

ESSEX COUNTY.

CHARLES M. DAVIS, SUPERINTENDENT.

To Hon. Edwin O. Chapman, State Superintendent:

In obedience to law, I have the honor of making the following report for the schools of Essex county during the year ending August .31st, 1891.

The public schools of Newark are under the superintendence of Wm. N. Barringer, Ph.D.; those of Orange under Usher W. Cutts, A.M., while this report concerns those of the eleven townships in the county.

Twenty-three years ago there were forty-two (42) districts, which have been reduced to thirty-five (35), three having been annexed to Newark and others consolidated. Notwithstanding this annexation, the growth of the townships has been so marvelous and the interest of the citizens so great that the public schools of the townships have increased many fold in many ways, as will be seen from the following statements:

	1868.	1891.
On census roll	7,656	13,662
On school register	4,652	8,723
Average attendance	2,670	6,216
Number of buildings	42	47
Value of property	\$108,750	\$707,300
Number of male teachers	27	29
Number of female teachers	49	177
Average salary, male	\$55 75	\$119 64
Average salary, female	33 27	45 61
Buildings Very good	4	38
Good	7	6
Medium	12	1
Poor	9	1
Very poor	10	1
Total	42	47

Only four buildings remain as they were in 1868, and some repairs have been made to these. The one marked very poor is in a district that has been annexed to another, the citizens of which are ready to build a good house as soon as a suitable location can be obtained.

The larger part of the county lies behind the range of hills called "The Orange Mountains," access to which is not easy. With the exception of the village of Caldwell, which is rapidly growing and whose public school has attained a very high degree of excellence, the population of this section is very little, if at all, greater than in 1868; in some districts it is less. But east of these hills the townships are becoming thickly settled, and there are in them several schools, the superior to which it will be difficult to find anywhere, whether in town or city. The general

character of all these schools is high, and their influence is felt in the country districts, where the qualifications of the teachers are much better than formerly.

The influence of the County Normal Class, which extended through the year, has been felt for good in all the districts. Eighty teachers attended regularly and carried into their schools the results obtained from the instructions of the able conductors.

Where there is such general excellence it might seem invidious to mention any by name; and yet some of the schools so far take the lead of others that it is well to give them particular attention. First of all stand the public schools of Montclair and East Orange, in the character and furniture of their buildings, the high qualifications of their teachers, and the excellent training in natural history, natural science and manual work which they furnish to their pupils. These schools and that in Bloomfield prepare scholars for entrance to the highest colleges in the land. Connected with the Montclair school is a shop for industrial work in wood and iron. There are five lathes operated by a steam engine, which, under able instructors, the pupils are taught to use. The girls are taught various kinds of needlework, and a well-furnished kitchen gives them an opportunity to learn cooking. The South Orange school has made commendable progress in form-study, drawing and industrial work. Other schools are beginning to follow these examples.

East Orange has put up a High School building at a cost of about \$115,000, and the citizens of Montclair have authorized their Trustees to erect one which, no doubt, will rival that of their neighbor.

It must not be inferred from these commendations that High School work is the great and distinguished work of the public school. On the contrary, the attention given to the primary and grammar classes should be the most emphatic. And indeed it is just in these classes that, in the schools mentioned, as well as in the great majority of the others, the ablest teachers are employed and the greatest success obtained. There is great advance along all the lines in all the schools.