A history of education in Virginia

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A HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA

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THE FIRST STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
WHO LIT THE TORCH OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA

AND TO

JOSEPH D. EGGLESTON

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION FROM
1906–1913, WHO HELD THE TORCH HIGH UNTIL
ITS LIGHT PENETRATED THE REMOTEST
PARTS OF THE STATE
PREFACE

In the preparation of this volume, I have been actuated by a desire to make the history of Education in Virginia accessible to teachers and students, and to place it within the reach of all who have any wish to become acquainted with the story of the educational progress of the State.

It need not be said that it is impossible to describe within the limits of this volume the whole history of education in Virginia. Out of the mass of material which would have filled many volumes, the effort has been made to select only the essential facts and tell a brief story of the growth centering about these salient features.

Throughout the course of this book, I have tried to acknowledge in the text the valuable help I have received from numerous published works; but it gives me pleasure to record my
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special indebtedness to Dr. Lyon G. Tyler, President of William and Mary College, who supplied me with the valuable fruits of his own difficult and original research; to my wife, Sue Porter Heatwole, for a piece of research in the files of The Virginia Gazette; to Mr. E. G. Swem, of the Virginia State Library at Richmond, for courtesies in making available valuable documents; to President Joseph D. Eggleston, of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia, for suggestions and personal papers; to President Edwin A. Alderman, of the University of Virginia, for his sympathetic interest and timely suggestions; to Professor James C. Johnston, of the State Normal School, Harrisonburg, Virginia, who read the manuscript and offered suggestions as to its form; and to Doctor Paul Monroe, of Teachers College, New York, for his never failing interest, his scholarly and suggestive advice and criticism.

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INTRODUCTION

Life in colonial Virginia was more nearly a reproduction of English society than that in any other colony. In his famous sermon before Lord Delaware and his company on the eve of their departure for the colony, the Cambridge divine, Cranshaw, said, refuting the charge that the Virginia settlers were the offscouring of England—"They are like those left behind, even of all sorts better and worse." The Rev. Hugh Jones, writing in 1724 on "The Present State of Virginia," stated that the gentry "live in a neat manner, dress after the same modes and behave themselves exactly as the gentry in London." Even more to the point, so far as this study is concerned, is the famous reply of Governor Berkeley in 1671 to the inquiry of the home government as to the course taken concerning churches and schools. The
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governor replied, "The same course that is taken in England out of town; every man according to his ability instructing his children." Another portion of the testy old governor's reply, thanking God that there were no free schools or printing, is often quoted, but the really significant statement quoted above is seldom given.

Neither the efforts nor the needs of a sparsely settled frontier country, no matter how well-to-do the aristocratic class, could be expected to result in an extensive system of schools. The apprentice education for the laboring class confined to agriculture; tutorial education in the homes of the wealthy landed proprietors; endowed Latin grammar schools for youth aspiring to the professions; a university for the training of teachers in church and commonwealth—this was the plan of education evolved. It closely paralleled the educational scheme which sufficed in England until near the close of the nineteenth century.

For the first three quarters of a century of our national existence, Virginia's educational