

CHAPTER THREE

CERTIFICATES DIPLOMAS DEGREES

The need for specific requirements for teachers has always been recognized. Questions have always arisen, however, concerning what those requirements should be, who should set them, and who should issue the certificates. In Michigan, nearly a century passed after statehood before a stable and satisfactory pattern was achieved. In the meantime, responsibility shifted from township to county, from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the State Board of Education to the faculty of the Normal; and at times, the University of Michigan, the Detroit Board of Education, and certain other schools issued certificates.

The problem antedates statehood. Election of township "inspectors of common schools" was provided for by the Territorial Laws of 1829. Five inspectors were to be elected at the annual township meeting.¹ This provision was later incorporated into state law. In the revised Michigan Constitution of 1850, the authority to examine persons who proposed to teach and to certify them was given to the principal of the Normal, acting with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Township officials, however, still had authority to examine, and Normal graduates were often required to submit to such an examination. In other words, the first certificates issued by the Normal were not recognized locally as legal qualification for teaching.

After a decade, the state legislature took action to end the confusion. A County Superintendent of Schools was provided for, and among his duties was that of issuing teaching certificates. A Third Grade Certificate licensed the holder to teach for six months in a specific township. The Second Grade Certificate was valid through-

out the county for one year. The First Grade Certificate was available only after one year of teaching experience, and was valid for two years. Qualifications for these certificates were set by the County Superintendent. The State Superintendent was authorized at the same time to grant certificates valid in any schools in the State until revoked.

County Superintendents took their assignment seriously and made a concerted effort to raise the standards for certification. They raised requirements each year, and those who met them were increasingly qualified.

In 1875, the legislature reversed itself, passing a law abolishing the office of County Superintendent and revoking the authority of the State Superintendent to issue certificates. The authority reverted to townships. County boards were given the authority again in 1891.

In 1878, the State Superintendent noted that many township boards had expressed dissatisfaction with the examining system. They were too busy to give it adequate attention, and often found it embarrassing to decide on the qualifications of neighbors and friends. He recommended a state certificate, with authority vested in the State Board of Education. The legislature agreed and enacted a law giving the State Board authority to grant certificates valid for ten years in any school in the State. The Board was directed to prepare examinations for the various grades of local certificates, but the local authorities were not obliged to use them.

In 1889, the legislature gave the State Board authority to issue a Life Certificate, valid in any school. Requirements included two years of teaching experience and approval of the Normal. The latter required that the candidate complete the Normal's first two years (or graduate from a four-year high school) and two additional years of college-grade work there. It was also required that courses completed be listed on the certificate. This practice has been retained to the present time.

The State Board issued the certificate on the recommendation of the principal of the Normal and "a majority of the heads of departments of said school."² This served to improve the status of the certificate holder and make him more secure.

It was this Life Certificate which, in 1897, first listed Michigan Normal as College rather than School. Two years later, the legislature changed the name of the institution to Michigan State Normal College.

In 1927, the minimum requirement for a Life Certificate was

raised to four years of college-grade work. In 1936, the Provisional-Permanent Certificate now in use was established, and the Life Certificate was not issued after June, 1939.

The policy of issuing teaching certificates based on examinations was abandoned in 1921. Only professional training was considered a qualification from then on. Counties could still issue certificates, without examination, providing that one year of professional training was required for Third Grade Certificates, one and a third year for the Second Grade, and one and two-thirds for the First Grade.

Licensing of teachers for rural schools became a concern for the State Board within 15 years of the opening of the Normal. The Board, under authority granted by the legislature, issued a certificate after 1867 for teaching in rural schools only. The certificate was valid for three years and was renewable once upon a showing of teaching success. Further renewals required, in addition, that the applicant pass an examination in two advanced courses. The Normal's one-year English Common School course was required. The certificate was abandoned in 1882 when the Normal dropped that course.

Two years later, it was replaced by a five-year certificate which licensed the holder to teach both in rural and elementary graded schools. Requirements included completion of the Normal's new three-year English Course (which included two years of high school work). It was not renewable except upon a showing of the completion of advanced studies.

In 1897, the legislature authorized the State Board to issue a two-year certificate valid only for teaching in a one-room rural school. It was based on the training requirements for the Third Grade county certificate, plus professional training as might be prescribed by the Board.

In 1903, two three-year certificates were authorized by the Board. One, the Graded School Certificate, was valid for grades one through nine; the other, the Rural School Certificate, was valid in rural school with not more than two teachers. The Graded School Certificate was based on graduation from a good high school plus completion of a professional course at the Normal extending over 42 weeks. The Rural School Certificate required completion of a program at the Normal extending through seven terms of 12 weeks each. This time could be shortened to three terms by showing credits for corresponding studies completed in high school and experience in teaching. Both certificates were conferred by the Board on the rec-

ommendation of the principal of the Normal and a majority of department heads.

In 1927, the three-year Rural Certificate was revised to require more college-grade credit and a year and a summer of work at the Normal instead of one year. At the same time, the three-year Graded School Certificate appears to have been dropped in favor of the five-year certificate mentioned earlier. The five-year certificate was upgraded, requiring two years of college-level work rather than only one, and was valid for rural schools and graded schools through the eighth grade.

Specialized Life Certificates

In 1901, the State Superintendent was authorized to endorse state-wide certificates in certain specialized areas—kindergarten, music, and drawing. This was supplemented in 1905 to authorize the granting of special certificates for these areas, and enlarged in 1915 by the inclusion of domestic science, manual training, and physical training.

Beginning about 1917, and varying in number from year to year, other specialized forms of the certificate appeared. Thus, from 1917 to 1920, Life Certificates were issued in physical education, commercial work, kindergarten-primary (kindergarten and the first three grades), and supervision and critic teaching. To these were added primary grades (the first three grades), public school music and drawing, teaching in the intermediate grades (grammar grades) in the rural school, and in special education (the broad area of handicapped children). From 1920 to 1925 appeared additional certificates called high school and departmental, drawing, commercial art, fine arts, music and fine arts, early elementary, industrial arts, public school music and art. From 1925 to 1930 appeared public school piano, agriculture, junior high school, and later elementary (grades five through eight). One, titled "Supervision and Teacher Training," listed among desirable talents the "ability to drive a Ford car, operate a typewriter, and lead community singing." There was also a certificate in business administration. The years 1930 to 1936 saw the appearance of certificates for senior high school (grades ten through twelve), administrators and supervisors of schools, and administrators and supervisors of schools, rural communities.

A teacher certification code was at last adopted in 1936. Some fif-

teen different kinds of certificates were then in existence, including those issued by the University of Michigan and the Detroit Board of Education. The new code was to be administered by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. It reduced the number of different certificates to three.

Two introduced the new provisional-permanent concept which provided that the candidate, upon qualifying for the certificate, could be granted a limited certificate good for five years. If, in that period, he could show at least three years of successful teaching and ten additional semester hours of college credit, he would be granted the permanent certificate. Upon receipt of the permanent certificate, he still had to teach at least 100 days in a five-year period or lose his license, which could be renewed only by an application showing that he had earned another ten hours of credit. One form of the provisional-permanent certificate was for elementary teachers, the other for secondary.

A third type of certificate was designated the State Limited Certificate. It required two years of college work, including a certain amount of professional training, and was valid for five years for teaching in rural schools. Renewals were based on additional college credit and were designed to lead ultimately to a college degree and a provisional-permanent certificate. This enabled many young people to teach for a living and, in summer sessions and off-campus classes, to complete their education and training. Need for this certificate diminished over the years and the State Limited Certificate was discontinued in 1960.

Thus, over a century and a third, authority for granting teaching certificates moved to a highly centralized authority and control. In that time, teacher preparation became an important function of universities and colleges, both public and private, and the Normal School evolved through college to university status. Conflicts of opinion over certification have advanced from questions of form and location of authority to questions of content.

Diplomas and Degrees

Until 1960, it was possible for a student to earn some kind of teaching certificate without graduating from college. Those who graduated from the Normal received special recognition in the form first of a certificate, then a diploma and, after 1889, a degree. After

1903, the degree became the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science in Education. The academic content was equivalent to that of the bachelor degree in the better colleges.

Course content and quality had varied over years. Deficient preparation in high schools had made it necessary to provide much of the instruction that should have been given before the student arrived at the Normal College. One comment on the quality of work was made by the Board of Visitors in 1878, when they observed that "the Normal School was more like an excellent academy, with some excellent instruction given in pedagogics and the science of education, than a Normal School proper."³

However, the Normal was by 1890 conferring its first degrees—Bachelor of Pedagogics (B.Pd.). Requirements were the holding of a Life Certificate plus two years of college work. Since the Life Certificate was granted on completion of a course that demanded two years of college work beyond a four-year high school, this was a four-year college degree. The only person to receive the degree in 1890 was William H. Brooks. Several faculty members received the degree in 1891 and 1892.⁴ The Master of Pedagogics (M.Pd.) was also initiated and granted in 1890, and represented the Normal's first venture in graduate work.

Daniel Putnam, writing in 1899, commented on the degrees:

The specific conditions upon which these degrees are given are not yet permanently settled, but are modified, from time to time, as experience suggests. It is intended, however, that the degree of Bachelor of Pedagogics shall indicate scholarship equal to that required for the degree of BA from a reputable college; and the degree of Master of Pedagogics shall indicate, in addition to the scholarship just mentioned, that the person receiving has been engaged in teaching or in school supervision continuously and with pronounced success for at least five years since receiving the Bachelor's degree; and has prepared and presented a thesis acceptable to the Faculty of the school upon some subject connected with the history, science, or art of education.⁵

In 1902, the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Pedagogy (later referred to as the Bachelor of Arts in Education) was adopted. This degree was described as requiring the B.Pd. plus one additional year of college work. This, in effect, transformed the B.Pd. to a three-year degree, based on what became known as the "junior degree course" and procurable for one year of college work beyond the Life Certificate.

In 1917, the degree of Bachelor of Science in Education was adopted. It applied to the specialized curriculum of Household Arts. In 1918, both degrees dropped the modifying "education" and became simply AB and BS degrees.

The M.Pd. degree was officially adopted as an honorary degree in 1920. The names of faculty members and others on the list of recipients would suggest, however, that from the first it had been used as an honorary as well as an earned degree. In 1922, the honorary degree was designated as Master of Education.

In 1941, the college presented a vocational curriculum known as Occupational Therapy, offering a certificate to accompany the BS degree. In 1949, a certificate for directors of Teachers of Recreation was also offered. In 1957, two undergraduate specialized degrees were offered—Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Bachelor of Music Education.

* * *

The story of the teaching certificate in Michigan scarcely inspires enthusiasm. For nearly a third of a century the State's authority to certify teachers was delegated largely to local political bodies, oscillating between the township and the county. There were thus as many different standards for qualifying as there were townships and counties, and the judgment of the institution that prepared the candidates might or might not enter into the decision. A variety of state-wide certificates, most of which pertained to teaching in the rural schools, appeared. But nearly a century had passed before a state-wide authority was given exclusive control. When, in 1935, the State Board was given this responsibility, some fifteen varieties of local certification existed. To state it another way, not until 1935 were there educational vision and leadership, and climate, adequate to make an issue of a very bad situation and find a remedy. One naturally is inclined to raise the question as to why it took so long to accomplish the obvious; why a recommendation by the State Superintendent in 1878 was not fully implemented until 1936, some 58 years later. In the answer lies the story of the democratic process, beset by narrow interests and local prejudice, reaching an apogee of confusion, and, out of strong reaction to incompetence, rising at last to face the issue and resolve the problem.

The story of the degrees, on the other hand, portrays a trend that was consistent, and which led Normal from the status of school to

college to university. This trend is the more noteworthy in that it occurred in the face of strong, sometimes bitter, opposition from those within its own ranks who wished to make the professional education program primary if not exclusive. Much of this development was due to the demands from the high schools, which grew rapidly both in quality and number. As early as 1889, a degree was offered which purported to be the equal of a degree from any reputable four-year college. From 1903, a degree from Normal was legally recognized as such.

The North Central Association

In 1928 Normal, along with the other three Michigan normal colleges, was finally included in the approved list of "Accredited Institutions of Higher Education" by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The story behind this event is of particular interest in that Normal had played a role in the founding of North Central some 34 years earlier.

On December 1, 1894, the Michigan Schoolmasters Club (an organization representative of university and college presidents, school superintendents, high school principals and teachers, whose primary objective was "the establishment and perpetuation of cordial relationships among all educational forces within the commonwealth"), meeting at the Normal, adopted a resolution to ask the presidents of the University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin, Northwestern University, and the University of Chicago to unite with a committee of the Schoolmasters Club in calling a meeting to form an association that would represent the North Central States.

Action on this resolution was prompt, and within the month a letter was posted to representatives of colleges and secondary schools in 10 states inviting them to attend a meeting to be held in March at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. The purpose would be "to organize, if deemed expedient, an association of colleges and secondary schools of the North-Central States, representative of universities, colleges, scientific schools, normal schools, high schools, and academies."

This letter was signed by the presidents of the four universities named above, the principal of Grand Rapids High School, by William Butts (with whom the idea had originated), Principal of the Michigan Military Academy, and by Richard G. Boone, Principal

of Michigan State Normal School. The convention was held as planned. A constitution was drafted and membership defined as consisting of colleges, universities, and secondary schools (normal schools were looked upon as secondary schools), together with such individuals as might be nominated by the executive committee and elected by the Association. The first president was James B. Angell, President of the University of Michigan.

At this point a mystery takes shape. Boone was not present at the Evanston convention and Normal thus lost the opportunity to be designated as a charter member.⁶ The first annual meeting, held in 1896, approved the first list of members, and on this list Normal appeared as a secondary school. It was so listed for the remaining years of Boone's administration (through 1899). From 1900 to 1915, however, which included the Leonard-Lyman and the Jones administrations, Normal was absent from the list. During the ten years of the Jones administration (1902–1912), he was listed as an individual member, and for the year 1905–1906 he was named as a vice-president from Michigan. But Normal did not hold an institutional membership, and Jones attended the annual meetings on only three occasions.⁷ During these same years, as we have seen, he was active with the North Central Council of State Normal School Presidents.

This delay in recognition, extending as it did through four administrations, derived from the haughty attitude of the universities (who controlled North Central policy from the first) towards normal schools—an attitude less seemly in the University of Michigan which, by its close proximity, was in a position to know the developments at its sister institution in Ypsilanti and which, furthermore, had shown a pioneering concern for the training of teachers. The general mood of the universities of the time was, however, to prevent teachers colleges from training high school teachers.

By legislative authority of 1889, Normal had begun in 1890 to grant a bachelor's degree (Bachelor of Pedagogics) based on four years of college-grade work. In 1893, in a detailed brochure prepared for circulation at the Columbian Exposition of Chicago in that year, Normal had stated that its function was to prepare teachers both academically and professionally for both primary and secondary schools. It listed courses in the fields of mathematics, history, English, physical science, natural science, Latin and Greek, French and German, and psychology and pedagogics that were of college grade and would support a program typical of liberal arts colleges leading to the bachelor's degree.⁸

When, in 1913, the Association published its first list of accredited institutions of higher education, normal schools (and colleges) were designated as "unclassified institutions." The resulting dissatisfaction, however, prompted what proved to be a temporary concession. At the 1914 meeting of the Association action was taken to replace the title "Colleges and Universities" with "Higher Institutions", and include in this listing some normal schools and junior colleges. This was effective in 1915. Normal's McKenny acted promptly, and secured accreditation for Normal (which was tantamount to membership in the Association).

But this arrangement lasted only two years. In 1917, a new category was added, called "Institutions Primarily for the Training of Teachers," and here the name of Michigan State Normal College (together with the other three normal colleges of the State) went. The action that established this in-between category did not resolve the issue, however.

The dispute within the Association continued for another decade. Finally, in 1928, the Association acted to discontinue the in-between category. It decided to broaden the list of colleges and universities to include a variety of institutions of higher education. This was to become effective as of 1931, but the four Michigan Normals were made an exception and placed at once in the category of "Colleges and Universities."⁹

The record of Normal's membership in the North Central Association is thus a curious one. Normal was host to the Michigan Schoolmasters Club meeting from which came the initial impulse for the formation of such an organization. Normal's principal, Richard G. Boone, signed the letter sent to representative colleges and schools in the North Central states calling for an organization meeting to be held in Evanston.

Through the failure of Boone to attend the organization meeting at Evanston, Normal did not show as a charter member,¹⁰ but it appeared in the first membership list (as a secondary school), and retained this membership through 1899 (i.e. through the Boone administration). From then it was not a member until McKenny restored it in 1915. For two years it was listed with the higher education institutions, then shunted to the in-between category where it remained until 1928. From that time, its true status has been recognized.