WATKINS MUSEUM

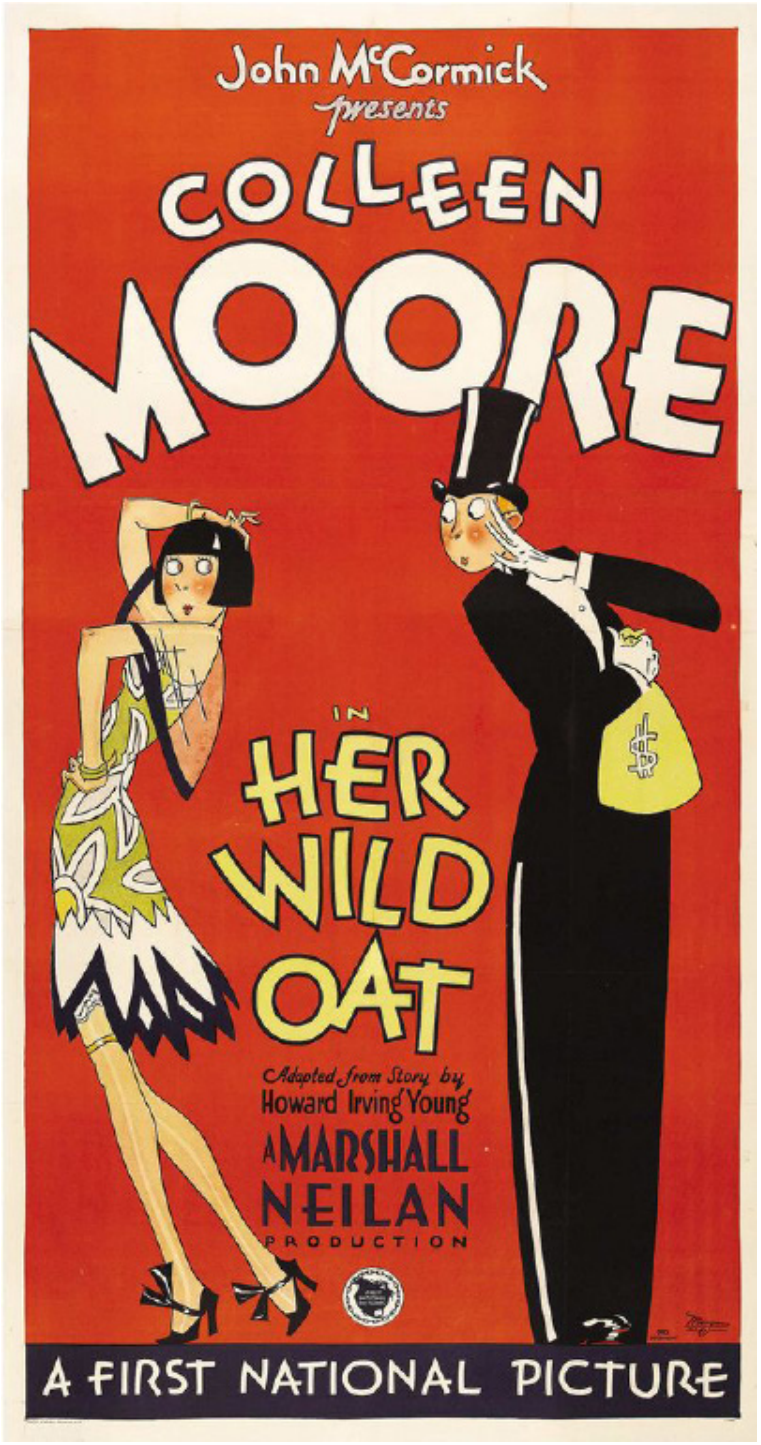
ABBY EHLING, BETH POST, SYDNEY PURSEL

TITLE & PURPOSE

PROGRESS REPORT:

Education in Lawrence

This exhibit examines education in Lawrence during the Progressive Era, as well as the factors that inspired these reforms, to encourage reflection on what is happening in education now.


John McCormick
presents
COLLEEN
MOORE
IN
HER
WILD
OAT
Adapted from Story by
Howard Irving Young
A MARSHALL
NEILAN
PRODUCTION
A FIRST NATIONAL PICTURE

TITLE HEADER / BODY COPY (lc)

HAMBURGEONSIV hamburgeonsiv

bodoni regular | 36 / 40

HAMBURGEONSIV hamburgeonsiv

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HAMBURGEONSIV hamburgeonsiv

bodoni italic | 36 / 40

SECTION HEADER

HAMBURGEONSIV hamburgeonsiv

shree devanagari regular | 30 / 40

HAMBURGEONSIV hamburgeonsiv

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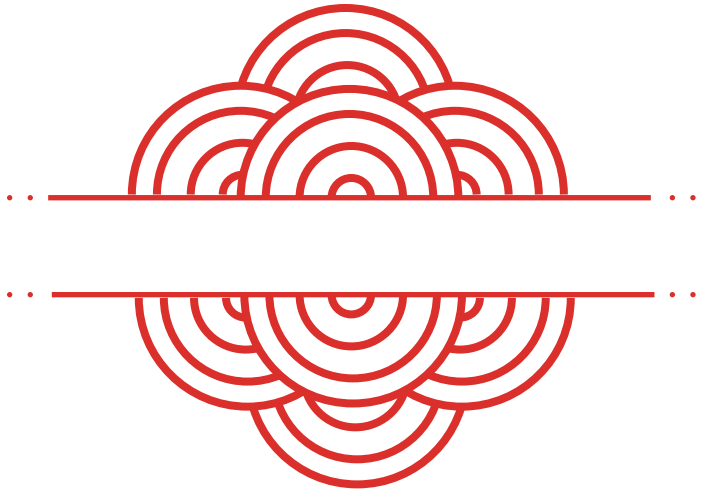

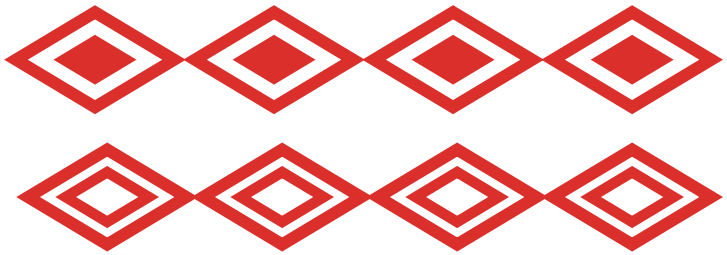

GRAPHIC ELEMENTS

DESIGN – LABEL

The Winston Readers; The Primer

1925
Douglas County Historical Society, Accession: 1978.020.009

Photo of Lawrence High School Basketball Team

1926–1927
Donor: Lila Phillips, Accession: 1989.122.002

LHS Yearbook

1927
Douglas County Historical Society, Accession: 1989.145.001

#progressatwatkins

John Dewey *the father of progressive education*

Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

- Philosopher
- Interested in the relationship between the individual and society
- Promoted democracy in the classroom
- Believed curriculum should apply

Starting in 1896, laboratory schools offered an alternative education to their students through a more hands-on and practical approach. Class curriculum focused upon activities and experimentation rather than reading and recitation. These laboratory schools offered psychological, sociological, and logical components to hone the child's interest in a subject.

"When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lovely and harmonious."

–from *The School and Society* published 1899

LABEL COPY

progressive

adjective pro·gres·sive \prə-ˈgre-siv\

1

a : of, relating to, or characterized by progress

b : making use of or interested in new ideas, findings, or opportunities

c : of, relating to, or constituting an educational theory marked by emphasis on the individual child, informality of classroom procedure, and encouragement of self-expression

Progressive Era

From the 1890s to the 1920s, the Progressive Movement sought to address the economic and social problems caused by rapid industrialization in the United States. Progressives were concerned with minimizing the social and economic gap between the rich and poor, and creating a communal atmosphere throughout society.

Three Major Themes of Progressive Thought

- Progress requires political force to counteract economic interests; it's a battle against prevailing forces. Changes must start from the bottom up – child labor laws, mandatory school attendance and women's right to vote came from this movement.

- Science and reason are the sources for solutions for social issues such as poverty, discrimination and injustice.

- Education is needed to secure a good job and for citizens to know their rights and responsibilities.

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Events that triggered change

- Industrialization: In the mid-1800s, machines began to replace workers, and schools were needed to create more reliable and efficient workers. Additionally, more and more people were moving to urban areas as a result of industrialization, which meant rural schools (which comprised most of the schools in Kansas) were losing students and resources, forcing many to close.

- Changes to immigration patterns: A culture seen as uniquely "American" developed during the 1800s. As new immigrants came to the U.S., they were expected to learn how to be American citizens. The immigrants of the early 1900s had an especially difficult time transitioning to the U.S. because of a language barrier.

John Dewey, the father of progressive education

- Philosopher
- Interested in the relationship between the individual and society
- Promoted democracy in the classroom
- Believed curriculum should apply to the student's life
- Encouraged learning by doing

"When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lovely and harmonious." from The School and Society published 1899

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Instructors

The 1830s saw the creation of what we know now as public schools; as a result more teachers were needed. Little training was required, and the pay was very low. At the time, men thought women would make good teachers because of their nurturing nature. More and more women chose to become teachers in an effort to gain greater independence. The teaching profession underwent many changes in the years leading up to the early 1900s.

By the early 1900s, women were fighting for higher pay and benefits. They were also seeking administrative positions, previously held only by men. Educators were also becoming more educated themselves. "Normal Schools" were established in the 1830s as training institutions for teachers, but by the early 1900s these schools were transitioning into colleges and universities.

Socially, the United States was changing because of the increase in non-English speaking immigrants, industrialization, and economic growth. Schools were used as a way reconcile these changes. In the classroom, educators began to focus on the well-being of their individual students. Previously, classrooms were somewhat rigid; students were asked to recite lessons in a uniform manner and remain silent unless spoken to. As the Progressive Era moved forward, and as women gained traction in pay, benefits, and working conditions, adjustments were made in the classroom by educators to allow more freedom for each student to learn in a way that best suited their needs.

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Classroom

"These schools undertake to provide for all the pupils, opportunities that meet the needs of individuals as well as group needs. The classrooms are homelike, clean and attractive, and an atmosphere of interest, industry, and goodwill prevails."
from Lawrence Public Schools, a Progressive School System, June 1931

One-room school houses were quite common in Kansas in the 1800s. Each school house represented a district that served its surrounding area. As time passed, one-room school houses were seen as less efficient. All grades were taught by the same teacher, which meant it was necessary for the teacher to jump between levels throughout the day; not a very efficient practice. Additionally, these rural schools had very little funding.

In an attempt to standardize the quality of education and encourage more efficient institutions, many rural school districts began to consolidate during the Progressive Era. In the early 1900s, Kansas had around 4,000 school districts. As a result of consolidation, Kansas now has around 300.

Student Life

Parks and playgrounds were being built rapidly around the turn of the century in response to the Progressive movement. Proponents believed the mental, physical, and moral well-being of children would greatly benefit from supervised play. Organizations like the YMCA and Boy Scouts of America were also created to provide the recent influx of urban youth with exercise and character-building activities.

Purpose

Create a social environment for children and adults.

Interactive for children includes riddles of facts regarding the four original and remaining schools in Lawrence, KS. The interactive reveals images of each school, then and now, as a solution to the riddle.

For older visitors, a social media and sticky note interactive encourages visitors to leave their thoughts on both the exhibit and the future of education in Lawrence.

Riddles

Four Schools in Lawrence operated during the Progressive Era and are still open today!
Use the clues to figure out Which School Am I?

- I was established in 1869. Although my original building no longer exists, my location stayed exactly the same.
- Langston Hughes went here in the early 1900s, from 4th to 6th grade.
- There is a stone tablet sculpture on the school grounds to commemorate my original building.

Which School Am I? New York Elementary

.....

- I was built in 1915 and am the oldest school building still operating in Lawrence.
- My name comes from an abolitionist minister and survivor of Quantrill's Raid who served on the Lawrence Board of Education for seven years and was the president of the board for six.
- There is a mural on the side of my building highlighting an event involving the abolitionist minister and a runaway slave named Lizzie.

Which School Am I? Cordley Elementary

Riddles

- I am the oldest school in Lawrence opening in 1854. I was also the first school in Lawrence to have desks that were not attached to the floor.
- My name comes from General and Revolutionary War hero who helped write the Constitution.
- Langston Hughes went here for second grade in 1909. Mary J. Dillard was his teacher.

Which School Am I? Pinckney Elementary

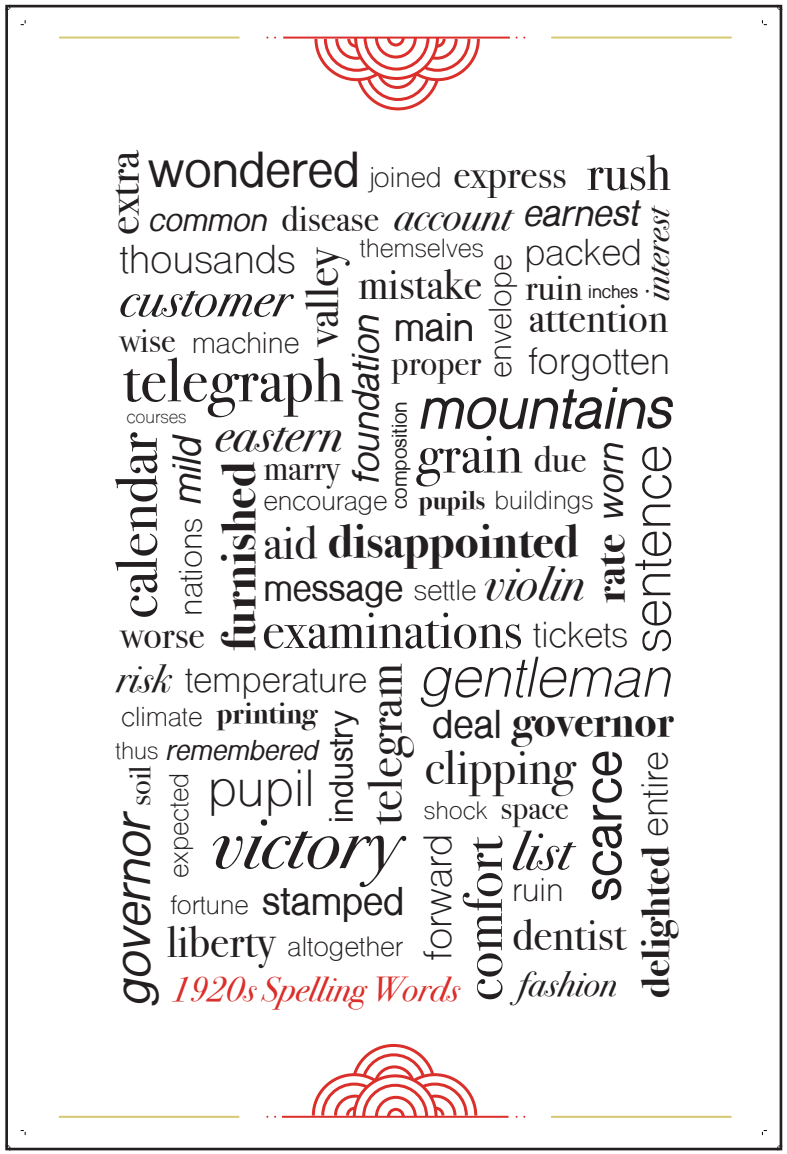
.....

- I was established in 1857 but my first location was in the basement of a Unitarian Church.
- I am not the same kind of school then as I am now.
- My building is a monument to Lawrence students and graduates who lost their lives in World War I.

Which School Am I? Liberty Memorial High School NOW Liberty Memorial Central Middle School

Social Media Question

What are your concerns with the future of education?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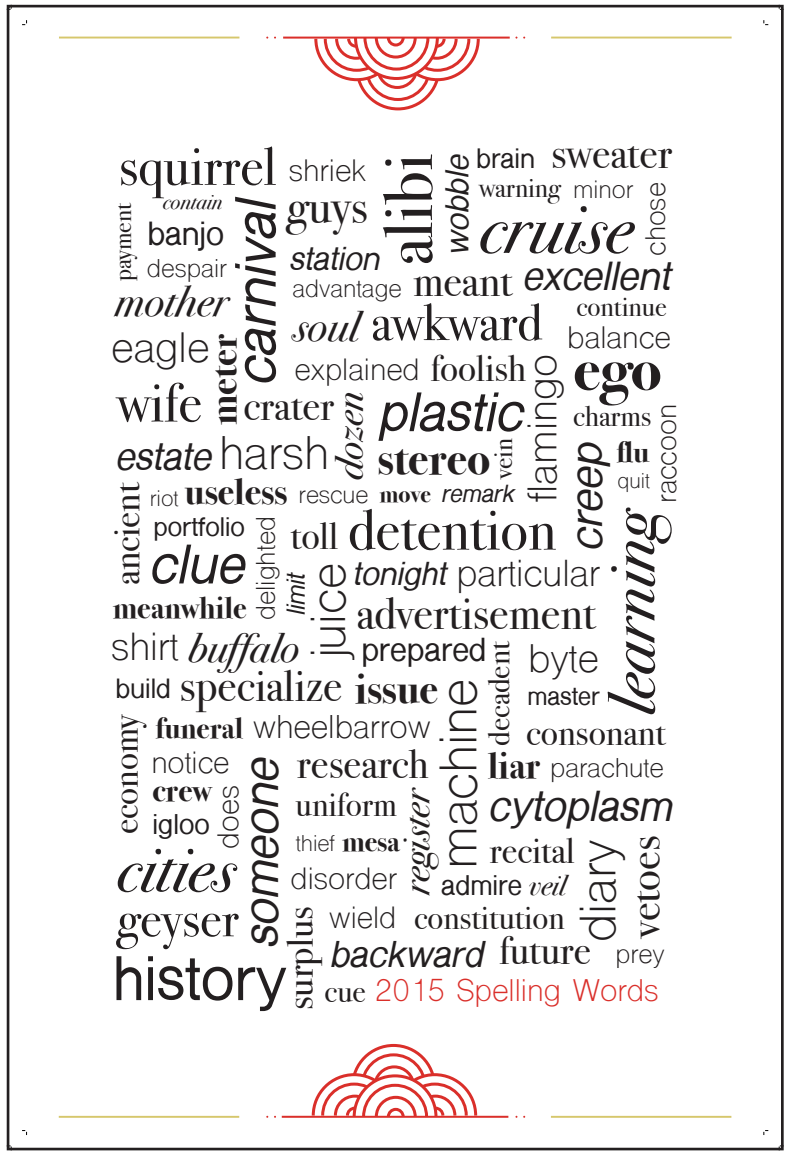
1920s Spelling Words
fashion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sweater
contain
alibi
wobble
warning
minor
payment
guys
chose
banjo
cruise
despair
station
advantage
meant
excellent
mother
carnival
continue
soul
awkward
eagle
balance
explained
foolish
ego
wife
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delighted
clue
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limit
juice
meanwhile
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buffalo
prepared
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funeral
wheelbarrow
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veil
diary
vetoes
geyser
wield
constitution
surplus
backward
future
prey
history
cue
2015 Spelling Words

WALL BORDERS

FINAL EXHIBIT

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