

Education in America, 1860-1950

by Steven Mintz

Resources Invested in Education				
	Spending on Education		Spending Per Child 15-19	Percentage of GNP
1860	\$60		\$5.33	1.4
1900	\$503		\$20.53	2.9

Improvements in Education					
	% Illiteracy 10 or older			High School Graduates	College Enrollment
	Total	White	Black		
1870	20 %	11	80	2.0	1.7
1900	11 %	6	45	6.4	4.0

	Proportion of Young Attending School	Average Days Attended By Pupils	Proportion of 17 Year Olds Graduating High School
1870	57	78	2
1890	69	86	3.5
1910	74	113	8.8
1930	81	143	29
1950	82	158	59

	Percent of 18-21 Year Olds Attending College	Percent of Adult Population Illiterate
1870	1.7 %	20 %
1890	3.0 %	13 %
1910	5.1 %	8 %
1930	12.4 %	4 %
1950	29.9 %	3 %

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How many days of school did a typical student attend in 1870?
2. What proportion of young people actually attended school?
3. How likely was such a student to graduate from high school or attend college?
4. Describe the changes that took place in educational expenditures, high school graduation, college enrollment, and literacy rates.