

## Introduction

Prior to the eighteenth century poor children in England were educated in foundling or charity schools, usually as part of the workhouse. Community motivation was dominated by a mediaeval fear of starvation and vagrancy. During the eighteenth century, however, the Whig-Utilitarianism and the increasing popularity of Quakerism and Methodism caused a change in attitude toward philanthropy which went along with the new economic conditions brought about by industrial change. The industrial revolution caused great local increases in population density, occupational changes, and poverty in the larger towns. Emphasis shifted toward preparation for apprenticeship or domestic skills and indoctrination in the beliefs of the dominant sect.

The Society of Friends had been a pioneer in the field. The earliest Quaker school still in use, Saffron Walden, began in 1702 in Clerkenwell as a workhouse-school, teaching employed children for two hours a day. The Quaker school at Ackworth had been built by the Governors of the London Foundling Hospital in 1758 and included its own woollen 'manufactory' where as many as 800 foundling children from London were employed and taught. It was taken over by Quakers in 1779 for poor members of the Society. By 1800 the number of abandoned children on the streets of London was unprecedented, and new techniques evolved to meet the challenge. A book was published with the sub-title 'how three hundred children ...may be managed by one master and mistress.'

These techniques required specialized spaces and furniture, along with new theories of education. One of the authors most interested in buildings and their layout was Joseph Lancaster, who published Hints and Directions for Building, Fitting Up and Arranging School Rooms on the British System of Education in 1811. He came to America in 1818, but his ideas were developed by the British and Foreign School Society, which issued the Manual of the System of Primary Instruction in 1831, including among illustrations of the 'Lancastrian' school room the recommendation for high windows and "Baize curtains hang (ing) from the ceiling to check the reverberation of sound."

The method of managing several hundred children in one large classroom was to use older children as 'Monitors' of small groups, a technique invented in India and publicized by Andrew Bell in 1808 in a book called 'The Madras School,' which differed in several important respects from the Lancastrian prototype. There is a contemporary but undated engraving in the archives of the Greater London Council entitled 'An Internal View of the Clapham School. Conducted on the System of the Madras School invented by Andrew Bell, D.D. etc.' which shows an octagonal school room arranged to accommodate 200 boys, erected in 1810. It was apparently criticized by Lancaster in 'Hints and Directions...' The illustration shows the monitor system in action, with scholars facing toward the center; high windows and pyramidal ceiling with a skylight at the peak. There is a low masonry stove in the center with no chimney; two schoolmasters in front of a blackboard,

and in the foreground a group of five kindergartners monitored by a six-year old, practicing alphabet letters in a sand tray.

(Note: The above is summarized from The English School, its architecture and organization 1370-1870, by Malcolm Seaborne, published 1971 by Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, which was brought to our attention by Mrs. Rosemary Krill of the Hagley Museum. The footnote on the Clapham School (19, p.159) continues: "An octagonal schoolhouse of 1819 still survives in Birmingham, Pennsylvania (Building Bulletin No. 18 Schools in the U.S.A. H.M.S.O., 1961, 300), and another of 1824 at Mildenhall (Wilts.).