

"The first local high school curriculum consisted of little more than the traditional 'three Rs' to which was added a little Latin and a stern discipline ... 'suasion backed by the birch' ... "

"By 1879 the sciences and history had been added to the high school curriculum; chemistry, physics and astronomy were taught without laboratories. Recitation periods were 35 minutes long ... "

Mr. Allen explains that there was then still a strong preference for private schools, and that many thought "only ruffians go to the public schools." There was a demand for labor, and a student who did not readily profit by attending high school was suspended, or advised to quit and go to work. The school felt no obligation for guiding the student beyond the building and grounds of the school.

As early as 1872, the whole school system was organized on the scheme of triannual promotions. Another early innovation is stated thus, "It may seem an unwarranted deviation to omit the use of a textbook on grammar as we have... yet we concluded that more rapid progress could be made without than with one."

"...Fifty-five years ago in 1884, Little Rock was offering eight years of elementary education, two years of intermediate schooling, and three years of advanced high school work, which composed 13 years of public school education."

"The report of 1880-84 states that pupils are 'to be taught the meaning of all words they read' and 'Reading lessons are to be printed on slates....'"

"Pupils were given an examination on spelling, grammar, history, geography, and arithmetic before being admitted to the high school... All examination questions were to be made out by the superintendent, although the teachers graded the papers."

At that time only two electives were permitted in the high school (Latin and German). In 1939, more than 50 times that number of electives were offered in senior high school, to say nothing of junior high school.

"The English course in high school in 1880-1884 consisted of three years of rhetoric, including grammar and composition."

In 1939, Mr. Allen was particularly aware of contrasts in printed courses of study and curriculums of the early days and at that date. "The course of study for 1894 gave only a page and a half...to the first grade; all courses of study for the high school were listed on (only) 4 pages... the complete report together with all courses of study amounted to only 87 pages of printed matter." Mr. Allen adds, "Today they amount to more than 6000 pages of printed matter ... done by commercial printers; today (1939) all course of study printing is done with the school's own equipment."

"In 1916, the first course of study (arithmetic) was produced. A course of study for elementary social science, and also one for language, followed in 1919. The course in elementary reading was ready by 1923. A course for the primary grades came out in 1926. By 1937, more than 40 high school courses ... had been completed ... "