CHAPTER THREE:
EXAMINING THE MANUSCRIPTS

The manuscripts, “A Lecture on Popular Education” and “Knowledge is Power,” both of which can be found in Appendix A of this thesis, are housed in their original form at the Indiana Historical Society’s William Henry Smith Memorial Library as part of the Mills family collection. The original handwritten manuscripts were used to establish the copy text of this edition. The collection consists of a number of documents relating to Mills’ views on education, as well as a number of sermons and correspondences. In contrast to Mills’ famous addresses as “One of the People,” the two addresses in this edition have never been published. Both addresses are found in book-like pamphlets with nearly all of the pages for each manuscript bound together.

The original “A Lecture on Popular Education” manuscript is ninety pages in length, handwritten by Mills in ink, and composed on lined paper. The manuscript is unnumbered and each page is approximately four and a half inches by seven inches. The original “Knowledge is Power” manuscript is handwritten, on lined blue paper. The manuscript is forty-three pages long, each page has been hand numbered by the author, the sheets are approximately eight inches by ten inches. Both original manuscripts, though delicate, remain in remarkably good condition. The ink contrasts well against the pages, and the individual pages can be handled without risk to the documents. The Indiana Historical Society also retains a microfilm version of both speeches; however, the copies found in Appendix A are based on the original documents.
Both addresses are undated and unsigned. An examination of letters, sermons, and additional addresses written by Mills helps to verify authorship and determine when Mills likely wrote the two addresses contained in this edition. Letters written by Mills throughout his life verify the authenticity of the two addresses as authored by Mills. For the most part, Mills’ handwriting style and form remained much the same over the years. Letters written by Mills typically appear to be more carefully composed, containing fewer deletions and insertions than appear in his addresses or sermons. It seems reasonable to conclude that, in contrast to his letters, Mills did not intend for the versions of the two addresses examined in this edition to be viewed by others, or at least by a large audience. Most likely, these addresses were composed to aid Mills in delivering formal speeches.

The type of paper used by Mills during different time periods provides some clues regarding a manuscript’s date of origin. For example, the paper used by Mills in an 1853 letter to S. T. Farwell, the Treasurer of the American Education Society, most closely resembles the paper used by Mills in his “Knowledge is Power” address, indicating the address was likely transcribed in the 1850s. The paper is blue and lined. The ink used is black and of a similar thickness to that used by Mills in the “Knowledge is Power” address. In addition, the actual formatting of the letter is similar to the “Knowledge is Power” address. The blue paper of the letter is folded to create four possible writing sheets, and the back page is folded to create a mailing address.

The physical characteristics of the “Knowledge is Power” manuscript bare few similarities to other manuscripts written by Mills in the 1840s. The paper Mills typically used during the 1840s seems to be of a distinguishably different quality than that used by
Mills for his “Knowledge is Power” speech and other writings in the 1850s. For example, an 1845 sermon entitled “An Address Delivered at the Concert of Prayer for Colleges Feb 25, 1845” is written on rather thin paper, unlined and unbound despite its sizable nature. The writing utensil used by Mills also appears to be different during the 1840s, as the consistency and thickness of the writing is thinner.

The type of paper used for “Knowledge is Power” bears more resemblance to the paper used by Mills for his handwritten draft of his sixth annual address to the legislature published in 1852. It, too, is on blue paper, lined, and folded, and the black ink used is similar in texture and width. One interesting note about the sixth annual address is that it appears Mills ran out of paper before completing the document, as Mills uses white paper sheets of a different length but similar width for the last ten pages. Additionally, the appendix for the sixth annual address is composed on varying lengths of blue paper. Of Mills’ works available at the Indiana Historical Society, the type of paper on which “Knowledge is Power” is written is most similar to the draft of Mills’ sixth annual address to the legislature. In addition to using the same blue, lined paper, Mills also appears to have used the same ink in both texts.

Mills does appear to employ a different writing style in his sermons written in the 1830s and early 1840s than in his letters and documents written in the late 1840s and thereafter. An 1832 sermon of Mills’ is of smaller size, written on unlined yellow paper, and is bound with string. Another sermon entitled, “A Charge Delivered at Installation of Rev. Albert F. White at Atica, Ia December 26, 1847,” appears similar to “A Lecture on Popular Education.” Interestingly, this sermon is on lined paper that, for some reason, was bound so that the lines ran vertically, from the top of the page to the bottom, rather
than horizontally. In all likelihood, this binding was done inadvertently, since Mills did not use the lines to write the text of the sermon, but instead wrote from side to side in the booklet.

An 1864 letter to a Mr. Henry is especially similar to the paper used by Caleb Mills in his address, “A Lecture on Popular Education.” The paper is off white, lined with light blue lines, and contains a watermark in the upper left hand corner in the shape of a shield with the word “Hudson” written across the shield. Like “A Lecture on Popular Education,” the letter was folded into fourths to create four available sheets of paper to write upon. Unlike “A Lecture on Popular Education,” the last page of this letter is unlined.

Both manuscripts reveal some characteristics about the author’s writing style and perhaps even his state of mind in composing these addresses. For example, the varied spelling of certain words by the manuscript author is a reflection of the contemporary use of English in the United States during the mid nineteenth century. Spelling was only beginning to become standardized during this time period. Portraits of Caleb Mills reveal the author wore glasses, which may account for the size of the author’s script.¹

Throughout both manuscripts, particularly at the end of lines, Mills tends to become a bit less careful with his handwriting. Whereas Mills almost always clearly writes each letter of a word at the beginning of a sentence and paragraph, he is more likely to carelessly write those words appearing at the end of a line or paragraph. This seems to indicate that author’s thoughts often outpaced his ability to get those thoughts onto paper. Authorial conventions such as the tendency to connect words such as “of the” also speaks to the author’s apparent struggle to get all ideas down onto paper in a

¹ See Appendix B, page 237, for a portrait of Mills.
brief period of time. Abbreviations, such as the employment of the ampersand, also
demonstrates Mills’ efficient writing style, as the symbol would take less time to write
than the word “and.”

By examining the manuscripts in the Mills family collection, and by finding clues
within the text of the two addresses, it is possible to estimate the date of origin of both “A
Lecture on Popular Education” and “Knowledge is Power.” Because it is written on
paper and in a format similar to other documents dated during the late 1840s, “A Lecture
on Popular Education” appears to have been written during the late 1840s, and no earlier
than 1841. We also know that “A Lecture on Popular Education” was written no earlier
than 1841 because the author cites data from the 1840 U.S. Census. From the author’s
addresses to the Legislature, it is clear that Mills utilized the most current available data
in his essays. Therefore, it seems reasonable to infer further that this speech was not
written after the publication of the 1850 Census in the 1853. Though not exceedingly
precise, the editor concludes that “A Lecture on Popular Education” was written
sometime between 1841 and 1853, and most likely in the late 1840s.

The origin date of “Knowledge is Power,” the second speech contained in
Appendix A, may also be estimated based upon internal and external evidence. The
paper, format, and writing style of this address most closely resembles a draft of the sixth
annual address to the legislature, delivered in 1852. In addition, Mills reveals that the
address is delivered to a group of teachers upon the formation of a regional teachers’
association and notes the lack of state teacher’s association at the time of his address.
Since Indiana State Teacher’s Association was founded in December 1854, and Mills
address also discussed the established office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, an
office which was created by the School Law of 1852, this allows the editor to conclude “Knowledge is Power” was written sometime between 1852 and 1854.

**About Editorial Decisions**

This edition is designed to simultaneously present the reader with the most authentic, yet clear and understandable transcription possible. The editor believes that this edition will be primarily used by educators or students seeking to increase their knowledge of Caleb Mills and/or the issues and events related to his addresses upon the subject of popular education and by researchers who may not have access to the original address manuscripts. To meet the needs of this target audience, this edition is best described as a partial diplomatic transcription.

This edition is a line-by-line transcription of the handwritten versions of the two addresses. Any line contained in the original manuscript, including spaces inserted by the author, have been numbered in this edition. Spaces inserted by the editor to separate Mills’ handwritten pages have not been numbered. In the traditional sense of a diplomatic transcription, authorial deletions and insertions have been included in the transcript as close to their original form as possible. Throughout both manuscripts, Mills often makes deletions by drawing a single line through the undesired word or phrase. This action often left the original word or phrase legible. Since the words or phrases Mills chose to delete may be of interest or use to a researcher, in this edition, authorial deletions are included in the text and indicated with a single strikethrough. To make an addition to the manuscript, Mills would insert a single caret and then write, generally superscript, the new material. Much like the authorial deletions, these insertions are
potentially useful to the researcher and do not disrupt the readability and clarity of the manuscript. Authorial insertions are indicated in this edition by carets surrounding the word or phrase Mills inserted using a caret.

An example of authorial deletions and insertions transcribed in this edition may be found on the first page of “Knowledge is Power” at line fourteen. In that passage, Mills deleted the word “is” and inserted the word “contains.” Thus, Mills changes the meaning of his sentence from, “It is a noble thought, and well worthy of being deeply pondered,” to “It contains a noble thought, and well worth of being deeply pondered.”

In some cases, Mills underlined words or phrases for emphasis. The editor has also included these instances in the edition. Underlined words or phrases in Mills’ original manuscripts are similarly underlined in this edition. An example of this is found at page twenty-eight, line three of the address “Knowledge is Power” where the word “profession” is underlined.

In the interest of providing a clear and understandable edition of the texts, certain other conventions of a purely diplomatic transcription have not been employed. In these cases, silent emendations have been made in the interest of presenting a clear edition. In particular, two grammatical conventions employed by Mills throughout both addresses have been emended without textual annotation. Mills exclusively employed the ampersand (&) throughout the document to indicate the word “and.” Each occurrence of this within the text has been replaced with the word “and.” An example of such a silent emendation is found on the first page of “A Lecture on Popular Education” at line fifteen. Most likely, Mills incorporated techniques such as these because he intended to write quickly. His handwriting in both addresses, though certainly legible, is less deliberate
and neat than the penmanship Mills uses in his letters. Additionally, Mills occasionally appears to connect two separate words. In those cases, the connected words in the manuscript are separated without notation in the edition. For example, in first page of “Knowledge is Power” at line ten the author begins the sentence with “Ifhe.” This has been emended to “If he” in the transcription.

In these and other addresses, Mills demonstrates a solid grasp of grammatical conventions. Indeed, as a well-educated minister and instructor, the correct use of grammatical conventions would have been expected of Mills. Therefore, grammatical errors that appear to be either inadvertent or the result of hurried drafting have likewise been silently emended in this edition to remain clear and understandable. Also, punctuation at the end of sentences such as periods and question marks have been added where they had been omitted by the author. Hyphens indicating a word break have also been added where missing. Spelling has been corrected where the author appears to have accidentally omitted or transcribed letters. However, spelling of words consistent or acceptable in the mid-nineteenth century has been retained. Finally, uncapsalized words at the beginning of sentences or in reference to a proper name have been capitalized, and capitalization employed by Mills’ for emphasis has been retained.

The editor made as much effort as possible to decipher even the most difficult or illegible passages within the text. On these occasions where the author’s handwriting is deemed illegible and the meaning not entirely clear, editorial emendations were made to facilitate better reading and understanding of the manuscript, indicated in the text by the word “illegible” surrounded by square brackets. An example of this technique may be found in the address “A Lecture on Popular Education” at page fifty-five, line one.
Where the writing of Mills is illegible, but the meaning of his words seem possible to ascertain, based on the context of the surrounding words, the apparent word is inserted in the text surrounded by square brackets to indicate that this is an editorial inference. An example of this technique may be found in “A Lecture on Popular Education” at page sixty-three, line eleven where the word “aristocracy” has been inserted.

The “Guide to Textual Notation Symbols” below identifies emendations made in the texts—both those by the author and those by the editor—and the corresponding symbols utilized to signal the emendation for the reader. Any editorial or textual situations that departed from traditional annotation are indicated with an explanatory footnote.

**GUIDE TO TEXTUAL NOTATION SYMBOLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authorial deletions</td>
<td>Is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorial insertions</td>
<td>^contains^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorial underlines</td>
<td>Supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial Insertion: illegible word</td>
<td>[illegible]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial Insertion: uncertain word</td>
<td>[aristocracy]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annotations are included to aid the researcher’s understanding of references and allusions in Mills’ addresses. For instance, biographical and historical references are included to help the reader contextualize the meaning of certain passages. At the beginning of “Knowledge is Power” the author names a number of individuals, by last name only, whose “slumbering” minds were awakened by knowledge. Since these individuals may not be widely known to today’s readers, biographical information about each individual is provided. References are also included where Mills quotes or paraphrases from the Bible. While the audiences that Mills addressed would probably
have been familiar with Scriptures, modern readers may not have the same level of familiarity. In addition, certain words that may have a different contemporary meaning, or that may not be as familiar to a modern audience, are defined in the annotations. Annotations also identify authors who are quoted by Mills, but who are not specifically mentioned or identified in the text of the address. Sources for each notation have been provided where applicable.

*Comparing the Texts*

Although “A Lecture on Popular Education” and “Knowledge is Power” are two addresses written at different time periods and to apparently different intended audiences, both texts reveal much of the same information about the author and his message. The manuscripts point to an author expressing relatively progressive ideas regarding concepts of education and the government’s role in children’s education. In both addresses, Mills expresses dissatisfaction with the lackluster condition of education in the state of Indiana and the educational attainment of the state’s citizenry. Further, in both addresses, Mills reiterates his view that a solid and thoughtful education is the only insurance for a good and prosperous society.

“A Lecture on Popular Education,” the earlier of Mills’ two addresses, is written to “Fellow Citizens,” a rather generalized audience that nevertheless seems to include—or be primarily addressed to—men rather than women. Women seem to be absent either as members of the audience or as the subject of this address. Throughout the text, Mills uses terminology such as “citizen” and “humanity,” but really only seems to be speaking to men. For example, in his description of able-bodied teachers, Mills uses the term “he”
and describes the successes of young men from colleges around the state who may spend a few months of their break employed as teachers within small communities. In his school district allegory, all of the individuals involved in decision-making are male. That women are apparently excluded from this address seems somewhat noteworthy in light of the fact that Mills gives the subject of female education considerable attention in his later address “Knowledge is Power.”

Sean Wilentz notes that the republican ideology flourishing in the United States through the mid-nineteenth century may be characterized by its emphasis on commonwealth, virtue, independence, citizenship and equality. Both of the addresses discussed in this edition reflect the emphasis observed by Wilentz. While Mills makes many references to republican ideology in both manuscripts, “A Lecture on Popular Education” seems to contain the strongest demonstration of this commitment, with a special emphasis on virtue and citizenship.

Throughout “A Lecture on Popular Education,” Mills utilizes republican terminology and expresses many republican ideals. The author frequently refers to his audience as “Fellow Citizens.” Throughout the lecture, Mills emphasizes the necessity of popular education in a successful republic. In his opening remarks, Mills notes that “knowledge must be diffuse among the sovereign people and the morality of the Bible must be faithfully inculcated . . . we shall look in vain for rulers of expanded, enlightened

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2 See Appendix A, pages 149, beginning with lines 9.
3 See Appendix A, pages 161–173.
4 For a further discussion of this subject, see Chapter One.
and liberal views and for legislators of disinterested, patriotic and virtuous principles."⁶

Virtue is as integral to a proper education as learning the fundamentals of mathematics or any other academic subject. Mills defines popular education for his audience as nothing less than the, “intellectual and moral training of the whole rising generation.”⁷

By emphasizing citizenship in “A Lecture on Popular Education,” Mills seems to place less emphasis or focus on the individual. Although Mills is well-known for favoring a centralized and standardized system of education operating at the state level, it is clear from this message that Mills regarded the local community as one of the most important determinants of the success of an individual school. Throughout “A Lecture on Popular Education,” Mills seems to quite positively refer to school districts as “little republics.” A selfless school board and enlightened community—one that understands that the societal value of education cannot be reduced to mere dollars and cents—is key to the successful operation of a common school.

Mills also utilizes literary techniques in both addresses to support and convey his message. In one interesting passage from “A Lecture on Popular Education,” Mills presents an allegory describing the construction of a school building in the fictional “District No. 9.” Similar to John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress from this World to the World Which is to Come, the name of each school board member reflects his personality. Elder Forethought, Colonel Wise, Dean Countcost, Doctor Considerate, Mr. Loveyouth, Esquire Goodsense, and Esquire Lovework debate the proper construction of good school buildings and find themselves at odds with the stingy sensibilities of Captain Pinchpenny and Mr. Cheap. Ultimately, the board decides to construct a sensible, bright, and

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⁶ See Appendix A, page 72, lines 10–17.
⁷ See Appendix A, page 73, lines 3–4.
comfortable school building and hire Master Faithful, rather than Master Simple, as the school teacher. The results of these decisions are—predictably—quite positive: parents and community are quite involved with the functions of the school, the library is used by the entire community and “diffused abroad useful knowledge thro’ all classes both old and young.” Mills concludes the allegory by instructing, “All may be what No 9 was, by pursuing the same course of patient, persevering and self denying effort.”

Mills also uses examples in “Knowledge is Power,” though none are quite as lengthy or complete as the allegory in “A Lecture on Popular Education.” Rather, Mills systematically describes individuals opposed to common education for differing reasons and then undermines the validity of their arguments. For example, according to Mills, the individual who denounces education because neither he nor his children can read and do not need to, “has forgotten that he sold his stock of pork or flour last year for a cent less per pound than his neighbor who takes and reads a newspaper.” By articulating the views of opponents of popular education in these examples, Mills is able to safely engage and address those views while making certain that his view regarding the value of education seems the most reasonable.

Given Mills’ background as a Presbyterian minister, it is perhaps not surprising that he incorporates a number of scriptural references in both addresses. Mills uses the book of Proverbs to support his views that a child should be properly “trained up.” In other cases, Mills simply uses well-known phrases and individuals to illustrate portions

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9 See Appendix A, page 183, lines 13–15.
10 See Appendix A, page 78, footnote 4.
of his message, such as when he notes that someone would need to have the patience of a Job to conduct the business of a school district.\footnote{See Appendix A, page 111, line 8.} These scriptural references would likely have been familiar to a mid-nineteenth century Hoosier audience. Both the Protestant religion and the growing number of churches in Indiana during that time period were vital parts of the frontier community.\footnote{James H. Madison, \textit{The Indiana Way: A State History} (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1986), 98–108.}

The actual content of the two addresses annotated in this volume not only speak to the educational debate in the United States but also appear to address prominent political ideas—such as republicanism—of the time. A closer examination of both documents contained in this edition are prepared to help researchers, students, and educators alike to better understand the role of Caleb Mills and education reform in Indiana and throughout the United States during the mid-nineteenth century.