Changes in Beverly High School's Culture and Organizations in Response to World War One
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Abstract

In my paper I proved that Beverly High School's curriculum had changed once the war had started. I also showed that students' attitudes towards their country had changed. They had become more patriotic. I showed the changes that the school made and how these changes had on impact on Beverly High School students.

I showed these changes by looking through the Beverly High School Aegis books from 1914-1920 and recorded the change in the writings of the students. Before the war had started the writings in the Aegis were consisted of short stories and jokes that students had written. The old Aegis's also consisted of the scoring of Football games and other editorials. Once America had gotten involved with the war the Aegis began to run stories about the war that students had wrote, and they started to advertise things that the students could do articles, read the annual reports, and look in magazines to find the information I needed to write my paper.

The significance of my paper is as I said before to follow the change in high school curriculum and the high school students. It is to show when and how the curriculum changed. It is also to show the difference in the students’ attitudes toward America to get involved. It also kept track of the different men who had come to speak to the school about getting involved and it kept track of the things the students had done to help out America.

Previous to my paper there has not been anything done on my topic. I had to interpret stories in the aegis, look through newspaper
World War one had an impact on America’s high school students in both a negative and positive way. The curriculum of many of our nation’s schools changed drastically in order to support our country in the war. Beverly High School is one of the many schools that made a serious attempt to aid the war effort. Beverly High School adapted remarkably well to the changes brought on by the war and the students’ patriotism was brought to an all time high.

The one thing that had been constantly changing once World War I had started was the faculty in Beverly High School. Not only were the teachers leaving their jobs to serve in the war but also they were leaving their teaching jobs to fill the jobs of other men who had been drafted. They were taking over jobs in factories and other work places. The curriculum as a result of this was constantly changing with the constant hiring and rehiring of teachers. The number of faculty and students had decreased by over 100 in the span of one year. Even though the number of students was beginning to decrease the attitudes of those students still in school had changed. They were finally beginning to realize the importance of school and work and that school would only help them begin to become good citizens. [1]

After America entered the war in 1917 the high school curriculum began to change. Courses were introduced to benefit the war effort. The boys who had been introduced to military training at a young age in Boy Scouts were now offered opportunities in high school to take a course in military training. Military camps had never really been advertised before, and some had never even existed before the war. There were military camps all around Massachusetts now whose primary purpose was to teach military drills. On March 21, 1917 Mr. James Armory Sullivan paid a visit to Beverly High School to talk about one of the camps that the boys could attend. The camp he was talking about was located on Plum Island. [2] Almost once a month a sergeant from this camp would come to Beverly High School to recruit young boys to come and participate in the
activities. This camp taught the boys discipline and obedience to authority as the basis for all its training.

It was said that boys of the ideal fighting age were undisciplined and did not listen well to authority. The ideal fighting age was said to be eighteen. When the boys are at their physical peak. The camp on Plum Island taught them discipline and in so doing prepared them for war. There were some people that felt that high school boys were too young to undergo this kind of training. In the magazine “School and Society” N.C Shaeffer stated that military training was not essential in teaching boys to fight for their country. Although Shaeffer stated that military training is not essential in teaching boys to fight he did not give an alternate training method. He felt that the minds of boys were not yet ready to undergo that kind of training so therefore all it accomplished was improving their physical health. He felt that the physical strength boys gained from the drills will not be well put to use without mental skills. Yet the mental skills would not be gained until they went off to college and fully matured. The community itself according to Shaeffer typically did not feel that the boys were mentally ready for war, even though they may have been physically ready to go off to war. [3] (Appendix A)

The boys debate team in 1917 had a debate on whether or not “military drills should be made compulsory in BHS” both sides had done a good job but no decisions were made on the debate. [4]

In response to World War One, Beverly High School began to support various organizations designed to help in the War effort. One of the biggest organizations that Beverly High School supported was the Red Cross. Every student in the Beverly Public School District obtained a membership to the Junior Red Cross. One night a week teachers would show the students how to knit. The students in a matter of one year had produced 620 sweaters, 273 pairs of socks, 268 afghans and much more. The girls also attended sewing classes where they knitted hospital night shirts, bed socks, hot water
bottle covers, and the list goes on. (Appendix B) At the end of one year the students raised $228.89 to benefit the Red Cross by selling flags, carnations, and postcards. They collected stories, jokes, and pictures and made scrapbooks with them. During the Red Cross Christmas seal campaign the children sold 171,387 seals and made $1,713.87 for the organization. The sale of the seals was to help the suppression of tuberculosis. Beverly High School girls helped in soliciting members for the Red Cross Society. Before the war had started not many accounts of school children helping out the Red Cross had been written about and not too many students wrote about their patriotism or anything that had to do with our country but now that America was in the war every time a girl walked into a room the first words out of her mouth were “would you like to help support the Red Cross by buying seals?” Many wore Red Cross pins to show his or her support. [5]

Another organization that the student of Beverly High School supported was the United War Work Campaign. The United War Work Campaign was an organization started by Woodrow Wilson which united seven different organizations in the War effort. It brought together the Boys and Girls Club and six other organizations.

The students also did other jobs to help out the war by selling thrift stamps, and getting their parents to take out liberty bonds, which helped the government financially.

Another activity that the students participated in was the Students Army Training Corps. The Students Army Training Corps came to the high school to attempt to recruit college bound students. This organizations, main goal was to get college bound students to fight for their country. The college students who participated in this organization were paid and given housing and were given all of the basic military training they needed in order to fight for their country. They encouraged students to go to college. After they completed their college education they would then be inducted into the training corps when they felt they were mature enough to handle the responsibility of war. Once the
students had been enrolled, the organization would place them according to their physical and mental strengths and weaknesses.

Nearly 1000 children of all ages in Beverly cared for war gardens (otherwise known as “victory gardens”). These gardens began to be grown when America went to war. Girls and young children would grow vegetable gardens and fruit and ship them off to the soldiers as a way of helping. They also formed pig clubs and poultry clubs. The children would raise livestock that would be killed and sent off as well. Suggestions for food conservation were typed up on typewriters and sent to every home so they too could get involved. This was one of the small contributions that girls and young children could do for their country. [6]

The government was asking citizens to save peach stones and nutshells to be made into gas masks. In order to make gas masks the peach stones and nutshells had to be ground down into a paste. The high school students knew the importance of the gas masks in war and wanted to help out as much as they could. The students began to advertise in the Beverly High School Aegis to “save your peach stones” and that whichever class at the end of one week had to most peach stones would get a prize. Contests like these were often held after the war had started, to get kids involved with helping their country. By March 1918 the children had collected and shipped off 1097 pounds of nutshells and peach stones combined. [7] (Appendix C)

Patriotic symbols became more popular soon after America got involved with the war. Almost every student had an American flag sewn onto his/hers book bag, jacket and other articles of clothing. Every house had an American flag flying outside of their doorway and the “Star Spangled Banner” now had more meaning and more of an impact on people. Children at a young age were being taught how to be more patriotic and show their love for their country. The children also made up games and played them at recess such as “Under the Flag”. In this game young children were supposed to express their
love for America by showing who was a “true American”. Children would stand under the flagpole one at a time and wait for the wind to blow. Once the wind was blowing and the flag stood straight out they would make a wish. If the flag stayed blowing straight out until they were done making their wish then that was supposed to mean that they loved their country, and therefore the wish would come true. Young children made up this game so it was obviously not realistic but it did show that they loved their country. As the children grew up the games became more realistic. [8]

The war brought many hardships and grief to America, but it made a positive impact as well. During the war years all Americans were brought together and worked in unity to defeat a common enemy. The sense of patriotism and pride in America was at a high. High School students’ at Beverly High School during this time showed great pride in their country by supporting the Red Cross and other organizations. High school students’ desire to work hard not only in the classroom but also in the work force increased. They finally realized the importance of school and they wanted to succeed in the outside world during this time of war. On the negative side the amount of students going into high school and graduating high school had decreased. Therefore, the war had a positive impact as well as a negative impact.
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Footnotes

[1] B.S Hurd, *Municipal document for 1918 of the City of Beverly, Ma. containing the Address of the mayor, and the Annual Reports for the Year*, Pg 160 (Beverly Educational Archives)


*Beverly High School Aegis* April 1917, vol. 16, number 7, pg. 155 (Beverly Educational Archives)

[3] N C Schaeffer, “Should our educational system include activities whose special purpose is preparation for war?”, *School and Society* F27 ’15, vol. 1, number 9, pg. 289-295 (Salem State College)


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