

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# THE LYMAN-LEONARD INTERLUDE

As the nineteenth century bowed out, the State of Michigan presented a far different picture from that which obtained when Normal first opened its doors. The scene has been graphically described:

Fifty years have changed the wilderness into more than a hundred thousand cultivated farms. Eight thousand miles of railroads afford good market and travelling facilities to the people of almost every county in the state. The census reports show a population of nearly two and one-half million people. *Twelve thousand schools afford instruction to six hundred thousand pupils.* Postal facilities have improved a hundred fold.<sup>1</sup> (emphasis added)

We have seen that the establishment of a second normal school (at Mount Pleasant in 1895) created a new problem, that of coordinating the work of two schools. With the creation of a third (at Marquette in 1899), the problem assumed a more complicated form, and the State Board felt moved to try a novel experiment. They decided to place all three schools under a single head, to be given the title "President of the Normal Schools of Michigan." Subordinate to him would be a principal for each of the institutions.

In addition to general supervisory control and direct responsibility to the Board, the President would be required to give one or more courses of instruction in each of the schools each year upon the general subjects of philosophy, theory and art of teaching, and the history of education. His general supervisory function was described in such manner as to emphasize curriculum and instruction: "to so arrange, subordinate, and co-ordinate the courses of instruction in

each of the various Normal Schools of the State, that there shall be an interchange of credits between all of the said schools.”<sup>2</sup>

The Board acted at once to appoint a principal to succeed President Boone, and began looking for a president for the Normal School System. The choice for principal fell on a recently arrived member of the faculty, Elmer A. Lyman, head of the Mathematics Department, to serve under the as-yet unnamed President of the Normal School System of the State.

Lyman was born in Manchester, Vermont, but came at an early age with his parents to Indiana. He attended the University of Michigan, graduating in 1886, and for the next four years gained administrative and teaching experience in the public schools in Kansas and Ohio. He then returned to the U-M as instructor in mathematics, where he served for eight years. He came to Normal in 1898.

Soon thereafter, the Board found the man they were looking for as president in Albert Leonard, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts of Syracuse University.

Leonard was born near Logan, Ohio, attended the Ohio Central Normal School, and graduated and took a master’s degree from Ohio University. He came to Normal with an honorary PhD from Hamilton College at Clinton, New York, conferred in 1894 while he was principal of the Central High School at Binghamton, New York. In 1897, he joined the staff of Syracuse University as professor of pedagogy and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. He had been on the staff of the *Journal of Pedagogy* since 1887 and, since 1891, its editor.

Leonard assumed his new duties July 1, 1900. A year later, in his first annual report, he noted that the Massachusetts Board of Education had just recommended a single supervising officer for the normal schools of that state. Also, in the first issue of the *Journal of Pedagogy* after his arrival in Ypsilanti he editorialized:

While there is an impression in other states that neither the new (Michigan) plan nor any similar plan can be successfully and harmoniously carried out in Michigan owing to political and other complications, we are inclined to the opinion that the hindrances to the successful administration of the normal school system have been exaggerated.<sup>4</sup>

This was to be the one and only report by President Leonard. By the close of the next biennium the State Board had changed its mind

about their Normal School System. In relieving Leonard of his duties, the Board said:

The Board desires to place on record this belief, that the officer (the President) strove with all his power to successfully solve the inconsistencies, ambiguities, and anomalies of the new position, and the present Board put forth their most vigorous efforts to carry out the scheme devised by their predecessors . . .<sup>5</sup>

The startling reversal of its position by the State Board occurred before the second year of the experiment had been completed. In its biennial report for 1902 to the Legislature, the Board said:

It is probable that the experiment should have been given more time, but by an opinion arrived at during the early spring of last year, which was concurred in by all the parties concerned, it was finally concluded that a compromise between the old and the new methods would bring about a happy solution of the matter of proper supervision and correlation of the then existing normal schools.<sup>6</sup>

The compromise referred to was the creation of a Normal Executive Council, composed of the president of Michigan State Normal College and the principals of the other State Normals, to be presided over by the Ypsilanti school's president, and to meet at least once each quarter at the same time and place as that scheduled for the regular meeting of the State Board. The duties of this Council would be

to discuss all questions relating to the general educational policy of said Normal Schools and report to the State Board of Education for its consideration the result of their deliberations, and when said report has been officially approved by said board the same shall become binding upon and operative in all the Normal Schools of the State.

Not only was the president of the Ypsilanti Normal to preside over the meetings of the Council but to call them as needed, and he was further instructed to "counsel and advise" with the principals and faculties of the several normal schools.

This arrangement proved to be reasonably satisfactory, and continued in existence until, under the new State Constitution of 1963, effective January 1, 1964, each school was provided with its own board of control.

Lyman returned to his position as head of the Mathematics Department, which he filled with distinction until his death in 1936. Through the years he published a number of widely-used textbooks for high schools in arithmetic, algebra, trigonometry, and geometry, some in collaboration with such well-known names in the teaching profession in Michigan as Albertus Darnell (later to become Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Wayne State University) and Edwin C. Goddard (later to become Professor of Law, and a national authority on Bailments and Carriers at the University of Michigan). He served as trustee for Alma College (Michigan) and Berea College (Kentucky), the latter conferring on him the honorary degree of LL.D. As a teacher and colleague he was held both in esteem and affection. He died in his seventy-third year, active until within a few months of the end.

Leonard, who had maintained his residence in Ypsilanti, moved to Boston where he served in the Educational Department of Houghton, Mifflin and Co. for several years. In 1907, he became Superintendent of Schools at New Rochelle, New York, in which position he remained until his death in 1931. His alma mater conferred on him the honorary degrees of Doctor of Literature in 1909, and Doctor of Education in 1928. His city of New Rochelle honored him by giving his name to a junior high school, and the teachers of the State of New York made him president of their association.