



John C. Zachos achieved great success as teacher, lecturer, and writer. He devoted most of his life to the cause of education and developed a new method for teaching adults and the illiterate.

John Zachos: Cincinnatian from Constantinople

by Eva Catafygiotu Topping

Fate decreed that the long life of John C. Zachos (1820-1898) should be spent in many places.¹ The Greek Revolution of 1821 made him first a refugee from his birthplace, and soon after an orphan; and then while still a young schoolboy learning the letters of his ancient, native tongue, an exile from Greece. In the new trans-Atlantic republic Zachos attended four schools in three different states. A teacher for more than half a century, he taught in the schools of Ohio, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts, if the pulpit be another form of the teacher's desk. In the course of his long academic career Zachos was the valued associate of several great pioneers in American education and he participated in three noble, bold experiments in democratic education.

For a quarter of a century the expatriate Greek lived in Ohio. Sixteen of these years were passed in Cincinnati, his first home in America. Like another Greek, Homer's Odysseus, Zachos experienced life in places distant from his birthplace. Wherever he went, he rejoiced in hearty discourse with his fellow mortals. The world was his schoolroom, humanity his subject, the perfection of the human soul through freedom and education his single purpose.

John Zachos was born December 20, 1820 in Constantinople, capital of the Ottoman Empire since 1453. For a thousand years his birthplace had been one of the world's greatest cities. The Greeks who built it always called it the Queen City of the world. Although slender minarets had altered the multi-domed, Byzantine silhouette of Constantinople, Greek life continued in the imperial city, assuming new roles that would shape Greek and Turkish history alike.

Both of John's parents were Greeks, belonging to the influential, cultivated Greek community in the Turkish capital. Nicholas, his father, was a prosperous merchant, who also served the sultan's court as interpreter. He thereby enjoyed diplomatic rank and privileges. A fearless patriot, Nicholas Zachos had joined a secret revolutionary society dedicated to the liberation of the Greek people from Turkish rule. His mother was a wellborn lady of education and brave spirit. She bore the lovely name of an ancient goddess, Euphrosyne. Zachos gave the name in 1853 to his first daughter, whom his mother would never see.

The outbreak of the Greek War of Independence on March 25, 1821 dramatically affected John's destiny almost at the beginning of his life. When news

of the revolt in the Greek peninsula reached Constantinople, the Turks retaliated by hanging the Greek patriarch and massacring the city's Greek population. Betrayed as a member of the revolutionary society that had instigated the revolt, Nicholas Zachos was arrested and condemned to death by hanging. Fortunately, however, bribes saved his life, and the family escaped in a Greek boat to mainland Greece. With his parents and younger sister John was now a refugee. The years in Constantinople had been too few for him to have any memory of it. Yet he never forgot the famous city of his birth. Many years later, a young editor in Ohio, Zachos inserted into a journal a description of the legendary beauty of his birthplace.²

The Zachos family encountered difficulties and dangers in revolutionary Greece. The elder Zachos immediately obtained a commission in the revolutionary army. He maintained and commanded a troop of Greek soldiers fighting the Turks in the mountains of Thessaly. During a battle in which the Turks outnumbered the Greek rebels, Nicholas Zachos was killed, a hero in the sacred cause of Greek freedom. John, his only son, was then four years old.

Thus Euphrosyne Zachos was left a young widow with two small children. She was responsible for them and the family fortune. The fighting forced the fatherless family to move from place to place. When the mainland was no longer safe, Mrs. Zachos hired a boat and sought refuge for her family and other dependents among the Aegean Islands, beyond the reach of the Turks. John's education began in these unsettled conditions. He first learned to read and write under a fig tree:

The tree was laden with rich ripe figs, and from time to time this luscious fruit would drop in the midst of the little school. Then would ensue a grabbing and scrambling for a few seconds until the prize had disappeared into some eager mouth and order was restored by the long switch of the old pedagogue.³

In view of his long career in education, it is interesting that Zachos' earliest memory is that of school and teacher.

Sometime before 1827 Euphrosyne Zachos remarried. Her second husband was Nicholas Silivergos, a well educated gentleman, secretary to Greece's first president. Through her husband's official connections, she became acquainted with Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, the young Philhellene from Boston. In Greece since early 1825, Howe had served the Greek forces as surgeon. During the fall of 1827 he was in charge of distributing American aid in Greece. John's mother then decided to send her son to America where he could receive a better education than was available in Greece at that time. Other American Philhellenes had brought Greek war-orphans to the United States. Dr. Howe agreed to take John with him when he returned to America.

On November 12, 1827 the American relief ship *Jane* sailed from Poros,

bound for New York. Among its passengers were Dr. Howe and four Greek children, including John Zachos.⁴ John celebrated his seventh birthday somewhere on the wintry Atlantic Ocean. The *Jane* reached New York on February 5, 1828, and America received a seven-year-old Greek immigrant. John was in the New World beginning a new life. He never saw Greece again.

Dr. Howe took John to Boston and arranged for him to enter Mt. Pleasant Classical Institute in Amherst, Massachusetts. The Greek schoolboy resumed his education in an American school under the cold New England sky. Founded in 1827 by Martin Thayer, a wealthy Philadelphian, Mt. Pleasant Institute was housed in his stately, double-winged, columned residence on a hill overlooking Amherst village. A staff of a principal and seven or eight teachers supervised the education of about seventy boys. The school combined traditional and progressive elements: the students governed themselves and the curriculum included besides the classical course, "commercial theory," and "physical culture in the gymnasium."⁵

John probably remained in Amherst until 1833, when for unknown reasons the Institute folded. Mrs. Silivergos had paid for the first three years of John's schooling. But when her husband's extravagance at the court of King Otho had exhausted the Zachos fortune, he had depended for support on American friends, probably the members of the old Greek Committee in Boston. Now, aged thirteen, John was on his own, to support and educate himself in a foreign country.

Manual-Labor institutes, new in the early 1830's, offered him a way to continue his education. Combining study with work, these schools enabled students to be self-supporting. Reformers and Jacksonian democrats believed that these schools would erase the line dividing intellectuals from farmers and workers. After a short time as a printer's boy, John somehow made his way to the small town of Bristol in eastern Pennsylvania, where he enrolled in Bristol Manual-Labor College. The Rev. Chauncey Colton, an Episcopalian minister, had founded it in 1833.⁶ Here John spent several years of his early teens, training his hands and mind. Bristol Manual-Labor College proved a cross-roads for John. His training in mechanics enabled him to perfect an invention which he first patented in 1876 and again in 1883 and 1886. And it was the Rev. Colton who directed him to another Episcopalian school, Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio.

In 1836, like thousands of native-born Americans, young Zachos turned his steps westward, to the open land beyond the Alleghenies. For him, crossing these mountains was truly decisive. He was not only becoming an American, he was also about to become a Buckeye. John came to Ohio to study in 1836. He left twenty-six years later, a prominent educator and author.

John enrolled in the freshman class at Kenyon, the second Greek to study at the new college. The first had been John Anastakis, his shipmate on the *Jane*, who arrived at the college in April, 1828 with a letter in which Peter

Stuyvesant of New York recommended the "Grecian boy" to Bishop Philander Chase, founder and first president of Kenyon. Stuyvesant also expressed satisfaction "that the time when the learning of ancient Greece is planted in the western wilderness, the ignorance of modern Greece should be refreshed under its shade."⁷

Bishop C. P. McIlvaine, Chase's successor, received the second "Grecian boy" to refresh his ignorance at Kenyon. During Zachos' years, the good Bishop quarreled bitterly with the faculty, started an ambitious building program, and preached two sermons every Sunday to captive students in the dark, cold basement of an unfinished chapel. A pessimistic undergraduate wrote in 1840, "Kenyon seems to be on its last legs, if it is not down off them now."⁸

Nevertheless, Kenyon students were well taught. Studying by candles and lard oil lamps, they learned much. Zachos followed the prescribed curriculum, enjoying particularly the courses in ancient and modern languages and literatures. At Kenyon he discovered and learned to love Shakespeare. At the same time he studied the cultural heritage which his native Greece had bequeathed to the world. Here too the Greek student developed oratorical skills, which later made him known as "Greek Zachos of the silver tongue."⁹ In the "western wilderness" Zachos became a true *philologus*, worthy of his ancestors.

Zachos graduated from Kenyon with honors on August 5, 1840. Commencement exercises consisted of an alteration of music and oratory.¹⁰ T. Stanley Matthews, a graduate from Cincinnati, delivered the first of twelve orations: John C. Zachos, of Athens, Greece, delivered the fifth and tenth. That he was the only orator with two speeches is a tribute to his eloquence. Homer—the title appeared in Greek letters on the program—was the subject of his first speech, the traditional "Greek Oration", always delivered in classical Greek. The second speech also had a Greek subject, "Greece: Influence of her Memorials and Literature," John's two orations testify to passionate pride in his Greek origins. Although the new Bachelor of Arts gave Athens as his address, it is unlikely that John had ever been in that city, which in 1840 was the capital of Greece and the residence of his mother and sister. The listing "John C. Zachos, Athens, Greece," expresses an immigrant's nostalgia and pride.

Cincinnati was well represented at John's commencement. In addition to his classmate from Cincinnati, two other Cincinnatians spoke, the Rev. S. G. Gassaway and Dr. Daniel Drake. Dr. Drake, the Benjamin Franklin of the West, gave the final oration. The three Cincinnatians proved a happy omen for John's future.

Alone of the Class of 1840 John had no home to go to with his new degree. But he had made good friends at Kenyon. One of them, Stanley Matthews, took his Greek classmate home with him. Thus, John Zachos, born in the ancient Queen City on the Bosphorus, found his first home in America in the Queen City on the Beautiful River of the Indians. The two friends are listed in the Cincinnati Directory of 1842: "Stanley T. Matthews, law student, boards T. J.

Matthews”; and “John C. Zachos, teacher, boards T. J. Matthews.”¹¹ A former professor at Transylvania College in Lexington and later president of Woodward College, Mr. Matthews offered a congenial home to Cincinnati’s first Greek.

In 1840 Cincinnati was boastful, brash, and booming, the right city for bright, young men. It was already the “pork shop”¹² of the nation, and the book press and machine shop of the West, as well as the country’s busiest inland port. A thousand manufactories produced tools, carriages, furniture, soaps, candles, clothing, whiskey—everything needed on an expanding frontier. General William Henry Harrison’s candidacy for the presidency in 1840 symbolized Cincinnati’s arrival on the national scene of power and prestige. Somebody probably told Zachos how in 1824 Harrison had enthusiastically supported the Greek Revolution, and served as chairman of the local Greek Committee, which raised money for the Greeks and urged Congress to send the American Mediterranean Fleet against the Turks.¹³

The two graduates of a small college in a remote village now found themselves in the “Athens of the West.” Led by transplanted New Englanders, Cincinnatians had created another Boston. They were busily publishing magazines, books, papers, texts of all kinds, pamphlets and poetry, and energetically organizing societies, lectures, and libraries. A thousand Unitarians challenged religious and social orthodoxy. New ideas flourished. Literati opposed slavery and advocated social reforms. Schools, seminaries, institutes, and colleges welcomed students from the South and East as well as the West. Matthews and Zachos could choose any profession and prepare for it in Cincinnati.

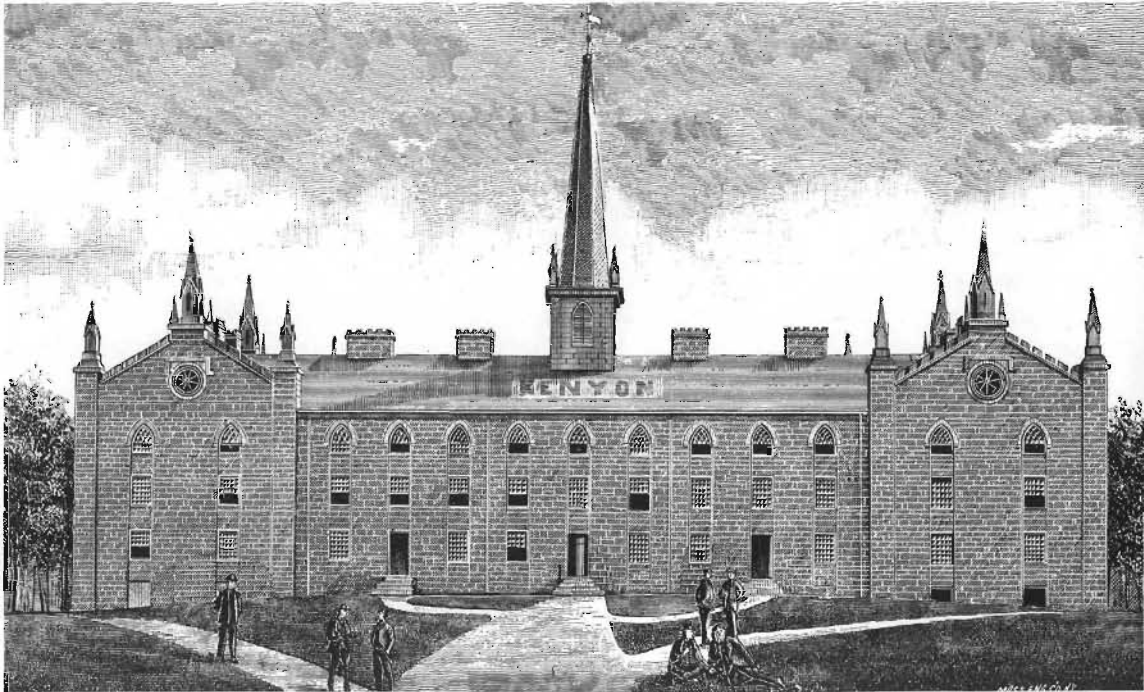
Emancipated from Bishop McIlvaine’s evangelical sermons, the two young men explored Cincinnati’s exhilarating intellectual world. Since he had no economic problems Matthews promptly began to study law in the office of Salmon P. Chase. Finishing two years later, he moved to Tennessee where he practiced law, and edited a Democratic paper. In 1844 he returned to Cincinnati and continued in law and journalism.

Zachos decided on medicine for a career. The example of his patron, Dr. Samuel Howe, may have influenced his choice. Furthermore, Cincinnati had at that time several medical schools of repute. Dr. Daniel Drake had long since put this city on the medical map. But before he could begin medical studies, Zachos had to earn some money. So he taught school, as indicated by the Directory of 1842. Two years later, the Directory of 1844 lists “John C. Zachos, medical student, Mussey’s office.” John’s professor, Dr. Reuben Mussey, was a world-famous surgeon and member of the distinguished faculty of the Medical College of Ohio.¹⁴ After three years of medical studies, Zachos decided against a career in medicine, and did not take a medical degree. He preferred the teacher’s pencil to the surgeon’s scalpel. The human mind interested him more than the body.

Armed with the B.A. and an A.M. granted by Kenyon in 1843. Zachos re-



Stanley Matthews, a classmate of Zachos' at Kenyon College, pursued a law and journalistic career in Cincinnati. Matthews and Zachos both spoke at their commencement, and were two of the twelve founders of the Cincinnati Literary Club in 1849.



COMMENCEMENT OF KENYON COLLEGE

AND

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5TH, 1840, 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ A. M.

PRAYER.

MUSIC.

1. ORATION—Literary Popular Assemblies, with English Salutatory, - T. STANLEY MATTHEWS,
Cincinnati.
2. LATIN ORATION—Cicconis Ingenium, - - - - - CHARLES R. RHODES,
Zanesville.
3. ORATION—Foreign Travel, - - - - - WILLIAM SPEER,
Pittsburg, Pa.

MUSIC.

4. ORATION—Political Science, - - - - - A. BANNING NORTON,
Mount Vernon.
5. GREEK ORATION—"Ομνος, - - - - - JOHN C. ZACHOS,
Athens, Greece.
6. ORATION—Influence of Enthusiasm, - - - - - MANDEVILLE THUM,
Paris, Ky.

MUSIC.

7. ORATION—Submission to Law, - - - - - A. BALDWIN NORTON,
Mount Vernon.
8. ORATION—Fame and the Future Life, - - - - - CHARLES R. RHODES,
Zanesville.

MUSIC.

9. ORATION—Christian Patriotism, - - - - - RICHARD S. KILLIN,
London, England.
10. ORATION—Greece: Influence of her Memorials and Literature, - JOHN C. ZACHOS,
Athens, Greece.

MUSIC.

11. DISSERTATION—Principles of Protestantism, - - - - - *REV. S. G. GASSAWAY, A. B.
(Candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity,) Cincinnati.
12. DISSERTATION—Signs of the Times, - - - - - REV. D. W. TOLFORD,
(Candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity,) Ohio City.
13. DISSERTATION—Ministerial Vigilance, - - - - - JOHN HENSHAW, A. B.
(Candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity,) Millersock, Va.
14. DISSERTATION—Agency of the Spirit in the Propagation of the Gospel, - JAMES JAY OKILL, A. B.
(Candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity,) New-York City.

MUSIC.

15. ORATION-- - - - - - REV. JOHN UFFORD, A. B.
(Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts,) Maumee City.
16. ORATION--The Anomalies of War; with Valedictory Addresses, - EDWARD W. SYLE,
London, England.

MUSIC.

DEGREES CONFERRED.

MUSIC.

Rev. S. G. Gassaway, of Cincinnati, will deliver an Address before the Nu Pi Kappa Society.

MUSIC.

Daniel Drake, M. D., of Cincinnati, will deliver an Address before the Philomathesian Society.

MUSIC.

BENEDICTION.

* Excused.

sumed teaching. In 1848 he was "Professor of Mathematics in Dr. Colton's Academy."¹⁵ Colton was John's old teacher from Bristol Manual-Labor College. He had come to Cincinnati in 1841 as rector of Grace Episcopal Church, but could not resist founding schools. He first established the Academy in which his former pupil became a colleague, Professor Zachos. Later he founded St. John's College.

While other restless Americans rushed to the goldfields of California in 1849, John Zachos was settling down in Cincinnati. On July 26, 1849, at the height of a devastating cholera epidemic, he married a teacher, Harriet Tompkins Canfield, a seventh generation American. The descendant of Thomas Canfield who landed at Plymouth early in the seventeenth century, Harriet was born in New Philadelphia, Ohio on January 15, 1824.¹⁶ Six children were born of the Zachos-Canfield marriage. The oldest was born in Cincinnati and named Ainsworth Yeatman for two of Zachos' close friends.

A few months later, twelve young men, including Zachos, his friends Ainsworth Spofford and Stanley Matthews, won immortality in Cincinnati annals by founding The Literary Club. The immortal dozen were teachers, lawyers, and a painter, who were serious, sociable, and fond of talking. At the first meeting on October 29, 1849 all twelve founders were present.¹⁷ After prolonged debate they adopted a constitution. Matthews, R. H. Stephenson, and Zachos formed a committee which proposed as the question to be discussed at the next meeting, "Ought a system of universal and liberal education to be conducted at the public expense in this country?" They liked large questions. As enterprising as their city, in May, 1850 the Club sponsored Emerson's first visit to Cincinnati. They had private discussions with the Concord Sage, took him on a picnic to Fort Ancient and so impressed him that Emerson later described them as a "knot of excellent young men."¹⁸

Of the twelve founders of The Literary Club, three achieved sufficient fame and eminence to be included in *The Dictionary of American Biography*. They are Stanley Matthews, United States Senator and Justice of the Supreme Court; Ainsworth Rand Spofford, Librarian of Congress; and John Celivergos Zachos, author, inventor, and educator. Friends together in their salad days at the Club, they gained their laurels in Washington and New York.

Amiable, witty and with an innate flair for drama, Zachos sparkled in the company of the Club's New Englanders and Westerners. He enjoyed good conversation and fellowship. For the meetings of the first years he composed poetry and read papers.¹⁹ Enthusiastic new member Rutherford B. Hayes, Kenyon, Class of 1842, recorded in his diary on November 3, 1850, "Zachos made a good speech on teachers."²⁰ It was the subject already the closest to the speaker's heart.

In 1894, John Herron, a Club member since 1849, recalled Zachos' picturesque personality and made him the subject of a paper. At that time he sent a letter to Zachos in New York, asking for "a contribution to the budget." It was

an unusual request to make of someone who had been gone from the Club thirty-two years.²¹ Herron's letter touched Zachos' memories of youthful escapades and of the "genial and friendly club." Zachos ended his answer to Herron with these verses:

*And so, farewell, my friend, and all that still remember me;
I follow in that mighty throng that sail "the unknown sea."
There shall we reach another land,
And clasp each other by the hand,
As brothers who should be.*²²

The Literary Club and its Greek founder from Constantinople had not forgotten one another after all.

By the beginning of Zachos' second decade in Cincinnati he had married, helped found a literary society, and advanced in his chosen career. He now was the co-owner and principal of the Cincinnati Female Seminary on the southeast corner of Ninth and Walnut. His partner, Miss Margaret Coxe, had founded the school in 1843. Well-regarded as an institution of "high rank", in 1850 it had a staff of ten teachers and one hundred and twenty pupils. Always ready to experiment, Zachos developed an educational method that "repudiates the commonplace routine, with its feeble results . . . and infuses a new spirit into both teacher and pupils."²³

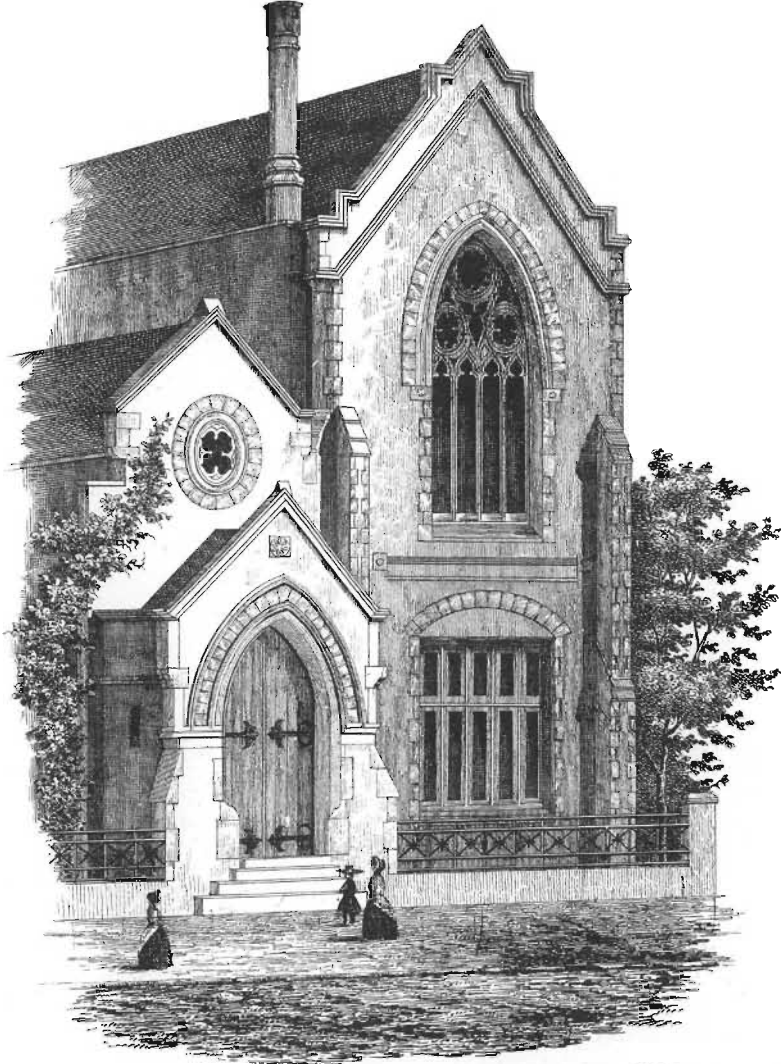
The successful teacher and administrator turned author in 1851, when the local firm, W. W. Derby & Co., published Zachos' first book, *The New American Speaker*. To this hefty book of five hundred and fifty-two pages belongs the honor of being the first book published by a member of The Literary Club. Widely used, it went into four editions by 1854.²⁴ The fourth edition was reprinted in 1857. In New York another edition was issued in 1865. In his first book Zachos included selections by Ohio writers: Dr. Drake, Grimke, Foote, and the Rev. Chauncey Colton.

A second book followed the next year, *Introductory Lessons in Reading and Elocution*, a work of collaboration with Richard Greene Parker. Zachos is identified on the title page as "A Native Greek." While he wrote this book, he remembered his birthplace and his mother. "Constantinople" illustrates the vagaries of English spelling.²⁵ Milton's verses containing his mother's name illustrate "Brisk or Lively Movement":

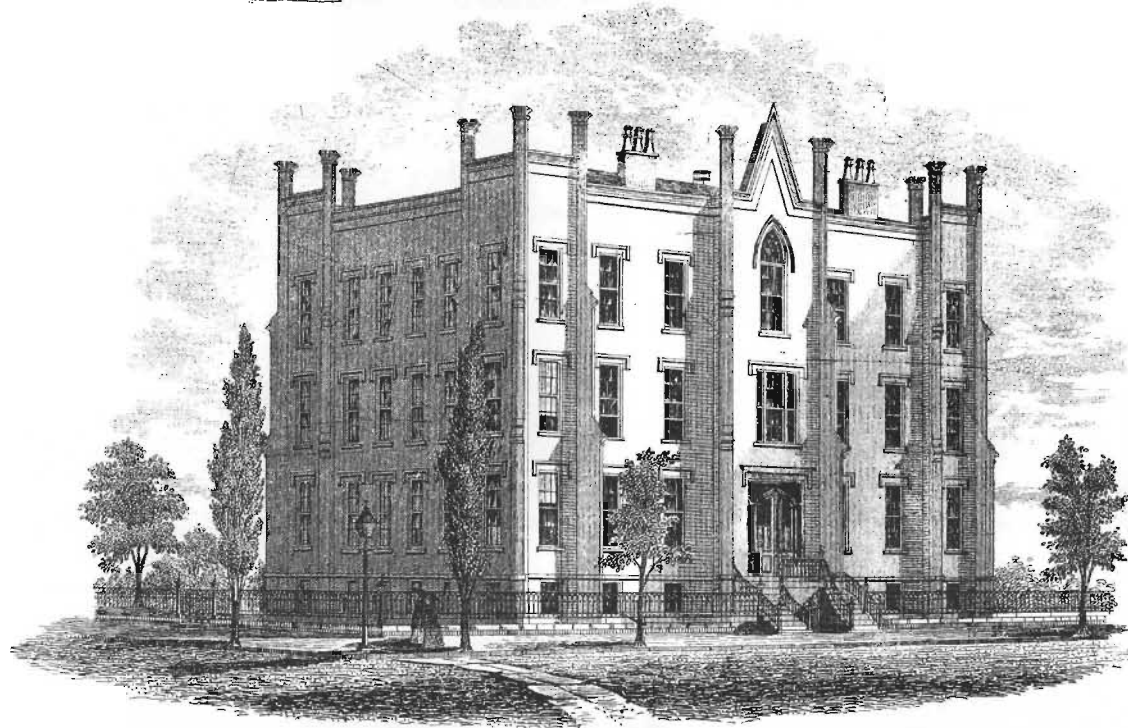
Come, thou goddess, fair and free,
In heav'n yclep'd Euphrosyne:²⁶

The nostalgia of the "Native Greek" had already lasted twenty-five years. His first book had contained many selections referring to Greece.

Before his second book was off the press Zachos had moved to Dayton, where he and Miss Coxe became the co-principals of Cooper Female Institute, an "attractive and scholarly" school. Incorporated in 1844 by several prominent citi-



Miss Margaret Coxe founded the Cincinnati Female Seminary in 1843. Later Zachos joined her as co-owner and principal of the school which was regarded as an institution of "high rank" in the city.



zens of Dayton, the school enjoyed a reputation throughout Ohio.²⁷ Although Zachos had left Cincinnati for a much smaller town, he advanced professionally because he now became a teacher of teachers.

Intense professional activity in several directions marks this period of Zachos' career. During the Dayton years of 1851-1854 the Cooper Female Institute engaged only a fraction of his time and energies. He became extremely active in the newly-organized Ohio State Teachers Association, attending the semi-annual meetings, organizing special groups, like the Association for the Advancement of Female Education. He not only spoke at meetings but also presented reports on the role of the teacher in the classroom, spelling reform, the use of phonetics, the place of mathematics and classics in the curriculum of girls' schools. An experienced teacher, administrator, and successful author of texts, Zachos spoke with assurance and authority. His criticism was always direct and pungent:

*The drawling over a language five or six years, with so little fruit of scholastic attainment, should not be tolerated; yet I am afraid any such interference with the sacred right of dunces, would strike a heavy blow at some of our schools and colleges.*²⁸

In this same period Zachos began to teach and lecture at Teachers Institutes. These were structured to broaden teachers' knowledge and to improve their teaching skills. Zachos appeared frequently at these institutes, exhorting teachers to excellence, emphasizing their important role in a democratic society. He also taught his favorite subjects, literature and rhetoric, the written and spoken word.

For two years, 1852 and 1853, the *Ohio Journal of Education* opened to Professor Zachos of Dayton a third avenue to the schoolrooms of the entire state. An editor of the first two volumes of this comprehensive educational journal, he campaigned for the improvement of education. In the first volume he also published several interesting articles of his own on literature and literary criticism.²⁹

In these activities Zachos was associated with Lorin Andrews. Andrews had left Kenyon without a degree in 1840. In 1847 he abandoned a career in law and "With a devotion as pure and unselfish as ever burned in the bosom of a Missionary of the Cross" he turned to reform of education in Ohio.³⁰ Zachos was one of his tireless assistants in the decade before the Civil War. They served together on committees and appeared at Teachers Institutes. With Andrews began Zachos' association with important educational reformers.

At the meeting of the Ohio State Teachers' Association at Columbus in December, 1853, Professor Zachos met Horace Mann, America's foremost reformer of schools. The tall, erect, first president of Antioch College and the delegate from Montgomery had both mutual interests and a mutual friend, Dr.

Samuel Howe. In fact, against Howe's advice, Mann had come to create a co-educational, non-sectarian Harvard in the western wilderness at Yellow Springs, Ohio. The new college had opened in the fall and Mann was recruiting faculty. He needed a principal for the Preparatory Department at Antioch to replace an incompetent incumbent. Impressed by Zachos, Mann offered this important position to his friend's Greek protege.

In 1854 Zachos moved to Yellow Springs, professor at Antioch College and principal of the Preparatory School. For two years he worked closely with Horace Mann, sharing his ideals and commitment to liberal education for men and women. Zachos was respected in the town and college alike. Long after he had left Yellow Springs a resident recalled him "as a highly educated gentleman, and well qualified for his position which he held in the college, which at that time was large."³¹

Mann and Zachos did not confine their teaching to Antioch. Both traveled the circuit of Teachers Institutes, eager to encourage and improve teacher training. In the summer of 1855 Zachos taught at an Institute at Oxford, Ohio. Forty-two years later one of the teachers present described him:

Zachos was a Greek of fine Oriental temperament . . . he was in the flush of young manhood . . . His hair . . . was then jet black: his small, lithe, graceful body was clad in neat elegant attire; he wore a diamond, and carried in his white hand an elastic cane, which seemed a part of him, so constantly did he use it in gesticulation . . . he practised with exquisite effect the dramatic art of story-telling. I retain a lively recollection of his standing on a table in the campus of Miami University, and narrating, with much vivacity, to a company of several hundred ladies and gentlemen, a series of myths and fairy tales.³²

A year later, this gifted teacher fell victim to academic politics. At the trustees' meeting of September, 1856, Mann recommended the permanent appointment of Zachos as principal of the Preparatory Department. Trying to force Mann to resign because they feared his religious liberalism, the trustees twice rejected his recommendation of Zachos. Depressed at the loss of "one of the best men we could have,"³³ Mann considered resignation, but remained at his post to battle the trustees until his death in 1859.

After an absence of six years, Zachos and his family then returned to Cincinnati in the fall of 1857. A teacher without position, with a wife and five children to support at a time of national economic panic, Zachos resumed his career as best he could. The Cincinnati Directories of these years reflect the uncertainties of his situation. In 1858 he is listed as "lecturer", in 1859 as "Prof. John C. Zachos." He does not appear at all in the Directory of 1860. That of 1861 lists "John C. Zachos, teacher." The last listing is identical with the first, that of 1842. It appears that during these years he had no permanent

position and that he lectured and taught at different schools and at Teachers Institutes.

In this last period of residence in the Queen City Zachos wrote and published four books. In 1858, Rickey, Mallory & Co. of Cincinnati published the first two, *The Primary School Speaker* and *The High School Speaker*. The latter was reprinted by another local firm, R. W. Carroll & Co., in 1871. In that same year, William Howard Taft, student in the sixth grade of Woodward High School, used Zachos' book.³⁴ He marked accents on the poems which he prepared for recitation. Long interested in spelling reform and phonetics, Zachos next published *The Analytic and Phonetic Word Book* in 1859. In 1860 the fourth book appeared, *Analytic Elocution*, written to "promote the noble art of speaking."³⁵

Early in 1862 Professor Zachos left Cincinnati, his first home in his adopted country. He never returned to live in the Queen City on the Ohio, nor to be buried in the plot he had bought in Spring Grove Cemetery, when he was a young man.³⁶

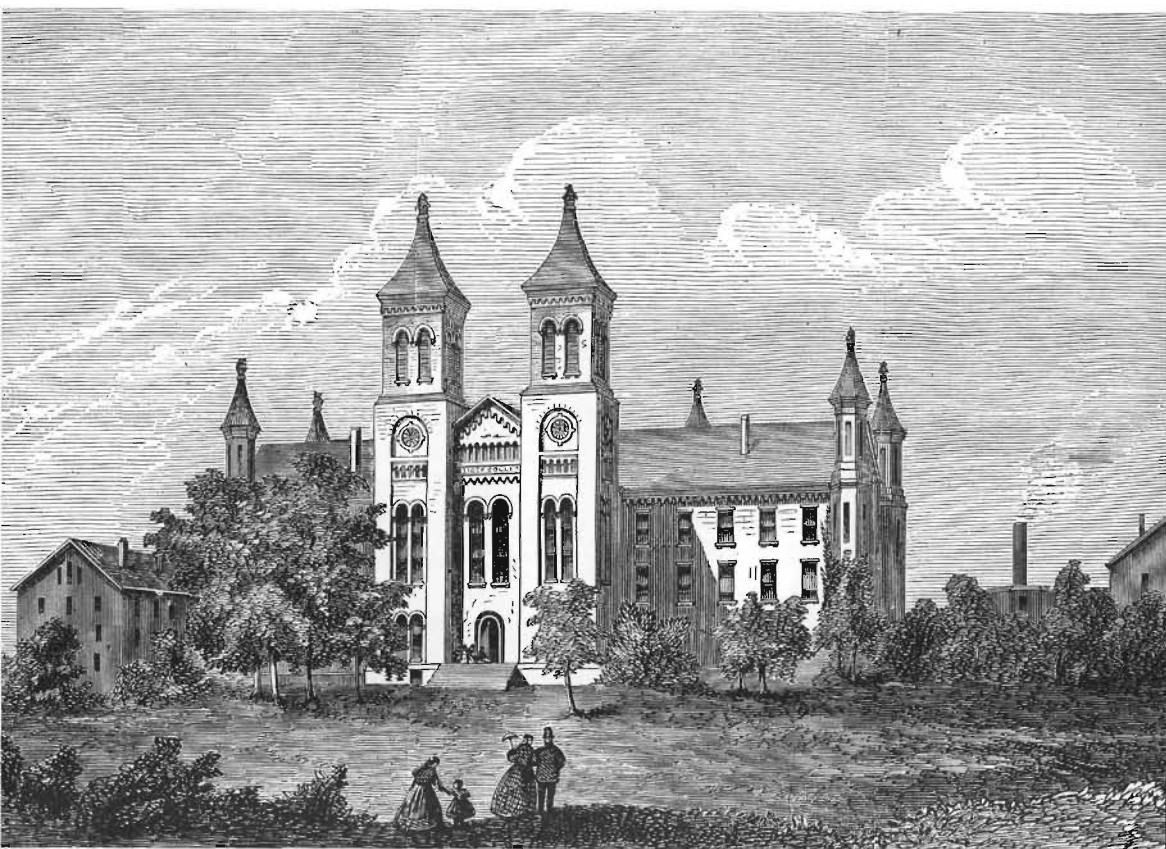
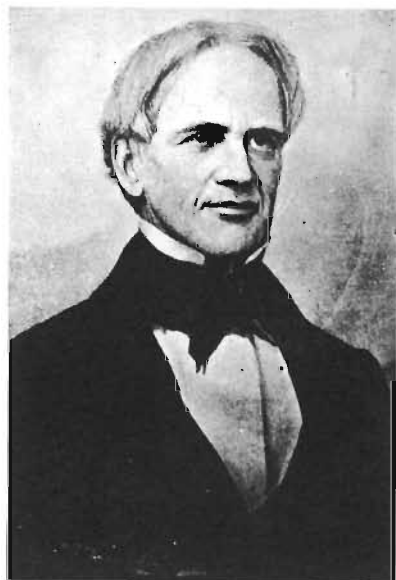
On March 13, 1862 Professor Zachos was on Parris Island, one of the semi-tropical islands off the coast of South Carolina. He was one of the fifty-three teachers and superintendents sent by the Boston and New York Education Commissions to prove that Negroes could be educated, that they could work as free men and direct their own destinies. Such faith in the blacks was not common, not even among abolitionists. Convinced that Negroes could achieve equality with whites if they were educated and free, Zachos had been one of the thirty-five teachers selected by the Boston Commission out of one hundred and fifty applicants.

The Port Royal Experiment, as it came to be known, had the strong official backing of Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury in Lincoln's first cabinet. Edward L. Pierce, formerly a law clerk in Chase's Cincinnati office, directed the experiment on the scene. Before sailing from New York, Pierce had written to Susan Walker, the abolitionist sister of Judge Timothy Walker, "Chase has done everything. If the enterprise fails, not upon him rests the responsibility . . ."³⁷ Lincoln had with great reluctance authorized the enterprise.

The future of the Negro in the United States depended in fact on Pierce and his dedicated band. It was their mission to liberate ten thousand abandoned black slaves from ignorance and in Miss Walker's words "to lift up into the glorious light of freedom the oppressed and benighted ones . . ."³⁸ On March 17 the Cincinnati *Gazette* carried on the front page the story "Teachers for the Port Royal Contrabands." It failed to note, however, that several Cincinnatians were involved in the critical experiment which would furnish the model for reconstruction, whether it failed or succeeded. The local press at that time was more interested in the military campaigns of General Ormsby Mitchel.

For two years beginning in March, 1862 Zachos was teacher and superintendent on Parris Island, in sole charge of five sea-island cotton plantations, and four hundred blacks. He was both planter and teacher. His responsibility

In 1854 Zachos accepted the position of professor and principal of the Preparatory School at Antioch College. For two years he worked closely with Antioch's president and education reformer, Horace Mann.



ANTIOCH COLLEGE.

PREPARATORY SCHOOL.

J. C. ZACHOS, PRINCIPAL.

ASSISTANT TEACHERS.

HENRY D. BURLINGAME. Miss R. S. WILMARTH.
Miss A. JOSEPHINE CHAMBERLAIN.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT.

L. G. FESSENDEN, Esq.,
Professor of Vocal and Instrumental Music.

ASSISTANT TEACHER.

ANNA F. REED.

included the production of cotton and the education of black people, until recently slaves.

Zachos set to work on arrival to clothe "this poor people" whom he found "all in rags, and in utter destitution"39 Since the cotton had been already gathered, he was able to concentrate all his attention on the confused Negroes. Within two weeks after his arrival Zachos had established two schools for children and one for adults, on two different parts of the island. He was the only teacher, assisted by one old black man, the only Negro on Parris Island who could read. Zachos found his new pupils eager to learn. He optimistically reported to the Boston Commission that "a large number will be able to read the Bible in three months from this time. Will that not be a triumph for them and for us?"40 Zachos used the phonic method, eager for the fast progress of his black students. School was sometime held under the sunny southern skies, no doubt reminding the teacher of his own first lessons under a fig tree.

The only white man on the island, Zachos had to supply every need of his charges. Not only did he teach daily, he also preached on Sundays. From the start the blacks were a "most attentive and devotional audience."41 He also doctored them, seeing six to ten patients every day. Zachos was grateful for his courses with Dr. Mussey: "I never thought my studies in medicine would ever come so well into play."42

Zachos supervised the growing of cotton and food crops, from the sowing to the harvesting. He acted as judge, settling disputes among the blacks who for the first time did not have masters. He was even a drill sergeant, training the Negroes to defend themselves in case of attack by Confederates nearby. He ran the one store on the island, distributing goods sent by northern philanthropy. On April 3, 1862, Miss Walker, Chase's confidential agent at Port Royal, wrote in her diary: "Mr. Zachos came up in his boat from Hilton Head, very glad to see him: went with him by boat to the store house and filled his boat with clothing for his five plantations"43 Miss Walker, to whom Zachos had been recommended by an influential member of the Boston Commission, liked the exotic professor from Cincinnati.⁴⁴ Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, fiery abolitionist, close friend of Dr. Samuel Howe, and commander of the first regiment composed of ex-slaves, considered Zachos one of the "best superintendents" at Port Royal.⁴⁵

Himself a tested friend of Negroes, Colonel Higginson recognized in Zachos another true friend of the oppressed race. With patience and sympathy Zachos started four hundred black Americans on the road to freedom. From the beginning they had won his affection and understanding. He saw both their faults and their virtues and defended them against criticism:

It is nonsense, or worse, to say these people will not work unless they are made to. They are just as industrious and willing as any class of white people I ever saw: and besides they are docile, affectionate, and grateful

*for anything that you do for them. Their faults are those of children. I am struck, constantly, with the childhood of this race.*⁴⁶

A sensitive teacher, Zachos had correctly understood his black pupils. Slavery and ignorance had condemned them to endless childhood. Zachos considered his task to be that of guiding them to adulthood and independence. He always treated them with respect: "Now I felt at once it was not proper to treat these people as paupers."⁴⁷ Zachos gave them their first lessons in self-respect as well as in reading.

On Thursday, New Year's Day, 1863 the ten thousand black "contrabands" at Port Royal were freed by Lincoln's Proclamation. Miss Charlotte Forten, a black teacher from Philadelphia, described the occasion. "The most glorious day this nation has yet seen" was too glorious for her to "give a regular chronicle" of it. She records, however, several high points of the ceremony held under magnificent live oak trees. After an invocation, "An ode written for the occasion by Professor Zachos, originally a Greek, now Sup[erintendent] of Paris island — was read by himself, and then sung by the whites."⁴⁸

Miss Forten concluded her chronicle, "My soul is glad with an exceeding great gladness."⁴⁹ Greek-born Zachos shared the same great gladness. The four hundred blacks with whom he lived and taught were at last free men. A year later, in 1864, exhausted by his labors, Zachos left the Sea Islands, where for two years he had guided four hundred former slaves into a new life. The vast experiment in emancipation and philanthropy had succeeded. Professor Zachos could repeat the words he had written on April 5, 1862: "I never was more intensely occupied in my life, or to more useful purpose. I am truly grateful to God for the opportunity."

He was now forty-four years of age and his life began a circling movement. Following a period of recuperation, Zachos was installed in 1864 as minister in the First Unitarian Society in West Newton, Massachusetts.⁵⁰ Horace Mann, his colleague at Antioch, had helped organize this society in 1849. Zachos was now back in the state where his American education had begun in 1828.

Theology and religion were not new interests for Zachos. A student in Cincinnati, he had discovered Unitarianism, along with other young seekers after truth. In an essay of 1852 Zachos had identified religion with self-sacrifice and had denounced clergymen who were "smooth-faced, double-tongued, temporizing, tenacious of forms and lax as to principles."⁵¹ Zachos' life had long since become an exercise in liberal and practical Christianity.

While he preached to his select congregation in West Newton, Zachos did not forget the blacks, and their desperate need for education. In 1864 he published a book, setting forth an oral method by which they could be quickly taught to read. The book's long title proclaims the author's purpose: *The Phonic Primer and Reader, Designed Chiefly for the Use of Night-Schools Where Adults are Taught, and for the Myriads of Freed Men and Women, Whose First Rush from*

THE
HIGH SCHOOL SPEAKER:

A COLLECTION OF

DECLAMATIONS, POETIC PIECES AND DIALOGUES,

FOR THE USE OF

BOYS IN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES.

BY

PROF. J. C. ZACHOS, A. M.,

AUTHOR OF THE "NEW AMERICAN SPEAKER," "LYCUM SPEAKER," ETC.

Mem. Lit. Club 1849

CINCINNATI:

R. W. CARROLL & CO., PUBLISHERS,

117 WEST FOURTH STREET.

1871.

lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot?

Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Beside, sir, we shall not fight alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us.

The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone,—it is to the active, the vigilant, the brave. Beside, sir, we have no election! If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat,—but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged. Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston. The war is inevitable,—and let it come! I repeat it, sir, *let it come*.

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry peace! peace!—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field. Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Heaven!—I know not what course others may take, but as for me,—*give me liberty, or give me death*.

[Patrick Henry.]

The accent marks made by William Howard Taft on speeches for class recitations, such as this famous one by Patrick Henry, perhaps indicated Taft's early interest in politics and government. Taft's copy of Zachos' book, The High School Speaker, is presently in the library of the Literary Club.

the Prison-House of Slavery is to the Gates of the Temple of Knowledge. The next year his *Phonic Primer and Primary Reader* was published under the auspices of the American Phonic Association. Both books were published in Boston. Zachos had tested his theories and methods on Parris Island. He was confident of their success.

The circling movement of Zachos' life continued beyond Massachusetts. In 1866 he went to Meadville, Pennsylvania. The Greek student at Bristol Manual-Labor College in 1833 had returned to the western part of the same state. Here he occupied his second Unitarian pulpit, and as Professor of Sacred Rhetoric was member of the faculty of Meadville Theological Seminary.

In 1871 the circle's final curve began in New York, where a little Greek boy had landed in 1828. The great metropolis with its tens of thousands of immigrants gave Zachos his last and largest schoolroom. Invited by Peter Cooper to be Professor of Literature and Curator of Cooper Union Institute, Zachos became the philanthropist's trusted adviser and friend. Kindred liberal spirits, Cooper and Zachos collaborated a dozen years in advancing America's first great experiment in adult education and vocational training for women. Watching the several thousand men and women who came daily to the Institute, Zachos must have wondered at the size of Cincinnati Female Seminary and the Cooper Institute at Dayton.

Himself an unlettered man, Cooper admired his friend's way with words. Zachos wrote Cooper's autobiography and other essays for him. He attended Zachos' lectures, often inviting guests. At Cooper's "urgent request" William Cullen Bryant heard Zachos lecture on Burns in January, 1878. Afterwards, at Cooper's house, in an argument over the beauty of languages, Bryant claimed superiority for Italian and Zachos for Modern Greek, a language he had spoken for a few years as a very small boy long ago.⁵²

After Cooper's death in 1883 Zachos continued at the Institute for another fifteen years until his own death. Growing old in the cause of democratic education, he lectured, directed the literary departments, and supervised the busy library and reading room. To the end of his long active life Zachos communicated to thousands his intense delight in the miracle of ideas and words, his love of freedom and faith in humanity.

John C. Zachos died in New York on March 20, 1898, where seventy years earlier had ended his fateful voyage from Greece on the American relief ship *Jane*.

He is buried in Newtonville Cemetery, Boston.⁵³

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THE
NEW AMERICAN SPEAKER:

A COLLECTION OF

ORATORICAL AND DRAMATICAL PIECES,
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WITH AN

ORIGINAL INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

ON THE

ELEMENTS OF ELOCUTION.

DESIGNED

FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS, ACADEMIES, AND COLLEGES.

BY J. C. ZACHOS, A. M.

Mem. Lit. Club 1849

FOURTH EDITION.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY A. S. BARNES & CO
CINCINNATI: H. W. DERBY & CO.
1854.

The first book written by Zachos, The New American Speaker, was widely used and went into four editions, the fourth being reprinted in 1857.

- (1) Two readily available biographical sketches are found in *The Dictionary of American Biography*, XX, 640-641 and *The Biographical Cyclopaedia and Portrait Gallery with an Historical Sketch of the State of Ohio*, VI, 1352-1354. The latter contains the only portrait of Zachos known to me.
- (2) *The Ohio Journal of Education*, III, (1854), 28-29.
- (3) Written by Miss M. Helena Zachos in Thomas Burgess, *Greeks in America* (Boston, 1913), 199.
- (4) Stephen A. Larrabee, *Hellas Observed: The American Experience of Greece, 1775-1865* (New York, 1957), 157.
- (5) Frank Prentice Rand, *The Village of Amherst: A Landmark of Light* (Amherst, 1958), 47.
- (6) Doron Green, *A History of Bristol Borough* (Bristol, 1911), 73.
- (7) *Bishop Chase's Reminiscences. An Autobiography*, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1848), II, 22.
- (8) George Franklin Smythe, *Kenyon College: Its First Century* (New Haven, 1924), 173.
- (9) From the poem "The Men of '49" by Prof. Venable, *Literary Club Papers*, III, 195.
- (10) Mr. Thomas B. Greenslade, archivist at Kenyon College, has kindly furnished me with a copy of the commencement program.
- (11) On pages 331 and 368.
- (12) This felicitous phrase by an English traveler is cited by Louis Leonard Tucker, "Cincinnati: Athens of the West, 1831-1861," *Ohio History*, LXXV (1966), 11.
- (13) See E. C. Topping, "Cincinnati Philhellenism in 1824," *The Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin*, XXXI (1973), 127-141.
- (14) Otto Juettner, *Daniel Drake and His Followers* (Cincinnati, 1909), 162-170.
- (15) This title appears in an advertisement for Ray's *Elementary Algebra* in *The School Friend*, IV (1849) 94.
- (16) Frederick A. Canfield, *A History of Thomas Canfield and of Mathew Canfield with a Genealogy of their Descendants in New Jersey* (Dover, 1897), 58, 197.
- (17) The best account of the founding is Ainsworth Spofford's fiftieth anniversary talk. See *The Literary Club of Cincinnati, 1849-1903* (Cincinnati, 1903), 13-18.
- (18) C. Carroll Hollis, "A New England Outpost: As Revealed in Some Unpublished Letters of Emerson, Parker, and Alcott to Ainsworth Spofford," *New England Quarterly*, XXXVIII, (1965), 70.
- (19) See *Literary Club Papers*, IV, 160 for a poem read to the Club in 1850.
- (20) *The Diary and Letters of Rutherford B. Hayes*, ed. Charles R. Williams (Columbus, 1922), I, 329.
- (21) *Literary Club Papers*, IV, 159.
- (22) *Ibid.*, 160
- (23) Charles Cist, *Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati in 1851* (Cincinnati, 1851), 70.
- (24) The library of The Literary Club has copies of the 1854 and 1857 editions of Zachos' first book.
- (25) In a note on page 167 Zachos states that Constantinople can be spelled 11,628 ways!
- (26) Zachos quotes four verses from "L'Allegro" on page 189.
- (27) Robert W. Steele and Mary Davies Steele, *Early Dayton* (Dayton, 1856), 184.
- (28) *The Ohio Journal of Education*, I (1852), 172.
- (29) *Ibid.*, 169-174, 206-213, 274-277, 296-300, 372-380.
- (30) *The Ohio Educational Monthly*, N.S. II (1861), 357.
- (31) Quoted in a letter to me from Mrs. Nina D. Myatt, associate curator of Antiochiana in the Olive Kettering Library at Antioch College.
- (32) *The Antiochian*, March, 1897, 102.
- (33) From a letter by Mann quoted in Mary Peabody Mann, *The Life of Horace Mann* (Washington, 1937), 500-501.
- (34) Taft's copy of *The High School Speaker* is in the library of The Literary Club.
- (35) The library of The Literary Club has a copy of the 1868 edition of *Analytic Elocution*.
- (36) *The Cincinnati Cemetery of Spring Grove*, Enlarged Edition (Cincinnati,

1862), 137 lists Zachos as proprietor of Lot 80 in Section 30.

(37) Pierce's letter is among the Susan Walker Papers at the Cincinnati Historical Society.

(38) "The Diary of Miss Susan Walker," ed. Henry N. Sherwood, *Quarterly Publication of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio*, VII (1912), 12. This valuable diary is in the Susan Walker Papers.

(39) From his first letter, March 25, 1862, to the Boston Education Commission. The Commission printed extracts from letters of the teachers and superintendents. Copies of these extracts containing two letters from Zachos are in the Susan Walker Papers.

(40) Letter of April 5, 1862.

(41) Letter of March 25, 1862.

(42) Letter of April 5, 1862.

(43) "The Diary of Miss Susan Walker", 26.

(44) James T. Fisher's letter of March 13, 1862 is among the Susan Walker Papers.

(45) Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, Introd. by Howard Mumford Jones (East Lansing, 1960), 14.

(46) Letter of April 5, 1862.

(47) *Ibid.*

(48) *The Journal of Charlotte L. Forten, A Free Negro in the Slave Era*, Introd. and Notes by Ray Allen Billington (New York, 1969), 171-172. It was in this book that I discovered Zachos, a fellow Greek-Cincinnatian.

(49) *Ibid.*, 175.

(50) M. F. Sweetser, *King's Handbook of Newton* (Boston, 1889), 173.

(51) *The Ohio Journal of Education*, I (1852), 210.

(52) Parke Godwin, *A Biography of William Cullen Bryant* (New York, 1883), II, 360-361.

(53) From the obituary in the *New York Times*, March 21, 1898.