state bureaucracy were attributed to Superintendent Elisha E. Higbee. The commissions and omissions of the underlings became Higbee's sins. The final responsibility for the frauds of the proprietors had to be laid at his door. The scholarly and until 1886 highly respected educator and theologian suffered through a period of intense criticism and vituperation. The official gubernatorial investigation and the state's press were practically unanimous in their condemnation of Superintendent Higbee.

Like the inspectors, Higbee was also accused of not making enough inspection tours and not remaining the required

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[1]Lancaster Daily New Era, February 24, 1886.

[2]Principal of the Dayton SOS, "Report," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1886, 72.

twenty-four hours. Much was made of an episode that had occurred in his Harrisburg office. When informed that the orphans were being neglected and mistreated, Higbee supposedly turned on his heel exclaiming contemptuously, "I guess they got more than they would have received at home."[1] The superintendent, it was charged, was unsympathetic and a bungler. "Right under his nose," the system was being seriously mismanaged. "No man," said one generally sympathetic journal, "is more responsible."[2]

While the state's press heaped abuse upon his head, most of the editors felt sorry for the superintendent. Higbee's failing was a tragedy not a crime. He had not done anything intentionally wrong. Instead as a good Christian gentleman, Higbee had always been too ready to believe the best and doubt the worst about his fellow men. He had too much confidence in human nature which in the case of many of the proprietors was not a safe assumption. He had taken his cue from his predecessor, James Wickersham, and hoped that the operation of a Soldiers' Orphan School would be considered a sacred trust. Higbee had not realized that the owners were shrewd and calculating men. Superintendent Higbee had simply been the wrong man for this particular job:

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[1]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 1, 1886; Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886.

[2]Greenville Advance Argus, March 5, 1886; Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886; Philadelphia Public Ledger, February 25, 1886.

> He is not of that skeptical, aggressive nature which doubts all testimony and which pushes by principals and matrons to inspect himself. Dr. Higbee was not selected with the view to the performance of such duties as these. These are perhaps hardly to be looked for in a professional educator.[1]

Higbee himself admitted to this essential failing. He had always believed that the schools were run by "humane managers, supervised, it was thought, by conscientious inspectors." He had always been correct in his duties. "Others," he lamented, "have been entrusted, perhaps, in too large degree. Their reports we have accepted as from honest men and women."[2]

The Charge of Collusion

These charges against the members of the state department while serious were largely the unfortunate sins of omission. Ultimately, the worst of all possible accusations was hurled at the central agency. The officers of the syndicate. This, as Governor Pattison charged, was a matter of "official discrimination and corruption."[3]

The chief offender seemed to be the chief clerk in the central department in Harrisburg, Col. James L. Paul, who audited the accounts and assigned each soldiers' orphan

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[1]Lancaster Daily News, March 16, 1886; Philadelphia Press, March 13, 1886.

[2]Higbee, "Orphan Schools," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXIV (April 1886), 399.

[3]Robert E. Pattison to Lewis Cassidy, April 15, 1886.

to a particular school. Paul had used his official position to favor the four syndicate schools at the expense of the other eight. He saw, claimed the gubernatorial investigators, that the four were always full of orphans while the nearly vacant non-syndicate members struggled to stay in existence. Mansfield school with plenty of space in its dorms was nearly empty. But the syndicate's Mercer school, while able to accommodate less than 275 children, held nearly 350. The scheme seemed to be obvious. "It appears," said a non-syndicate proprietor, "as though it was the intention of the syndicate to close up all the schools except their own."[1]

One of the startling discoveries made by the governor and his attorney-general was that Paul so readily aided the syndicate because he was a member of it. Evidently Wright had allowed Paul to purchase at a cheap price a part-ownership in both the Chester Springs and Mt. Joy schools. It was no wonder, said the critics, why the membership rolls at these institutions increased after Paul bought into the syndicate. A state officer, responsible for auditing the books of the schools, was approving payments to himself.[2]

To hide his involvement, Paul had his profits charged up on the books of the institutions as loans. The hired principal of the syndicate's Mt. Joy school testified that

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[1]Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886; Kittaning Times, March 19, 1886.

[2]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 13, 1886; GAR, 1886, 12.

he had written the word "loan" over two dividend payments made by the school to Paul. But the headmaster could not remember why he had written in the words. When questioned about this discrepency, the principal said he did not think it would have looked good for the chief clerk of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools to appear as the owner of a school. The same explanation was given to explain the absence of Paul's name on the letterhead and deeds of the two syndicate schools.[1]

The involvement of this official in the actual financial dealings of the institutions he was supposed to oversee was too clear to be ignored. As a public official, Paul was making money through a public charity. It was, as a generally friendly newspaper understated, a situation which could not be justified.[2]

Digging deeper, the critics also discovered that Mrs. Hutter owned stock in one of the schools--five hundred dollars worth in the Chester Springs school. Evidently she had never made any profits on the small amount and sold it at a loss in 1881. Still, the investigators questioned the propriety of a state inspector holding ownership, however small, in an institution which she was supposed to be regulating in the public interest.[3]

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[1]Leg Rec, 1887, 3149; Carlisle American Volunteer, March 3, 1886.

[2]Greenville Advance Argus, March 4, 1886; Harrisburg Daily Telegraph, March 8, 1886.

[3]M. S. McCullough to Mr. Darlington, May 11, 1870, Chester County Historical Society.

Complete Control by the State

As the administrative deficiencies of the schools unfolded in the spring of 1886, Pennsylvanians were convinced that changes had to be made in the system.[1] Even if the charges against the owners and department officials were exaggerated, enough truth remained to show that there was something seriously wrong with this welfare service:

> The fundamental error of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools idea is that the management of the schools is entrusted to private hands without the state exercising over them efficient and constant oversight.[2]

There had to be a reform of the whole system. Practically all of the state's press called for the resignation of Superintendent Higbee and the two inspectors. Some believed that the schools and particularly the four belonging to the syndicate should be put under new management. The most common suggestion was that all twelve of the schools, whether "good, bad or indifferent," syndicate or non-syndicate, should be abolished entirely. "They have become the prey of lobbyists and corrupt officials," exclaimed one editor, "and it is high time they come to an end."[3]

A few journals stated that state aid to the soldiers' orphans, in any form, should come to an end. The original, patriotic purpose of helping children whose fathers were

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[1]Lancaster New Era, February 26, 1886; Philadelphia Press, March 13, 1886.

[2]Philadelphia Press, February 23, 1886.

[3]Philadelphia Times, March 12, 1886; Harrisburg Telegraph, March 10, 1886; Connellsville Courier, March 26, 1886; Wellsboro Agitator, February 23, 1886.

killed in war had obviously been served. The true soldiers' orphans were now grown men and women, able to make their own way in the world.[1]

However, popular opinion was that the state should continue to care for the children of the soldiers, whether they were orphans or simply the offspring of disabled veterans. As a member of the Grand Army of the Republic noted, "he would be a bold legislator who would rise in his seat and move the repeal of the law which established the Soldiers' Orphan Schools." Instead the existing system had to be improved, or failing that, some new method found to care for these dependent children.[2]

The first official action was taken by the governor of the state. On April 15, 1886 following his month long investigation of the schools and the central department, Governor Pattison demanded the resignation of Superintendent Higbee. Higbee, however, refused to resign. He claimed he had been confirmed by the state senate and only that body could remove him. The governor was more successful with the two inspectors. Since they were his direct appointees, he could and did dismiss them. Sayers and Mrs. Hutter were fired on April 15, 1886.[3]

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[1]Ibid.; Pottsville Miners Journal, February 26, 1886.

[2]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, March 29, 1886; GAR, 1887, 245; "The Grand Army and the Orphan Schools," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXV (March 1887), 371.

[3]Pattison to Cassidy, April 15, 1886.

But this was all that was done. The schools and the central department continued to operate in the usual way. After the initial shocking revelations of early 1886, the so-called "Scandal" of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools disappeared from the pages of the newspapers and from the thoughts of most people in the Commonwealth.

At the same time, it was evident that a persistent if quiet movement was underway to change the system of care for the soldiers' orphans. Principally, it was a matter of time. Under the law passed in 1885, the schools were due to close in 1890. Many of those closely indentified with the system knew that because of all the unfavorable publicity of 1886, it would be very difficult to extend the present method of state aid past 1890. As evidence of the unpopularity of the schools, in 1887 for the first time in over twenty years there was strong opposition in the state legislature to the appropriation of funds for the schools.[1] Even Superintendent Higbee believed that now was the time for the legislature to pass a new law establishing a more satisfactory method of care for the soldiers' orphans.[2]

Most of the impetus for change came from the state membership of the Grand Army of the Republic. The GAR was anxious that the state continue to care for the orphans

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[1] Leg Rec, 1887, 1896.

[2] Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXV (March 1887), 371.

past 1890. In 1887, members of the Grand Army showed their displeasure with the existing system by suggesting that all funds be cut off to those school owners found guilty of neglect and fraud. The following year the Army went on record approving the establishment of an industrial training program for the soldiers' orphans.[1]

Finally on February 23, 1889 the state senate at the behest of the Grand Army established a seven man committee which along with a similar delegation from the GAR was ordered to "take into consideration all matters pertaining to the Soldiers' Orphan Schools."[2] This joint committee held public hearings in the state capitol and at GAR headquarters in Philadelphia. Most witnesses, as all the committee members, believed that the four syndicate schools should be closed. According to the chairmen of the committee, there was not a state legislator who could be reelected if he advocated the continuation of the infamous four. One witness suggested closing all the schools and placing the orphans out as foster children in the homes of Grand Army men, the state paying for their board and education.[3]

A group of former students of the schools recommended that the state lease the facilities of the private owners and

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[1]GAR, 1887, 257; GAR, 1888, 255.

[2]Amos Mylin (comp.), State Prisons, Hospitals, Soldier Orphan Homes Controlled by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, II (1897), 625.

[3]Carlisle American Volunteer, March 6, 1889; Leg Rec, 1889, 2567; West Chester Daily Local News, February 27, 1889.

employ its own principals, teachers and attendants. The GAR members of the committee, the day before the whole committee made its report, proposed that a twelve man commission (including the governor, five legislators, five GAR men and the superintendent of public instruction) replace the Superintendency of the Soldiers' Orphans as the administrative arm of the state but that the contract system continue to be used ruling out, however, the four syndicate schools.[1]

The bill that was finally reported out to the legislature combined certain features of these last two proposals with a state owned and operated system of relief for the soldiers' orphans at last established. An eleven man commission (minus the superintendent of public instruction) would administer the leased schools. The contract system was abolished. The former private owners now worked for the state.

The bill was non-controversial and passed both houses of the legislature with a unanimous vote and little debate. The only amendment mandated that no former syndicate school could be leased as a state facility. This action was a fitting and closing commentary on the unpopularity of those who, it was believed, had taken advantage of the liberality of the state.[2]

What happened next was anti-climatic. On July 30, 1889, the state's newspapers reported the new commission's closing

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[1]Leg Rec, 1889, 2563, 2567-2568.

[2]Leg Rec, 1889, 1235, 2162, 2170.

of five of the schools (the four syndicate properties and the Mansfield school): "The great deed has been consumated." "This action is heartily approved everywhere." "The people, backed by the press, have given the Syndicate Schools a brain clout."[1]

One editor, however, believed that this action of the commission did not go far enough. All of the former private owners, now public employees of the state, should pay for their neglect and profiteering: "The whole system of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools was wrong, founded on the wrong principle and continued for private speculation. The only way to cure the dog is to cut off his tail behind his ears. ABOLISH ALL."[2] The editor soon got his wish. By 1893 three more schools were closed. With the building of an industrial training school at Scotland in 1893, the remaining institutions of the original system were gradually phased out of existence.

But the charges of profiteering and administrative incompetence died hard. In 1891 three years after both the state department of the soldiers' orphans and the syndicate schools were abolished, the press of the state headlined a "STARTLING REVELATION." One of the former syndicate owners, William Thompson, claimed that his partners had cheated him

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[1]Philadelphia Record, July 30, 1889; Harrisburg Telegraph, July 30, 1889.

[2]Lancaster Daily Intelligencer, July 30, 1889.

out of his share of the profits. Back in the 1880's when Clerk Paul was packing the syndicate schools with orphans, Thompson had demanded a larger share of the profits. The reply of the head of the syndicate, Senator Wright, had been brutally frank: "If you bring suit in the courts, you will expose the excessive profits of the schools." Thus, it was agreed to settle up later when the schools finally came to an end. Now, as that time came due, Thompson said that Wright and Paul owed him more than he had recently been paid.[1]

On the basis of this evident falling out among the former owners, a legislative committee was set up to recover for the state the claimed three hundred thousand to half million dollars that had been paid in excess profits to eight owners of the old schools.[2] Two years later the committee made its report. There was evidence that the officers of the former state agency, The Superintendency of the Soldiers' Orphans, had been careless and derelict in their relations with the private owners. The inspection visits of the superintendent and his two inspectors, stated the 1893 report, did not fulfill the purposes for which they were intended.

Furthermore, and based largely on the old Governor Pattison investigation of 1886, the committee believed that

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[1]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, March 18, 1891; Philadelphia Daily Record, March 19, 1891.

[2]Leg Rec, 1891, 1941.

the state indeed had been cheated out of a considerable sum of money. Unfortunately, years had passed since the frauds had taken place. Financial records had been lost or destroyed. Some of the persons involved were dead; others were unable to remember what had taken place or simply refused to devulge what they claimed was privileged information. Thus, the committee said it was unable to state precisely how much the state could sue to recover from the former owners. The Commonwealth had no legal case against the proprietors. The legislature dropped the matter.[1]

In the final analysis, it is apparent that the problems of this public-private venture in social welfare, The Soldiers' Orphan Schools, were twofold. First, all of the owners, syndicate and non-syndicate, were enterprising capitalists rather than patriotic philanthropists. The events connected with the schools showed that it was a mistake to combine a money-making proposition with a plan of social relief. It demonstrated that it was possible for the world of business to dominate a political arm of the state. The other failure was one of political administration. The public officials charged with the task of supervising the schools were inefficient and unrealistic in the performance of their duties.

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[1]Leg Rec, 1893, 3335, 3339, 1942.

The crowning fault of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools was that they were transitory institutions. The system was something old and something new, a way station from the past to the future. Organized at a time when local and private relief was the vogue, the schools existed on into an era that saw state government take over more of these welfare functions. The original makeup of the system was an anachronism from an earlier day. The eventual construction of one school completely under state control and ownership was a recognition of this fact. It was now one state school and not many private ones. At last, the initial mistake of half-private, half-public social relief was rectified.

CHAPTER V

POLITICS AND THE END OF THE SOLDIERS' ORPHAN SCHOOLS

Much of the failure of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania can be attributed to the state officials who administered the system. They neglected to institute industrial education. They failed to supervise adequately the private school owners. Seemingly more could have been done to solve the problems of job training and state control. A different problem, however, constituted a third reason for the end of the schools. In this instance, circumstances were beyond the control of those who ran the system. Events external to and having nothing really to do with the care of the orphans hastened the closing of the institutions. The Soldiers' Orphan Schools also failed because they became involved in the politics of the state.

Pennsylvania Politics in the Later Nineteenth Century

Pennsylvania politics after the Civil War differed little from the rest of the nation. Pennsylvania was a Republican state.[1] With one exception between 1864 and 1889, a

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[1]Garraty, The New Commonwealth, 236-237; James Bryce, The American Commonwealth, (edited by Louis Hacker), (New York: Putnam, 1959), 145; Evans, Pennsylvania Politics, 1, 7; Bradley, Militant Republicanism, 9; Dunaway, History of Pennsylvania, 438.

Republican was governor of the state. The national congressional delegation and the state legislature was also usually under the control of the GOP. The most famous Pennsylvanian politician of the era, Simon Cameron, was the acknowledged chief of the state's Republicans.[1]

But as on the national level,[2] the dominance of the Republicans was always in jeopardy. Between 1865 and 1877 the Republican party never polled more than 52.7 per cent of the total vote and after 1873 its highest total was only 51.6 per cent in any state wide election.[3] Despite the record of Republican victories Pennsylvania justly earned the reputation as a "doubtful state."[4]

In truth, there was little difference between Pennsylvania Republicans and Democrats on the so-called "issues" of the tariff, the money question and regulation of monopolies.[5] The personality and popular appeal of state and local

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[1]Evans, Pennsylvania Politics, 70, 81, 323; Bradley, Militant Republicanism, 361, 414; Stevens, Pennsylvania: Birthplace of a Nation, 254.

[2]Garraty, New Commonwealth, 237-238; In five northern states (Connecticut, New York, Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan) between 1876 and 1888, the Republican candidate for president never received more than 52.6 per cent of the popular vote. Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistic of the United States, (Washington, D. C.: Gov. Printing Office, 1966), 688.

[3]Evans, Pennsylvania Politics, 322.

[4]Ibid., 8, 133; Bradley, Militant Republicanism, 249, 357; Stevens, Pennsylvania: Heritage of a Commonwealth, 762, 773, 788.

[5]Garraty, New Commonwealth, 240-258; Bryce, American Commonwealth, 151-157; Evans, Pennsylvania Politics, 320; Stevens, Pennsylvania: Birthplace, 266.

candidates seemed to be more important than issues. The aim was to retain party control and get into office irrespective of political ideology.[1]

Despite a lack of political substance, politics was constantly in the public eye. If the mass circulation of partisan newspapers and the popularity of political rallies were true indicators, then politics was a great avocation for Pennsylvanians, as for most Americans, in the latter nineteenth century--a pastime which they took with an almost vicious seriosness. Local and state-wide campaigns which to a later generation would appear to have little meaning, were important to the American voter one hundred years ago.[2] Politics was real and immediate to Americans of the era. Not even a charitable enterprise like the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania escaped its pervading influence.

A Tradition of Involvement in Politics

All of the members of the state bureaucracy in charge of the schools were political appointees. In an era of limited state government, the $1,500 to $2,500 per year posts in the Department of the Soldiers' Orphans provided

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[1]Garraty, Commonwealth, 238-240; Josephson, The Politicos, 99; Evans, Pennsylvania Politics, 322-326; Stevens, Pennsylvania: Heritage, 759-760.

[2]Morgan, Gilded Age, 5-6; Wiebe, Search for Order, 27; Evans, Pennsylvania Politics, 6, 22; Stevens, Pennsylvania: Heritage, 266.

a lucrative patronage system.[1] Since the GOP controlled the state government, all the appointees were loyal Republicans. Chief clerk Paul admitted that he owed his appointment to the Republican boss of Westmoreland County, "Honest John" Covode.[2] His successor, Joseph Pomeroy, was the nephew of the Republican chief of Franklin County.[3] Inspector Sayers had been the chaplin of the Republican dominated state senate.[4] Mrs. Martin was a cousin of the Republican appraiser of the Port of Philadelphia.[5] Inspector John Greer was a former Republican state senator.[6]

Factionalism inside the Republican ranks frequently led to disagreements over filling the posts. In 1867, Thomas Burrowes was not reappointed to the post of Superintendent of the Soldiers' Orphans by the newly elected governor, John White Geary.[7] Burrowes was a political supporter of Geary's predecessor, Andrew Gregg Curtin. The new governor was a "creature" of Simon Cameron.[8] This

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[1]Mylin, State Prisons, Hospitals, Soldiers' Orphan Homes, II, 580.

[2]Paul, SOS, 120.

[3]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, March 10, 1886.

[4]Wickersham, History of Education, 599.

[5]Philadelphia Press, July 30, 1889.

[6]James A. McKee, History of Butler County (Chicago: Richmond-Arnold, 1909), 1444.

[7]Mohr, Burrowes, 200.

[8]Bradley, Militant Republicanism, 275; Burrowes, although he never commented on the political implications of the dismissal, admitted that he left the post with "unwillingness" and "regret." Burrowes, "Some Parting Thoughts," Pennsylvania School Journal, XV (June, 1867), 301.

change was only one manifestation of the continuing feud between Cameron and Curtin for control of the Republican party.

Likewise, in 1881 Superintendent Wickersham lost his position as head of the state department because he incurred the emnity of the powerful Republican machine. Three years earlier he had allowed himself to be put forward as a candidate for governor by those Republicans opposed to Cameron.[1] Needless to say, Wickersham lost the nomination. The victor and regular party man, Governor Hoyt, gained his revenge in 1881 when he failed to reappoint Wickersham as Superintendent of the Soldiers' Orphans.[2]

A similar political struggle at the county level directly led to the closing of one of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools. In 1872, a Liberal Republican reform movement sought to replace the Cameron regulars as leaders of the party. The politically ambitious principal of the Soldiers' Orphan School at Cassville in Huntingdon County, A. L. Guss, allowed himself to be put forward by reform-minded Republicans of that area as a candidate for Congress. While he lost the election to his Democratic opponent, Guss and his Liberal friends did succeed in gaining temporary control of the local party organization. Guss, who also edited a local newspaper, became the leader of the dissidents.

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[1]James P. Wickersham to W. A. Pennypacker, January 9, 1878, Chester County Historical Society.

[2]Baer, Wickersham, 40; Eugene M. McCoy, "History and Development of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction," (Univ. of Pennsylvania Ph.D. Thesis, 1959), 225.

A bitter struggle broke out with Guss and the Liberals pitted against the regular, Cameron Republicans. The conclusion was perhaps foregone since Huntingdon was the baliwick of a powerful Cameron lieutenant, John Scott, junior Pennsylvania senator in the United States Congress. Guss's opponents accused him of being a monster and fiend in the operation of his Soldiers' Orphan School. He was charged with "vilely assailing" thirteen and fourteen year old girls, "luring them to the hills and groves."[1] Guss, on the otherhand, claimed it was all a matter of character assassination and that his foes never had the courage to face him in a court of law.

But the damage had been done. The political ally of the regular Republicans, the Grand Army of the Republic, called for a legislative investigation of proprietor Guss and his school. On strictly partisan grounds, the legislative committee recommended that the Cassville school be closed and its pupils transferred to other institutions in the system.[2] The local Democratic Journal, while gleeful at the strife which was ripping the opposition apart, well understood the other consequences of the whole affair:

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[1]Huntingdon Journal, February 18, 1874.

[2]Huntingdon (Republican) Journal, July 1, 1871 to April 10, 1874; Huntingdon (Republican) Globe, July 1, 1871 to April 10, 1874; Huntingdon (Democratic) Monitor, July 1, 1871 to April 10, 1874; Paul, SOS, 287-288; Wickersham, "Report of the Superintendent," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1874, 31-32; GAR, 1874, 3-11.

> Thus endeth the great struggle of the waring factions now renting the Radical party of this county. It was a bitter struggle in which the welfare of the Soldiers' Orphans was but a secondary consideration . . . We deeply and sincerely regret that the school is going to be removed. We are sorry that the Soldiers' Orphans find themselves between the upper and neither millstones of partisan hate . . .[1]

The Politics of 1886 and Robert E. Pattison

These examples of how the schools became involved in politics are minor when compared with the events of 1886 and the administration of Governor Robert E. Pattison. Pattison was the only Democratic governor of Pennsylvania between the Civil War and the New Deal years of the 1930's. He received his start in city politics as city comptroller of Philadelphia. Described as highly moral and scrupulously honest, Pattison was well known as a reform politician.[2]

In fact, the issue of reform was instrumental in Pattison's election as governor in 1882.[3] Hailed as a youthful and energetic crusader against machine politics and corruption, Pattison succeeded in capturing the Democratic nomination for governor. For once, the two principal waring factions of the party headed by the Speaker of the National House of Representatives, Sam Randall, and ex-United States

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[1]Huntingdon Monitor, March 30, 1874.

[2]Stevens, Pennsylvania: Heritage of a Commonwealth, 785-786; Lewis W. Rathgeber, "The Democratic Party in Pennsylvania, 1880-1896," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1955), 100.

[3]Rathgeber, "Democratic Party," 94, 154; Dunaway, Pennsylvania, 451.

Senator William Wallace respectively, temporarily submerged their differences long enough to support the popular candidacy of Pattison. Pledged to clean up the state after twenty years of Republican rule, Pattison narrowly won election over two Republican rivals. A split in the ranks of the majority party caused by the candidacy of a Liberal Republican nominee, John Stewart, drew off enough GOP votes from the regular ticket to throw the general election to Pattison.[1]

The political future of the vigorous, thirty-two year old governor-elect seemed assured. While he could not succeed himself in 1886 Pattison could, if he made a substantial record of reform in the next four years, gain outright control of the party from the two conservative, regular factions and perhaps even win the support of Liberal Republicans. His hand-picked candidate, probably Attorney-General Louis Cassidy of Philadelphia, would succeed him as the state's next governor while Pattison could move up the political ladder—into the United States Senate, perhaps even to the presidency itself.[2]

The only trouble was that Pattison failed in the next four years to capture control of his own party and to retain the support of the Liberal Republicans. His attempts at civil

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[1]Rathgeber, "Democratic Party," 94-96; Dunaway, Pennsylvania, 451; Stevens, Pennsylvania: Heritage of a Commonwealth, 786; McClure, Old Time Notes, II, 540-541.

[2]Rathgeber, "Democratic Party," 149-154.

service reform, instead of gaining him control of his party, earned him the everlasting contempt of the old-line Democratic politicians. Pattison had retained well-known and partisan Republicans in office. One reappointment that particularly angered many Democrats was that of Republican Elisha E. Higbee as Superintendent of the Soldiers' Orphans in 1885. Thus, as the nominating convention of 1886 drew near, three groups (headed by Randall, Wallace and Pattison) vied for control of the Democratic party in Pennsylvania with the incumbent governor in danger of becoming the odd man out.[1]

Moreover, his liberal friends in the GOP were convinced that Pattison had failed to live up to his promise to clean up the state. They believed he was really not interested in Civil service reform. They were particularly incensed by Pattison's appointment of Lew Cassidy, Democratic boss of Philadelphia, to the post of Attorney-General. After 1883 the Republican Liberals drifted back into the ranks of the Republican regulars.[2]

As Governor Pattison entered the last year of his administration, his survival as an effective political leader was much in doubt. He needed an issue to restore the alliance that had brought him success four years earlier.

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[1]Rathgeber, "Democratic Party," 85-86, 94, 149, 154; E. J. Stackple, Behind the Scenes With a Newspaper Man (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincot, 1927), 18; Stevens, Pennsylvania: Heritage of a Commonwealth, 787.

[2]Rathgeber, 86-88; Stevens, Pennsylvania: Heritage, 787; Philadelphia Inquirer, December 28, 1882.

The storm that broke over the heads of the soldiers' orphans in February 1886 seemed to be made to order for the troubled politician.

At least this is how the Republicans saw the whole affair. "The Soldiers' Orphan Schools Scandal," they said, was a fraud, a scheme designed to further the political fortunes of Governor Pattison and the Democratic Party.[1] The Democrats, claimed the Republicans, were simply seeking "to manufacture political thunder."[2]

On the one hand, Pattison was seeking to regain the allegiance of the conservatives of his own party.[3] He was showing both regular Democratic factions that he too knew how to play the game of political patronage. The alleged "stench" of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools, said the Republicans, would have never entered the nostrils of Governor Pattison, "if Superintendent Higbee were not an eyesore in the eyes of anxious Democratic aspirants for the position of head of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools." The "Scandal" was a scheme to kick out Higbee and replace him with a partisan Democrat.[4]

By this act the split in the Democracy would be healed and a united party led by a Pattison lieutenant could march

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[1]Greenville Advance Argus, March 18, 1886; Chambersburg Repository, March 9, 1886).

[2]Lancaster New Era, March 27, 1886.

[3]Philadelphia Press, April 17, 1886.

[4]Carlisle Herald, March 18, 1886; Chambersburg Repository, March 9, 1886.

forward to victory in November, particularly if he could also regain the support of the Republican Liberals. This depended upon their acceptance of Pattison's dismissal of such Republican Stalwarts as Chief Clerk Paul and Inspector Sayers from the central, state department of the Soldiers' orphans. He could prove at least that he was interested in reforming the abuses that had crept into an honored state charity.[1]

The Democrats Charge the Republicans

Much of the evidence concerning these alleged political intentions of Governor Pattison towards the soldiers' orphans is circumstantial. Pattison never admitted that he was using the "Affair of 1886" to further his own political career. At the same time, a case seemingly can be made for the political implications of the Democratic governor in the alleged scandalous revelations of that year.

Six days before the governor announced his intention to make a personal inspection tour of the twelve Soldiers' Orphan Schools, he received a letter from a political friend in Mercer county. "As a citizen and a democrat [sic], "the correspondent had some advice for his leader which he wanted to keep private. Pattison would be pleased to know that his administration was "generally" endorsed by the Democrats in that area just as it had "the approval of many of the most

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[1]Lancaster Daily New Era, March 16, 1886; Carlisle Herald, March 18, 1886; Carlisle American Volunteer, March 10, 31, 1886.

intelligent republicans [sic]." "It is the general opinion of both parties," continued the writer, "that a great outrage is being perpetrated." To make himself even more popular, the governor was urged to undertake a thorough investigation of "Wright and Co."[1]

Later as Pattison proceeded with his on-the-spot inspection of the schools, he received similar encouragement from other political observers. One "uncompromising Democrat" told the governor to bring "the Republican rascals" to justice. Another said that there were many citizens in the state who were delighted with Pattison's efforts against the Republican owners of the schools.[2]

Democratic newspapers throughout the state saw a chance to embarrass the opposition. The Democratic newspaper which first headlined the charges against the Republican owners, the Philadelphia Record, was sure that "political pressures" had perverted the original good intentions of the state charity. According to the Record, the schools existed simply for the enrichment of a few Republicans "whose faces are well known in the lobby of the State Capitol."[3] Other Democratic journals echoed this political theme. Persons

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[1]Dr. G. W. Yeager to Robert E. Pattison, February 26, 1886, Executive Correspondence, Pub Rec.

[2]Samuel Skillen to Robert E. Pattison, March 11, 1886; Joseph Slosson to Robert E. Pattison, March 11, 1886, Executive Correspondence, Pub Rec.

[3]Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886.

of political influence were taking advantage of the soldiers' orphans. The chief organ of the Pattison administration, the Harrisburg Daily Patriot, claimed that a "vast political ring" was reaping a bonanza large enough to enrich half of the "loyal statesmen of the Commonwealth."[1]

Three prominent Republican politicians were identified with the alleged infamies and frauds. Syndicate owner George Wright, a former Republican state senator and GOP boss of Mercer County, more than any other legislator had pressed for the continuation of the system. In 1879, by a vote of twenty-nine to three, the state senate had mandated the closure of all the schools in 1885. One of the three who had voted against this act and, by implication for an indefinite extension, was Senator George Wright. After he left the senate, syndicate leader Wright was reported often on "The Hill" in Harrisburg. Wright had been using his political power and friendships, said the Democrats, to keep his lucrative business enterprises in operation.[2]

A second prominent Republican to feel the force of this Democratic attack was George Pearson, chief clerk of the Republican state senate and secretary of the party's state executive committee. As the details of the syndicate's

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[1]Lancaster Daily Intelligencer, n.d., 1886 in Scotland Scrapbook; Harrisburg Daily Patriot, March 16, April 16, 1866.

[2]Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886; Leg Rec, 1879, 2390; Harrisburg Daily Patriot, March 11, 1886.

financial manipulations came to light, Pearson was reported to be "very greatly agitated."[1] Apparently the young politician owned a quarter interest in the syndicate's Chester Spring's School and had recently borrowed one thousand dollars from proprietor Wright without putting up any security.[2] Even a Republican journal noted that "evidently Pearson wishes he had never had anything to do with a Soldiers' Orphan School." It headlined, "Pearson To Take a Back Seat." After a conference with the state chairman of the party, the erstwhile secretary decided to step down from his post, "lest his interest in the schools be used to the party's detrement in the next campaign." "The party," said state chairman Thomas Cooper, could "not be compromised by one man's private relations."[3]

The third leading Republican whose political reputation was tarnished by "The Scandal" was state senator Thomas Cooper, chairman of the Republican state executive committee and the leader who said Pearson had to go into temporary political retirement. Democrats made much of the fact that at the very time orphans were being starved and ill-clothed, Cooper, Wright and Pearson were on a pleasure excursion to California aboard Cooper's private railroad car which

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[1]Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, n.d., 1886 in Scotland Scrapbook.

[2]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 2, 1886.

[3]Harrisburg Daily Telegraph, March 22, 1886.

supposedly had been furnished from the ill-gotten gain of the syndicate. Senator Cooper, as head of the senate education committee in 1883, had largely been responsible for the extension of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools. He, Wright and Pearson had seen that Grand Army of the Republic posts throughout the state signed and returned remonstrances to the state legislature urging the continuation of the schools. Armed with these resolutions, Cooper had swayed the vote of his fellow lawmakers, prevented the abolition of the schools and thus, charged the Democrats, enabled the Republican syndicate to become richer and richer.[1]

The Democrats did not stop with these attacks upon Republicans outside the central, state administration of the system. They charged that much of the inefficiency and fraud inside the state agency at Harrisburg could be attributed to the Republican party. Chief Clerk Paul, the Democrats claimed, did not have to be encouraged to keep the syndicate schools full of orphans. Like Wright and Pearson, he was a member of the same political ring of Stalwart Republicans who had ownership in four of the institutions. Similarly, it was reasonable to expect Inspector Sayers to make a favorable report about a syndicate school. He, too, was a regular party man.[2]

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[1]Philadelphia Record, April 17, 1886; Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 17, 1886; Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, n.d., 1886 in Scotland Scrapbook.

[2]Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886; Montrose Democrat, March 12, 1886.

Even Superintendent Higbee did not escape the insinuations of political favoritism. In early 1884, Governor Pattison had requested his Republican Superintendent of the Soldiers' Orphans to replace Paul as chief clerk of the state department. Higbee held out against the entreaties of Pattison until December 1885 when at last he dismissed Colonel Paul. But then, charged the Democrats, Higbee again insulted the civil service reform tendencies of his governor. Higbee appointed Joseph Pomeroy, nephew of the Republican boss of Franklin County, to the vacant post in the soldiers' orphan department. Certainly Governor Pattison now had every right to demand the resignation of his partisan, Republican superintendent.[1]

All in all, the state's electorate was encouraged to believe that Republicans were responsible for the "Scandal of 1886." Republicans identified with either the schools or the state agency had conspired to defraud the state of thousands of dollars while in the process neglecting the welfare of helpless children. The Democrats were sure the issue of the soldiers' orphans would play a role in the coming gubernatorial election.[2] "The Soldiers' Orphan School infamies," summarized one Democratic newspaper, "are properly chargeable to the Republican Party."[3]

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[1]Philadelphia Record, February 22, 1886; Harrisburg Daily Patriot, February 25, March 10, April 16, 1886; Montrose Democrat, March 12, 1886.

[2]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 25, 1886.

[3]Bellefonte Democratic Watchman, n.d., 1886 quoted in Harrisburg Daily Patriot, March 20, 1886.

The Republicans Charge the Democrats

Partisan influence within the Republican party, it seemed, had been used to enrich profiteering speculators. Prominent members of the GOP were identified with the ominous sounding "syndicate." The state secretary of the party had been forced to resign. Its state chairman was under a cloud of suspicion. Out of power for four years, the Republicans had been confident of regaining the governorship in the coming fall election of 1886. Now they were identified with an unfolding scandal of major proportions.[1] Senator Stewart, leader of the liberals in the party, was not at all sure he was going to support the regular party choice for governor now that Republicans were identified with fraud and corruption.[2] Matt Quay, heir apparent to Simon Cameron as boss of the state's Republican dynasty, summed up the situation: "I regard the whole affair as unfortunate at the present time. It is very essential that the party should be united if we want to succeed in the fall."[3]

In their anxiety to disassociate their party from any suggestion of malfeasance, the GOP leaders and press initially were as quick as the Democrats to castigate those Republicans tainted with the odor of scandal. "Hunt the

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[1] Philadelphia Press, April 15, 1886.

[2] York Democratic Press, April 25, 1886.

[3] Philadelphia Press, April 23, 1886.

rascals down," Simon Cameron was quoted as saying, "expose them."[1] "Senator Wright is now in the city," reported a Republican daily of Harrisburg, "but refuses to talk. Let him step down and answer the charges or admit he has cohorted with theives and perjurers."[2] Likewise, the principal GOP organ of the state believed it was the duty of the Republican head of the state department of the soldiers' orphans, Superintendent Higbee, to "RESIGN NOW."[3]

Soon, however, the Republicans changed their tactics. They stood to gain little by agreeing with the charges of the Democracy. Somehow the odium of scandal had to be transferred to the opposition. Democrats, not Republicans, should be charged with wrongdoing. The Republicans attempted to discredit the original exposé of February 22 in the Philadelphia Record. Republican journals reminded the public that the Democratic Record was a muckraking sheet, founded on sensationalism and closely identified with the political ambitions of Governor Pattison. Such a startling revelation about orphans, while a god-send to an enterprising reporter like John Norris, should never be allowed to besmirch the reputation of innocent children, let alone that of their offended mentors. No one, said the Republicans, should be

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[1]Harrisburg Daily Telegraph, March 9, 1886.

[2]Harrisburg Morning Call, March 11, 1886.

[3]Harrisburg Telegraph, March 10, 1886.

allowed to create a sensation at the expense of the state's most honored charity.[1]

More than one Republican editor questioned the motives behind the article of February 22. Governor Pattison supposedly quoted excerpts from the piece before it hit the newsstands.[2] Later, the governor's superintendent of the soldiers' orphans claimed that his chief was really behind the original exposé. Pattison had chosen John Norris for the "appointed work of defamation." The reporter of the Record had spent several weeks in January 1886 in the superintendent's offices in Harrisburg gathering material for the February article. At that time, said Higbee, Norris let slip that he was acting under "high authority."[3]

Successful in casting doubts on the veracity of the Democrats' charges, the Republicans next turned their attention to the more damaging month long investigation of the schools by the governor himself. Pattison and his Democratic inquisitors were accused of greatly exaggerating, even falsifying the true condition of the schools. The word was "ex parte." Pattison, charged the Republicans, long before he started his tour of inspection had made up his mind about the guilt of the owners. This premeditated assault was accomplished by stressing only one side of the

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[1]Harrisburg Morning Call, March 4, 1886; Greenville Advance Argus, March 4, 18, 1886; Harrisburg Telegraph, February 25, 1886.

[2]Lancaster Daily New Era, March 23, 1886.

[3]Higbee, "Honor of the State," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXVI (March 1888), 333-334.

story. Only witnesses willing to paint the schools in the most despicable colors were allowed to testify. Defenders of the institutions were shut off with injunctions like "You are on trial here!" "That is not true, you know it is not true," badgered reporter Norris. The public, said the Republicans, should be aware of the unfairness of the Pattison investigation. The Republicans were sure that his month long tour of "slander and falsification" would go down as the darkest page in the ill-fated history of the Pattison administration.[1]

The Republican press generally concluded its coverage with the same question: "Why did the governor undertake this campaign of villification?" The answer was politics. It was evident why he had taken his attorney-general, Lewis Cassidy, along on the tour of the schools. As chief inquisitor of the Republican owners, Cassidy, Pattison's choice as the next governor, would receive much favorable publicity and exposure.[2] It was even hinted that reporter Norris had political ambitions. He had his eye on the lieutenant-governorship.[3]

Furthermore, said the Republicans, Democrats were trying to steal a well-known and traditional segment of the

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[1]Pittsburgh Leader, March 19, 1886; Lancaster Daily New Era, March 23, 1886; Harrisburg Morning Call, March 22, 1886.

[2]Carlisle American Volunteer, March 10, 1886.

[3]Chambersburg Public Opinion, n.d., 1886 in Scotland Scrapbook.

Republican vote. "The scheme," cried one GOP editor, "which is as plain as the nose on a man's face is to create in the hearts of the GAR a kind feeling towards the Democrats." The Republican editors cautioned the Grand Army men not to be duped by this political trick, not "to be drawn over to the party that is endeavoring to perpetrate so remarkable a joke." The veterans were to see the Pattison investigation for what it really was--a cheap Democratic trick to wean the veteran vote away from the party that had saved the Union.[1]

Finally, in their counter-attack against the Democrats, the Republicans gave a different version of Pattison's sincerity for civil service reform. He had "exploded" on learning that Superintendent Higbee had replaced Chief Clerk Paul with Joseph Pomeroy.[2] "This," Pattison supposedly had exclaimed, "is a slap in the mouth of John Stewart."[3] Stewart was the leader of the state's Liberal Republicans, Pattison's ally in the last election and political enemy of Stalwart Republican leader John Pomeroy, Joseph Pomeroy's uncle. Higbee by his action, claimed the Republicans, had destroyed the alliance between the liberals and Pattison.

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[1] Chambersburg Repository, March 8, 9, 13, 1886.

[2] Lancaster Daily New Era, March 19, 1886.

[3] E. E. Higbee to Robert E. Pattison, April 23, 1886 quoted in Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXIV (May 1886), 451.

In the process, the superintendent had incurred the governor's wrath to the point that Pattison demanded Higbee's resignation.[1]

The Retreat of Both Parties From the Controversy

Pattison's friends denounced these charges. Only minds of the "baser sort" would think the governor had any political reasons for taking up the cause of the soldiers' orphans. "The shoe," said one Pattison spokesman, "pinches these Republican journals on their political corn." To hide the real culprits of their party, the Republicans were trying to hang the millstone of partisanship around the neck of Governor Pattison. But, said one Democrat:

> If the Republican editors suppose they are rendering their party a service by denouncing Governor Pattison it is to be hoped that they will not be undeceived till the close of the campaign. They should be encouraged to keep on at this sort of thing for they will probably be disillusioned when the Ides of November shall have come.[2]

Through all the charges and counter-charges, who was to say that one political party was any more guilty than the other of trying to use the orphans to win votes. Soon it became apparent that the issue of the soldiers' orphans was not rebounding to the advantage of either party. Both Democrats and Republicans seemed to be playing politics with the interests of children. What in March had looked like a tactic of political success, by April and May seemed to have

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[1]Lancaster Daily New Era, March 16, 1886; Carlisle Herald, March 18, 1886; Harrisburg Telegraph, March 25, April 16, 1886.

[2]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, March 13, April 2, 20, 1886.

all sorts of danger signals. This unpleasant fact acknowledged by a Republican editor, could just as well have been said by a Democrat:

> The man who attempts to make political capital out of this question will beat his own brains out with a club.[1]

By late spring, both parties began to back off from the political consequences of the alleged "Soldiers' Orphan School Scandal." Other stories like the exposé of the Republican "Gas Ring" of Philadelphia (also written by John Norris of the Record), labor troubles on the nation's railroads, and the marriage of President Cleveland replaced the soldiers' orphans as news in the state's newspapers.

The Democrats did not attempt to win votes in the fall election by identifying their rivals with the revelations made earlier in the year. Their candidate for governor made no mention of the soldiers' orphans in either his acceptance letter to the party's nominating convention or, as far as can be determined, in any of his campaign orations.[2]

Two explanations can be given for this later reluctance of the Democrats to discuss the schools. One was the risk of being identified too closely with a partisan issue. In the summer of 1886, both the Grand Army of the Republic and the alumni of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools (the so-called

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[1]Harrisburg Telegraph, April 13, 1886.

[2]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, August 19, 1886; Carlisle American Volunteer, September 22, 1886.

"Sixteener's Association) went on record as opposed to "the partial and partisan investigation" of the incumbent Democratic governor.[1] If these two groups reflected prevailing voter sentiment, the Democrats undoubtedly reasoned that it was just as well they drop the original charges made by Governor Pattison.

Moreover, the candidacy of his chosen successor for governor, Attorney-General Cassidy, was not well received by the rest of the party. In July, 1886, the state's press reported that the incumbent Democratic administration had completely withdrawn from the political picture. At the nominating convention the following month, Pattison and Cassidy abandoned all attempts to control the party. The former was taking the waters at Bedford Springs while Cassidy was on an extended tour of Europe. Neither took part in the October Campaign against the Republicans.[2] Chauncey Black, the Democratic candidate for governor and the nominee of the conservative-Randall wing of the party, failed to mention the soldiers' orphans in any of his campaign pronouncements.[3]

After Governor Pattison's political future began to decline, he dropped the issue of the soldiers' orphans in

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[1]Philadelphia Record, August 18, 1886; GAR, 1886, 162.

[2]Rathgeber, "Democratic Party," 154, 163.

[3]Chauncey F. Black to the Nominating Committee of the Democratic State Convention, September 16, 1886, quoted in York Democratic Press, September 24, 1886; York Democratic Press, October 29, 1886.

the remaining months of his term as governor. In early April 1886, at the height of the controversy most observers believed that the governor would bring criminal charges against those owners who had unduly profited from operating a school.[1] Indeed, in April, Pattison instructed Attorney-General Cassidy to proceed in the courts against those who had defrauded the state and to "recover some of the ill-gotten gain" for the state.[2] But no formal charges were ever made by the Pattison administration. Perhaps it was true, as one Republican editor later claimed, that the "State did not prosecute because it knew there was no case."[3]

Likewise, the Republicans were reticent about the charges connected with the schools. All their protests to the contrary, Republicans and only Republicans were identified with the alleged abuses. As syndicate leader and ex-republican state senator George Wright said: "I prefer keeping quiet. I believe the whole thing will be explained away at the proper time."[4] An out-of-state analysis entitled "Pennsylvania Politics—Republican Prospects in the Coming

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[1]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, April 14, 1886; Philadelphia Press, April 13, 1886; Connellsville Courier, April 2, 1886.

[2]Pattison to Cassidy, April 15, 1886.

[3]Higbee, "Honor of the State," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXVI (March 1888), 334.

[4]Harrisburg Morning Call, March 11, 1886.

Campaign" had nothing to say about the soldiers' orphans.[1] Similarly, one of the most persistent GOP critics of the schools, General Louis Wagner, included nothing about the orphans in his remarks before the Republican state nominating convention in June 1886. It was expected that Wagner, the new state inspector of the Soldiers' Orphans, would have much to say about the alleged outrages. Instead, the influential GAR-GOP leader spent his time depreciating the leaders of the long-lost Confederacy.[2]

Still, the Republicans seemed to go farther than the Democrats in seeking the truth about the whole affair. In May 1886 Superintendent Higbee appealed to the legislature to make an investigation of his conduct in office. This call was seconded by the Republicans of Mercer County when they urged the lawmakers to make "a thorough, complete, impartial and non-partisan investigation."[3] But both houses of the general Assembly were under the control of the GOP, and such appeals suggested to Democrats the possibility of a whitewashing.[4]

On January 17, 1887, after the Republicans had further increased their margin of legislative control by victories in the fall elections, a Republican in the lower-house offered

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[1]New York Times, May 10, 1886.

[2]Harrisburg Daily Patriot, July 1, 1886.

[3]Higbee, "Official Department," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXIV (May 1886), 450; Shenango Valley News, June 25, 1886.

[4]Montrose Democrat, May 7, 1886.

a resolution setting up a joint legislative committee to investigate the charges against the Soldiers' Orphan Schools. The resolution passed but it never came out of committee in the state senate.[1] Evidently, persons in the party like senators Wright and Cooper had no wish to reopen a public discussion of what, the year before, had been an unpleasant episode for the Republicans. The Republican controlled legislature took no notice of former Governor Pattison's report of his March 1886 investigation. It "was laid upon the table."[2]

Politics and the End of the Schools

In the final analysis neither Democrats nor Republicans suffered because of the partisan events of 1886. The real losers were the owners of the schools and the officials of the state department in Harrisburg. The accusations by both parties had so discredited the system set up by Governor Curtin that the people of the state did not know what to believe.[3] In their confusion, most citizens seemed to believe the worst and doubt the best. "The disagreements are to say the least most unfortunate and to be greatly deplored," said one Republican editor. "If different parties

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[1]Pennsylvania House Journal, 1887, 64.

[2]Leg Rec, 1887, 29.

[3]Dunaway, Pennsylvania, 454.

make reports differing so widely the result must inevitably be to create distrust of all."[1]

The fate of the schools due to close in 1890 was assumed by the Grand Army of the Republic. The veterans anxious to preserve state aid for the children of dead and disabled comrades eventually brought forth a plan which solved the confusion caused by the events of 1886.[2] Both Democrats and Republicans applauded the decision of the GAR to hold legislative sanctioned hearings in Harrisburg and Philadelphia on the schools.[3] Similar bi-partisan approval greeted the largely GAR written law of 1889 which completely changed the twenty-five year-old system.[4] Finally, the new and GAR dominated Soldiers' Orphan Commission's closing of five of the schools in July 1889 was greeted with enthusiasm by both political parties.[5] The Republican Harrisburg Telegraph said that the action of the Commission was to be "heartily approved everywhere." No tears were shed for the Republican and now former superintendent of the soldiers' orphans. The Reverend Mr. Higbee had been "notoriously weak and inefficient."[6]

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[1]Scranton Republican, n.d., 1886, Scotland Scrapbook.

[2]Scout and Mail, n.d., 1887, Scotland Scrapbook; GAR, 1887, 244, 246, 264.

[3]Norristown Daily Herald, October 1, 1888; Carlisle Volunteer, March 6, 1889.

[4]Leg Rec, 1889, 1234-1235.

[5]Lancaster Daily New Era, July 30, 1889; Philadelphia Press, July 30, 1889.

[6]Harrisburg Telegraph, July 30, 1889.

Republican editors forgot the defense they had made on behalf of the Republican owners and administrators just three years previously. Now they laughed at and ridiculed the efforts of the owners to save their reputations and their schools.[1]

The schools, however, never recovered from the charges and countercharges of 1886. The scandals of that election year had discredited the system. Governor Curtin's patriotic enterprise was abolished three years later.

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[1]Philadelphia Press, July 30, 1889; West Chester Daily Local News, February 27, 1889.

CHAPTER VI

THE HERITAGE OF THE SOLDIERS' ORPHAN SCHOOLS

But for all their failings, the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania had served a useful purpose. They had charted a new course in child care which continued long after the original schools came to an end. Pennsylvanians, indeed, had a right to be proud of this particular "patriotic philanthropy."[1]

In 1881 former Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin addressed a gathering of old students of the schools at the state capitol in Harrisburg. After reviewing the events which had led to the establishment of the school and congratulating the orphans for their good appearance, the governor suggested that the graduates find someone to write a history of their schools. Curtin believed such a venture should be undertaken "so that not only the people of other States of the Union but all nations might know how much Pennsylvania had done to relieve the sufferings and horrors of war."[2] Not only did the suggestion show that Curtin continued to emphasize the motive of patriotism in maintaining the state charity, but

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[1]Wickersham, History of Education in Pennsylvania, 587.

[2]Pennsylvania School Journal, XXX (October, 1881), 162.

he, like all Pennsylvanians, obviously was exhibiting pride in this particular public relief project.

For the first time in history a government had come to the direct aid of its soldiers' orphans. No other state had ever attempted such a task.[1] Even after nine other northern states had followed the example of Pennsylvania and set up programs to aid their soldiers' orphans, the Keystone state, as Superintendent Wickersham boasted, beat them "all by ten to one."[2] Wickersham and his colleagues claimed that Pennsylvania spent more money and aided more children than all the other states combined.[3] When the original method of aid finally came to an end in 1889, the state had appropriated nearly ten million dollars for the care and education of over fifteen thousand children who had passed through the Soldiers' Orphan Schools.[4]

In comparison nine other northern states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

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[1]Harrisburg Telegraph, March 20, 1866.

[2]Sixteeners' Association Proceedings, 1881, 5.

[3]Wickersham, "A Word for Pennsylvania," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXI (November 1872), 159; Paul, SOS, 17; Annual statistics for the other states are not available but in those years checked, Pennsylvania did spend more money and aided more children than all the other states combined. In 1878, the other states spent $142,700 for 1270 soldiers' orphans while Pennsylvania expended $372,748 on 2653 soldiers' orphans. In 1883, the other states appropriated $254,800 for 1402 soldiers' orphans as compared to Pennsylvania and $352,141 for 2306 children. U. S. Commissioner of Education, Report for 1878, 651-653; Ibid., 1883, 711, 778.

[4]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1889, 5.

and New Jersey) had more abbreviated programs. Ohio, for example, which after Pennsylvania seemed to have the most ambitious program, spent $160,000 in 1871 for the maintenance of 270 children.[1] In the same year the Pennsylvania legislature appropriated almost three times that amount ($520,000) to care for 3607 soldiers' orphans.[2] The state of Michigan in 1889 spent one hundred dollars for the care of each of the two hundred soldiers' orphans it was supporting.[3] In the same year, it cost Pennsylvania $150 for the per capita upkeep of eighteen hundred children.[4]

The Schools Fail as Educational Models

There was more to the story of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania, however, than a comparison with what was being done in other states. The advocates of the Pennsylvania system believed it was serving another purpose. The schools were considered to be experimental models. The educators who ran the schools claimed that they were testing revolutionary pedagogical ideas.

In March 1865 Henry Barnard was informed by his friend, Superintendent Thomas Burrowes of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania, that at last the latter would be able to put

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[1]John Greer, "Report of the Inspector," Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1890, 45.

[2]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1889, 5.

[3]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1872, 30.

[4]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1889, 5.

into practice "some unique educational theories" without running counter to the usual "school master prejudices."[1] "I will be able to introduce a method of instruction," Burrowes wrote Barnard one year later, "which I have long been cogitating and maturing but which is not in books or anywhere in operation."[2] "From this experiment of Dr. Burrowes," said a delegate to the Pennsylvania state teachers' association convention in 1865, "the highest results are anticipated in reference to the character of our schools generally."[3]

The plan of Superintendent Burrowes for the soldiers' orphans proved to be something less than revolutionary. He claimed that he was going to inaugurate a system of industrial education.[4] This turned out to be nothing more than doing simple work chores. Like most schoolmen of the era, Burrowes continued to stress the usual classical-English curriculum. He had only one different idea. At each Soldiers' Orphan School, the teachers would spend all of their time individually assisting students in a large study hall. Once the pupils had prepared their lessons,

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[1]Thomas Burrowes to Henry Barnard, March 25, 1865 in Mohr, Burrowes, 189.

[2]Thomas Burrowes to Henry Barnard, February 15, 1866, in Mohr, Burrowes, 198.

[3]Jennie Leonard, "Speech to PSEA Convention," Pennsylvania School Journal, XIV (September 1865), 2.

[4]Pennsylvania School Journal, XIII (May, 1865), 246.

teacher aides would hear the recitations in smaller, adjoining rooms. The idea, however, was never tried in any of the schools.[1]

Burrowes' successor, George McFarland, also believed he could use the Soldiers' Orphan Schools to prove the efficacy of an educational idea. McFarland was enthusiastic about the possibilities of grading. During his tenure as superintendent, all of the schools were required to divide their students into grades, usually eight levels. In a speech to his professional colleagues at a state teachers' association convention in 1871, McFarland urged the adoption of the eight-grade plan for all of the state's common schools:

> The series of grades that have been very thoroughly tested in the Soldiers' Orphan Schools are applicable in the main to the common schools. Their condition and wants being similar to the Soldiers' Orphan Schools, it is believed similar good results will follow . . .[2]

There is no evidence that any of the schoolmen in the audience took McFarland's advice. The majority of the state's schoolhouses remained ungraded through the latter nineteenth century.[3]

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[1]Paul, SOS, 107.

[2]McFarland, "Speech at PSEA Convention," Pennsylvania School Journal, XX (September 1871), 99.

[3]Wickersham, "Ungraded Schools," Pennsylvania School Journal, XX (May 1871), 17-20; In 1872, of the 16,000 schools in the state, only 4,500 were graded. Twenty years later 10,000 or still less than half of the 23,000 schools were graded. Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1872, v; Ibid., 1890, vii.

Another participant in the schools, F. A. Allen, principal of the Mansfield Soldiers' Orphan School, was in great demand as a speaker on educational matters. He traveled to teachers' institutes as far away as Mississippi and California.[1] Allen called the program he was trying out in his Mansfield school, "the new departure." The school was divided into five grades, each with its own teacher who taught three distinct classifications of subject matter—language, mathematics and science. Allen was a great advocate of the "object method" of teaching. Natural objects were used at Mansfield in the mathematics and science classes. Ordinary newspapers were read in the language class.[2] To most educators, however, Allen "was in advance of his times."[3] In the general discussion that followed one of his speeches, an English teacher called Allen's ideas "destructive." Another critic said that it was unwise to use newspapers in school because of the "danger of politics and parties."[4]

The few innovations associated with the Soldiers' Orphan Schools, while evidently known to the educational profession at large, remained isolated experiments. The

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[1] Wellsboro Agitator, February 17, 1880.

[2] U. S. Bureau of Education, Circular of Information, 1875, 417-418; Pennsylvania School Journal, XXV (September, 1876) 126-127.

[3] Wellsboro Agitator, February 17, 1880.

[4] "PSEA Convention," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXV (September 1876), 126-127.

educators who ran the schools might have considered them to be testing grounds. Certain practices being tried out on the soldiers' orphans hopefully would be copied more generally throughout the state and nation. However, a check of the debates in the state legislature of Pennsylvania when changes were made in the common school system reveals no mention of any precedents being attributed to the Soldiers' Orphan Schools. On at least four occasions when significant educational laws were passed by the legislature (a twenty-day school month, a six month term, free textbooks, and compulsory attendance), reference could have been made to similar, already established practices in the Soldiers' Orphan Schools.[1] Likewise, the mandate of the new state constitution of 1873 requiring the state to support the public education of all children over the age of six was not sustained by the earlier and similar aid for the soldiers' orphans.[2] Finally, there is nothing in the reports of the state superintendent of public instruction to suggest these officials were influenced by what was happening in the orphan schools.[3]

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[1]Leg Rec, 1885, 465-470, 2321-2322; Leg Rec, 1887, 487-493; Leg Rec, 1895, 715-728, 789-796; Leg Rec, 1874, 1469-1481.

[2]Debates of the Convention to Amend the Constitution of Pennsylvania, 1873, II, 446-449, 641-646; VI, 38-45, 61-84; VII, 682-695.

[3]Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1886, v-x; Ibid., 1890, v; Ibid., 1891, v-ix.

The Schools Fail as Models for State Orphanages

The authorities of the Soldiers' Orphan School hoped their schools would set a precedent for the care of all dependent children. "We wish," said Superintendent Higbee, "that every destitute child within the State had the full advantage of such an education."[1] "What has been done for the soldiers' orphan," seconded Superintendent Wickersham, "must be done for all who need such help."[2] The establishment of the Soldiers' Orphan School proved, said their defenders, that such public institutions were no longer in the experimental stage. "The Soldiers' Orphan Schools are, in all respects," claimed the state commissioner of public charities, "fair samples of what can be done on a larger scale for all the hapless children of the State."[3]

The same argument based on social order that was used to rationalize the Soldiers' Orphan Schools was offered to justify the more expanded program. According to one report, not just fifteen thousand soldiers' orphans but over seventy-five thousand neglected children from all walks of life were "running wild" in the streets of the state. They were "the stuff of which riots and disturbances of the peace" were made. Their destiny was the county almshouse or the state

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[1] Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1887, 3.

[2] Wickersham, "Our Neglected Children," Pennsylvania School Journal, XXXII (August 1883), 35.

[3] First Annual Report of the Commission of Public Charities of Pennsylvania, 1871, iii.

prison, "a tax and a plague upon the body politic." The solution was to gather them into state schools where they could be trained to good behavior.[1] "Nor is this mere theory," said Superintendent Wickersham. "My experience with thousands of soldiers' orphans gathered in from homes of destitution, more than proves the position I take."[2]

Wickersham even prepared a legislative bill to cover the care of all dependent children in the state. Each county government would be required to establish a "proper Home" patterned on the existing Soldiers' Orphan Schools for all of the "truant, vagrant and neglected children" in the local district. The superintendent's proposal found no support in the state legislature. It died in committee. Its legislative sponsor simply hoped that the day was not far distant when the state would provide for the care of all destitute and dependent children.[3]

Apparently the pattern of care provided by the state for its soldiers' orphans did not inspire similar efforts for the other orphans in the state. Except for the soldiers' orphans, the Commonwealth failed to set up any institutions for any other orphan children. Well into the next century, the county almshouse remained the standard method of public relief for dependent children.[4] Not until 1917 was a mothers'

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[1]Wickersham, Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1871, xxiv; Ibid., 1873, xxiii; Ibid., 1880, xix-xx.

[2]Ibid., 1873, xxiii.

[3]Leg Rec, 1878, 1032.

[4]Flynn, Public Care, 77.

assistance fund set up by the state to give financial aid to fatherless children. This fund, however, continues to be administered by the officials of the local counties.[1]

The Legacy of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools

The Soldiers' Orphan Schools of Pennsylvania seemingly had no influence upon educational and social reform in the latter nineteenth century. New developments in education, a mounting concern for homeless children, the control by state government of more welfare services—all of these trends characterized the schools. But there is no evidence that such practices influenced educational and welfare patterns in the state or the nation.

The importance of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools was that they began something new for the care of a particular type of orphan--the soldiers' orphan. No state had previously established this kind of child welfare service. Indeed, there is evidence that once Pennsylvania started its soldiers' orphan schools, other northern states were encouraged to help their soldiers' orphans. In 1865, the superintendent of the Pennsylvania system was sure that other states would follow the example of Pennsylvania.[2] The next year, Governor Curtin revealed that upon request

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[1]Stevens, Pennsylvania: Birthplace of a Nation, 313; Pennsylvania Manual, 1968-1969, 435.

[2]Burrowes, "Soldiers' Orphans," Pennsylvania School Journal, XIII (May 1865), 245.

he had forwarded details of Pennsylvania's plan for her soldiers' orphans to the governors of Ohio and Connecticut.[1]

Indeed, the authorities of Ohio acknowledged the leadership of Pennsylvania. At a public meeting in support of a similar plan for Ohio, Governor Rutherford Hayes noted that his state was "sadly behind our sister states." He read a letter from the governor of Pennsylvania explaining how the Keystone state had set up her soldiers' orphan homes.[2] Later, the historian of the Ohio Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphan Home admitted that Ohio followed the example of Pennsylvania and that Pennsylvania was the first state to care for soldiers' orphans.[3]

Furthermore, it is interesting that after the other nine states emulated the effort of Pennsylvania, they seemingly did not copy the mistakes and failures of the Keystone state. All of the nine erected a single Soldiers' Orphan School under the direct ownership and control of the state. Four of these institutions (in Michigan, Illinois,

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[1]Burrowes, "Soldiers' Orphans," Pennsylvania School Journal, XIII (May 1865), 245.

[2]Curtin, "Speech to the Legislature, 1866," quoted in Paul, SOS, 75.

[3]Rutherford B. Hayes, "Speech at Dayton, Ohio, July 13, 1869," quoted in Edward Wakefield Hughes and William Clyde McCracken, The History of the Ohio Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphan Home (Xenia, Ohio: Association of Ex-Pupils, 1963), 37; Ibid., 7.

Indiana, and Ohio) were bonafide industrial training schools.[1] All of them set up a non-partisan board of directors dominated by the veterans of the late war to oversee each of its schools.[2]

Even if a direct connection cannot be made between the Pennsylvania effort and that of the other states, it is clear that the spirit and intent of a century ago still lives on in the state of its birth. Over five hundred children of veterans of World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam conflict are today given institutional care by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.[3] Pennsylvania is one of four states that continues to maintain a special orphanage for soldiers' orphans.[4] In fact, the present state owned facility at Scotland, like the other three, is unusual for the modern age. Today, placement in a private, foster family is the usual method of care for orphans.[5] The Pennsylvania School For Veterans'

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[1]Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1890, 45; Annual Report of the Pennsylvania SOS, 1893, 9; However, these industrial schools must have been set up late in the century as in Pennsylvania since in 1884 only Ohio had facilities for teaching "engine, telegraphy, wood-working, and tinning." U. S. Commissioner of Education, Report for 1883, 771, 778.

[2]Wallace E. Davies, Patriotism on Parade (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1955), 144.

[3]Pennsylvania Manual, 1965-1966, 417.

[4]Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio still maintain Soldiers' Orphan Schools. These four plus Iowa were the only states of the original ten who still maintained Soldiers' Orphan Schools as late as 1884. U. S. Commissioner of Education, Report for 1883, 771, 778.

[5]Walter Friedlander, An Introduction to Social Welfare (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1961), 370.

Children is clearly a survivor of an earlier era. It undoubtedly is still in existence because for over one hundred years the institutional care of soldiers' orphans has been a fixture on the state scene.[1]

Emphasis upon industrial training is still the keynote at the Scotland School since each child, regardless of personal ambition, must learn a manual skill. Military discipline and a concern for order continues to permeate the administration of the institution. Each Friday afternoon, the school's corps of cadets parades on the drill field like their predecessors of one hundred years ago.

Most similar of all, the same two motives that guided the effort of long ago serves as the basic philosophy of the present veterans' children program. In 1945, over eighty years after the beginning of the original plan by Governor Curtin, the superintendent of the Scotland School sought to explain why a building program had to be undertaken for the institution. He cited two arguments.

First, the thousands of veterans' children of Pennsylvania made destitute and dependent by World War II could not be denied their historic and patriotic birthright. The public officials of Pennsylvania in 1945 taking their cue from Governor Curtin and the lawmakers of 1864, had to "remember

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[1]Interview with Maurice Heckler, former assistant principal of the Scotland School, September 27, 1968.

this ancient obligation" to the Pennsylvania veteran and his children.

Secondly, the orphan children of World War II could not be allowed to become a "lost generation." Like the soldiers' orphans of an earlier day, these orphans of the twentieth century had to be trained to become "good and useful men and women." They too had to be prepared for a life of social usefulness.[1]

The modern administrator who wrote this brief was echoing the arguments of Governor Curtin and Superintendents Burrowes and Wickersham. In the name of patriotism and the order of society, a soldiers' orphan in Pennsylvania today, like his counterpart one hundred years ago, continues to receive the aid of the state.

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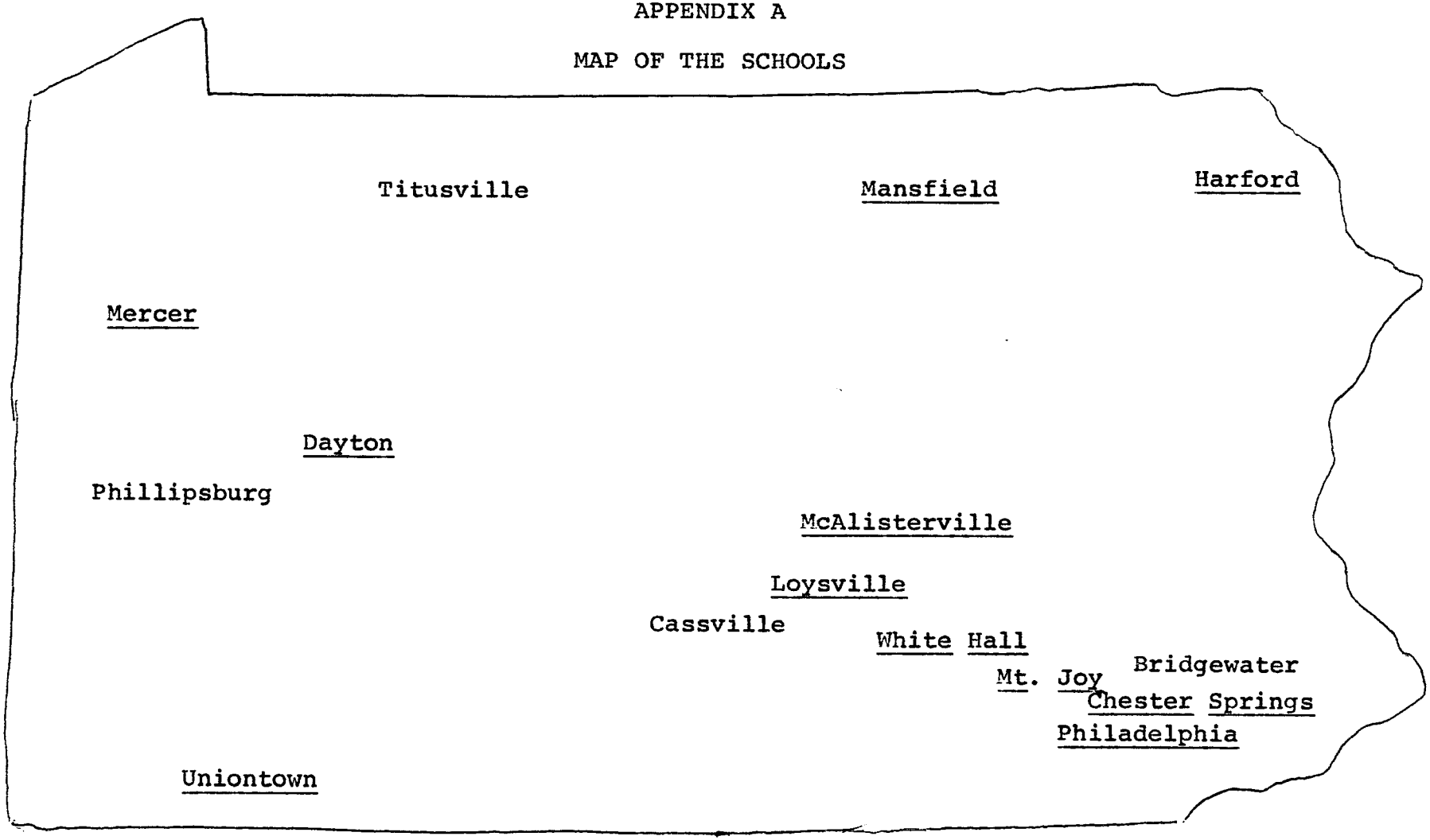
[1]"Post-War Plan for the Soldiers' Orphan Industrial School, 1945," typewritten, Scotland School archives.

APPENDIX A

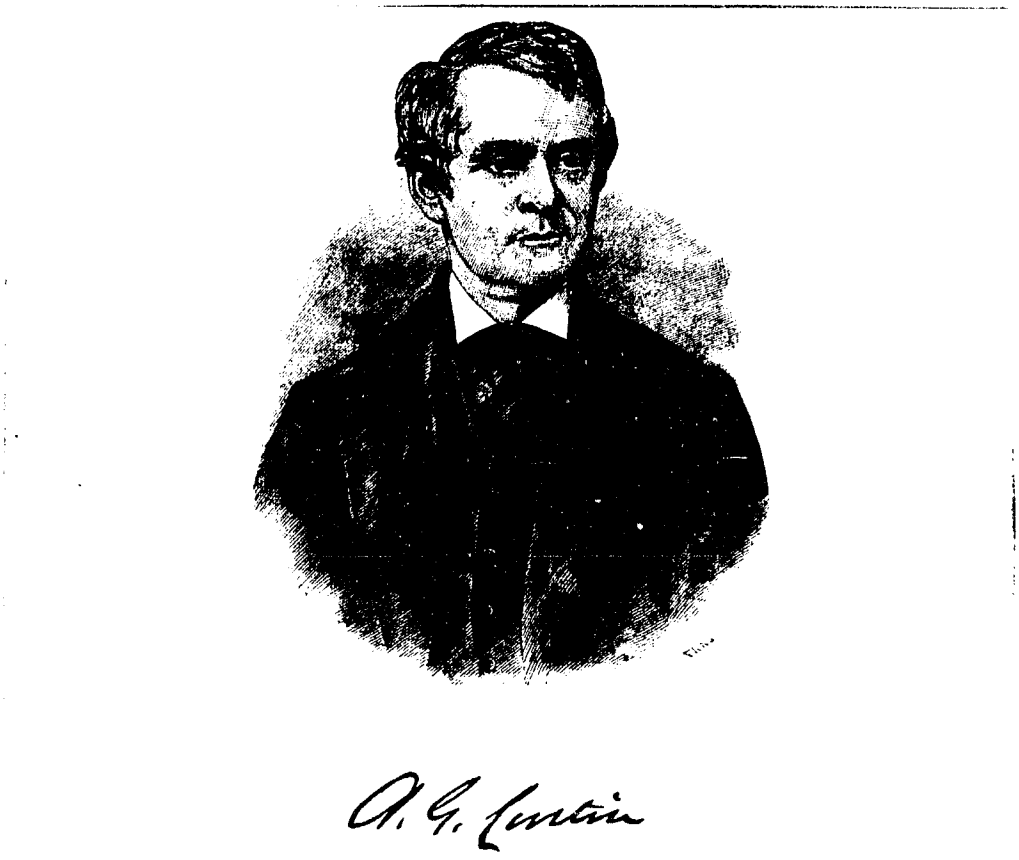
MAP OF THE SCHOOLS



The map shows the location of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools in 1871 at the height of the system. Those underlined were still in existence in 1889.

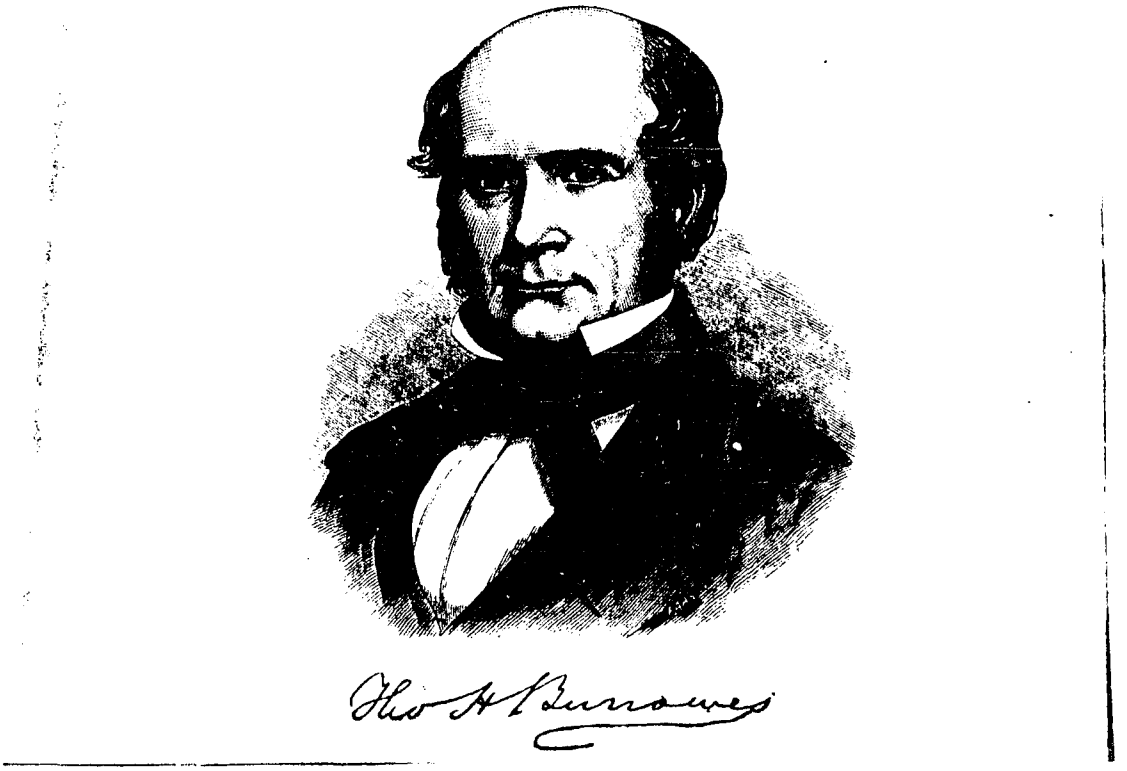
APPENDIX B

CONTEMPORARY ENGRAVINGS



Andrew Gregg Curtin

This engraving of the founder of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools was made during his first term as Civil War governor of Pennsylvania.



Thomas Henry Burrowes

Burrowes was in his late fifties when he was appointed the first superintendent of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools by Governor Curtin. Burrowes had already served two terms as state superintendent of the common schools and at the time of taking over the new state system was the first editor of the Pennsylvania School Journal. After leaving the Superintendency of the Soldiers' Orphans, he was president of the Pennsylvania State College until his death in 1871.

James Pyle Wickersham

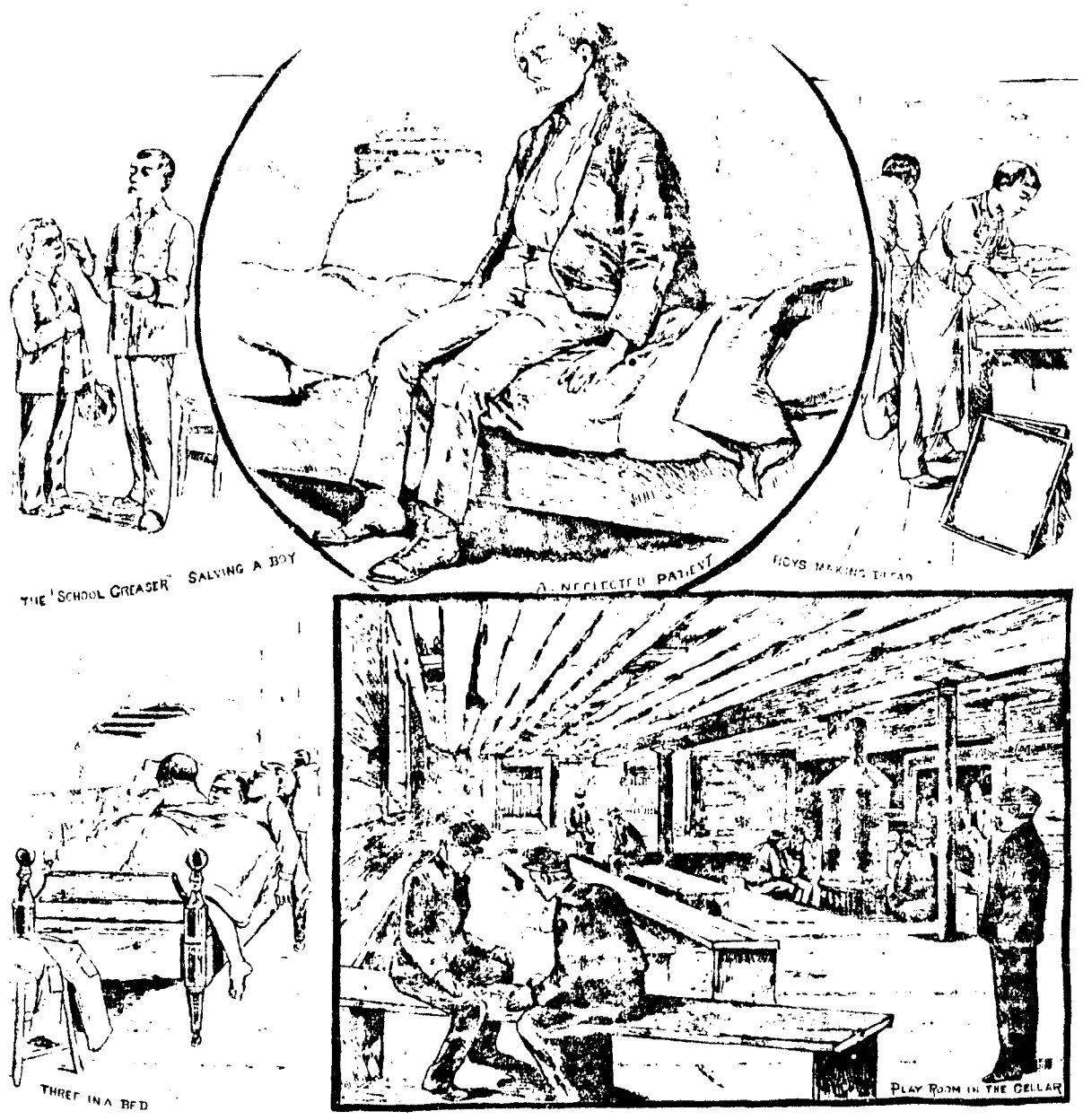
The career of Wickersham was much like that of his Lancaster County neighbor Burrowes. Wickersham followed Burrowes as state superintendent of the common schools, editor of the Pennsylvania School Journal and superintendent of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools. He also was famous in Pennsylvania educational history as the founder of the first teachers' normal school at Millersville in 1855. Active in Republican state politics, Wickersham was appointed ambassador to Denmark by President Arthur in 1882. Before he died in 1891, he wrote a history of education in Pennsylvania which is considered the definitive work on that subject.

Mrs. Elizabeth E. Hutter

This engraving of Mrs. Hutter undoubtedly catches the aristocratic and matronly background of the long-time state inspectress of the Soldiers' Orphan Schools. A member of one of the oldest families of Philadelphia, she was married to the minister of the largest Lutheran congregation in the city. Supposedly in her younger days, she had been something of a "star" of Philadelphia society. With this upperclass background it is perhaps understandable why Mrs. Hutter was so interested in having the soldiers' orphans become obedient and law-abiding citizens. It was Mrs. Hutter, for instance, who was unduly worried about the industrial training of the orphans. She believed they had to be prepared to compete with the foreign but radical inclined craftsmen pouring into Philadelphia

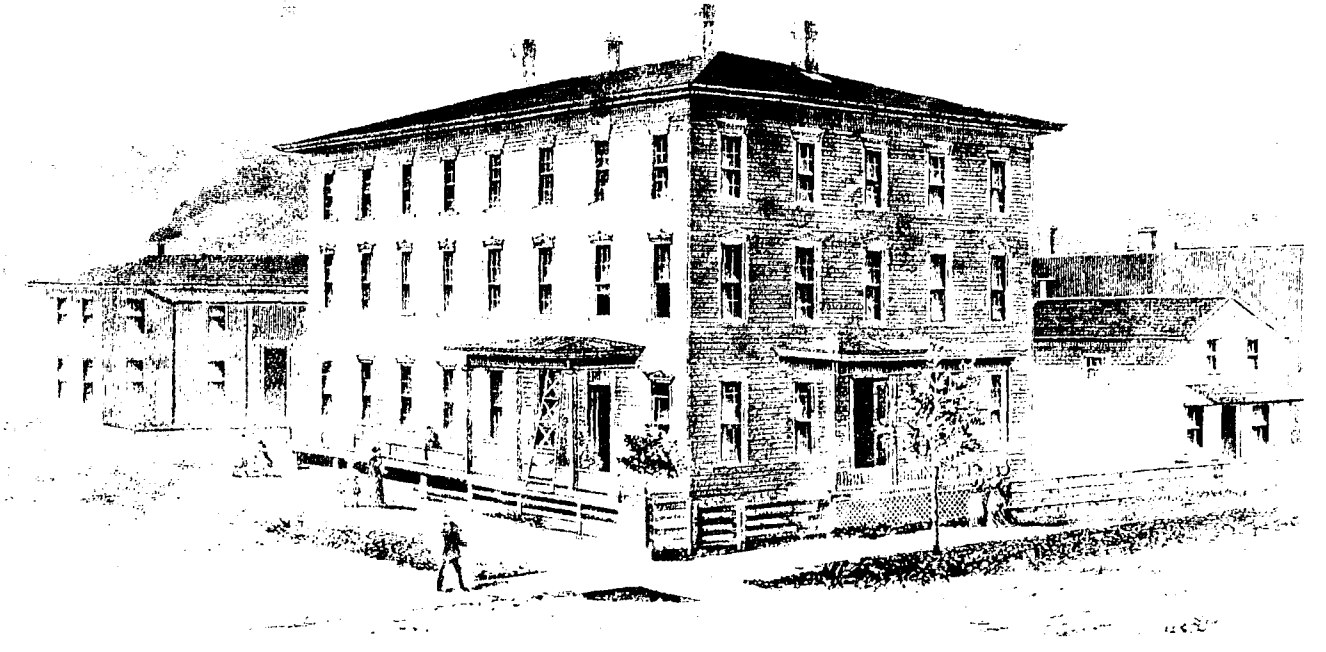
[From Paul's History of Pennsylvania's Soldiers' Orphan Schools.]

These two steel engravings show the soldiers' orphans dressed in their "Sunday best." The boys were uniformed like their deceased fathers--a blue jacket, gray trousers and blue garrison cap. The girl's dress was described as a "scotch plaid mohair, poplin." Most of the time, however, the clothing was more ordinary--a cotton shirt and pants for the boys and a gingham or calico dress for the girls.



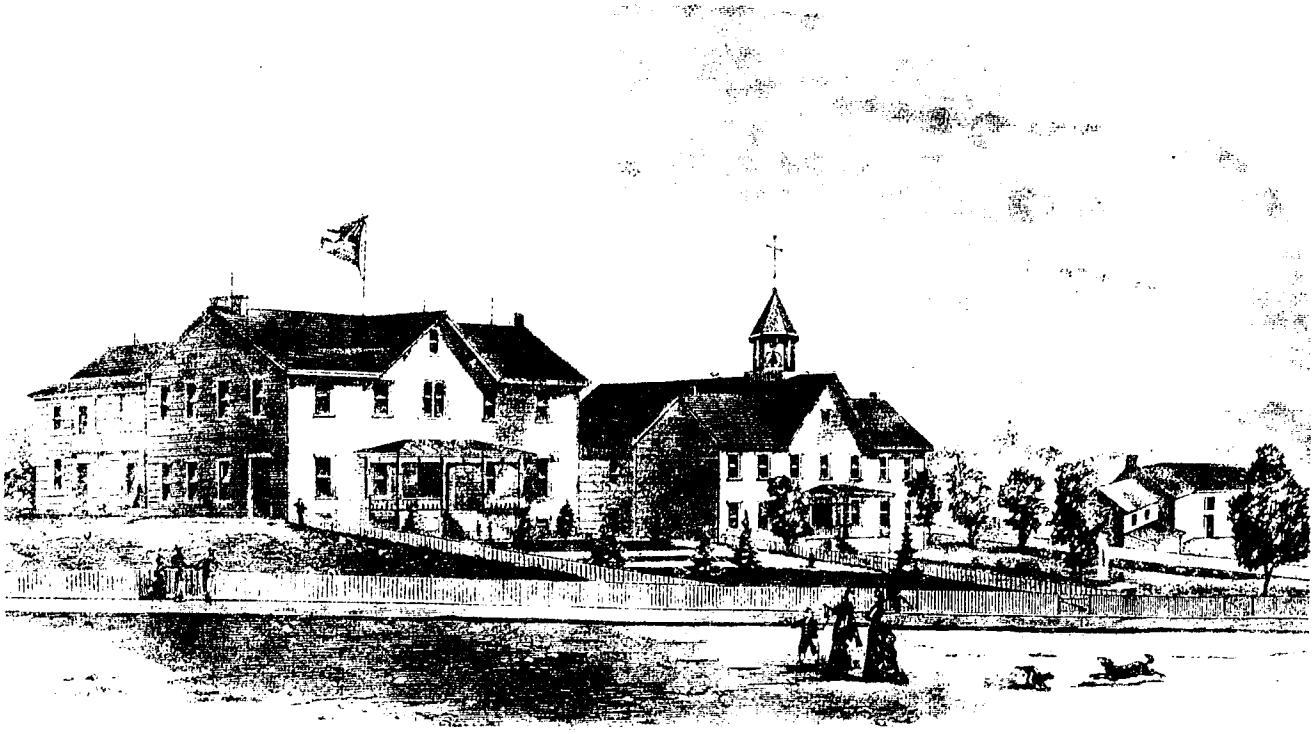
PENNSYLVANIA.—THE MALTREATMENT OF INMATES OF THE SCHOOLS FOR SOLDIERS' ORPHANS.—SHOCKING REVELATIONS AT THE MOUNT JOY SCHOOL.—GRAPHIC SCENES AND INCIDENTS.

These sketches from the March 27, 1886 issue of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper were made of one of the syndicate schools (at Mt. Joy) at the time of Governor Pattison's inspection tour of the institutions. They illustrate well the adverse opinion of the schools that was general throughout the state at the height of the "Soldiers' Orphan Scandal of 1886."

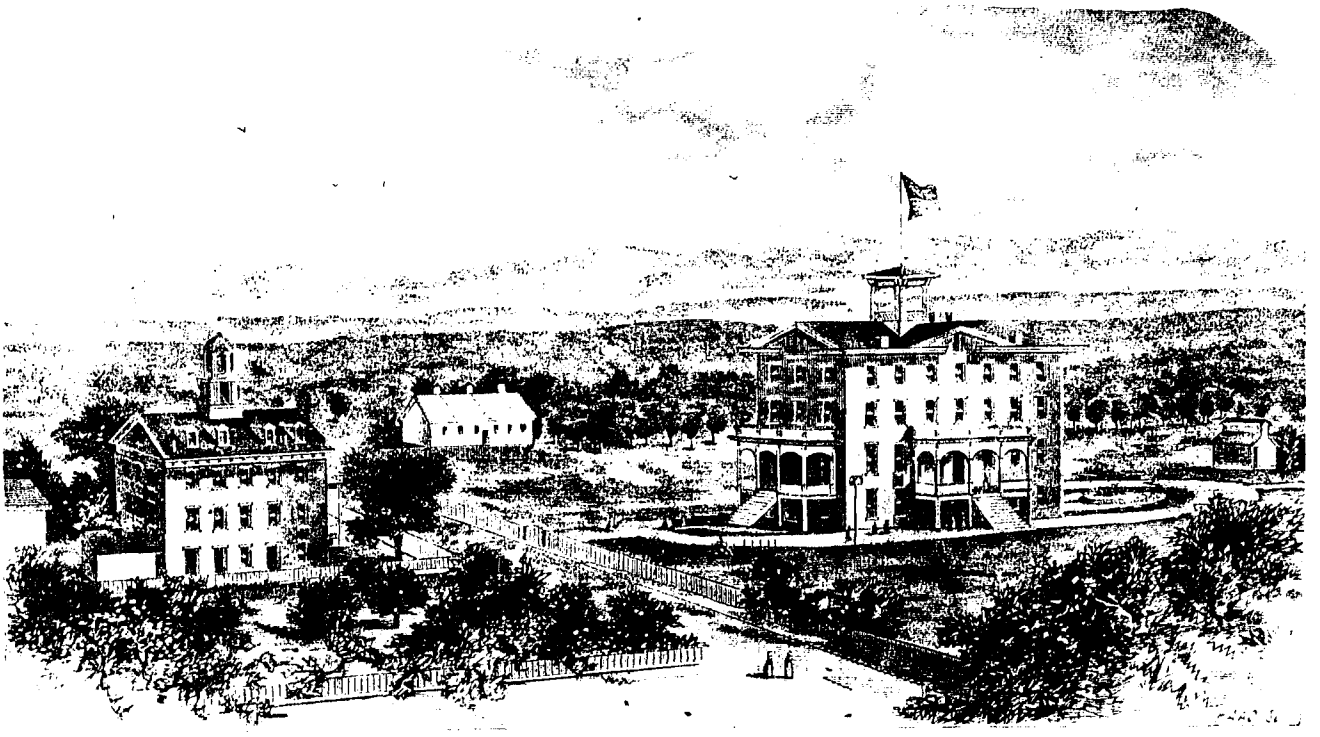


MANSFIELD SCHOOL

This engraving of the Mansfield Soldiers' Orphan School was typical of most of the institutions. With a few exceptions, all of the buildings were of wood. First, there was the main building of three stories. On the first floor was a large school room with smaller adjoining recitation rooms. On the second floor were the sleeping quarters for the staff and some of the children. The third floor was a dormitory for either boys or girls. Connected to this main building by wooden sidewalks were smaller two-story frame structures. One would be a dormitory for the girls with perhaps a sitting room and sewing room on the first floor. Another building would house the male pupils and the dining facilities. A farm with accompanying out-buildings would usually adjoin the school.



The Uniontown school was similar to the Mansfield school except that the main building (on the left in this picture) was the dormitory-dining hall and the structure in the middle was the school-house.



McALISTERVILLE SCHOOL.

[illegible] JUNIATA COUNTY PA

The McAlisterville school was an exception to the usual architecture since the two main buildings were made of brick. The institution had formerly been an academy dating back to 1856. The original academy building is on the left with the school rooms being on the first floor and living accommodations on the other two levels. The larger, four-story dormitory was built in 1866.

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