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Committee of Eight

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Committee of Eight

In 1905, the American Historical Association commissioned the first conference on the teaching of history in American elementary schools. The resultant report was titled, *The Study of History in Elementary Schools: Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Eight* (1912). It advanced a plan that increased the number of hours devoted to teaching elementary history, with a clear emphasis on U.S. history.

In the early 1900s, the teaching of history in U.S. primary grades remained largely unexplored. The reports of the Committee of Ten and the Committee of Seven, other American Historical Association committees, which researched secondary school history teaching, served as blueprints for this later investigation of history teaching in elementary schools.

The Committee of Eight employed novel social science methods for its study of elementary history teaching methods. The Committee of Eight sent circulars of inquiry to approximately three hundred superintendents of schools throughout the United States and examined the replies, analyzing the existing condition of elementary history teaching. Suggestions and recommendations were made to enhance the teaching of history in first through eighth grades. Members of the Committee of Eight included James Alton James, Henry E. Bourne, Eugene C. Brooks, Mabel Hill, Julius Sachs, Wilbur Gordy, J. H. VanSickle, and Henry W. Thurston.

Chara Haeussler Bohan