

**SOME PRESENT ASPECTS OF  
THE WORK OF TEACHERS'  
VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS  
IN THE UNITED STATES**

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Some Present Aspects of the Work of Teachers' Voluntary Associations in the United States by  
Carter Alexander

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**CARTER ALEXANDER**

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Teachers' Voluntary Associations  
In the United States

BY

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## PREFACE

This investigation was begun in 1908 at the suggestion of Dr. David Snedden, then professor of Educational Administration in Teachers College, and it has been prosecuted under his direction. The intention at first was to make a survey of all the significant phenomena in the important associations of the country, but the magnitude of such a work, the difficulty encountered in securing adequate data, and the publishing in 1909 of an excellent article by Superintendent C. S. Foss of Reading, Pennsylvania, on the state associations, necessitated a considerable narrowing of the original investigation.

The writer wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness for source materials to the hundreds of teachers all over the United States, especially those studying at Teachers College, who have so kindly furnished him with information regarding various associations. In particular he is under obligations to Superintendent Foss for giving him access to the sources used in preparing the latter's article, and to Miss Lillian Flint of St. Paul, for affording him the same privilege as regards materials gathered by her for a study of teachers' pensions.

The author's thanks are also due his friends, Dr. I. L. Kandel, Professor E. O. Holland of Indiana University, and Mr. L. D. Coffman of Teachers College, for assistance in revising the manuscript.

C. A.

Teachers College, August 8, 1910.

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SOME PRESENT ASPECTS OF THE WORK OF  
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IN THE UNITED STATES \*

INTRODUCTION

The statement that "whatever impairs the popular habit of achieving ends by [private initiative] and [voluntary organization], endangers society,"<sup>1</sup> is peculiarly true of an organization of society like that in the United States. And of the increasingly numerous and powerful forms of voluntary association at work here today,—religious, charitable, philanthropic, civic, labor, business, professional, etc.,—probably no form has greater potential possibilities than that of the teaching profession. For the teachers of the United States, now about five hundred thousand strong, could by co-operation and closer association exert a tremendous force that not only would influence all their own numbers, but, by virtue of their peculiar relation to society, would ultimately affect every community and practically every individual, at least during his school days, in the land.

But while teachers have almost recovered from their former custom of devoting much time at their meetings to discussions as to whether teaching is a profession or can ever be one, still they do not on the whole appear to have much conception of the possibilities of organization, or much belief in its value, even if it could be attained. There is some painting of impossible ideals just as there was seventy years ago, some perfunctory self-congratulation and a few instances of keen elation over real or

\*In this study a *voluntary* association means "an organization of individuals for moral, benevolent, social or political purposes, or for any object other than pecuniary benefits." (Inter. Encyc., XVII:434.)

A *teachers' association* means one composed wholly or in the main of teachers, although no hard and fast line can be drawn between such associations and those composed of educational experts and administrators, or general educational associations, or learned societies.

<sup>1</sup>Giddings, Principles of Sociology, 195.