THE SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL, ANNE ELIZABETH ALLEN.
Given at Faculty Meeting, Feb. 15, 1909.

Upon what does the spirit of a school depend?
This question perhaps would be answered by each individual
here in a different way, but fundamentally I believe we should
all agree that it depends upon us, the teachers in the school;
upon our unity of thought, feeling and action; upon our be-
lief and practice of the fundamental laws of living.

I think that we should all agree that so far as the
learning of the facts of geography, history, nature study, math-
ematics, art, etc., is concerned, a child could acquire them more
quickly if tutored alone at home—hence—that is not, primarily
what the school is for.

I remember that at a parents' meeting years ago, the subject
for discussion was the question, "Why do I send my child to school?"

It was the first time such a question had entered the minds
of most of us, I believe, and I feel certain that had any one
present answered it as he or she really thought, the unanimous
reply would have been—"Because it is a custom to send a child
to school at the age of six to learn all that he is expected to
know and I simply follow the custom."

I began to think of how much easier it would be to teach these
facts to a child or even a family of children at home: of how
simple a thing it would be 'never to let him make a mistake'.
His hours of schooling could be shorter, his out-door life
longer—then why send him into a crowded, poorly-ventilated
place to learn?

When the reason why finally came to me it was so simple and
obvious that I wondered I had never thought of it before.
The laws of community life that carry with them their own
disciplinary measures can be nowhere brought to a child so
perfectly as in a well organized, ideally citizened school
room. Then, instead of being the only boy or girl of a given
age, there are twenty or thirty or even fifty boys and girls of
the same age, at practically the same stage of development.
Here, the same general laws may govern all individuals in this
community. While each child may need special laws to suit his
or her needs, all are asked to live within the broad general
laws that all must observe in any community. Here the laws
may be so simple that all may understand and be asked to obey
them and obedience to the fundamental laws of life may become
habitual to a child. What better preparation can he have for
the greater world that he is later to take his place in, and what
is more, how much better is he living his life today—

It seems to me that we all need to ask these questions:
"What of law and order have we each established in our small
parts of the larger community?"
"When we feel the need of establishing a law do we abide by it
and carry it out fully and intelligently day after day?"
"Are we sure that the children understand its significance and
function in relation to the whole as well as their part of the
school?"

Do we not lose sight of the fact that this is the harvest
time in the child's life for the formation of habits—personal
as well as those relating to those of the rational laws of com-
munity life?
Are we not so absorbed in teaching that we forget that of training which is the larger responsibility of the teacher and includes teaching as only one part.

Are we not forgetting that feeling with a little child follows action and that constantly reminding him of the courteous relation he should bear towards his fellows helps to bring about the courtesy of spirit that we are longing for?

Do we not forget in our desire for interest and spontaneity that they should come with courtesy and consideration for others? Life discipline - Community life with all its complexity bears in its organism the laws that compel obedience. Why shall we not seize every opportunity for training each child into reverence for and obedience to law?

When this is accomplished, the subtle, precious thing, 'the spirit of the school', that we covet will be ours!
That the school is a social institution and not an intellectual forcing house is a fact to which we should all certainly agree.

That as a social institution there are many sides that are undeveloped and that it is our problem as teachers to find the most satisfactory way of developing them is quite as patent to us all.

How to unify the parts of so large an institution as ours and bring about an interchange of social supply and demand and of friendly interests is a question worthy of our most earnest consideration. A school that is a unit; from the youngest to the oldest class, with a great social ideal; a school where the different parts come together with an interest common to all, that will be helpful to all is I am sure what we most desire. If this interest be a purely social one each part has the opportunity of contributing towards the pleasure and entertainment of all.

Whatever touches one part of such a school touches all, because they are not separate, but integral parts of one great unified body.

Before touching upon the more specific theme of this discussion, there are several things of which I should like to speak along the broad, general lines of living together that we could accomplish, I think, did we all believe fully in the potency and supremacy of definite plans for social organization, from top to bottom.

There are certain interests that the Elementary High School and College Students have in common, such as, geography, mathematics, photography, book-binding, cooking, etc., etc. Would it not be possible for us to plan definite times when all the members of the school interested in any one of these subjects or in collections such as, coins, stamps, butterflies, pictures, etc., could come together to exchange specimens or show results? In the Elementary as well as in the High School and College opportunities for exchange of work offer themselves.

In the former, one Primary Grade makes reading books for another to use; a Grammar Grade prints the poems another grade used; the Kindergarten needs sand table tops which the children of an older grade, working in the Manual Training Department make for them; a Grammar Grade is invited to the Kindergarten to skip and is in turn entertained by this grade. The Kindergarten once, or perhaps twice, had the joy of lending some mathematical materials, familiarly known as blockstools to a High School teacher. Why shouldn't this interchange take place constantly until we grow dependent upon one another as are the members of one family; until we learn to say "ours" instead of "yours and mine"? Would not this social exchange of supply and demand do more to unify the school and make for a real school spirit built upon the solid foundation of comradeship, than all the throat-straining college yells that ever were invented? (I feel sure of the sympathy of the teachers of music for one reason, at least).

The greatest social power in any organization is the coming together of its members under a controlling idea which is in this school best illustrated, I think we shall all agree, in the dancing. Gradually it is showing the way towards a unity of
which we see the van and which we all desire to see accomplished if I am not mistaken. It is the one thing that every member of the Elementary and High School with the one exception of the Kindergarten - that all love and in which all take part, (an occasional child may dislike it and rebel, but these few exceptions only perform their function of proving the rule).

Dancing is intrinsically a social thing and an adequate means to a desired social end, lending itself perfectly to the accomplishment of unity.

Were it possible for our classes to be brought together more frequently, big and little, old and young, would there not be a greater interest shown and more pride taken by all for the school as a whole? This is planned for the Elementary School, three times a year, at Xmas for music and Xmas festivities - once a year; for a dancing party, a cotillion for which the children make their own favors, and again at the Spring Festival for dramatic representations - and is most successful.

Wouldn't it be possible for an Elementary School Group to have a May Day party for a High School group, planning a program and assuming under the guidance of a teacher or teachers, the entertainment for their guests? This might involve a study by both guests and hosts of May Day traditions and bring about a feeling of unity thru this mutual interest.

Again - the University as a whole is a store house of knowledge along all lines and we know how generously the other members of the Faculty give of their wealth whenever we need a broader view in geography, geology, history, art, astronomy, etc., etc., etc., ad infinitum.

A great leader of the department we are interested in brings his stereopticon slides and takes us to unknown and sometimes undreamed of regions in a few moments and gives us great draughts out of his or her rich experiences. We become acquainted and again mutual interests bridge the tide and we learn to know each other. He who has given us so much time and thought remembers those he has benefited. We may forget those who do something for us, be it confessed to our shame, but are not apt to forget or lose interest in those we have done something for.

The community at large, with its varied social institutions, its industrial and municipal organizations we find are always ready to contribute towards a larger social unity - whose center and motive power for us lies in this school.

A word as to the specific work done in the Elementary School thru its Parents' organization.

The object of celebrating the festival days, to which the Parents' organization thru its social committee lends both financial and sympathetic aid seems to me to be for purposes educational as well as social. Halloween, Thanksgiving, Xmas, Twelfth Night, St. Valentine's day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, May Day and Decoration Day, besides the birth-days of great people - all have an historical and social significance which is best impressed upon our minds thru their celebration with appropriate decorations, sports, songs and dramatic representations. As a nation we are beginning to observe these different holidays more and more and to add an occasional national holiday. How much these periods of relaxation are needed we in Chicago should certainly realize.
This let me repeat, is a reason for the celebration in our school of each festal day as it appears, that the children may know its historical significance thru entertainments appropriate to each and learn how to adapt themselves socially to planning and carrying out such programs. The greatest handicap that the social life of the school faces, as we all know, is the lack of a large assembly hall. Yet with such an obstacle, think what has been accomplished in these few years of our sojourn together! With all of the many and rare advantages that we have, I believe that much more may be accomplished before we have our assembly hall and the school awaits the cooperation of all members of its body to contribute of their time, talents, interest and sympathy.

I sometimes wonder if the great influx into America of other peoples with other ideals and with their beautiful holiday traditions will not in time lead the American people out of their indifference to the beauty of such festival celebrations and suggest to them the advisability of finding a place for each one in its national year book.
KINDERGARTEN CRITIC MEETINGS

Anne Elizabeth Allen.

Time 8 to 9 A.M. - Mondays and Thursdays,
and 11:30 to 1 o'clock when possible on Wednesdays.

Plan of work in and for these Critic Meetings -

The students keep a diary of their daily work and of the work done in the Critic Meetings.
They are urged to write in detail any suggestions or criticisms of the work in the Kindergarten as they see it and of the children in the small group which each teacher has at the table for two half hour periods - and to bring up any questions they want to talk on. These diaries are read and discussed at the Wednesday Critic Meetings. Cases of special children are brought up and advice asked from all who know these children.

When disciplinary measures are used with any children, the reasons are given the students and any questions relative to the conditions determining that special form of discipline are answered or discussed.

Table plays are planned by the students and given to each other as they will be given to the children at the tables and criticized by them as follows -

1. Attitude of the teacher and preparation -
   a. Was she sensitive to existing conditions - flexible or stiff?
   b. Genuine - affected.
   c. Sympathetic with the children or anxious to teach facts.
   d. A part of the play or the whole?

2. What opportunity was given the children for initiative?
3. What supposed images in the minds of the children was the play built upon?
4. How did the play strengthen these images?
5. How were number, form, position, direction, etc. used to strengthen and make these images grow?
6. How would you characterize the play as a whole?
   a. Did it fulfill the conditions of a good play or was it a lesson?
   b. Effect upon the children; interest - fatigue.

One Critic Meeting a week is partly devoted to planning the program for the next week.

The materials to be used are brought to the meeting and the plays planned and methods of handling materials shown and pictured by the students.

Whenever work the children do in drawing, painting or in any of the plastic materials the students do with the children and bring their results for inspection and help. If they plan a new construction they are asked to bring a model before trying it with the children.

They are asked to put at least one picture a week on the board illustrating some phase of the work of the program.

Appropriate stories and poems are searched for and for one
period a week the students have the opportunity of each taking a small group of children to sing with and tell stories to and to dramatize stories with.

In the spring and fall when the weather permits they also have the opportunity of organizing the children into small groups for out-door games and excursions - for which they plan and discuss in the Critic Meetings.
OUTLINE OF A KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM FOR A YEAR IN BRIEF --
Anne Elizabeth Allen.

FALL QUARTER - Some phases of the home life of the children drawn from their particular environment.

Motive -- To carry on the experiences in their home environment into the new one and to give opportunity for a perspective view of what has come closest to them.

The emphasis in all that follows is placed upon the active and dramatic side.
The topics have been chosen not only because of their larger social meaning as seen by the adult, but because these typical social activities of home and neighborhood have a value for the children from their own point of view. The aim is to take such play themes as children would engage in in playing alone at home and with the help of organization and appropriate materials aid them in carrying out these themes more definitely and satisfactorily to themselves.

1. Man's Home and Preparations for Winter.
   a. The home, with its equipment for comfort and convenience.
   b. The immediate surroundings of the home.
   c. The home industries.
   d. The preparations for winter: - warm clothing, heating of houses, storm windows and doors, preserving fruits and vegetables.

2. Nature's preparation for Winter as shown in our home yards, school garden, our neighbors' yards and the parks.

3. Preparation made by animals for Winter.
   a. Hibernation and Migration.
   b. Preparation made by those animals who neither migrate nor hibernate - the squirrels and bees.

When practicable, excursions to parks, gardens and museums will be taken.

Materials used: Regular Kindergarten material when that seems to lend itself best to expression.
Outside materials such as leaves, twigs, pebbles, grains, sand, shells, nuts, etc., with which the children may experiment. And materials that they may bring themselves - or that we have collected on our excursions.

Stories - Legends, myths, fairy stories and poems, stories of everyday life and action, rhymes and jingles - repetition stories.

Games - Out-door tag, circle games, hide and seek. Those games involving competition on a small scale. Ball games.
Representative games: - trades, industries - rhythmic games.

Note -- Materials used, Stories, Games for the year's program, not for Fall alone.
Fall Festivals celebrated -

1. Hallowe'en celebrated in simple way.
   The children bring and prepare pumpkins for Jack-o-lanterns, with which the school room is decorated, and make other decorations which they assist in putting up. Another grade is invited in to bob for apples and to play other hallowe'en games - The Parents are invited as spectators.

2. Thanksgiving - For this festival the children begin to prepare at the time we are considering the preserving of fruits and vegetables for winter use. They assist in making grape juice and jelly and just before our celebration make cookies. Their parents are the invited guests to whom these refreshments are served. (An opportunity is there offered the parents of seeing some of the regular work of the Kindergarten that a casual visit does not offer - and to the children of entertaining them).

3. Christmas - The period between Thanksgiving and Xmas is occupied in Xmas plays and games and in the preparation by the children of gifts for their parents and friends which are so simple as not to tax their skill and at the same time are useful and to a degree, artistic.

PROGRAM FOR WINTER QUARTER.

Topics suggested, - The outside occupations that come closest to the home, viz. -
1. That of the Milkman who comes once a day to the house.
2. The Postman who comes three times a day.
3. The Grocer, a necessary neighbor.
4. The Baker.
5. The Dry Goods Merchant, etc., etc.
The trades of the shoe-maker, carpenter, blacksmith, etc. may also be the focus for our attention, but the others first mentioned seem to come a little closer.

Transportation is a necessary factor in all of these occupations and leads us to the sources of supply for all of them. Winter sports and games - is another topic that affords us especial opportunities for interest as the Midway has its skating pond, its toboggan and small slopes for sliding.

Whichever topics are considered - excursions to the home of that especial industry or trade are made as often as practicable.

St. Valentine's Day is celebrated in many ways. The school room is decorated with posters and strings of hearts. Gingerbread boys are made by the children and used as valentines for the visiting Grade. A postman game is planned and other games are played. The parents are invited as they are to all festivals celebrated.
PROGRAM FOR SPRING QUARTER.

Central topic - the garden.
Observations especially of outdoor changes and preparations for planting.

The relations between the market gardener in the country and the grocer in the city may engross our attention and provide an opportunity for realizing what our own gardens may mean - We will plant seeds (in window boxes) of the same kind that we shall afterwards plant in our gardens, watch their growth and compare with weeds that come up in the boxes as well as outdoors. This will help in weeding our gardens later. Excursions to truck gardens - Process of growth. Care of plants and means of getting them to the city investigated.

Individual garden beds - or group beds - certain children responsible for weeding each day and others for watering - (These responsibilities given to all the children in turns).

OUTDOOR SPORTS AND GAMES IN THE GARDEN.

Opportunity will be offered for undisturbed group or individual play in the garden - the children themselves taking the initiative and carrying out their own ideas as long as these plans are wholesome. (This plan has been somewhat carried out but not as fully as it should be). The teachers may come into these plays when they are able to take their places and play as the children do.

SPECIAL DAYS CELEBRATED.

1. May-day - The children make may-baskets, bring flowers to fill them and hang them on the doorknobs throughout the building.

2. Easter - with an Easter egg hunt in and out of doors as the weather permits - (No observation of the religious holiday is made).

Stories, poems, songs, games and excursions (field work) are used when they will enhance the value of the subject under discussion and present opportunities for the growth of motor, visual, tactile, auditory, etc. images.

Whenever number, form, color, position and direction will add to the interest and value of a play they become an integral part of it.

Whatever is pure and wholesome that will contribute a stimulus to the imagery of children of Kindergarten age and keep out uneducative automatisms, that is, automatisms that obstruct thought and thus prevent the growth of images may be educative, provided the teacher herself sees its relations and dependence upon a larger whole.