

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As with any major production, a book such as this could not have been completed without the assistance of numerous people, and I have encountered many generous souls throughout the course of my research and writing for this project. ix

Particularly worthy of mention are those diligent archivists, librarians, and school district employees—often unnamed and unknown—who have persisted in their stewardship of the primary source materials that are so highly valuable to historians. Without access to stashes of school board minutes, superintendent files, administrative memos, teacher materials, mimeographs, district bulletins, among many other types of sources, it would have been impossible to complete this study. The range of resources produced by Progressive Era school districts demonstrates the wide scope of their activities in the early twentieth century.

Deserving special recognition is the Seattle Public School Archives, a department of the school system that is a model for what an educational archive can be. Eleanor Teows was the head archivist during my research in Seattle, and I am deeply in her debt. She not only revealed the many sources available regarding the city's educational history but also, in so doing, made me aware of the existence of the types of documents I then located in other cities. The librarians of the University of Washington Special Collections also offered great assistance.

In Portland, Oregon, the staff at the Records Management Department of the Portland Public Schools, especially David Evans, accommodated a scholar in their offices so he could review school district files far older than those they regularly retrieve. The Portland Public Library, itself a product of the Progressive Era, stores a wide variety of press clippings and unpublished district reports. The Portland school district central office welcomed me in to study school board minutes.

Oakland, California, once had a wonderful district library stocked with professional development materials from past and present; alas, due to significant budget cuts stemming from a series of state and city financial crises, many of its holdings were either disposed of or warehoused and, thus, have not been within the reach of the researcher. Nevertheless, staff at the district central office kindly provided what they could from their files and cleared some desk space for me to work. The Oakland History Room in the Oakland Public Library thankfully houses a range of older district publications, and the main library retains some older city newspapers that are unavailable elsewhere. I thank Gary Yee for the time he took to familiarize me with the many dimensions of conducting research in Oakland.

The Denver Public Schools can be lauded for recognizing the precious nature of their older, handwritten school board minutes, symbolized by its decision to keep these large volumes locked in a vault, yet they remain available to the researcher. The Western History Room of the beautiful Denver Public Library supplemented district records with published and unpublished state and school materials. I was fortunate to have access to the Jesse H. Newlon Papers and the Archie L. Threlkeld Papers in the Penrose Library at the University of Denver, for they yielded unparalleled glimpses into the minds of significant individuals in this book.

Stanford University's Cubberley Education Library served as a crucial foundation for the origins of this study, and the outstanding staff, especially Kelly Roll, deserve credit for assisting my many quirky requests and questions. Cubberley Education Library houses a preeminent national collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century school records and materials. Despite periodic threats to close the library or to dispatch with its archival material (a fate that befell some education collections at Teachers College, Columbia University, and the National Institute for Education), it remains a jewel for educational researchers.

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As a sixth- through twelfth-grade history and social studies teacher in Minnesota I was, and continue to be, astonished by my many students who asked insistent, often incessant, questions about the nature of American society. Their ability to inquire thoughtfully about the past, to interrogate textbook history, to write with precision, and to discuss and debate issues of class and race provides a model of decorum that far outshines the behavior of far too many adults and American politicians.

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*William Collins Watterson, “Nightscape with Doves,” *New Yorker* (February 9, 1987), 77.

