THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PEABODY EDUCATION FUND
TO THE
DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN FLORIDA
1867-1900

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Since the years immediately following the Civil War the name of Peabody has been closely associated with the improvement of education in the South. George Peabody, a New England industrialist and philanthropist, established the Peabody Education Fund (1) in 1867 to aid a land ravaged by war to rebuild through the development of its greatest resource, its youth. Compelled to leave school at age twelve and keenly aware of his lack of formal education, he believed that the best way to aid the South was to assist in the development of public schools, free and open to all. Though his stated purpose was to assist the destitute South through education, his writings and remarks indicate a deeper objective: that of bringing harmony and understanding to his beloved country, cleaved by hatred and fear following in the wake of the war.

George Peabody had desired that his gift benefit education both in the South and in the southwestern states; but recognizing that he could not foresee future conditions, he left to the discretion of the trustees (2) the terms upon which the fund was to be distributed, and the aspects of education which would be encouraged most at any given time (3). However, he lived for about two years after setting up the fund and worked closely with the trustees in the preliminary planning; so it is likely that his ideas influenced the order in which the objects of the fund were emphasized and the terms upon which aid was given.

At the third meeting of the trustees on March 20, 1867, the objectives of the fund were made clearer through the adoption of the following resolutions:

Resolved: - That for the present, the promotion of Primary or Common School Education, by such means or agencies as now exist or may need to be created, be the leading object of the Board in the use of the Fund placed at its disposal.

Resolved: - That in aid of the above general design and as promotive of same, the board will have in view the furtherance of Normal School Education for the preparation of teachers, as well as the endowment of scholarships in existing Southern institutions as by the establishing of Normal Schools and the aiding of such Normal Schools as
may now be in operation in the Southern and Southwestern states, including such measures as may be feasible and experience shall dictate to be expedient, for the promotion of education in the application of Science to the industrial pursuits of human life (4).

In carrying out these purposes the self-perpetuating board of trustees met annually for over forty years to hear reports of the general agents (5) of the fund and to plan for its effective use.

The first general agent, Barnas Sears, in 1869 presented to the board suggestions to be used as a guide in the distribution of funds:

1. That in promoting "Primary or Common School Education" we confine ourselves, as far as possible, to Public Schools.

2. Instead of supporting small schools in the country, or helping to support them by paying the tuition for poor children, we limit ourselves to rendering aid to schools where large numbers can be gathered, and where a model system of schools can be organized.

3. That, other things being equal, we give preference to places which will, by their example, exert the widest influences upon the surrounding country.

4. That we aim at the power and efficacy of a limited number of such schools in a given locality rather than at the multiplication of schools languishing for want of sufficient support.

5. That we make efforts in all suitable ways to improve State systems of Education to act through their organs, and to make use of their machinery wherever they are proffered to us.

6. That we use our influence in favor of State Normal Schools, on account of their superior excellence over Normal Departments in Colleges and Academies, which will be overshadowed by the literary and scientific departments, and fail to win the regards and excite the enthusiasm of students or interest of the general public.

7. That we give special attention to the training of female teachers for Primary Schools, rather than to the general culture of young men in Colleges, who will be likely to teach in the higher schools for the benefit of the few.
8. That, in the preparation of colored teachers, we encourage their attendance at colored Normal Schools, and, only in exceptional cases, at other Institutions which attempt to give normal instructions.

9. That we favor the appointment and support of State Superintendents, the formation of State Associations of Teachers, and the publication of periodicals for the improvement of teachers, and where it shall be necessary, contribute moderate amounts in aid of these objects (6).

These suggestions became the policies which guided the work of the board in subsequent years.

Early it was recognized that a competent administrator, well acquainted with the educational needs and problems in the United States, especially in the South, and sympathetic to and acceptable by southern people must be found. Barnas Sears, the first executive secretary, not only possessed these qualifications, but also was meticulous by temperament and unceasing in his efforts to work with local citizens to encourage the development of public schools.

Thus was set up the administrative machinery necessary to the fruitful employment of the fund to improve education in the South: a board of trustees was appointed; policies were adopted; and an executive secretary was appointed.

In consistency with the objectives and policies of the fund, Sears first turned his efforts toward the promotion of education through improving the public schools. These efforts went to develop in selected centers graded schools which were called "model" schools. In this endeavor his goals were to build among the citizens a belief in public schools and to encourage them to levy taxes for the adequate support of public education. Later the fund was employed to develop education by the upgrading of teachers through the awarding of scholarships and through assistance to normal schools, to "Peabody" summer schools, to summer institutes, and to the state superintendents.

In order to use funds effectively for the first purpose, the encouragement of public support of the common schools, it was essential for Sears to travel throughout the South learning first-hand of the conditions of such schools as existed, meeting with civic leaders, encouraging the establishment of public schools, and fostering interest in public support of schools. In 1867, he had made his first trip to the state, visiting the towns which had set up stable governments and which were large enough to support schools. His report of January 21, 1868, includes this statement relative to Florida:
In this state which is very backward in education there are no schools in rural districts. In all the Peninsula south of St. Augustine, there are no schools of importance, except Gainesville, on the railroad to Cedar Keys, which has a boarding school. East of the St. John's River there can be no school except at St. Augustine, the only healthy place in that vicinity and the only town of importance. Scholars would come in here from a distance of thirty miles if there were a good school. On the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad crossing the widest part of Florida on the north there might be public schools at Fernandina, Jacksonville, Lake City, Madison, Monticello, Tallahassee, Quincy, and Marianna; also at Appalacheeola and Pensacola on the coast. There are private schools at four or five of these places (7).

Below are summarized Sears' judgments regarding the status of education in these communities made at the time of his first visit to Florida and the propositions made to each in connection with grants from Peabody fund (8). In Jacksonville where several families were considering sending their children north to school or moving there so their children might receive education, his suggestion that if a few families paid the cost of sending their children away ($500-$800 per year) the amount would support a public school, was accepted. The people agreed to pay a sum of three thousand dollars to which the trustees of the fund added one thousand. In St. Augustine, where the only education was that provided by Catholic nuns and priests, a general meeting was held when several prominent citizens recommended the establishing of a free school supported by taxes, it was decided to raise fifteen hundred dollars by subscription to be added to the thousand dollars granted by the Peabody fund for a public school.

As he traveled westward in north Florida, Sears stopped in the principal towns, encouraging interest in support of public schools by offering grants from the fund upon agreement of the local citizens to aid in their support. In both Lake City and Madison he offered five hundred dollars if the residents would convert the existing private schools to public schools. In Monticello seven hundred dollars was promised if free schools were provided for all white children. Tallahassee was promised one thousand dollars if the two academies, one for boys, the other for girls, should be made free. Five hundred dollars was promised Quincy if their private academy were made a free school, including the English branches. A similar proposition was made to Marianna. The mayor of Appalacheeola, a coast town more poverty-stricken than most communities, was given five hundred dollars upon agreeing that all children have access to the school. During this trip, the first of many made to Florida to encourage the development of common schools, Sears put in to practice the belief of the trustees that the best way to promote a school
system was to send, as "educational missionary", aid to those willing to help themselves and to provide information and wise judgment regarding the work of education (9). As he wrote the state superintendent:

Our policy is to aid and encourage free public schools in those towns which are central and influential. We wish to have good models, which shall stimulate other towns, and teach by example. We cannot give charitable aid to all the feeble rural districts: our fund would be insufficient for that. The amount divided among so many would be very insignificant--hardly worth asking for. I wish all the towns which we assist to come into the State system of common schools, if possible (10).

No aid was given to colleges, to academies, or to private, sectarian, or charity schools. The scale of grants to public free schools, where attendance averaged 85 per cent, was as follows: 100 pupils enrolled, $300; 150 pupils, $450; 200 pupils, $600; 250 pupils, $800; and 300 pupils, $1000. In each instance the local residents agreed to pay at least twice the amount granted by the trustees, and in addition to furnish the school building. All schools receiving aid were required to be graded and to provide a teacher for each fifty pupils. The rates for Negro schools were two-thirds of those for whites (11).

Typical of the aid given common schools during the first period of the administration of the fund were the grants made to communities in 1873, the sum provided for common schools in this year being exceeded only in 1874 when Florida received $10,200. The table below lists the towns aided in 1873 and the amounts granted to each (12):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacksonville</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Augustine</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainesville</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key West</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallahassee</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensacola</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Oak</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake City</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monticello</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampa</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocala (colored)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quincy (colored)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appalachicola (colored)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,800</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1867, several publishers of educational materials had offered free textbooks, both for pupils and for teachers, an offer accepted by the trustees. However, the general agent reported serious difficulties in regard to their distribution: the clamor from many schools and districts, the expense of transportation, and the lack of time to investigate the need (13). Books worth about two hundred dollars had been procured for schools under the Freedman's Bureau from the Peabody Fund and given to indigent children in Florida by July 1, 1869 (14).
As shown above the Peabody Fund during its early years under the direction of Sears was utilized principally in efforts to enable the citizens of Florida further to establish and to develop a system of common schools. In this period, 1867-1877, the graded schools aided by the Peabody Fund served the remainder of the state as examples of desirable institutions; meanwhile and were probably the chief sources of teachers for the public schools. Afterwards its use was turned largely to higher education and the education of teachers. In 1880, aid to public schools was discontinued, while normal schools were aided, summer institutes were financed, and teaching scholarships were granted to teachers and to those planning to teach. During the period from 1886 to 1893 Florida received no aid from the fund because the state had repudiated certain of its bonds included in Peabody's gift (15).

The program of scholarships for southern young men and women, planning to teach, was inaugurated in 1877-1878, during which year twenty scholarships were made available, two of them being awarded to residents of Florida. These grants of two hundred dollars each, which were known as Peabody scholarships, were used to aid teachers-to-be to attend the University of Nashville, later to be known as George Peabody College for Teachers. Between 1877 and 1900 it appears that a total of sixty-five students were granted such assistance (16). Normally the term of the grant was two years, but only forty-seven of the Florida scholars held scholarships for this period. Appointment was based upon competitive examinations, recipients being expected to teach one year in the public schools of the state for each year that the scholarship was held. These regulations were later altered so that a student already pursuing work successfully at Peabody college was given first consideration.

Below are listed the scholarship holders, together with specific information about each, including residence when granted the scholarship, the years when the scholarship was held, degrees received from the George Peabody College for Teachers or its predecessor, if any (17):

1. Adams, Thomas Birchum, Ashville, Hamilton County; 1896-1900; L.I., A.B. (1902)

2. Allison, Humphrey D., residence unknown; 1883-1885 (Left during the year, 1884-1885)

3. Allison, Monroe C., residence unknown; 1881-1882

4. Armour, Mary Julie (Mrs. John Pike), Welborn (Wellborn), Suwannee County; 1879-1881; L.I.

5. Bache, Charles Walton, Live Oak; 1880-1881
6. Bachman, Ethel C., Williston, Alachua County; 1892-1894; L.I.

7. Baker, Mary Elizabeth (Lizzie) (Mrs. Charles D. Benedict), West Wynnton, Calhoun County; 1879-1881; L.I.

8. Bennett, Henry Eastman, Okahumpka, Lake County; 1894-1896; L.I.


10. Bower, Halcia Eulalia, Hermitage, Gadsden County; 1898-1899, L.I.

11. Bruce, Daisey Hunt, residence unknown; 1892-1894

12. Campbell, Charles, Mt. Pleasant, Gadsden County; 1896-1898; L.I.

13. Carn, Ettie Leona, (Mrs. Will Roberts), Centerville, Leon County; 1899-1900; L.I.

14. Carney, Mary Decosta, residence unknown; 1897-1898

15. Cawthon, William Stanmore, St. Augustine; 1899-1900

16. Chapman, John Cecil, Plymouth, Orange County; 1897-1899

17. Chapman, Mattie Pauline, Plymouth, Orange County; 1895-1897; L.I.

18. Cone, John L., Benton, Hamilton County; 1883-1884

19. Emerson, Alice, Jacksonville; 1882-1884; L. I.

20. Erwin, John Marcus Ferdinand, Greenwood, Jackson County; 1881-1883; L.I.

21. Erwin, Sallie Baker (Mrs. Thomas W. Fenner) Marianna, Jackson County; 1877-1879; L.I.

22. Fouts, Jesse Jonathan, Wilderness, Clay County; 1881-1883; L.I.

23. Grace, Lloyd Averett, residence unknown; 1899-1900 (Also attended 1900-1901)

24. Graham, Harry Edmund (Harrie E.), Manatee, Manatee County 1884-1886; L.I.
25. Graham, John Alexander, Manatee, Manatee County 1881-1882; 1883-1884; L.I.

26. Gray, Jennie Bentham, Rockledge, Brevard County; 1892-1893; L.I.

27. Griffin, Aosta Louise, Anthony, Marion County; 1895-1897

28. Griffin, Sara Donella (Donnie), Anthony, Marion County 1892-1893; 1894-1895; L.I., A.B. (1896)

29. Hall, Willis Washington, Melrose, Alachua County; 1894-1896, L.I.

30. Harris, Isaac Leonard, Appalachicola, Franklin County; 1879-1881; L.I.

31. Jackson, Festus S., Taylor County; 1892-1893

32. Kellum, John Gabriel, Bradford County; 1894-1895

33. Linn, Bessie, Tallahassee; 1884-1886, L.I.

34. Maxwell, Evelyn Croom, Pensacola; 1880-1882, L.I.

35. Miller, Claudia Stevens, Lake City; 1896-1898; L.I.

36. Mountien, Loren E. (C.), residence unknown; 1892-1894

37. Myers, Willis McCall, Gainesville; 1884 - 1886 (Left during the year 1885-1886)

38. McFarlan, John L., Jr., Quincy; 1881-1882

39. McIlvaine, Florence Vestina, Cedar Keys; 1879-1881; L.I.

40. Oliver, Edna E., residence unknown; 1892-1894

41. Palmer, Flossie (Florence) Louise, Gainesville; 1895-1897

42. Palmer, James Holland, Gainesville; 1894-1896; L.I., A.B. (1898)

43. Payne, Minnie Cornelia, Marion County; 1892-1893, 1894-1895

44. Peeler, Charlie Birl, Gainesville; 1893-1895; L.I.
45. Pittman, J. W., Quincy; 1884-1886; (Left during year, 1885-1886)

46. Prevatt, Joseph Bry, residence unknown; 1898-1899

47. Quincey (Quincy), Hendricks Jennings, residence unknown; 1898-1899

48. Sheats, William Nicholas, Jr., Gainesville; 1897-1899

49. Shine, Charles Fort, Leon County; 1877-1879

50. Snell, Benton Solomon, Kissimmee; 1898-1900; L.I.

51. Sweat, Wisoca Cyrene, Starke; Bradford County; 1894-1896, L.I.

52. Tatum, Eugenia Cornelia, Oklocknee, Leon County; 1881-1883; L.I.

53. Taylor, Posey, Lloyd, Leon County; 1895-1897; L.I.

54. Terry, Katie Ines, Fort White, Columbia County; 1897-1900; L.I.

55. Thomas, George Marshall, residence unknown, 1896-1898

56. Thomas, William Ruben, Gainesville; 1885-1886 (Left during year, 1885-1886)

57. Van Brunt, Richard William, Tallahassee; 1896-1898; L.I.

58. Walton, Oscar Byrde, Bradford County; 1879-1881; L.I.

59. Watson, Alexander Morris (Alex M.), Manatee County; 1898-1900

60. Wauchope, Roberta Clayton (Bertha C.), residence unknown; 1879-1880, 1881-1882

61. Wauchope, Jessie B., Providence, Bradford County; 1883-1884

62. Whitfield, Hardy Croom, Tallahassee; 1881-1883; L.I.

63. Williams, Sophronia Patton (Mrs. R.C. Colbert), Alva, Lee County; 1899-1900, L.I. (1901)
64. Wilson, Irena Mary, residence unknown; 1892-1894

65. Wolfe, Joseph Emmett, Pensacola; 1879-1881; L.I.

Of the sixty-five scholarship holders listed above fifteen are known to have served education in some capacity for ten years or more; ten, from three to ten years; six, two years or less; and seven for an unknown period of time. According to available records, six never taught. No information was located about the teaching experience of the remaining twenty-one (18). Hence, at least thirty-eight or slightly more than half of the recipients taught, twenty-five of this number having taught longer than the two years required to fulfill the obligation incurred by their acceptance of the scholarships. Since a large proportion were in school work for a comparatively long period of time, it is evident that the scholarships were invaluable in preparing leaders for the schools of Florida.

Florida profited not only from the educational leadership of her citizens who were granted these scholarships; but also from the aid of those who held them when residing in other states and later moved to Florida. Among the latter were Albert A. Murphree, president, first of the Florida State College (now Florida State University), Tallahassee, and later of the University of Florida, Gainesville, and Wightman Fletcher Melton, one-time president of the Florida Methodist Conference Seminary (now Florida Southern College), Leesburg, both from Alabama; William Guy Davis, member of the faculties of the Florida State Normal, DeFuniak Springs, and Columbia College, Lake City, from West Virginia; and from Tennessee, John Hunter Workman, long a high school principal in Florida (19).

Though not through a direct grant, the state also gained from the services of educators attending the subsidized University of Nashville, but not holding scholarships. Included in this group were: Joseph Bryne Lockey, public school teacher and member of faculty of summer normal schools; Edwin Wallace McMullen on faculty of Florida Southern College; Pauline M. Reese, elementary school teacher and principal, Pensacola; Sallie Puleston, Monticello, and Estelle Leonard (Mrs. G.E. Muriel), Jacksonville, high school teachers with long service; and Rowena Longmire, member of the faculty of the Florida State College for Women (now Florida State University) (20).

The scholarships were of tremendous help in building a small corps of professional educators. Yet it was also necessary to improve the quality of teaching done by the mass of teachers if the standard of education in Florida was to be raised to any appreciable extent. The Fund, therefore, promoted in-service growth by support given to summer normals and county institutes and by gifts to the office of the state superintendent of schools. References to such gifts are found in the reports made during the eighties and nineties
by state school superintendents, by the general agents of the Pea-
body Fund, and by the United States Commissioners of Education.

This phase of the work of the Fund had its beginning during
the administration of Superintendent Haisley (1877-1881), when he
used for travel expense part of a sum given to his office. On his
trips throughout the state, one of his major purposes was organizing
and meeting with teacher institutes (21). From this early time sub-
sidies were granted the state for in-service education of teachers.
The summer normals and county institutes had a constant purpose, that
of creating a more effective teaching force, yet their character
changed through the intervening years, until in 1897 Superintendent
Sheats wrote that the proper term was not institutes, but "teacher
summer training schools." They had changed from short institutes
where teachers listened to lecturers to longer schools where the
procedures used included "actual recitations interlarded with lect-
ures and model lessons."

In 1897, the summer schools lasted from four to eight weeks.
There were eight schools for white teachers exclusively, three for
Negroes alone, and one for the instruction of both, in separate
departments. During this summer 713 Florida teachers, 365 white and
332 Negro, from thirty-nine counties were in attendance (22).

These summer schools had faculties comprised of leading teach-
ers from other states as well as from Florida. The aid from the
Fund to these schools was not only direct, in the form of financial
assistance, but also indirect, through membership on the faculties
of teachers who had attended the Peabody Normal School with the aid
of scholarships. Among the faculty from Florida who had held the
scholarships were H. E. Bennett, John A. Graham, C. B. Peeler, A.A.
Murphree, and W. S. Cawthon (23).

State Superintendent Sheats credited the Fund with elevating
"the standard for teaching by making teachers dissatisfied with a
low grade of scholarship and with knowing nothing about the science
of teaching." He gave the general agent and trustees of the Fund
full credit for being pioneers in the germination of the idea that
teaching is a profession and requires special preparation (24).
The gifts from the Fund and the conditions attendant upon their be-
ing granted were invaluable in influencing state appropriations for
such purposes.

Two major purposes of the Peabody Fund, with the means used in
Florida to attain them, have been discussed. The first of these
was the development and improvement of a system of public schools;
the second, the raising the quality of teachers. These two are so
interrelated that they are difficult to separate, yet the chief
means of achieving the first was financial aid to selected public
schools, those of attaining the second were granting Peabody schol-
arships to teachers and subsidies to summer normals and institutes.
The administration of schools also was strengthened by gifts made to the office of the state superintendents which enabled them to have clerical assistance and travel funds. More of their time and effort was then devoted to encouraging belief among the citizenry in tax-supported public schools, to working with county school boards and superintendents in developing such schools, and to developing programs for in-service education of teachers. Hence, it was possible for the superintendent to give less attention to clerical details and more to broad policy making.

The influence of the Peabody Education Fund in Florida has been far reaching. Its accomplishments were made possible by the attainments prior to 1860 of educational statesmen, such as David S. Walker, John Westcott, and Thomas Baitzell. Under the leadership of men like these the following were achieved: within six years after attaining statehood, Florida had enacted legislation setting up a state system of common schools and financing them; between 1851 and 1860 she had established such a school system; during this time also she made legal provision for and activated two seminaries of higher learning—one east, the other west of the Suwanee River. These gains were the foundations upon which the citizens of Florida, with the aid and encouragement of the trustees and general agent of the Fund, were able to continue the development of a state system of education (25).

The roots of the present-day Florida school system were richly nourished both by the direct financial assistance of the Fund and by its indirect influence. Development involved continuing to foster in the citizens a stronger faith in the value of education for all and a belief in the necessity of adequate support for schools. It necessitated supportive school legislation, strengthening the office of the state school superintendent, and developing a strong force of trained educational leaders so that quality schools might become a reality. During the years when the Fund was in operation these were accomplished to a certain extent. By the close of the nineteenth century, ideals which formerly had been held by only a few were supported by many. Florida citizens had recognized the need for an adequate system of public schools and had taken long steps in the direction of this goal.

Footnotes

1. In February, 1867, Peabody established a trust fund of one million dollars to be used for the encouragement of educational effort in the South and southwestern states, to which sum in July, 1869, he added another million. (Edgar W. Knight, Public School Education in North Carolina. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., p. 27)


4. Ibid., p. 13


6. Report of the General Agent of the Peabody Education Fund, from January 21, 1868, to July 1, 1869, pp. 15-16


8. Ibid., pp. 75-76


10. Ibid., p. 42

11. Proceedings, 1872, p. 15

12. Proceedings, 1873, p. 40

13. Proceedings, 1869, pp. 27-31, 63


15. The Weekly Floridan, Jan. 27, 1880; Jabez Lamar Munroe Curry, A Brief Sketch of George Peabody and a History of the Peabody
Education Fund through Thirty Years. Cambridge, Mass.: University Press, 1893, p. 145


17. Ibid.


23. Sheats, Biennial Report, 1900, pp. 127, 137

24. Sheats, Ibid., p. 134

25. Pyburn, op. cit., pp. 1-79