

Teachers Tame the Prairie

Vignettes of Eastern Illinois University and Education in Illinois

Exhibit Narrative

The exhibit *Teachers Tame the Prairie: Vignettes of Eastern Illinois University and Education in Illinois* presents the story of teacher education as it came to be in our state. It honors both students and teachers as it looks at our schools and related issues over the past century. The intent is to place history within reach, to introduce or remind, to instruct and entertain.

One major constant in our society is that we have been schooled. It might have taken a different form from one individual to another, or from one community to another, but we all understand the relationship created among pupils, their teachers, and their school. What many people may not fully understand or even have thought much about, is how one becomes a teacher. What does it take to become well versed and practiced in the teaching profession?

Our presentation is divided into a few main units, including panel, window, and case displays. The west side of the Marvin Foyer addresses the path of the Eastern Illinois State Normal School as it developed into the Eastern Illinois University of today. Having as its focus the training of teachers, we salute the College of Education and Professional Studies and its impressive growth over the years. The east side of the Foyer presents the work of teachers as they embrace the profession and mold school life at all levels throughout Illinois.

The display windows and cases, as well as other related panels, are found on the perimeter of the Marvin Foyer and throughout the main level of Booth Library. A more detailed listing follows.

Marvin Foyer, East Side

The current exhibit focuses considerable attention upon the history of Eastern Illinois University, especially the training of teachers over the many decades since the school opened its doors to students in 1899. Established by the State Legislature as Eastern Illinois State Normal School, the institution evolved through several name changes, reflecting subtle or not-so-subtle changes in its purpose. At first the institution concentrated exclusively on preparing people to become teachers in the public elementary schools of the state. The prospective teachers were concerned with acquiring the pedagogical skills and the subject knowledge necessary for success as classroom educators. Graduates of Eastern at this early time (1899-1921) received diplomas or certificates—not academic degrees. From 1921-1947, the school was known as Eastern Illinois State Teachers College, and degrees were awarded for the first time—reflecting the desire of many students for greater specialization so as to be equipped for teaching at the secondary level, or even for moving into other fields.

From 1947-1957, the school was known as Eastern Illinois State College and was characterized by still greater specialization and proliferation of courses, with quite a few graduating students—including some World War II veterans—intent on pursuing careers other than in teaching. Eastern's first master's degrees were awarded during this time, but only in the field of education. From 1957 onward, the school was called Eastern Illinois University, and the possibilities for academic specialization proliferated. Master of arts and master of science degrees in a variety of disciplines began to be awarded, and the diverse institution as we know it today finally emerged and prospered.

Divided into the above time periods, the exhibit traces, first of all, the evolution of teacher training at Eastern—the coursework of the students, the establishment and growth of student teaching and other practical experiences, and the trend toward ever greater specialization and longer periods of study for prospective teachers. Depicted also in the exhibit is the physical transformation of the campus over the years—starting from one major structure in 1899, to the 30-plus buildings of today. Also, the exhibit examines some of the academic changes which occurred at Eastern in response to societal needs for more highly qualified teachers and other professionals, and to student needs for more diverse course offerings and degree options.

The exhibit portrays, as well, the social, athletic and cultural lives of the students over the decades—activities which helped to enrich their lives and make them well-rounded professionals and citizens. The exhibit focuses, also, upon some of the personalities who contributed most to establishing the school's character—the presidents, administrators, educators, coaches, and others who forged the school into the multi-faceted institution that we know today. The exhibit highlights some of the memorable events that took place over the years at Eastern—the

anniversaries that were celebrated, the buildings that were dedicated, the celebrities who visited campus, the institutional response to war, and other happenings that made headlines. It is hoped that viewers of this exhibit will glean a sense of Eastern Illinois University's tremendous impact upon the students, the teachers, and the citizenry of Illinois.

The history of the College of Education and Professional Studies is represented by images in the evolution of the departments within the college and the various name changes required to keep the programs of education current since Eastern's founding. With President Lord at the helm for so many generations of students, the need for departments, deans, and chairs, was delayed until the mid-1930s. The exhibit lists educational leaders who were instrumental in developing and administering the disciplines over the century, including our current dean of the college, Dr. Diane Jackman.

Particular attention is given to the use of the Training School and the Model Teacher School, as well as the expanding role of the practice teachers and their supervisors after the closing of the laboratory school. Images depicting the variety of student organizations, service projects, and hard-working student teachers portray the vibrant energy always critical for successful teaching and learning.

The "We are EIU!" panels feature current faces and icons of our University. Far from comprehensive in scope, one cannot but imagine these people multiplied by thousands, the programs times hundreds, the teaching moments endless. Nothing can represent us adequately... but you get the picture.

Marvin Foyer, West side

Eastern Illinois University graduates hundreds of teachers annually. Many of them begin their careers within the public and private schools of Illinois, and often spend many years influencing the youngsters and college students in classrooms throughout the state and beyond. Our exhibit looks at the typical experiences of both teacher and pupil in the elementary, middle level, and high schools of Illinois.

Higher education in Illinois is represented by looking back at the Normal Schools (both public and private) and their development, other state-supported colleges and universities, and private colleges and universities, among others. A brief look at where to study the professions is provided, as well as a historical peek at what institutions were available around 1910 to attract students as well as provide places to teach.

Following the circuit, you will find images of the whimsy of student life at the University. Although much of a student's life revolves around their studies and professional growth, there is always time to have fun, be a free spirit, express yourself, and grow up. Each decade has had its themes, but they always include romance, music, sport, and school spirit.

Next in the exhibit, schoolhouse design and the role of architecture in education is explored and visualized through photos, blueprints, postcards, and cartoons. The nineteenth century witnessed the evolution of the school from a place of shelter to an environment conducive to learning. One-room log structures were replaced by well-built buildings, with a greater attention to the quality of the materials, functionality, and aesthetics. By the end of the century, simplicity in design was replaced with exuberance, and schools such as Joliet Township High School (1901) came to symbolize civic virtue and pride.

School architecture became increasingly centralized and standardized in the twentieth century in response to changing demographics, economic pressures, and emerging educational philosophies. Crow Island School (1940) in Winnetka is considered to be among the first “modern” schools in the country. It was among the first schools designed collaboratively between architects and educators, and among the first to be designed to support a teaching methodology. An explosion in school construction in the 1940s was followed by unprecedented school consolidation in Illinois in the 1950s, which still continues today.

The exhibit features a variety of schools—rural and urban, public and private, old and new—located throughout Illinois. The exhibit also includes a timeline highlighting significant events which impacted and shaped public school education. Special focus is given to the topics of school transportation, health and safety, technology, and the school hot lunch program.



Pioneering Midwest Teachers and The Teacher of Today

The North Lobby displays portray the life of nineteenth and early twentieth century one-room school teachers as contrasted with the life, achievements, and opportunities of teachers today. Images and statistics illustrate both the benefits and the hardships posed to early teachers. The *Teachers of Today* display highlights some of Eastern Illinois University's outstanding education graduates, as well as some of the advantages of choosing a career in education in the twenty-first century.

Carl Lorber, Pamela Ortega, and Jeanne Goble, curators (North Lobby)



Eastern Through the Years

Coleman, Taylor, Thomas, and Booth are common names at Eastern Illinois University, but did you know they are also names of past faculty members? "Eastern Through the Years" displays photographs of early Eastern educators which will give you a face to associate with the faculty honored by campus buildings bearing their names. Here you can see a student activity admission ticket book, the trousers of Burl Ives from his 1976 visit to campus, and faculty publications relating to educational issues and methods, dating back to 1906.

Robert Hillman, curator (Marvin Foyer)



Legislation, Accreditation, and Teacher Certification

Federal legislation for education can be traced back to our country's earliest days. Many landmark decisions, which are highlighted in these exhibit windows, have affected all areas of school life and administration, from school lunch and equality in sports, to the certification of those qualified to teach our students. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and its associated organizations are also showcased in this exhibit. NCATE is the major organization that determines whether a teacher education program is of high quality and if it is providing the kind of education to its students that will produce high quality pre-kindergarten through grade 12 teachers.



Ann Brownson and Pamela Ortega, curators (Marvin Foyer)

Eastern Related Memorabilia



With materials drawn largely from University Archives and Special Collections, this exhibit depicts aspects of Eastern Illinois University's eventful history. Included in the exhibit are athletic uniforms, historic documents and books, paintings and photographs, architectural artifacts, a collection of historic tableware, and various interesting souvenir items.

Allen Lanham and Robert Hillman, curators (Marvin Foyer)

Education in Charleston: a Townie View



Here we place items loaned by local residents to Booth Library, specifically for this exhibit. From the picture (loaned by Jean Moody) of the 1922 graduating class of the Charleston Sanitarium Training School for Nurses (now the Hour House on North Division Street) to the photo of the Lounge Lizards, Eastern's own 1947 barbershop quartet, including Earl Snearley, Jr. (Peggy Manley's father), a variety of items will lead you to yet another story of Eastern. The Teachers College High School cheerleading letter and class photo is courtesy of Maxine Walls Clayton. How about those early Eastern grade cards (loaned by Suellyn Garner) signed by famous professors? Did I see McAfee, Metter, Booth, and Klehm among them?

Allen Lanham, curator (Marvin Foyer)

The Teacher's Desk



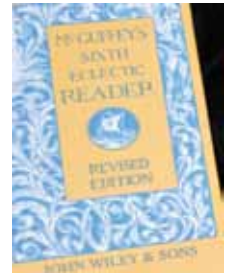
What would you expect to find on a teacher's desk in the 1930s? Papers, pens, pictures, books, keepsakes, and an apple would be good guesses. However, your list would be incomplete. Come and find other objects placed here to tickle your imagination, or swat another part of your body.

Marlene Slough and Allen Lanham, curators (Marvin Foyer)

School Books for Illinois

This exhibit presents the Eclectic Series of early curricular textbooks adopted in Illinois and thought to be the finest teaching materials in America. Materials include: *McGuffey's New Series of Readers, Speakers, and Speller*; *Ray's Arithmetics and Algebras*; and *Pinneo's Grammars*.

Marlene Slough, curator (Marvin Foyer)



Teachers Portrayed in the Media

Saturday Evening Post cover art often were nostalgic in depicting teachers and school days. Television and movie teacher depictions generated a variety of love-hate responses with viewers. Whereas some images evoke laughter, others were noted as gritty or urban in theme. What made “School Days” memories full of “Glee” or pain? Catch a glimpse.

Jeanne Goble, curator (Marvin Foyer and Reference Hallway)



Tools of the Trade

This case overflows with items from various rooms of the school, some left behind by the scholar, some by the janitor, others needed by the secretary or the teacher. Some tools remind us of early class instruction at Eastern for high school teachers in home economics and vocational trades.

Allen Lanham, curator (Marvin Foyer)



School Discipline: Effects of Societal Influences

This poster exhibit documents the changes in educators' approach to discipline as defined by society's influences on acceptable practices. Requiring strong leadership, pressure from reformers, and, in some instances, involvement by the Supreme Court, the philosophy of student discipline in classrooms across the United States has been slow to change. Ideas for alternative methods of classroom discipline are also explored.

Peggy Manley, curator (Marvin Foyer)



A Student's Closet



Memorabilia from grade school is featured in this window exhibit. From the toys of childhood to the graduation robe, items found here could still be in their closet as any student heads off to college. The impact of school in a child's life is far-reaching, and displayed here are some favorite souvenirs: the sports medals and trophies, the perfect attendance certificates, hobby items saved for "show and tell" sessions, and marbles that got boys in trouble in math class, among others. Hasn't every child played school at home, with the teacher being extra strict?

Allen Lanham and Stacey Knight-Davis, curators (Marvin Foyer)

Commemorative Items from Illinois Higher Education



Souvenir plates and other objects depicting images from Illinois colleges and universities grace this display case. The existence of such items underscores the importance of these institutions in the lives of many. School spirit and family pride may be built in a few short years, but last generations.

Allen Lanham, curator (Marvin Foyer)

End of School Year Souvenirs



This case highlights school mementoes collected by students each year just before summer vacation. Medals of all kinds, report cards, graduation honor cords, invitations to social events and ceremonies, club pins, and a few class pictures are included.

Featured are some of the fancy cards presented by the one-room school teacher to his or her students as a keepsake in the early 20th century. These are from the collection of Dr. William A. Smith, professor emeritus of recreation administration.

Allen Lanham and Marlene Slough, curators (Marvin Foyer)