

the earliest history of some of the New England Colonies. The labor would not be fruitless, if we should mark distinctly the gradual growth, during the two hundred years, of what is really the American system of schools, and notice in what communities, and under what variety of circumstances, it has attained its present form and strength. But my purpose does not lead me in that direction.

As might be expected, our first schools were opened in private families, and the task of hiring teachers, ascertaining their qualifications, and supervising their schools, was performed by the heads of these families. Where society is rude and partly civilized, or where the people do not live compactly together as in our pioneer settlements, we should look to the most intelligent homes for the origin of our best institutions. Children were taught by regular instructors in some families of the French settlers. Pierre Grignon started a school in his own house at Green Bay, in 1791, engaging James Porlier as teacher. Other families in this place adopted, without doubt, the same course. Similar cases occurred in the early history of Prairie Du Chien. In the annals of this French settlement, a Daniel Curtis is mentioned as teaching in the family of Joseph Rolette. In many of the oldest communities made up of the American population from the Eastern States, you can now find persons who received at such schools their first instruction in the common and higher branches of education.

The next schools were established at the military posts in the State, which were three in number: Fort Howard, at Green Bay, Fort Crawford, at Prairie Du Chien, and Fort Winnebago, near Portage City. The commanders of these posts had the supervision of the schools. Usually they engaged the chaplains appointed by the Government, to instruct the children who belonged to the officers and the soldiers, and sometimes to prominent citizens living in the vicinity of the forts. Rev. Richard F. Cadle had the charge of the post schools at Green Bay and Prairie Du Chien between 1832 and 1840, while acting as chaplain. Other individuals were occasionally employed. A