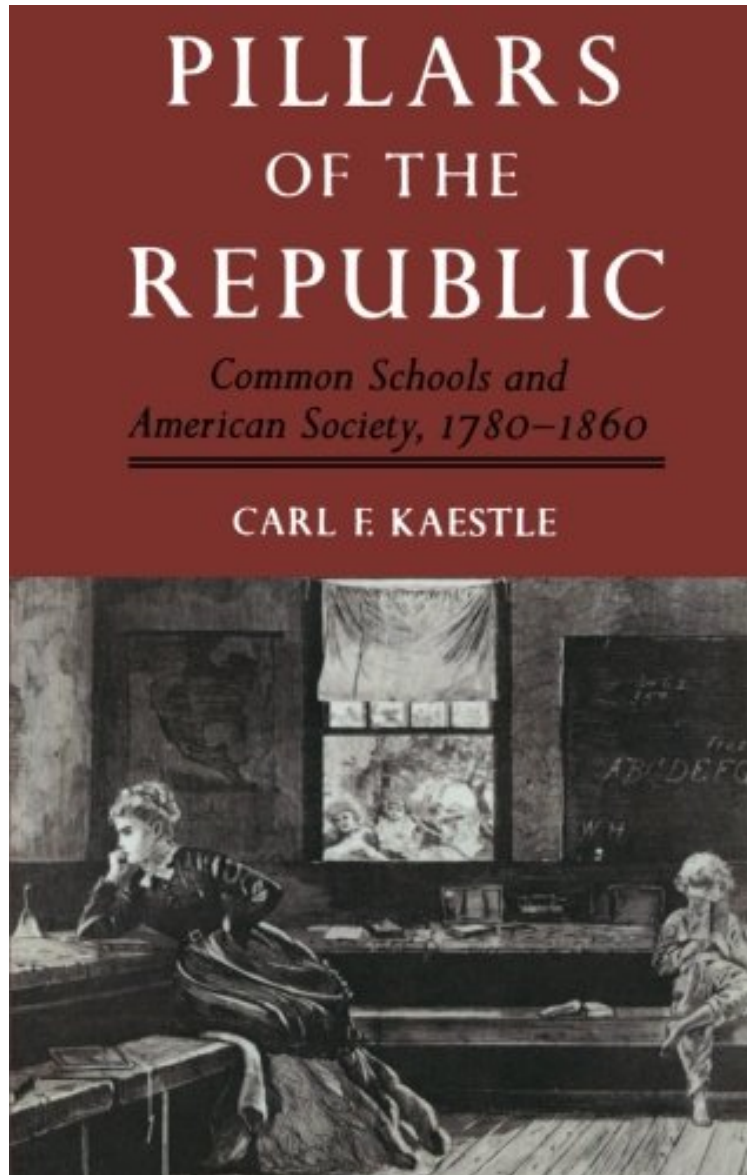


[Free] Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860 (American Century)

Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860 (American Century)

Carl Kaestle

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#621403 in Books Hill and Wang 1983-03-01 1983-03-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x .3 x 5.50l, .57 #File Name: 0809001543288 pagesCondition: Used - Average | File size: 24.Mb

Carl Kaestle : Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860 (American Century) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860 (American Century):

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. From Localism to Centralization!
By Kevin Currie-Knight
As a graduate student in Education, I must say that *Pillars of the Republic* is an essential read. While there have been a few different histories of American public education, Kaestle's is the first I know of to focus exclusively on the early period of American history (starting in 1780). The first several chapters focus on the educational outlets in the early founding-and-shortly-thereafter period, when children of the rich and middling classes were generally educated in small and roughshod schools that were often supported both by local taxes and parent tuition. These schools generally had short terms, were not divided by grade level, and had curricula consisting of the teacher instructing students with books brought from students' homes. The middle chapters cover the period (early 1800's) where the states and localities argued with the question of how to educate more students (particularly of the working class and immigrants). More schools were set up (supported by local property taxes) in a quest to educate a larger segment of students. The book's last chapters focus on the middle 1800's - where there was an increasing zeal for standardization of quality in schools and more state control. "Normal schools" were established to teach instructional methods to teachers, the office of State Superintendent was invented, and localities lost more and more control of schooling in favor of state control, which was not without serious dissent from democrats of the Jeffersonian tradition. Through it all, Kaestle writes in a very readable style while never glossing over any detail. Nothing that he says goes without being backed up by evidence, be it quotes from a source or statistics from the time. As another reviewer notes, the book is certainly academic and probably not for the casual reader but, at the same time, it can easily be read by the interested and motivated layreader. What was of most interest to me was the story of a nation founded on the idea of skepticism toward centralized government slowly evolving a more and more standardized education system. Kaestle lets us see both sides of this historic debate: those who were for centralization as a means of guaranteeing consistency in education, and those against centralization as a violation of the localism America was (in part) founded on. A very interesting book that no one interested in educational history should miss. For a good read that, in some way, picks up where *Pillars of the Republic* leaves off is *An Elusive Science: The Troubling History of Education Research*, which starts in the early 20th century and deals with the "professionalization" of schooling and the "scientizing" of pedagogy.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great for educators
By TM
Good comprehensive overview of the history of American schools. It is not the most engaging writing style, but the amount of time and energy put into researching it is amazing. This will give anybody an idea of how public schools got started.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Solid book
By Dale
This book provides a solid overview of the foundations of education in the United States. It is a must need for any education course to set down the roots of education.

Pillars of the Republic is a pioneering study of common-school development in the years before the Civil War. Public acceptance of state school systems, Kaestle argues, was encouraged by the people's commitment to republican government, by their trust in Protestant values, and by the development of capitalism. The author also examines the opposition to the Founding Fathers' educational ideas and shows what effects these had on our school system.

An eloquent and thoughtful essay, one of those glances back in time which shows us where we are. Kaestle leads us to understand why uniform, centralized public-school systems evolved out of haphazard educational alternatives, yet he also reflects on what has been lost, in variety, responsiveness, individual choice, and local control, as this nation has pressed on with an educational 'modernity' ever more centralized and vapid. A very wise and compassionate book.

Kenneth A. Lockridge, University of Michigan
Extremely valuable and insightful. Joseph F. Kett, University of Virginia
A splendid achievement. In assessing traditional and new interpretations of pre-Civil War common schools Kaestle has given us a fresh understanding of troublesome controversies. Especially notable is the precision he brings to our awareness of the interrelationships between ideology, social and cultural change, and leadership. This exposition, often enlivened by vivid illustrations, is always readable.

Merle Curti, University of Wisconsin
About the Author
Carl F. Kaestle is University Professor of Education, History, and Public Policy at Brown University. He is the author of numerous books on the history of education, including, *Literacy in the United States: Readers and Reading Since 1880*.