

ESSEX COUNTY.

CHARLES M. DAVIS, SUPERINTENDENT.

To E. O. Chapman, State Superintendent:

In obedience to law I have the honor to present this report concerning the public schools of Essex county.

In the city of Newark the schools are under the charge of Superintendent Wm. N. Barringer; in Orange, of Superintendent U. W. Cutts; those of the townships are under the supervision of the County Superintendent.

The children are distributed as follows:

	Newark.	Orange.	Townships.	Total.
On census roll	47,098	4,899	12,215	64,212
On school register	22,588	1,715	7,396	31,699
Average attendance	15,672	1,210	4,938	21,820
In private schools	6,800	1,400	2,267	10,467
Attending no school	17,713	1,784	2,549	22,046

The following amounts have been received for maintaining the schools during the year:

	Newark.	Orange.	Townships.	Total.
From the State	\$217,899 42	\$22,236 88	\$56,325 29	\$299,461 59
From the township and district tax	33,135 57	4,916 05	42,392 87	80,444 49
Value of school property	\$1,109,500	\$105,000 00	\$443,300	\$1,647,800 00

It is twenty years since the school law was enacted. A comparison of the schools to-day with those of the year following the passage of the act may prove interesting and instructive. The cities are included in these statements:

	1867-8	1886-7
Number of children on census roll	30,270	64,212
Number of teachers engaged	212	582
Money received from the State	\$13,131 30	\$299,461 59
Money raised by cities, townships and districts	126,757 37	262,042 40
Value of school property	368,750 00	1,647,800 00

The number of children has more than doubled, which is evidence that the population has at least doubled. The two hundred and twelve teachers have become five hundred and eighty-two, and instead of \$368,750 the school property is now valued at \$1,647,800.

If the statement be made for the townships we find a great advance, although not equal to that of the cities.

	1867-8	1886-7
Number of children on census roll	7,271	12,215
Number of teachers engaged	76	160
Money received from State	\$3,154 20	\$59,325 29
Money. raised by townships and districts	25,634 37	77,226 31
Value of school property	108,750 00	433,300 00

Twenty years ago there were in the townships forty-two school buildings; thirty-four of wood, five of brick, three of stone, with seventy-four rooms, seventy-six teachers and a seating capacity of three thousand two hundred and thirty-eight. Now there are forty-three buildings, twenty-four of wood, seventeen of brick, two of stone, with one hundred and sixty rooms and one hundred and sixty teachers, and a seating capacity of eight thousand one hundred and ninety. At that time two of the buildings were very good, sixteen good, eight medium, seven poor, nine very poor. Now there are thirty-two very good, nine good, two medium, none poor, none very poor. This great progress is the more remarkable from the fact that during this period three of the largest districts and parts of two others have been taken from the townships and annexed to Newark city.

In connection with this it may not be inappropriate to notice the geographical situation of the county and its influence on the population, the business and consequently on the character of the schools in the different sections. Essex is the most compact of all the counties in the State. It forms one of the seven congressional districts, Hudson being the only other county that constitutes a district by itself. The Passaic river rising half way across the State, runs northeasterly as far as Paterson, then turning to the south, it continues its course to Newark bay. This river was formerly the boundary of the county on the west, north and east, but a strip has been cut off from the north to form a part of Passaic county. That interesting trap-rock formation known as Orange Mountain, running northeast and southwest, divides Essex into two nearly equal parts. Newark city, at the mouth of the river, and also extending along the bay, occupies a considerable part of the eastern section. This city, as regards population, is the fifteenth in the Union; as regards manufactures, it is ranked third. Orange, at the foot of the mountain, has a population about one-tenth as large as that of Newark. The rest of this section is mostly covered with pleasant towns and villages, the homes of thousands whose places of business are in New York or Newark. With one exception, the western part of the county is thinly settled, containing about one-twentieth as many inhabitants as the eastern. The exception is Caldwell, which lies west of the mountain, but on a fine county road which runs from Newark northwesterly to Morris county. The population of Caldwell steadily increases. It has a fine brick school-house valued at \$20,000.

The rest of that section, instead of growing, has decreased in population. There are six districts in which there are one hundred and fifteen fewer children to-day than there were twenty years ago. The land is worn out, there are no factories, and communication with the cities is too difficult for men of business to reside there. This is where the weakest schools are found, and yet the people willingly tax themselves according to their ability.

There are no longer any "very poor" or even "poor" schoolhouses. All are furnished with "modern" desks, and in almost every one may be found a globe, a dictionary and a gazetteer. The larger schools have libraries for general reading not only, but containing many valuable books for reference,--- histories, scientific works and cyclopaedias. Vocal music is not neglected, being taught by special teachers in the larger schools, and more or less by the regular teachers in other schools. To aid in this, and at the devotional exercises at the opening of school, as well as to keep time in calisthenic exercises and for marching, there are six pianos and thirty-one organs.

Industrial work is receiving some attention. The report of Principal Randall Spaulding, published in last year's State Report, gave an interesting account of the work done in that line in Montclair. Principal Vernon L. Davey, of the Eastern District in East Orange, has also accomplished much in that branch. Under Principal Elias R. Pennoyer, fine success has been attained in kindergarten instruction. In other districts a beginning has been made in most of them with marked success.

The progress in the schools during the past year has been steady and healthful. It is certain that they have gained a strong hold on the confidence and affection of the people, who mean to maintain and defend them. As regards the teachers, I can but repeat with emphasis what I said in my report last year, that it gives me great pleasure to express my appreciation of their high character and their able and faithful work in the schools. As a body they are well educated, at least four-fifths of them being graduates from colleges, normal schools or high schools. They strive to train their pupils in purity and truth, as well as in intelligence and courtesy, putting character on as elevated a platform as that of intellect.