

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, ASHEVILLE

“THE TRAGEDY OF MODERN EDUCATION”

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“The tragedy of modern education – indeed, of childhood itself – in this wonderful mechanized culture of ours, is the loss of reality, and of any valid sense of reality.”¹ This quote by Ernest Morgan, son of Arthur Morgan, sums up his feelings about education in his time. The Industrial Revolution and urbanization of American society resulted in a loss of reality according to Morgan. To combat these problems Ernest’s wife Elizabeth along with help from others created the Arthur Morgan School a boarding school in Celo, North Carolina. The school, began in 1962,² and after forty years continues to educate children in its own unique way.

Originally, the Arthur Morgan School began as Camp Celo in the intentional community of Celo in Western North Carolina. Robert and Dorothy Barrus, residents of the Celo Community ran the camp. Eventually Elizabeth and Ernest Morgan went into partnership with the Barrus’s. They, along with the Barrues decided to make Camp Celo a work camp for young people in the early teens.³ The Morgan’s intentions, even before the work camp, had been to open a school in Celo. “We raised the issue with the Celo Community, and the members were receptive. In fact they agreed to lease fifty acres of land to the project for a dollar a year.”⁴ Now money for the school’s budget became another obstacle. Elizabeth and Ernest did not have much money, so they asked the Celo Community, which is a nonprofit organization, to make the school an activity of the community. Celo Health Center opened in 1948 helped recruit members to the still new community. The health center also had a corporate charter of its own like the Celo

¹ Ernst Morgan, “Reality in Education,” *Celo Education Notes* no. 10 (April 1964): 1.

² Ernest Morgan, *Dealing Creatively with Life* (New York: Barclay House Press, 1999) 264.

³ Burton W. Gorman, *Education for Learning to Live Together* (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Book Company, 1969), 4.

⁴ Ernest Morgan, *Dealing*, 262.

Community.⁵ They agreed to put the school under the health center's charter and the school therefore would be tax exempt because of its non-profit status. After these two accomplishments the Celo Work Camp opened in 1958.⁶ "The purpose of the work camp was twofold. First of all, we didn't have much money, and there was a lot of work to be done: fixing the roads and buildings, digging ditches, painting, clearing brush. But we also had a secret reason – we wanted to see if young teenagers liked to work."⁷ Most of the work done during the time of the work camp laid the structural foundation for the Arthur Morgan School. The success of working with young adults gave Elizabeth and Ernest Morgan useful knowledge for their future school.⁸ The school finally started in 1962 with an enrollment of sixteen children.⁹ Robert Barrus became the "main teacher" at the Arthur Morgan School. Elizabeth ran the school and Ernest mainly observed and attended the meetings.¹⁰ Elizabeth and Ernest made their dreams happen and in just a few short years had a fully functional school in Celo, North Carolina.

There were various aspects that allowed the Arthur Morgan School to stick to its ideological roots and continue the story of progressive education. The supportive Community setting gave the school a place to grow. In addition the individuals outside the community gave monetary support, and the innovative ideas that helped the school become self-sufficient allowed it to maintain the ideals that the school began with.

Defining Progressive Education with one clear and definite definition is difficult to do. Arthur Zilversmit, in his book *Changing Schools*, gives a definition to progressive

⁵ George L. Hicks, *Experimental Americans: Celo and the Utopian Community in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 99.

⁶ Ernest Morgan, *Dealing*, 262.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Burton W. Gorman, *Education*, 4.

⁹ Hicks, 101.

¹⁰ Ernest Morgan, *Dealing*, 264-265.

education in America from 1930-1960. Zilversmit explains the acceptance of progressive ideals about education happened because of the country's industrial growth, urbanization, and rise of immigration in the early part of the nineteenth century. American schools were the place that many felt could help deal with these changes. During the 1920's and 1930's a general consensus arrived about the main ideas of progressive education. Differing opinions about a clear definition of the movement existed and still do today but there are some key aspects. Progressives placed the child at the center of the curriculum. They felt the child had a natural yearning for acquiring knowledge. Also, progressives believed that the child as a whole needed to be developed not just intellectually but physically and emotionally. Lastly a progressive school would have a democratic approach to the children giving them a voice in what they learned. Under this umbrella of core ideas debate among progressive educators took place but these basic ideas were the staple that held them together. Zilversmit relies heavily on the progressive educator John Dewey. He fails to mention progressive educators from other areas of the world that influenced the movement.¹¹

William J. Reese, in his article "The Origins of Progressive Education," gives Progressive Education a longer history. He believed that the movement stood for the same basic core of ideas as Zilversmit but dates it as far back as the Enlightenment and Romantic periods. Reese notes scholars like John Locke who describes the mind as a blank slate to be molded by life. Like Zilvermsmit, Reece concurs that progressive education came mostly out of social needs. Reese credits Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi with

¹¹ Arthur Zilversmit, *Changing Schools: Progressive Education Theory and Practice, 1930-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 1-18.

laying the foundations of the educational movement internationally and credits John Dewey with the rise of the movement in America.¹²

The letters and writings of Ernest Morgan his wife Elizabeth Morgan along with writings of Arthur Morgan are the primary sources used for evidence. Based on my reading of these sources, the Arthur Morgan School expands the history of progressive education. The history of the school reveals ways a school can achieve this pedagogy. Arthur Morgan's papers are used to describe the background history of the Celo Community and its support of the school. Also, there are writings of students that were at the school presently or graduated. One problem of the sources is that there is not much negative feedback about the school. Another is that most of the primary source documents come from Ernest Morgan not Elizabeth who started and ran the school for the first years.

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi influenced the Arthur Morgan School through a chain of students. Lucy Griscom Morgan, Arthur Morgan's wife, received her education from Henry Russell. Russell studied under Friedrich Froebel who learned most of his knowledge from Pestalozzi. Robert Barrus, who helped Elizabeth and Ernest start the Arthur Morgan School, went to school in Switzerland, Pestalozzi's native land.¹³ Ernest Morgan also noted Pestalozzi's contribution. He stated: "the school drew its inspiration from several sources. One was Pestalozzi, the progressive educator who initiated the practice of experimental education in a community setting."¹⁴

¹² William J. Reese, "The Origins of Progressive Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 41 (2001): 1-24.

¹³ Gorman, 2, 4

¹⁴ Ernest Morgan, *Dealing*, 264-265.

Pestalozzi's life began in Zurich on January 12, 1746. His father was employed as a surgeon but died early in his life. Pestalozzi died after a long life in 1827. Due to the fact that Pestalozzi's philosophies were always changing it is hard to exactly define him and his ideas on education. Despite the variation of Pestalozzi's thought, there are some underlying themes that have had an impact on the Arthur Morgan School. Pestalozzi strongly believed that the home is an essential part of a child's education. Mother's love is also vital in this process.¹⁵ Through experience, according to Pestalozzi, young children gained the best possible education. Pestalozzi called this *Anschauung*, a German word meaning "observation, intuition, contemplation, sense experience, perception, and sense impression."¹⁶ He wanted the youth to experience the world directly instead of learning indirectly through teachers.¹⁷ In Pestalozzi's writings he stated: "The foundation for a good school is like that for any kind of happiness; it is nothing else but true wisdom in living."¹⁸

Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig has also had a role in shaping the school. Ernest Morgan also acknowledged Grundtvig's influence on the Arthur Morgan School.¹⁹ Grundtvig's life spanned from 1783-1872 living mostly in Denmark. In his lifetime he influenced "as a poet and historian, theologian and preacher, politician and philosopher."²⁰ As an educator Grundtvig created the Danish folk school. The ideology of these schools in Denmark follows the same basic prescription that Pestalozzi taught.

¹⁵ Robert B. Downs, *Heinrich Pestalozzi: Father of Modern Pedagogy* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), 18, 78-82.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁸ Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, *The Education of Man* (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1969), 34.

¹⁹ Ernest Morgan, *Dealing*, 264-265.

²⁰ Ernest Stabler, *Founders: Innovators in Education, 1830-1980* (Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 1987), 4.

Grundtvig called them “school for life.” Such schools would “set as its chief educational goal the task of helping to solve life’s problems. Secondly, the school should take a realistic approach to life and promote purposeful living.”²¹

According to Ernest Morgan, Maria Montessori also influenced the Arthur Morgan School.²² Montessori lived from 1870-1952. By 1896 she would graduate medical school to be the first woman in Italy to do so.²³ Along with Pestalozzi, Montessori believed that the child during education should be somewhat free to experience and learn for him or herself. The idea was that by letting the children become somewhat independent the child would be responsible for his or her actions. This would develop into self-confidence.²⁴ “This sense of responsibility and community would begin, in their own small community, the school or Children’s House, and later would expand to a responsibility and interest in the larger world.”²⁵ Montessori, like Pestalozzi, also believed that the education of a child started at home with the right environment to develop character. Love and security were essential parts of this educational process.²⁶ When describing Pestalozzi’s influence on Montessori one author noted: “Montessori, more than anyone else, would see its implication and refine its uses”.²⁷ The “it” in this statement refers to Pestalozzi’s educational methods. Montessori wrote: “the secret is this: making it possible for man to become the master of the mechanical environment that

²¹ N.F.S. Grundtvig, *Selected Writings*. ed. Johannes Knudsen (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 153.

²² Ernest Morgan, *Dealing*, 265.

²³ Jane Roland Martin, *Fifty Major Thinkers on Education*, ed. Joy A. Palmer (New York: Routledge, 2003), 225.

²⁴ Margaret Howard Loeffler, *Montessori in Contemporary American Culture* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1992), 104.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Jane Roland Martin, *Fifty*, 226-227.

²⁷ Rita Kramer, *Maria Montessori: A Biography* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1976), 65.

oppresses him today. Man the producer must become master of the production.”²⁸ In other words, by teaching children through repetition and filling their brains with textbook knowledge education was training them to be a part in the system. This type of education makes people who control it.

Arthur Morgan also played a great role in influencing the Arthur Morgan School and, as stated earlier the, Celo Community itself. The school does bear his name for the reason that he had a lot to do with the schools educational philosophy. Also, the school used his name because a community member suggested it to Elizabeth and Ernest, his son and daughter-in-law, so the Celo Community would support the school.²⁹ Arthur Morgan’s life spanned almost a century. Born in 1878 his father had a job as an engineer and a surveyor.³⁰ Morgan died almost a full hundred years later in April 1975 after a long life of many projects.³¹

Morgan believed greatly in the importance of education to ensure a better future. He stated: “for good or for ill, the school is making America. What is today America will be in a generation. Education is the chief business of our country.”³² Arthur Morgan also began an experimental school in the Berkshire Mountains in the state of Massachusetts. His wife named the school Jacob’s Pillow. Also during this time Morgan became well known. Antioch College asked him to sit on their board of directors. Eventually he would be Antioch’s president.³³ During his presidency at Antioch College Morgan took up

²⁸ Maria Montessori, *Education and Peace*. trans. Helen R. Lane (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1972), 35.

²⁹ Ernest Morgan, *Dealing*, 262.

³⁰ Hicks, 56.

³¹ Aaron Purcell, “Collaboration and the Small Community,” *The Historian* 65 no. 3 (Spring 2003): 662.

³² Arthur Morgan, *A Compendium of Antioch Notes* (Yellow Springs: Kahoe & Co., Publishers, 1930), 194.

³³ Gorman, 2.

many different tasks and reforms. He started one of the first work-study programs, as well as student budgets, and campus industries.³⁴ Each would play a role later in the Arthur Morgan School in the curriculum and its self-sufficiency. Historian Aaron Purcell who has written a good deal on Morgan noted: “Morgan’s Antioch work study program reflected Morgan’s belief that education should combine academic standards with practical experience.”³⁵ Arthur Morgan also followed in the footsteps of Pestalozzi and Montessori in his views of education. Morgan, like the two other thinkers, thought that education should be through experience to build confidence and create a moral person.³⁶ Arthur Morgan believed that traditional education that emphasized rigorous repetition hurt the individual. He stated: “Drill and regimentation produce skill, but dwarf the creative spirit.”³⁷ Experience of life should be the foundation for education according to Morgan. Through experience is where the child really learns. “Children may continue to learn facts in school rooms, but they learn life itself outside.”³⁸ Arthur Morgan, Pestalozzi, Grundtvig, and Montessori all have impacted the Arthur Morgan School and the Celo Community in some way directly or indirectly.

The Celo Community has a long history of its own starting in 1937. As early as 1932 during the years of the Great Depression, Arthur Morgan, father of Ernest, began discussing with his friend Clarence Pickett the social problems of the day. Because of the Great Depression there were many people who were alienated from society because of

³⁴ Purcell, 662.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Arthur Morgan, *A Compendium*, 200.

³⁷ Ibid., 200-201.

³⁸ Arthur Morgan, *The Small Community* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1942), 245.

economic hardship.³⁹ Morgan believed that these men “would like to find, whether they might, by simple living and hard work, maintain a considerable degree of freedom from the pressures and compulsions of the going economic regime, with the aim of using that freedom to try to orientate themselves to the economic world in ways that would be in harmony with what they considered to be fundamental ethical considerations.”⁴⁰ W. H. Regnery had views similar to Arthur Morgan’s and decided that he would help Morgan financially to start a community.⁴¹

First they had to search for the land that would be the location of the new community. Land needed to be cheap and because of the depression land in Southern Appalachia happened to be just that. Also the land needed to be located away from cities, which Arthur Morgan saw as the downfall of American society. Also the remoteness allowed Morgan to be experimental, which helped move toward “community self-sufficiency and autonomy.”⁴² Eventually these traits would allow the Arthur Morgan School to exist and allow the school to put them into practice also.

Arthur Morgan’s other son, Griscom, helped locate the land for the community. Olive Campbell of the Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina told Griscom to explore the South Toe Valley along the Black and Blue Ridge Mountains in Western North Carolina. Land in the valley turned out to be just the right fit and also very beautiful. The land needed to be beautiful so it could be an escape form the dreaded city landscape. After a long search it then was decided that this would be the area for the

³⁹ Arthur Morgan’s Papers, “Notes from Memory by Arthur Morgan and Griscom Morgan on the Beginnings of Celo Community in North Carolina,” Antioch University, Antiochiana, VIII G, Box 1, October 7 1957. 1.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1-2.

⁴² Hicks, 73.

community. Griscom Morgan negotiated the deal for the purchase of the land and persuaded the owner to sell 900 acres for 20 dollars an acre. Griscom negotiated a deal for other adjacent lands but this made up the main chunk of the Celo Community.⁴³ W. H. Regnery financed the project and purchased the land for \$27, 375.⁴⁴

When the business of purchasing the land finished Arthur Morgan then switched his attention to other duties. Morgan established Celo as a non-profit corporation, which he accomplished under North Carolina laws. This allowed the community to be tax exempt and govern itself. Morgan, Picket, and Regnery named themselves directors of the organization. Next, the men needed to recruit people to live in Celo. They had moderate success.⁴⁵ There were already some interesting people outside the community that helped in its early history. Dr. Elpenor Ohle became the community's physician and later head of the Celo Health Center. Celo gave Dr. Ohle the freedom of practice that he wanted. He had become frustrated with the medical profession because of the lack of freedom. Arthur Morgan also notes Dorothy Thomas as being essential in the beginning of the Celo Community. Lastly, Robert and Dorothy Barrus who are mentioned earlier, contributed to the early history of the community.⁴⁶ In addition to these important early contributors to Celo, Morgan continued to search for people to live there. He recruited graduates from Madison College in Tennessee. Three families decided to make the

⁴³ Arthur Morgan's Papers "Notes from Memory," 2-3.

⁴⁴ Hicks, 74.

⁴⁵ Arthur Morgan's Papers, "Notes from Memory," 5.

⁴⁶ Arthur Morgan's Papers, "Transcription of Tape Made by Arthur Morgan: The Beginnings of Celo Community," Antioch University, Antiochiana, VIII G, Box 1, November 3, 1970, 4.

journey and live in Celo. The early years of the community were rough and there were many doubts. Community harmony could not be reached easily because of tough economic conditions of the area.⁴⁷

The relevance of Celo's history to the Arthur Morgan School is great. Celo Community's ideals and background have harbored fertile ground for the school to succeed. The way that Arthur Morgan began the community with the help of other similar minded people with just a few other private investors shows the relationship with the school. The idea of Celo Community and its existence was experimental, which allowed experimental people into the community to try new ways to succeed in society. When the idea of the Arthur Morgan School was brought to the community the experimental nature of these people allowed them to support the school and its experimental curriculum. Over the years the community backing of the Arthur Morgan School has been essential to its existence. Also due to the fact that early on the community had problems with unity and maintaining community life as described by Arthur Morgan the school helped the community to come together. "The school is needed here. Celo Community needs it, to achieve meaning and cohesion perhaps even survival."⁴⁸ The school, because of its similar ideals, gave the community a sense of what values Celo initially based itself on.⁴⁹

The acceptance of Celo residents to allow the school to become a part of the non-profit charter under the Celo Health Center also proved that community support allowed the school to begin and continue to educate the way it had always planned. Celo

⁴⁷ Arthur Morgan's Papers, "Notes from Memory," 5-6.

⁴⁸ Ernest Morgan's Papers, "The Arthur Morgan School: its Philosophy, Program, and Development, Antioch University, Antiochiana, AMS/CCI, Box 1, September 4, 1964. V.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

acceptance of the school under the charter of the health center gave the school the tax-exempt status it needed to financially exist.⁵⁰ By gaining land and tax exemption from the community the school has been able to retain private leadership without constraints from the government on the Arthur Morgan School's curriculum. Also money has come from other private grants. "Elizabeth reported that the Prynce Hopkins Fund has granted us another \$2500, making a total of \$10,000 in a three year period."⁵¹ The grants show that if people support the curriculum of a private school, support may come from places outside community. These grants have also enabled the school to keep to its ideological base by receiving money that does not have to go in a particular area of education.

Studying the early day-to-day affairs of the Arthur Morgan School depicts the ability of the school to keep its progressive roots. Experimental child centered education has always been the goal of the Arthur Morgan School. Ernest states:

"The purpose of the academic program, and, indeed, of the entire life of the school, is to open the children's eyes and minds; to arouse interest, aspiration and determination...to develop the habit of searching out what is the burden of the world's wisdom and judgment in reference to the main issues of life, and to give each child a new experience of the old religious sense is one and that is life, and how he lives it matter."⁵²

In this quote the schools objectives are mentioned, which are to prepare the child for life by getting him or her to enjoy what they are learning so it can be valuable for the future.

Despite the various work projects the school still emphasized the regular subjects. Ernest states: "the healthy motivation which develops in the community life of the school

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ernest Morgan's Papers, "Celo Health Education Corporation: Minutes of Board Meetings," Antioch University, Antiochiana, AMS/CCI, Box 1, January 9, 1965.

⁵² Ernest Morgan's Papers, "The Arthur Morgan School: Its Philosophy," II.

is reflected in vigorous academic performance.”⁵³ Sciences, English, math, social sciences, and French were taught but in different ways than most students of junior high age. Sciences like biology, astronomy, geology, and meteorology were studied, as Ernest Morgan described, in “the natural setting of the school” which provided “an unlimited laboratory.”⁵⁴

Social sciences, other sciences, and other wide-ranging studies were encouraged but not taught directly. Around the time of 1964 the school started to establish a library. With help from a librarian from outside the community a library at the Arthur Morgan School began. The staff promoted the students to study other sciences and social sciences at the library along with pleasure reading. Elizabeth Morgan noted, in a letter to Arthur Morgan dated September 29, 1966, that many students were interested in Science. At the time the Arthur Morgan School did not have laboratory sciences but she wanted to get a science newsletter to help the students pursue knowledge of science.⁵⁵ This was one way that the staff helped the students with interests of their own.

Students were motivated to pursue individual studies in various ways. Group discussions were the main way to motivate students to study independently. The whole school would meet regularly and discuss various topics. Ernest stated: “instead of trying to keep up with or get ahead of the group, a different type of social response was wanted, that of responding to a group atmosphere in which each person put forth his own best effort, with the motivation coming from inside.”⁵⁶ In other words students were

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Letter to Ernest Morgan to Elizabeth Morgan,” Antioch University, Antiochiana, AMS/CCI, Box 1, September 29, 1966.

⁵⁶ Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Arthur Morgan School: Its Philosophy,” II.

encouraged to add their unique contribution to the group discussions. Despite this students were not separated by level of achievement in their studies. Children of all levels worked together which helped them accept every one of all abilities as individuals rather than as competitors. Not only did group work result in cooperation it also helped each individual accept him or her self. Morgan noted: self-acceptance “reduces the pressure to blind conformity, and builds a solid base for cooperation. It facilitates the release of energy and imagination.”⁵⁷ The type of group cooperation and discussion described seemed, according to Morgan, to be the best way for each child to realize their full potential.

Not only were students pushed to enjoy studies outside the core curriculum, eventually they were able to have a period of unsupervised free study. By 1964 12 out of the 20 students at the Arthur Morgan School qualified for their own free study halls wherever or whenever they wanted. In the free study halls children did have to meet day goals or weekly goals to assure they were productive. Elizabeth Morgan noted the free study period in a letter to Ernest. She stated: “The free study period started today reacting throughout the school. The kids are taking so much responsibility in all areas.”⁵⁸ The students who qualified enjoyed their freedom and took advantage of it. Student account of the free study program shows their acceptance of it. One student listed some opinions of the free study. The student wrote: “The advantages and challenges of free study to me are: 1. to learn what conditions and environments are best for me to study in. 2. To see whether I can study with others, with one or two, or by myself. 3. The use of texts and

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Letter to Ernest Morgan from Elizabeth Morgan” Antioch University, Antiochiana, AMS/CCI, Box 1, April 6, 1964.

finding materials by my own force.”⁵⁹ Another student noted: “The advantage was simply that I could do anything I wanted to do at that time. It has taught me to use my time wisely.”⁶⁰ Not only did the children enjoy the free study time it also gave them power in making decisions on how to study, who to study with, and how to best manage the time given. The free study time played an essential role in the child-centered curriculum at the Arthur Morgan School.

Even though the community accepted the school and the staff ran it relatively smoothly there still were some problems with the government. Only after 3 years of existence the North Carolina Department of Education took the Arthur Morgan School off the states approval list. Three main reasons were cited for the states actions. “Non-certified teachers, and the lack of fire drills and of health inspections.”⁶¹ Calvin Criner worked for the states and supervised non-public schools. In a letter to Criner, Ernest explained the schools position. Ernest noted: “the school has one certified teacher for sixteen pupils... I cannot, offhand, think of any school, public or private, with a higher ratio of certified teachers to pupils.”⁶² He goes on about the other teachers at the Arthur Morgan School who are qualified but not certified and even mentions one teacher that is on the verge of certification. Later in the letter Ernest addresses the lack of fire drills and health inspections. He emphasized the need for fire drills and said the school would take action. The health inspections were not done because the inspector felt things were

⁵⁹ Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Arthur Morgan School: Its Philosophy,” II

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Minutes,” January 9, 1965.

⁶² Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Letter to Calvin Criner from Ernest Morgan,” Antioch University, Antiochiana, AMS/CCI, Box 1, December 14, 1964.

running smoothly. Despite this Ernest agreed to have a minimum number of visits a year by the health inspector. The school was quickly re-approved.⁶³

In addition to problems the school had with the state government it also had problems with some students and the freedom those students had. The school during a community board meeting reported that some students might be confused on how far their democratic power directing school business went. Liz Lotker, a counselor in one of the boarding house did not share her part of responsibility at the school. The staff asked her to leave. Some students were not happy with the decision and decided to protest. Parents of the protesting students sent a letter to the school. The letter stated: “if the students understood more clearly from the beginning what decisions they would be allowed to participate in and what decisions were administrative it might avoid this kind of difficulty.”⁶⁴ Another problem came up in this board meeting also concerning the students. The parents of one the students in the seventh grade took him out of the school to attend a school with “more disciplined study.”⁶⁵ Bob Barrus noted that many of the seventh grade boys were not studying and that the school needed to solve this problem.⁶⁶ Instead of solving this problem with more academic work the school did the exact opposite. Seventh graders were put to work on various projects to help with discipline. Elizabeth Morgan reported “that the new Pilot Plan for working with seventh graders, putting emphasis on work projects and minimizing academic work has been a success.”⁶⁷ The school solved the problem by reverting back to a main part of the curriculum;

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Minutes,” January 29, 1967.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Minutes,” April 29, 1967.

working.

Self-sufficiency has also played a role in the Arthur Morgan School's ability to keep its progressive roots. The school's capability of not relying on much outside money besides some individual grants, has allowed it to stay private and independent. Also, the methods of self-sufficiency used by the school played an essential role in the child-centered curriculum because the students usually worked at the school industries. At the Arthur Morgan School four ways to raise money and get the children to work were established. "Young people want, and urgently need to take part in the real work instead of being kept as house pets. We find that they get much satisfaction and validity from productive work, and grow rapidly in responsibility, maturity, and skill."⁶⁸ This quote from Ernest describes why the Arthur Morgan School developed such industries. The work is an essential part of the curriculum of the school. Also, the work provides the school with additional funds.

There were initially four different industries that the school started, all contributing to the funds of the Arthur Morgan School, but also contributing to the minds of the children. For example, Celo Laboratory Products created one way for the school to create funds. In addition it also provided a necessity to society. This industry "is a consumer-orientated mail order business, closely allied with the cooperative movement. It distributes quality-controlled vitamins and pharmaceuticals at far lower than those charged in most drug stores."⁶⁹ The lab also provided a good place to work for some students. Herb Smith ran the lab early on in its history. Smiths noted: "that it is a good

⁶⁸ Ernest Morgan's Papers, "Business Projects of the Arthur Morgan School," Antioch University, Antiochiana, AMS/CCI, Box 1, 1.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

educational tool” and that he “regularly uses two students, and more in times when there is greater need.”⁷⁰

Early on in the school’s history Celo Laboratory Products contributed some money but mostly broke even. Smith reported numerous times that the lab either had profits and losses but, overall breaking even. Smith reported in the minutes of the Celo board meeting “it will be a long hard fight if the business is to be paying.”⁷¹ After some time the school sold Celo Laboratory to Direct Drug Services out of Washington D.C. and received ten percent of sales over a two year period. Later the minutes of the board meeting reported that the contract with Direct Drug Services was extended because they were not contributing what they should have.⁷² In all the laboratory lasted a short time but contributed to the school what it could.

The Rummage Store provided a second industry of the school. Using contributions from friends and the community, consisting of clothing along with other items the students would clean them up and sell them for cheap prices. In addition to providing funds for the school this industry also helped people in the area who were not that well off to obtain essential items cheaply.⁷³

The rummage sales contributed small but needed amounts of money to the Arthur Morgan School. Early on in the school’s history in November of 1964 the Rummage sale reported that it made about \$140 in a month.⁷⁴ A report by Isabel Ballew, who ran the

⁷⁰ Arthur Morgan’s Papers, “Celo Health Education Corporation Minutes of Board Meeting,” Antioch University, Antiochiana, VIII G, Box 2, October 30, 1966.

⁷¹ Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Minutes,” January 29, 1967.

⁷² Arthur Morgan’s Papers, “Minutes,” November 28, 1969 and April 17, 1970.

⁷³ Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Business Projects,” 1-2.

⁷⁴ Arthur Morgan’s Papers, “Minutes,” November 14 1964, 1.

rummage at this time, in October of 1966, stated that: “business is booming. There is about \$400 in funds right now.”⁷⁵ Later In November of 1969 the board meeting of the Celo Health and Education Corporation reported that over the last two months the rummage accumulated \$570.⁷⁶ Over the 5-year period there had been an increase in the financial gains of the rummage sale contributing to the Arthur Morgan School what it could.

In addition to the Celo Laboratory and the Rummage sale the Celo Press also contributed to the self-sufficiency of the Arthur Morgan School. “Celo Press, the printing and publishing department of the school does both letterpress and offset printing. It has a variety of products and function, in addition to doing the printing for the school and related enterprises.”⁷⁷ The press printed most of the Memorial Society Movement’s, a movement promoting “dignity, simplicity, and economy in funeral practices,” literature.⁷⁸ This aspect of the Arthur Morgan School allows it to print what it needs itself without relying on someone else. Also the Celo Press allows the school to take on other printing services like the Memorial Service Movement and has allowed Ernest to publish his book *A Manual for Simple Burial*, which sold over 20,000 copies at the time.⁷⁹ The press enabled publication of the book. By 1966, just four years after the school opened, the report of the Celo Press in the minutes of the Celo board meeting stated that the press had \$5,000 of printing equipment. Most of the printing tools were second hand that came from various different locations.⁸⁰ The Celo Press, like the other industries, has also

⁷⁵ Arthur Morgan’s Papers, “Minutes,” October 30, 1966.

⁷⁶ Arthur Morgan’s Papers, “Minutes,” November 28, 1969.

⁷⁷ Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Business Projects,” 1.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Arthur Morgan’s Papers, “Minutes,” October 30 1966.

helped the schools raise a decent amount of money. In the three month of June to August 1965 the press reported that \$789 had been provided to the school.⁸¹ The next month of September the press made an additional \$166.⁸²

Lastly the School Store contributed some funds and gave students the opportunity to work. Ernest described the store as a “little project, run solely by students,” which “handles basic school supplies and local products. Its fortunes vary year to year with changing leadership.”⁸³ The store sold various items such as bathroom supplies, school supplies, and shirts. The school reported that for majority of the year 1966 the store made about \$200.⁸⁴ Throughout the years school store did not provide a huge amount of money but it gave the children a place to buy supplies and a place to work.

The students also worked in other areas in addition to the industries that helped the school raise money and get the children working. This additional work also provided an essential part of the school’s education process, also to its self-sufficiency. Ernest wrote: “It should be remembered that the businesses provide only a part of the work program. In addition students run the laundry, maintain the local telephone system, do cooking, cleaning, maintenance, land clearing and building.”⁸⁵ These chores followed in the prescription of education the Morgan’s tried to develop. In addition to the educational aspect, the chores also allowed the school another aspect of self-sufficiency. The work the children did maintaining the everyday chores of the school freed the school from having to hire outside help to do them.

⁸¹ Arthur Morgan’s Papers, “Statement of Income and Expenses,” Antioch University, Antiochiana, VIII G, Box 2, August 31 1965.

⁸² Arthur Morgan’s Papers, “Income for September, 1965,” Antioch University, Antiochiana, VIII G, Box 2, September 1965.

⁸³ Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Business Projects”, 2.

⁸⁴ Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Minutes,” October 30, 1966.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

The children enjoyed the industry of the Arthur Morgan School along with the additional work. Student approval keeps it as an essential part of the child based, democratic education. One student noted: “I think that just the opportunity to work has meant a lot to me.”⁸⁶ Another student stated: “My two highest points so far are working with Isabel every morning and doing laundry in the afternoon.”⁸⁷ Getting the kids to work and actually enjoying it was essential in the educational process of the Arthur Morgan School. Lastly a student wrote: “I think the biggest personal gain of mine has come from realizing the nature of ‘work’ and making some steps towards bettering myself on my worse point – the love of work or sense of responsibility or duty.”⁸⁸ The sense of responsibility that this student has accomplished is exactly the purpose of work program at the Arthur Morgan School.

Various accounts of staff and students show how valuable the school, and the methods it follows, had been in their life journey. James Pifer, of Michigan helped out at the Arthur Morgan School for a year. At first he saw the opportunity as just another job but came to enjoy it. Pifer stated: “I believe that the last seven months spent in the mountains of North Carolina provided me with some of the richest, most challenging and exhilarating moments of my life.”⁸⁹ Pifer went on to talk about how the problem solving of the everyday affairs helped everyone learn more about themselves.⁹⁰ The educational process of the Arthur Morgan School did not stop with the children it continued all the way up through the staff. Everyone would learn a little more about themselves. Students

⁸⁶ Ernest Morgan’s Papers, “Arthur Morgan School: Its Philosophy,” II.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

also noted how valuable the school had been in their education. One student wrote: “I think I have improved most this year in work and living habits, math and thoughtfulness. This year has been one of my most important years.”⁹¹ The quotes by the students are responses from questions that the staff had asked. Faculty of the Arthur Morgan School used the feedback to make necessary improvements.

“The tragedy of modern education – indeed, of childhood itself – in this wonderful mechanized culture of ours is the loss of reality, and of any valid sense of reality.”⁹² Elizabeth and Ernest Morgan realized the problems with society in their day and tried to solve them by opening the Arthur Morgan School. The school’s supportive community, non-profit status, and self-sufficiency enabled the school keep to its original ideology. The school has written a new chapter in the long history of progressive education and continues even today.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ernest Morgan, “Reality,” 1.

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