

BEGINNINGS OF TEACHER TRAINING IN THE TRIÂNGULO MINEIRO: The Uberaba Normal School (1881–1905)

Primórdios da formação docente no Triângulo Mineiro:
a escola normal de Uberaba (1881-1905)

Inicios de la formación docente en el Triângulo Mineiro:
La Escuela Normal de Uberaba (1881-1905)

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Abstract: This article is the result of an investigation whose object was the Uberaba Normal School in the period between 1881 and 1905. It is one of the eight institutions installed in Minas Gerais between 1870 and 1883. Unpublished documents were analyzed that allowed us to identify precarious conditions such as lack of pedagogical equipment, lack of own Building, aspects of teaching methodology, political disputes, expansion and professionalization of teaching and the beginnings of co-education. Finally, the reasons that led to the closure of the first teacher training and certification institution in the Triângulo Mineiro, located in Uberaba are explained.

Keywords: Normal School; teacher training; Uberaba/Minas Gerais.

Resumo: Este artigo é resultado de uma investigação que teve por objeto a Escola Normal de Uberaba no período compreendido entre 1881 e 1905. Trata-se de uma das oito instituições instaladas em Minas Gerais entre 1870 e 1883. Foram analisados documentos inéditos que permitiram identificar precariedades como falta de equipamentos pedagógicos, ausência de edifício próprio, aspectos da metodologia de ensino, disputas políticas, expansão e profissionalização do magistério e os primórdios da coeducação. Por fim, expõem-se as razões que conduziram ao fechamento da primeira instituição de formação e certificação de professores do Triângulo Mineiro, instalada em Uberaba.

Palavras-chave: Escola Normal; formação de professores; Uberaba/MG.

Resumen: Este artículo analiza la Escuela Normal de Uberaba en el período comprendido entre 1881 y 1905, una de las ocho instituciones creadas en Minas Gerais entre 1870 y 1883. A partir de documentos inéditos, se identificaron condiciones precarias —como la falta de materiales pedagógicos y de un edificio propio—, aspectos de la metodología de enseñanza, disputas políticas, la expansión y profesionalización del magisterio y los inicios de la coeducación. Por último, se exponen los factores que condujeron al cierre de la primera institución de formación y certificación de profesores del Triângulo Mineiro, instalada en Uberaba.

Palabras clave: Escuela Normal; formación docente; Uberaba/Minas Gerais.

INTRODUCTION

This article presents the results of research on the Uberaba Normal School¹ during its early years, from 1881 to 1905². To achieve this goal, we investigated the origins of normal schools, the role they played, and the reasons Uberaba was chosen to host one. We also investigate the school's functions, its material conditions, and the reasons for its closure. To elucidate the issues raised, we draw on memoirs, specialized bibliography, and analysis of primary sources, most of which were produced within the institution itself, such as Congregation minutes, examination minutes, attendance books, official documents, and letters. We also consult the press of the time, with particular emphasis on the *Gazeta de Uberaba*.

The research addresses the themes of school institutions and the trajectory of teacher education. Therefore, it is a work within the field of History and Historiography of Education, anchored in the assertion that researching the history of normal schools contributes to the assembling of the broader puzzle of schooling, situated in the long term (Le Goff, 2005, pp. 9-10). In this sense, we draw on the theoretical framework of the *Annales School*³, which, as demonstrated by Buffa (2001, p. 82), underpins studies and research in the field of History of Education, providing new approaches involving institutions, school life, subjects, etc.

The interpretation of sources from the perspective of the *Annales School* favored the raising of questions about the daily life of the Uberaba Normal School, such as the movement for the secularization of education—advocated by the republicans at the national level—which, as we will demonstrate, was also present within the institution. This approach aligns the research with Buffa's (2001, p. 83) observation on the need for studies that come from the particular to remain attentive to explanations or phenomena of universal nature. In this regard, the investigation analyzed the “particular in light of its relations with the universal.” With respect to the analytical categories employed, we highlight: 1) the Normal School, teaching work, and teacher

¹ Memorialists call it the *Official Normal School*, a term that, in our understanding, was used to differentiate it from its private competitor, the Colégio Nossa Senhora das Dores, which, during its first years of existence, was not officially recognized by the government and was only recognized as an official institution in the early 20th century (Moura, 2002, p. 80). The institution's founding minutes provide the name we consider more appropriate: “Eschola Normal da Cidade de Uberaba” (Arquivo Público de Uberaba [APU], código IP, 1.3, cx.32), henceforth referred to by us as the *Normal School*, created by Law No. 2,783 of September 22, 1881, and officially installed on July 15, 1882. It struggled with precarious facilities and intermittent periods, that is, periods of opening and closing. It opened in 1882 and closed in 1905. Reopened in 1928 and closed again in 1938. Reopened in 1948 and never closed again. It is currently the Marechal Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco State School.

² Sampaio was designated (Arquivo Público Mineiro [APM], código SI, 4.2, 1094) as a small academy, because the primary schools in the region increasingly had their teachers trained by it.

³ The *Annales* triggered a revolution in the possibility of historiographical interpretation, leading historiography to assume new dynamics in terms of the multiplicity of objects and methodology, which assumed a more open position towards interpretative interdisciplinarity (Le Goff, 2005, p. 36-37).

education, encompassing both teachers and students; and 2) the institution's period of existence and the shortcomings of teacher training.

The research seeks to meet the demand for research on normal schools that emerged in the interior of Brazil. That said, the creation of the Uberaba Normal School marks the expansion of a model beyond the capitals and the beginnings of teacher training in the Triângulo Mineiro and Alto Paranaíba regions⁴, evidencing, in this field, the beginning of a more effective action of the Minas Gerais provincial government in the interior of the Province, which can also be verified in Arruda (2013), Fonseca (2013), Gonçalves Neto and Carvalho (2018), Lage (2005), Martins (2013), Pedruzzi (2016) and Sousa (2021).

The article is structured in three sections. The first addresses the genesis of the normal schools, the model's expansion in Minas Gerais, and the reasons that made Uberaba one of the headquarters of the eight institutions created by the provincial government in the late 19th century. The second discusses the school's operations, emphasizing its responsibilities and the role of the adjacent primary school. Finally, we reflect on the administrative and pedagogical staff, highlighting the precariousness that marked the beginning of teacher training, and the reasons for the institution's closure.

THE NORMAL SCHOOL IN BRAZIL, IN MINAS GERAIS AND IN UBERABA

The model of teacher-training institutions that inspired the Brazilian Normal School originated in France (Saviani, 2009, p. 143). Designed to prepare technically trained professionals dedicated to teaching, these institutions represented both a hallmark of modernity and the visible tip of the broader schooling movement that intensified and disseminated literacy on a wide scale. They constituted *loci* of teacher training and certification, transmitting pedagogical knowledge contained in educational manuals and regulations. They played a key role in standardizing and rationalizing educational practices by offering professional preparation for new teachers and replacing the former schoolmasters. These institutions equipped educators with the knowledge required to train future generations, thereby enabling and legitimizing individuals who aspired to the teaching profession (Rosa, 2004, p. 21; Martins, 2009, p. 180; Gondra & Schueler, 2008, p. 198). In this way, they actively fostered the broader professionalization of teaching.

The qualification consisted of a license to work in elementary teaching. Its origins date back to 18th-century Europe, when concern for uniform rules and standards for teacher selection and appointment grew, in a context of training citizens

⁴ During the period in question, Alto Paranaíba was part of the Trianguline territory. Therefore, when we use the term "Triângulo" (Triangle), we are referring to both regions.

equipped with civic skills to deal with national issues. The State took measures to ensure a professional and secular teaching force, expanding the professionalization of this activity and establishing mechanisms for selection, authorization, and oversight.

Normal schools fulfilled a triple task: 1) to train educators with pedagogical knowledge; 2) to legitimize professionals from other fields who were already working in teaching (doctors, engineers, and lawyers), licensing them to continue teaching; 3) to train teachers who met current normative standards and moral values. The teaching franchise was decisive in the professionalization of the activity.

since it facilitated the definition of a profile of technical skills, which served as a basis for the recruitment of teachers and the outlining of a teaching career [...] it also functioned as [...] the State's "endorsement" of teaching groups, which in this way acquired official legitimacy for their activity (Nóvoa, 1999, p. 17).

In Brazil, after the Additional Act of 1834⁵, the establishment of normal schools became the prerogative of the provinces, and since many did not have the resources for education, or claimed not to have them, the beginning of teacher training was limited (Sucupira, 1996, pp. 61–65). This revealed that the elites had little interest in the training of normal teachers and the universalization of elementary education. The decentralization "of teacher training systems since their inception" is a factor that hinders the study of normal schools and the detailed reconstruction of their trajectory (Tanuri, 2000, p. 62).

Table 1 indicates the year of foundation, installation, and location of the first Brazilian normal schools; the first was founded in Niterói, in 1835. It was a precursor to the public project managed by the elites for teacher training and, after its establishment, many others emerged, in a movement marked by precariousness, advances, and setbacks, strengthened after 1870 (Villela, 2011, p. 101). In all provinces, they had a troubled and uncertain trajectory, subjected to a continuous process "of creation and extinction, only achieving some success from 1870 onward" (Tanuri, 2000, p. 64). In other words, another facet of the history of these institutions was their intermittency; they were installed, closed and reopened according to the will of the group in power, being "at the mercy of interests" that sometimes acted in favor of their existence, sometimes against it (Sousa, 2021, p. 52).

⁵ This measure created a dual system in which the central government oversaw higher education, while the provinces and municipalities were responsible for elementary and secondary education. (Oliveira, 2004, p. 948).

Table 1 - First normal schools in Brazil

Location	Year of creation	Year of first installation
Niterói	1835	1835
Minas Gerais	1835	1840
Bahia	1836	1841
Mato Grosso	1837	1842
São Paulo	1846	1846
Pernambuco	1864	1865
Piauí	1864	1865
Alagoas	1864	1869
Rio Grande do Sul	1869	1869
Pará	1870	1871
Sergipe	1870	1871
Amazonas	1872	1872
Espírito Santo	1873	1873
Rio Grande do Norte	1873	1874
Maranhão*	1874	1874
Corte*	1874	1874
Corte	1876	1880
Paraná	1876	1876
Ceará	1878	1884
Santa Catarina	1880	1880
Goiás	1882	1884
Paraíba	1884	1885

*Private institutions

Source: Araújo *et al.* (2008) and Tanuri (2000).

Table 1, prepared from Tanuri (2000)⁶ and Araújo *et al.* (2008)⁷, shows that normal schools were established at different times, given that each Province created them at its own time and conditions. The one in Rio de Janeiro took action in 1835, and that in Santa Catarina 45 years later. By 1869, eight schools had been established, and between 1870 and 1884, fourteen. If between 1835 and 1869 (34 years) eight institutions were created, between 1870 and 1884 (14 years) there were fourteen, which indicates an expansion of the model after 1870. Before this period, the great characteristic of normal schools was intermittency. As an example, we can mention the Ouro Preto Normal School, created in 1835 and installed in 1840, which operated for only two years and was closed in 1842. It reopened in 1846 and, again, closed in 1852, and remained closed for 18 years, being reopened in 1870 (Pedruzzi, 2016, pp. 22-23). For Sousa (2021, p. 171), the trajectory of normal schools in Minas Gerais, as

⁶ The article provides a “synthesis of the evolution of normal education from the perspective of State action and the educational policy it developed” (Tanuri, 2000, p. 61).

⁷ Dermeval Saviani, in the preface to the book *Normal Schools in Brazil: From the Empire to the Republic*, states that the work is the result of “the combined efforts of 31 researchers, all of them devoted to historical research on teacher training” (Araújo *et al.*, 2008, p. 7).

well as elsewhere in Brazil, until the 1870s, “was marked by a certain fragility and discontinuity”.

Table 1 presents the institutions located in provincial capitals, which makes it possible to investigate those established in the interior. In this regard, a gap becomes evident in the research that systematizes the number of Normal Schools outside the capitals. Our analysis of the school in Uberaba, for example, revealed the existence of other institutions in the interior of Minas Gerais, as shown in Map 1, which identifies units in Campanha, Diamantina, Juiz de Fora, Montes Claros, Paracatu, Sabará, São João del Rei, and Uberaba⁸.

Map 1 - Minas Gerais' normal schools in 1884



Source: Organized by the author, based on information from Mourão (1959).

By observing the information on Map 1, it is clear that, among the normal schools in Minas Gerais, Uberaba occupied the westernmost position. Therefore, we inquired into the reasons that justified the city's choice as the headquarters of one of the normal schools created by the Minas Gerais government in the interior of the province. According to Sousa (2021, p. 183), the normal schools that emerged in Minas

⁸ To better understand the expansion of normal education in Minas Gerais, at the end of the 19th century, we recommend the texts by Arruda (2013), Ferreira (2013), Fonseca (2013), Gonçalves Neto and Carvalho (2018), Lage (2005), Martins (2013), Oliveira (2018), Pedruzzi (2016) and Sousa (2021).

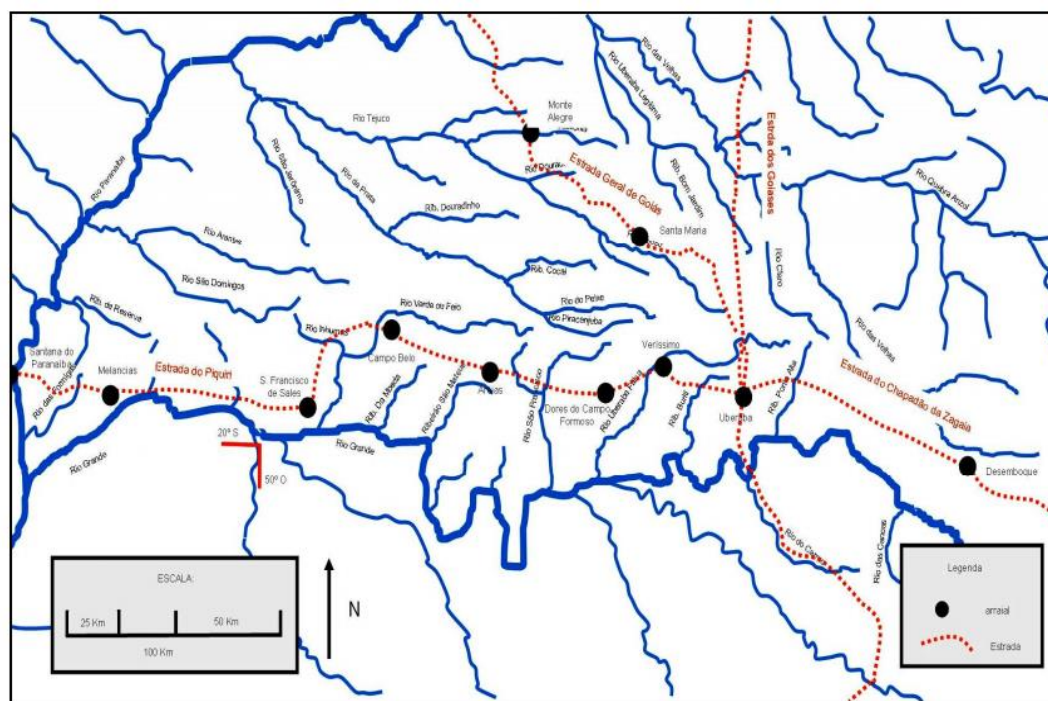
Gerais at the end of the 19th century "were strategically located." Take Diamantina and Juiz de Fora as examples. The Diamantina Normal School was located in a city that "presented itself as a major economic, cultural, and political exponent for the region in which it was located"; while Juiz de Fora was considered one of the "most important cities in Minas Gerais and the most important one in the Zona da Mata" (Ferreira, 2013, p. 33). Uberaba's situation was similar to that of both locations.

Emerging and developing over the course of the 19th century, Uberaba gained prominence in western Minas Gerais as a key transit hub among São Paulo, Goiás, and Mato Grosso, eventually becoming the most densely populated city in the Triângulo region (Lourenço, 2010, p. 175). The Triângulo region's main urban center benefited from the decline of mining, the growth of centers such as Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Campinas, and the expansion of coffee farming in western São Paulo. The region gained economic prominence with the expansion of Brazilian capitalism, which consolidated these spaces in the interior (Guimarães, 2010, p. 11).

Benefiting from its strategic position at the intersection of two major economic axes—one to the east, encompassing the oldest and most populous areas of the captaincy of Minas Gerais, and the other along the route linking São Paulo to Goiás and Mato Grosso—Uberaba emerged and developed at this convergence point (Lourenço, 2005, 2010), as shown in Map 2. Situated at this "node," the town became a key commercial hub for goods arriving from São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, particularly salt, an essential supplement for cattle herds. The expansion of coffee farming in western São Paulo and the expansion of the railroads⁹ meant that Uberaba's trade began to be conducted primarily through São Paulo, and became an outpost of São Paulo capitalism. Economic development was also benefited by livestock farming, cotton production and the war against Paraguay, given that troops that went to Mato Grosso were quartered in the city for months, leaving a large sum of capital (*Gazeta de Uberaba*, 1880, pp. 1-2).

⁹ The railway's insertion into the Triangle was an offshoot of the most dynamic capitalist sector of the Brazilian economy, namely, São Paulo's coffee industry. It was the Mogiana Company, based in Campinas, that organized the project as far as Uberaba (Guimarães, 2010, p. 61).

Map 2 - Convergence of trade routes in Uberaba



Source: Lourenço (2010, p. 61).

Three other factors deserve attention. The first is the arrival of wealthy families from Estrela do Sul, formerly Bagagem Diamantina, due to the depletion of diamond mining in their area. They brought their savings and invested in the municipality. The second factor concerns immigration. Official documents issued by the City Council on September 7, 1894, and May 15, 1896, indicate the arrival of a large number of foreigners. One document records the arrival of 67 Italian families, totaling 223 people. Another indicates the arrival of more families, totaling 200 individuals¹⁰. The third factor was the development of manufacturing, including the Cassú factory, one of the largest textile enterprises in the province. Nearby, there were 100 residences to house workers, in a village that once had 500 inhabitants (Bilharinho, 2007; Pontes, 1970). Throughout the century, the city housed tobacco factories, pottery, wineries, blacksmith shops, hat factories and food processing plants (Cellurale, 2020, pp. 531-549).

Growth led to the opening of schools and attracted those interested in teaching. Between 1850 and 1874, several intellectuals arrived, one of them being Fernando Vaz de Melo¹¹, founder of the region's first secondary school, Vaz de Melo School (Pontes, 1970, p. 409; Mendonça, 2008, p. 111). In addition, private public educational

¹⁰ Regarding immigration and the logic of labor replacement and racial whitening, Brazil received, at the end of the 19th century and the first years of the 20th century, thousands of families: 527,000 in the 1880s; 1,200,000 in the 1890s and 649,000 in the first decade of the 20th century (Kreutz, 2011, p. 351).

¹¹ According to Pedruzzi (2016, pp. 39-40), Fernando Vaz de Melo traveled in the company of Francisco de Assis Peregrino – the first director of the Ouro Preto Normal School – in 1840, to Paris, with the aim of learning “the teaching method most used in civilized countries”.

institutions were established, including a primary school for boys in 1838 and another for girls in 1853; the Normal School (1881-1905); and the Instituto Zootécnico (Bilharinho, 2007, p. 89; Machado, 2009, p. 70).

The number of private institutions was greater. We can mention the Colégio Des Genettes, the second secondary school in the region (1859-1861); the first Uberabense Liceu (1877-1879); the Colégio da Piedade (1878-1882); the second Uberabense Liceu (1881-1896); the Uberabense College (1889-1896)¹²; the Maria Isabel School (1889-1905); and the Episcopal Seminary (1896-1902). These had a short existence, but there are some that exist to this day, such as the Nossa Senhora das Dores School (1885); the Marista Diocesano (1903); and the Grupo Brasil (1908)¹³ (Mendonça, 2008, pp. 111-118). Uberaba experienced the convergence of important modern structures, such as urbanization, industrialization, and schooling. The number of social categories consuming formal education, periodicals, and books expanded. These included teachers, doctors, judges, engineers, clergy, merchants, journalists, clerks, pharmacists, workers, and immigrants.

From everything explained regarding the municipality, we conclude that its choice as the site of a normal school was due to the fact that it was the most developed location in the western region of Minas Gerais and the regional economy was best equipped to attract and receive the advances that occurred in Brazil in the second half of the 19th century (Guimarães, 2010, p. 55). This situation was confirmed by the electoral reform of 1881, which divided Minas Gerais into 20 districts, placing Uberaba as the headquarters of the 15th, encompassing the Triângulo region and three other parishes outside it (Pontes, 1970, p. 111). Furthermore, the municipality's history included being the headquarters of a Literary District¹⁴ (Sampaio, 1971, p. 382). Finally, we note that Congressman Joaquim José de Oliveira Pena, author of Law No. 2,783¹⁵, which created the school, had a good relationship with the provincial government. In the political game, a good relationship with those in power makes a difference.

¹² The first in the region to have a building constructed exclusively for a school building. Unlike what happened with the others, which operated in teachers' houses or rented houses, the Uberabense, with an imposing building, represented the new school model of the Republic, unlike the old imperial school (Riccioppo Filho, 2007, pp. 152-153).

¹³ Grupo Brasil was born public and remains public.

¹⁴ The headquarters of a Literary Circle was in an important location, with a delegate responsible for inspecting the schools in the district, covering several municipalities (Mourão, 1959, p. 11).

¹⁵ As the Law stated, in its article 1: "A normal school is created in the city of Uberaba, intended for the preparation of people who are destined for teaching" (Sampaio, 1971, p. 381).

THE ROLE OF THE UBERABA NORMAL SCHOOL

In Brazil, even with the decentralization brought about by the Additional Act of 1834, the mandatory teaching license remained. The General Education Law of 1827, in its Article 7, established that applicants for teaching positions would be publicly examined (Brasil, 1827). In Minas Gerais, Regulation 28 of 1854 reinforced this guideline, stating that no one could teach "without having taken an exam" (Mourão, 1959, p. 111).

In accordance with the law, the main function of the Uberaba Normal School was to train and qualify teachers. However, the minutes show that tests were conducted for candidates applying for other positions, such as Antonio Carlos de Araújo, who applied to be a jury clerk (APM, código IP 1-3, cx. 32). We found exams for candidates applying for other positions, such as notary and guardian of orphans. These tests assessed proficiency in Portuguese and arithmetic. In the teaching field, the minutes show that the school established itself as a hub serving the Triângulo region, southern Goiás, and other regions of Minas Gerais. The main locations were Araguari, Araxá, Bagagem, Desemboque, Frutal, Indianópolis, Monte Alegre, Patrocínio, Prata, Sacramento, Uberaba, and Uberabinha¹⁶.

Regarding the exams, interested parties had to submit a formal request to the school office. Once this was done, the institution would establish the date, content, and procedure. Candidates were then subjected to a proficiency test before the principal and two teachers. The content was announced in advance, and the topics were randomly selected. The exams were both written and oral, and, in addition to knowledge in areas such as Portuguese, arithmetic, history, and geography, they required appropriate moral behavior. After the exam, the panel would discuss it and issue a verdict based on the following criteria: excellent, good, fair, or poor.

This was the standard procedure for those seeking a teaching degree or enrolling as teacher training students. The examples of Rita Magnanima Caleagno, Maria Alice Ferreira, and José Baptista de Godoy, according to sources, intended to enroll, or

Elisario Ribeiro de Vasconcellos and Antonio Augusto de Affonseca, enrolled: the 1st for the Chair of primary education, of the 1st grade, of the Parish of Santa Maria do Monte Alegre, the 2nd for the same Chair of the Parish of Sant'Anna do Rio das Velhas, of the Municipality of Bagagem, by the aforementioned Director it was ordered to the Teachers [...] to carry out the required exams [...] they will respond on the subject of the point drawn by lot (APM, código IP 157).

¹⁶ Desemboque is now a district of Sacramento; Uberabinha is Uberlândia; Bagagem is Estrela do Sul.

It is worth noting that, unlike Rita Magnanima Caleagno, Maria Alice Ferreira and José Baptista de Godoy, citizens Elisário Ribeiro and Antônio Augusto were already working in teaching and sought out the school to take exams in order to be legitimized in the profession.

We selected an excerpt from the exam records illustrating that, in addition to scientific content, moral qualities and religious themes were also assessed. Thus, José Joaquim Cordeiro da Paixão was assessed on "geometry and linear drawing, arithmetic, Portuguese grammar, moral and religious instruction, sacred history, geography, and Brazilian history" (APM, código IP 157, p. 20v). Along with scientific knowledge, knowledge related to morality and religion was required.

The religious content was of the Catholic confession, as illustrated by the excerpt from the exam by Affonso Baptista Pinheiro: "who gave his test on the following point: Explanation of the Sign of the Cross" (APM, código IP, 157, p. 112v-113) and by Avelina Cândida Fernandes, who wrote about "Creation of the world: The angels. Adam and Eve. Magisterium of Redemption". In the written test, the student said: "In the beginning of the world God created the heaven and the Earth [...] and finally he said: let us make man in our image and likeness [...] On the seventh day he rested" (APM, código IP 1.3, box 31).

Thus, during the Empire, the school trained and qualified teaching candidates in accordance with the Catholic¹⁷ *ethos*. However, religious instruction bothered some teachers, leading José Rodrigues de Miranda Chaves, a supporter of secular education¹⁸, to submit a proposal that the school's Congregation, in accordance with Regulation 100, should represent the Board of Directors of Public Education on

the convenience of suppressing the teaching of religious instruction in Scholas Normaes Regulations of this Province [...] Put [...] to a vote, it was approved; voted in favor [...] Alexandre de Souza Barbosa, Doctor Saraiva Junior, Illidio Salathiel dos Santos, Randolpho Ribeiro and Miranda Chaves; voted against: the Directors Gabriel Orlando Teixeira Junqueira, Joaquim Thome dos Santos, Francelino Cardoso and D. Maria Luiza do Valle Rezende (APM, código IP 158, p. 71v-72).

¹⁷ The presence of religious education was related to the Padroado, which, in accordance with the Constitution of 1824, was one of the structural characteristics of the Brazilian State.

¹⁸ Advocates of secular education base their approach on the premise of state impartiality toward all religious denominations. In Brazil, the spread of republican and positivist ideas led to increased questioning of religious education, and at the end of the 19th century, the fight for a secular, free, and scientific public school intensified (Leão, 2012, p. 606).

The proposal, made at the Congregation meeting on October 2, 1888, a year before the Proclamation of the Republic¹⁹, divided the faculty, revealing that there were supporters of the Republic within the institution. Alexandre Barbosa, Saraiva Júnior, and Miranda Chaves, who were in favor of the measure, were acclaimed members of the Governing Board of Uberaba after the Republic was proclaimed (Pontes, 1970, p. 424). We believe that Illidio Salathiel and Randolfo Ribeiro were also republicans, due to their vote²⁰.

The *Gazeta de Uberaba* (1888, p. 2) reports that these teachers were labeled as "heretics", "impious", and "teachers without conscience or religion". This edition sheds light on the clash between those in favor of secularizing education and those defending religion. This reveals the presence of the republican movement and a competing curriculum and school culture²¹. According to Sacristán (2000, p. 17), the curriculum "reflects the conflict between interests within a society and the dominant values that govern educational processes"; it is an element of school culture, and Julia (2001, p. 10) defines it as a collection of norms that delimit "knowledge to teach and behaviors to inculcate, and a set of practices that allow the transmission of this knowledge and the incorporation of these behaviors". That said, the emergence of republican values can be seen at the Uberaba Normal School, their dissemination within the institution, and a movement in favor of changing the curriculum and school culture.

It is also noteworthy that the debate, which took place in major centers, was also present within the main educational institution in the Triângulo region, demonstrating that the republicans of Uberaba were aligned with the demands of the national movement. Behind this debate, there was a clash between two models of school culture, or teaching: one state-run and secular, and the other anchored in Catholic tradition. This situation was exacerbated by the arrival of the Dominican nuns and the founding of the Colégio Nossa Senhora das Dores in 1885. The nuns were welcomed by the Uberaba elite, eager to educate their daughters according to Catholic morality. The incursion of the "Dominican nuns into the educational sector" did not please "regularly qualified teachers, who felt disadvantaged by the competition" (Riccioppo Filho, 2007, p. 148).

The closure of the Normal School in 1905 marked a setback in the debate for secular education. In a different sense, denominational education, represented by the Nossa Senhora das Dores School, was marked from its inception by expansion, as mentioned by Sampaio (1971, p. 132), who, referring to education, stated that Uberaba

¹⁹ We found no document demonstrating that the representation was sent to the Instruction Board. It should have been, since it was a proposal approved by the Congregation, the school's main collegiate body.

²⁰ The sources reveal that the school, as a public institution, was a place of debate between secular and confessional education, demonstrating that controversies expressed in larger centers, such as capitals, reverberated within the Normal School, which, as a public institution, was an environment of diversity.

²¹ The result of a historical situation, it "cannot be understood outside the context in which it is configured, nor independently of the conditions in which it develops" (Sacristán, 2000, p. 107).

had "a school run by Dominican Sisters for the instruction of girls, to which the State Government granted the status of a normal school, attended by about 300 students". The memoirist paints a panorama of schooling in the city, revealing the neglect of public institutions and the attention given by authorities to denominational educational institutions, such as Colégio Nossa Senhora das Dores, which benefited from public funds to accommodate "poor" students ²².

Gatti and Gatti Jr. (2020, p. 235) draw attention to a relevant fact in Minas Gerais education, regarding the "transference of public resources to the private sector through subsidies, especially scholarships". Sousa (2021, p. 116) states that the closure of the Normal School in Diamantina strengthened "the action of the Catholic Church, legitimizing it in female education", in a process that unfolded throughout "Minas Gerais in this period, demarcating the power of the Church in relation to the power of the State, that is, the public and the secular permeated the contexts of political and social disputes as well as fostering possible agreements"²³.

Regarding the teaching method at the Normal School, the sources revealed the practice of a traditional type of teaching, focused on decorum without understanding, without reasoning, and on the memorization of formulas and content, differing from the new methodologies spread in Europe and the USA, called the intuitive method, and which were already present in Brazil (Silva, 2017, p. 125). They also revealed that, despite the predominance of traditional teaching, attempts were made to apply the intuitive method²⁴, since a report by Inspector Antônio Garcia Adjunto, addressed to the Secretary of the Interior, exposes the state of the methods²⁵.

The inspector was caustic when referring to the knowledge of the practical class teachers, using the term "incompetence" for them. He pointed out that many instructors were out of touch and did not apply or understand the most advanced teaching methods. Antônio Garcia, Adjunct (APM, código SI 677), states that

I stopped attending the exams for the other departments because they coincided with those at the Normal School, which I had to give preference to [...] There were exams for all departments, with the exception of science, physics, natural sciences and agriculture, taught by Professor Dr. Hilidio Salatiel Guaritá, due to the refusal

²² We doubt that it is free, since, according to Inácio Filho (2002, p. 55), the "referred scholarship holders should provide domestic services to the nuns as a form of payment".

²³ Sousa (2021, p. 117) supports the thesis that the installation of the bishopric was "the landmark of modernity in Diamantina" and that the installation of the Normal School was, at first, linked to the "interests of the three directing agents of the city, that is, the State, the ruling elites and the Catholic Church".

²⁴ The intuitive method values observation, analysis, interpretation and understanding of things for human development (Silva, 2017, p. 123).

²⁵ The traveling inspectors, appointed by the state president, were provided for in the Afonso Pena Reform (1892). They were responsible for examining attendance books, minutes, enrollment numbers, and teaching methodology, and produced important documents about the state of education in Minas Gerais.

of students who declared that they did not consider themselves prepared [...] The impression that the exams gave me was that the Normal School [...] leaves a lot to be desired. I have seen many teachers at the School who do not understand or apply the current teaching methods. The vicious system of decorum, without understanding, is widely followed there, so much so that in sciences of exclusive reasoning, such as mathematics, the mental work of students is confined to memorizing the lessons [...] This vicious habit that I have just mentioned has been greatly contributed to by the incompetence of teachers in practical classes, where students only cultivate their memory (APM, código SI 677).

It is noted that the teaching and learning process left much to be desired and was based on a "vicious system of decorum, devoid of understanding." The report offered some encouragement, praising some teachers in the normal education system, such as "Artiaga, Mamede, Saltão, and Gasparino," with particular emphasis on Alexandre Barbosa, a history and geography teacher, an exception in a scenario marked by the practice of memorization without reflection. According to the source, Alexandre Barbosa's students performed well, with "oral tests that did not differ from the written ones", demonstrating understanding (APM, código SI 677). According to Araújo et al. (2008, p. 12), the "concern with teaching practice as a formative element for future teachers became more evident from the end of the 19th century onward". The aforementioned document, while revealing precariousness, indicates the spread of an active-bias methodology in the interior of Minas Gerais.

An important function of the Normal School was its attached primary school, which served as a practical school where students put their learning into practice. The attached school focused on literacy, with the distinction of being better resourced than other schools of its kind. While primary schools had only one teacher, when available, the attached school was staffed by practical class teachers, students, and lecturers from the Normal School, many of whom had higher education degrees—a distinction not even private schools had. This factor influenced the choices of families from other regions seeking better conditions for their children. When faced with a choice between a location with a school attached to the Normal School and one without, these families opted for the former, and Uberaba was a viable option.

We arrived at this conclusion by analyzing the origins of the students at the attached school, who came from over 30 locations. Bagagem, Patrocínio, and Monte Alegre were the most frequent. We identified individuals from Araxá, Batatais, Bambuí, Cabo Verde, Catalão, Franca, Mogi-Mirim, Muzambinho, Paracatu, and Sorocaba (APM, código IP, 156). The names of Hildebrando Pontes, a future memoirist from Uberaba, and Honório Guimarães, a future educator in Uberabinha, stood out. The attached school received children of migrants and immigrants, including Arabs, Spaniards, Portuguese, and Italians (APM, código SI, 1092). Former students went on

to higher education, such as the aforementioned Hildebrando Pontes and Fidélis Reis, who graduated from the Instituto Zootécnico, which, in its brief existence, trained agricultural engineers in Uberaba in the 19th century (Machado, 2009, pp. 155-157).

Regarding the normalistas, we highlight the case of Joaquim Fontoura, a public school teacher in Monte Alegre who, because he was not qualified, was on leave to attend the normal classes (APM, código SI 1084). It is clear that the leave for qualification, a campaign banner for many teachers today, was a reality for some at the time. However, not all those granted leave took advantage of the opportunity, as in the case of Francisco de Magalhães, "given leave by the government to attend this school [...] he stopped attending classes" (APM, código SI 4.2, cx.63).

Although there was demand, the school suffered from a low number of normalistas and the dropout rate of some of those who enrolled, as explained above. There were 14 normalistas in 1882 and 22 in 1883, and if their number was low, the situation was different at the adjacent school, which was sought after by numerous candidates; in 1882, there were 96 enrollments and, in 1883, 173 (Sampaio, 1971, p. 387). The low number of graduates is a fate that has marked teacher training in Brazil since ancient times. According to Tanuri (2000, p. 64), the first normal school in Brazil was short-lived and opened in 1835 and closed in 1849, graduating "in 1840, after four years of operation [...] only 14 students, of whom 11 dedicated themselves to teaching." However, these were institutions that trained and licensed educators, and in the case of the Uberaba Normal School, it trained them to work in the Triângulo region. We highlight Fernando de Araújo Vaz de Mello Júnior, a teacher in Sacramento; Honório Guimarães, in Uberabinha; Olympio Carlos dos Santos, in Patrocínio; Maria Christina da Costa, in Prata; and many others we chose not to mention, attesting that the school unequivocally contributed to expanding the supply of specialized teaching staff and professionalizing teaching in the Triângulo region and other regions, as already mentioned.

Teacher and former student Olympio Carlos dos Santos sent a letter to the management of the Normal School on October 11, 1891, acknowledging and thanking them for the benefits he had reaped from that "recommended" educational institution. Since he could not otherwise express his profound gratitude and duty to such an illustrious faculty, he "respectfully offered them, as a token of friendship, a modest photograph of the School" under his direction. Olympio Carlos states that enrollment at his school "has always been substantial, and currently stands at 62 students" (APM, código IP 2.1 cx. 05, pc. 2), confirming that, by training teachers, the school fulfilled the important role of professionalizing teaching and expanding literacy.

Another important attribute of the institution was its public character, keeping its doors open to students from diverse backgrounds, such as Anna Rosa Luiz and Sabina Margarida de Jesus, from the village of Sant'Ana, now Indianópolis (APM, código IP 156). Joaquim Roberto, born to an enslaved mother and freed by his owner,

Antônio Borges Sampaio, before the Free Womb Law, was a Normalist. He received his diploma and course ring from the Normal School and was appointed public teacher of the primary education department in Uberabinha (Sampaio, 1971, p. 228).

The sources attest to the coeducation system, as both women and men sought out the school to enroll or obtain licenses, indicating a change in customs and an emphasis on female teaching. In the case of the female teachers, the combined teaching generated distrust and discomfort among part of the local elite, who did not want their daughters in the company of boys. Coeducation "in the normal courses created in the 19th century" faced resistance "in most provinces" (Araújo et al., 2008, p. 12). In Uberaba, the figures attest to this, revealing a decline in the public Normal School and the growth of its private competitor, the Colégio Nossa Senhora das Dores Normal School, which exclusively served female students (Sampaio, 1971, p. 132; Moura, 2002, p. 13). According to Arruda (2013, p. 164), a similar situation occurred in São João del Rei, where the closure of the Normal School is related to a competition established in the city in 1898, when Vincentian nuns founded "the Nossa Senhora das Dores School (CNSD), a confessional institution, of a religious nature, focused on training primary school teachers".

Regarding the expansion of female teaching, Tanuri (2000, p. 66) points out that "it was the only profession" that allowed for the reconciliation of "women's domestic duties, traditionally cultivated [...] with the movement toward enlightenment," which began in the 1870s. Furthermore, female teaching "presented itself as a solution to the problem of primary school labor, which was in short supply among male teachers due to low pay." In this sense, the local and national context was one of expanding female teaching, driven by republican and positivist thought, based on the belief that women represented the virtue of social moralization. However, especially in the interior, the positivist ideal merged with patriarchal conservatism. In this paradox, the state-run, secular Normal School failed, and the issue was resolved by the Nossa Senhora das Dores School, which was subsidized and specialized in women's education. To the alleged lack of funds for closing the school, which we will see in the next section, we must add the conservatism regarding coeducation and the arrival of a denominational school, since the enrollment movement of Normalists in Uberaba showed the following dynamic: it declined in public education and expanded in the Catholic and subsidized competitor.

PEDAGOGICAL STRUCTURE, PRECARIOUSNESS AND CLOSURE

At the time the Normal School was established, sources indicate that the Uberaba elite was aligned with ideas associated with the liberal *ethos* of modernity circulating in Europe and in the major centers of the Empire. This finding supports Tanuri's (2000, p. 66) observation of a widespread belief in the value of education at the end of the 19th century "among men of different parties and ideological positions," a trend also identified by Sousa (2021) in relation to the Diamantina Normal School and by Pedruzzi (2016) regarding the Ouro Preto Normal School. In Uberaba, Antônio Borges Sampaio's speech noted that the act

will mark the history of the city of Uberaba, with letters indelible, the 15th of July 1882, one of its notable eras; attesting to future material progress, it will show them that it also advances in the development of the intellectual [...] I congratulate the people of Uberaba [...] for the foundation and installation of this interesting and useful literary establishment, and for the illustrious personnel who will direct and govern it (APM, código IP 1.3, cx.32).

The enthusiasm is clear, as the speaker ranked the achievement among the greatest in Uberaba's history, associating it with progress, intellectuality, and enlightenment, considered singular elements of modernity and schooling. In a tone that highlights that a school institution is a space of power and representation, Sampaio thanks the provincial president, Theophilo Ottoni; the principal, Major Joaquim José de Oliveira Penna, for their efforts; he praised the "recognized qualified" faculty, and told them that "no male or female teacher should leave this establishment without being qualified to teach and direct primary education" (APM, código IP 1.3, cx.32). Teaching and directing is equivalent to teaching literacy, considering public and/or private school positions. When comparing the establishment of the Uberaba Normal School with the reinstallation of the capital's Normal School²⁶, which occurred years earlier, in 1872, we note that both events were surrounded by prestige, with the presence of local music bands and many authorities. In Ouro Preto,

the future teacher of the 1st chair of the normal institute, the bachelor Mr. Dr. João Joaquim da Fonseca d'Albuquerque, gave a long and enthusiastic speech about the benefits of establishing the School. He stated, among other things, that from that date onwards, a new era for public education in the province would begin (Pedruzzi, 2016, p. 82).

²⁶ Ouro Preto was the capital of Minas Gerais until 1897, the year in which Belo Horizonte became the new capital.

It's worth noting that these institutions were recognized as relevant and notable in the educational process. In the case of the Uberaba institution, its establishment was an achievement of the Liberal Party, critically acknowledged by the *Gazeta de Uberaba*, a newspaper affiliated with the Conservative Party and opposed to the liberals. The newspaper said it was an institution that "ennobles and exalts" the "modest, cramped, rickety mansion" where it operated (*Gazeta de Uberaba*, 1883, p. 1). Conservatives recognized the achievement and mocked the facilities! Unfortunately, we have not found yet any editions of the *Monitor Uberabense*, affiliated with the liberals, which likely praised this achievement²⁷.

The *Gazeta* characterized the building where the school began its activities as "cramped" and "rickety." Minutes from the Congregation and the Uberaba City Council demonstrated this and other shortcomings. At the Congregation meeting on May 7, 1884, to present and discuss the school's budget proposal, the first discussion was noted regarding the need for a dedicated building, given that the school's existing building was cramped. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the government's request for a budget survey and allocation, so that a list of annual expenses and acquisitions could be compiled. Teachers Joaquim Antônio Gomes da Silva and Joaquim Rodrigues Cordeiro, appointed for the task, presented two lists of items: one for the school's office expenses and the other for furniture and educational materials.

At first glance, the expenditure of 2,500 reais on furniture might seem exaggerated, however, this assumption will disappear as soon as it is known that that School has almost nothing, using, to this day, the furniture belonging to others found in the house, which, due to their triangular shape, are unsuitable for purposes other than those of the Mechanical Workshop, to which they belong (APM, código IP 157, p. 56).

The teachers continue to point out the need for six tables for teachers, 60 chairs, 11 tables-benches, 3 platforms, a bookcase, a piano, a wall clock, a compass, maps of the world and the province of Minas, a globe, a blackboard, a crank planetarium, a globe of hours, a bell, inkwells, ink pots, a box of envelopes, a box of feathers and brooms, for a total of 45 items (APM, código IP 157, pp. 56v-57v).

It's worth noting that, after two years of operation, the school operated in a rickety, cramped two-story house. It owned almost nothing, using inappropriate

²⁷ During the monarchical period, there were two political parties: the Liberal and the Conservative. As for political participation, only "between 1% and 3% of the people" were included in the "so-called national will, a figure that did not substantially change during the Republic" in its first forty years. It was a parliamentary system "without the people," with parties founded among the ruling classes, whose purpose was to control "instruments to entice, manipulate, and coerce the electorate, rather than to translate their interests" (Faoro, 1987, p. 323).

furniture, unrelated to the pedagogical activity, and improvised from a workshop²⁸. It lacked basic items for the teaching-learning process, such as tables, chairs, a globe, maps, and a compass, which allows us to conclude that, in the beginning, this dynamic occurred in precarious conditions.

According to Tanuri (2000, p. 65), the infrastructure of normal schools, "both in terms of the building and its facilities and equipment, is the subject of constant criticism in the documents." This situation is outlined by Sousa (2021, p. 137) regarding the normal schools in Minas Gerais that existed "between the late 19th and early 20th centuries," highlighting the case of the Diamantina Normal School. About the Juiz de Fora Normal School, Ferreira (2013, pp. 41-53) illustrates a similar fact. That said, considering the Uberaba Normal School and research on teacher training in Minas Gerais and Brazil at the time, we can affirm that conditions were precarious.

The first staff was questioned by *Gazeta* the day after the inauguration; the newspaper mocked the abilities of some of the teachers, saying that

for the teaching positions and other jobs, the following were appointed: Director, Major Joaquim José de Oliveira Penna, also appointed inspector of the 21st literary circle, replacing Dr. Illidio Salathiel Guarita. Professor of moral and religious instruction, pedagogy and sacred history, Dr. Thomaz Pimentel de Ulhôa. Portuguese pronunciation, Joaquim Antonio Gomes da Silva.!!!!!! Arithmetic pronunciation, Illidio Salathiel dos Santos. Geometry and linear drawing, Rufino José de Oliveira Pena.!!!!!! History and geography of Brazil Dr. Illidio Salathiel Guarita. Practical classes, Joaquim Rodrigues Cordeiro. Continuous doorman, Antonio Vicente da Silveira (*Gazeta de Uberaba*, 1882, p. 2).

The exclamation points after the names of Joaquim Antônio Gomes and Rufino José de Oliveira Pena represent disbelief and, in general, distrust in the distribution of positions among members of the Liberal Party²⁹. In addition to the principal, at least four of the six teachers mentioned were members of the party: Thomaz Pimentel de Ulhôa, Joaquim Antônio Gomes, Rufino José de Oliveira Pena, and Illídio Salathiel Guaritá. Later, positions were filled through competitive examinations, which is how Alexandre Barbosa and Antônio Pereira de Artiaga joined. Sources indicate that the

²⁸ Sousa (2021, p. 241) records a similar situation, since "it can be seen through sources that the director of the Diamantina Normal School, Joaquim José Pedro Lessa, made constant complaints to the government about the situation of the educational institution", pointing out "the lack of furniture, the precariousness of the building's facilities" among others.

²⁹ Arruda (2013, pp. 157-158) points out a similar issue, which occurred at the São João del Rei Normal School, that is, "the format of the nominations, the competence and the accumulation of functions of the teachers", citing professor Antonio Rodrigues de Melo as a beneficiary.

Normal School had highly qualified teachers in its pedagogical structure, including lawyers, priests, journalists, and doctors.

The timebooks revealed important information. The first, covering from 1882 to 1889, showed that, initially, only the teachers signed the timebook, a fact that changed over time as other employees began to sign it. Classes began in August, and the school routine was marked by absences and teacher volatility. In June 1884, the teachers suffered a sharp decline. That year, few teachers were regularly present. There were cases of abandonment of duty, such as that of music teacher João Baptista Spiridião Rodrigues, who, accused of abandoning his post, was suspended (APM, IP 1-3, cx. 32, doc. 20). His replacement, Franklin Augusto de Almeida, did not take office, and the position was temporarily occupied by Joaquim Thomé dos Santos (A União, 1887, p. 2). George Chiré and Maria Rita de Magalhães also dropped out (Minas Geraes, 1892, p. 292). The precarious building and inconsistent teaching materials were compounded by absences, volatility, and abandonment of duties. This situation contributed to the number of Normalists decreasing from 41 to 10 between 1884 and 1886 (APM, código SI 1084)³⁰.

An examination of the points revealed arrivals and departures. Many came from abroad, demonstrating the attraction of those interested in holding public office. This was the case with Alexandre Barbosa, Antônio Pereira de Artiaga, Paulo Frederico Barthes, George Chiré, Atanásio Saltão, Militino Pinto de Carvalho, and Artur Lobo.

At the top of the pedagogical hierarchy was the principal. His appointment was a matter for the government, and it was not necessary to be a teacher to hold the position, as seen in the cases of Joaquim José de Oliveira Penna and Borges Sampaio. The advent of the Republic opened the way for the group to decide who would perform the role, as a letter addressed to the General Inspectorate of Education announced the election of Illídio Salathiel Guaritá for the position of director, chosen by the teachers' vote.

Another important component of the pedagogical structure was the Congregation, a council of teachers chaired by the principal. With deliberative powers, its members had an active voice in budgeting and formulating opinions; they defined exams and class schedules; and deliberated on academic life. They were responsible for selecting textbooks and books, awarding prizes and honorable mentions to students, and ensuring the well-being of the institution, not only in terms of order but also in terms of improvements (APM, s.d., Regulamento n. 100, art. 34).

We identified two moments of enthusiasm in the school's trajectory. The first, at the time of its establishment, already recorded; and the second, at the beginning of the Republic, materialized in the Afonso Pena Reform (1892), which instituted a new curriculum and directed resources toward teaching, in the logic of enthusiasm and

³⁰ The reduced number of students was identified in other investigations. Pedruzzi (2016, p. 93) states that, from 1876 to 1878, only 13 diplomas from graduates of the Ouro Preto normal course were registered [...] 1 in 1876, 5 in 1877 and 7 in 1878"; in 1879 this number increased to 18.

optimism for schooling (Mourão, 1962, pp. 24-30; Nagle, 1976, p. 189)³¹. This was when a change of address occurred, moving the school to a different location. The building remained rented and had been constructed for other purposes.

Regarding its location, we hypothesize that the Normal School operated in four different locations, three of which are attested by the sources. The first, already characterized, was a building loaned by Joaquim José de Oliveira Pena. The institution operated there for approximately five years, until 1887. Sources imprecisely indicate that this two-story residence may have housed the school until 1894, a total of 12 years, not five. Still imprecisely, sources suggest that the school may have operated in another location between 1887 and 1894. Our assertion is based on a request from Councilman Antero Rocha, representing the Chamber before the Minas Gerais state government, requesting, at the regular meeting of March 15, 1892, the construction or acquisition of a building for the Normal School, given that the building where it was located was in a "state of ruin" (APU, 1892, pp. 96v-97v).

Thus, if the address changed after 1887, it was also a precarious building. In response to the purchase or construction, the state government claimed "no funds" (APU, 1892, p. 105-105v). Three years after Antero Rocha's failed attempt, and in an unusual situation, the teachers acquired a property, and the school began operating in a new location. A letter requesting tax exemption addressed to the City Council by director Antônio Pereira de Artiaga, regarding the Congregation's purchase of a building, states that it was presented

request from the director [...] asking for exemption from the tax on the purchase of a building made by the Congregation of the same School, to operate that educational establishment, basing their request on having made this private purchase for the benefit of public education, since they could not find a building with appropriate accommodations for that purpose in the place. Put to discussion after much consideration by the councilors present, it was decided that it should be granted (APU, 1895, p. 183-183v).

The acquisition, even for public education purposes, was carried out by private individuals and, besides being unusual and full of voluntarism, in which teachers acquired property to house the Normal School, the negligence of the state government, responsible for the institution, is evident. Thus, in Minas Gerais, the results of investigations into teacher training at the end of the 19th century point to the use of precarious locations that had not been built for pedagogical purposes, as

³¹ Nagle (1976, p. 189) states that educational enthusiasm and pedagogical optimism were two features of the educational thought pattern of the 1920s; however, initiatives and reforms occurred at the beginning of the Republic that already bore these marks, such as the Afonso Pena Reform.

demonstrated by Oliveira (2011, p. 47), in a table that records the Minas Gerais normal schools established between 1871 and 1884.

Regarding the Ouro Preto Normal School, Pedruzzi (2016, p. 107) states that “the complaint for its own building” was recurrent in the congregation’s minutes. Ferreira (2013, pp. 36-37), in relation to the Juiz de Fora Normal School, states that, although it was created in 1881, its installation only took place in 1894, and, in this researcher’s understanding, “the Normal School was not installed due to the lack of a building for its operation”³². In São João del Rei, the Normal School operated in a rented location and faced situations of change (Fonseca, 2013, p. 24).

In the case of the Uberaba Normal School, 13 years after its establishment, concerns persisted regarding rent, the lack of its own building, and dependence on the goodwill of third parties, such as Joaquim de Oliveira Pena in the early days and, now, the Congregation. The main leader of this period was Antônio Pereira de Artiaga, whose administration coincided with the Afonso Pena Reform. Attentive to new methods, Artiaga instituted awards for students, whose names were recorded in annals (APM, código SI 2.4, 1092), and organized books identifying the school’s furniture and visitors. The attendance and minutes received greater attention. The physical structure underwent improvements with the acquisition of offices and laboratories and the organization and expansion of a library, which became one of the largest in the city,

with more than a thousand volumes. This library, which was depleted by almost half when the School closed in 1905, was given by the Secretary of the Interior of the State of Minas Gerais to the new Bernardo Guimarães Literary Student Council (Pontes, 1970, p. 405).

Efforts to improve the library, in 1895, at the beginning of the Artiaga administration, are evidenced in sources such as the minutes of the Congregation of April 18, 1895, in which they discussed how to spend \$308,300. Among the proposals, Alexandre Barbosa’s prevailed, “who suggested purchasing books for the pedagogical library.” A committee was formed, composed of “Antonio Mamede de Oliveira Coutinho, Alexandre de Souza Barbosa, and Joaquim Dias Soares to organize the list of works” (APM, código SI 2.4, p. 7-8). We identified other improvements, such as the construction of a pavilion for a “gymnastics class” (APM, código SI 4.2, cx.63, pc.29) and the acquisition of equipment for science, physical and natural classes” (APM,

³² Our readings allow us to affirm that, in the general framework of Minas Gerais’s normal schools at the end of the 19th century, two situations stood out, in the sense that they demonstrated a more favorable position in terms of buildings. The Normal School of Juiz de Fora, which began operating in a building with adequate conditions for the purpose of education, ten years after its installation (Ferreira, 2013, p. 42), and the Normal School of Ouro Preto, for which, at the end of the Empire, the construction of a building began (Pedruzzi, 2016, pp. 113-115).

código SI 4.2, box 63, pc. 29). The improvisation and initial precariousness were overcome by investments and commitment of the teachers.

The end of the Artiaga administration³³ coincided with the beginning of a new cycle of crisis, including another relocation in 1903, as a letter from the Ministry of the Interior indicated the signing of a contract for a new house. The document measures

on the celebration of a house contract for the operation of that School [...] and that board should take into account the following bases: Not to exceed the term of the contract of December 31st; the government shall have the right to terminate it whenever it deems convenient; exempt the same government from the responsibility for repairs and repairs to the building when claimed (APM, código SI 4.2, cx.64, pc.28).

After more than two decades, the institution faced challenges related to relocation, lack of its own premises, and operation in buildings constructed for non-educational purposes. Political disputes persisted, and while during the Monarchy they revolved around the interests of conservatives and liberals, during the Republic they were between the groups in power in the State. Pontes (1970, pp. 138-139) states that Militino Pinto de Carvalho, director in 1900, and in a

election of deputies to the Minas Gerais city council. On the eve of the election, the poll workers were surprised that the doors of the establishment did not open to set up the tables and, trying to find out why, were informed by the school director that the keys to the building had been lost [...] The next day, with the keys still lost, the poll workers set up the three sections on small tables placed in the same places as they had been the day before and then proceeded with the election (Pontes, 1970, pp. 138-139).

To understand Militino Pinto de Carvalho's non-republican action, which occurred in the local scenario, we draw on the reflection of Nosella and Buffa (1996, p. 103), for whom the "Republic established among us was a mutilated Republic, as it excluded the worker from citizenship." These two researchers, who analyzed the São Carlos Normal School at the beginning of the New Regime, state that among us

³³ This administration ended tragically on July 10, 1897, when director Antonio Pereira de Artiaga was shot dead inside the Normal School by professor Artur Lobo. Sources indicate a strong rivalry between them.

The Republic did not represent a social rupture, since its citizens were the very masters of the Empire. The Brazilian State, upon becoming a Republic, continued to be governed by the same power holders. After all, the republic's politicians were the sons and grandsons of the "noble" coffee growers. The Brazilian elite has always recognized the importance of the State and privately appropriated the *res-publica*, as it did, for example, with large public schools. This is a perverse "logic" and a stigma that marks Brazil [...] The path here was the opposite of classical liberalism (especially American), for which, at the origin and foundation of the State, individuals with their productive initiatives and possessions stand. Here, first, the Portuguese State arrived, master of everything, demiurge of individuals who, through political-military means, became property owners.

Regarding education, Tanuri (2000, p. 67) states that the New Regime "did not bring significant changes to public instruction, nor did it inaugurate a new trend of educational ideas." In the case of Uberaba, the Normal School was instrumentalized to serve the interests of sectors of the local elite linked to state power, since, while serving as a polling station, the school was used for political purposes. Militino de Carvalho, linked to the state government of Silviano Brandão, locked the doors to prevent the triumph of the opposition from the Lavourista Party (Pontes, 1970, p. 138). The regime changed, but the practices remained, in new times that did not bring the free vote, but violent lords who subjected a passive and subjugated society to cronyism, favoritism, and blunderbuss. The halter was loosen, and the parties adapted to the new reality (Faoro, 1987, p. 386).

Education continued to be the subject of enthusiastic rhetoric and little effective action. The New Regime implemented the liberal proposal of church-state separation, but in practice, the liberal ideal of universal elementary education, the inclusion of the people in democratic and civic rites, and secular education continued under *unique conditions*. The decentralization implemented in 1834 and subsidies for denominational schools were maintained, and the universalization of elementary education remained neglected.

In a new context, marked by old practices, the Normal School (Northern School) had its activities suspended in 1901 and definitively closed in 1905, in one of the worst years in the history of Uberaba's education, given that a lack of funds led the City Council to close all municipal schools (Pontes, 1970, p. 143). The news of the Normal School's suspension for 1901 was treated with irony by the press. The *Gazeta* reported the fact, stating that the act of closing a school without opening another would only be understood by "a stubborn bricklayer who, called to repair a house still in good condition, thought it wiser to demolish it, even without trying to build a new one to shelter the residents" (*Gazeta de Uberaba*, 1900, p. 1). Sousa (2021, p. 251) shows that

the state of Minas Gerais' policy for Normal Schools, during this period, was on the way to being scrapped, since “the lack of funds” and precariousness contributed to “the dismantling of public normal education” that began in 1901.

The final act took place in 1905, when the state government, citing economic reasons, suppressed public normal schools, a fact reported by *Gazeta*:

Dr. Francisco Salles, President of the State, signed and is now publishing the decree approving the instructions for the execution of Law 395, of December 23, 1904, in the part referring to the suspension of the Normative Schools funded by the State coffers. The teachers and student inspectors of these establishments will be on standby, receiving half their salaries. The directors and secretaries of the suspended schools will, for the time being, remain in their positions, with some responsibilities related to the final exams (*Gazeta de Uberaba*, 1905b, p. 2).

The government of Minas Gerais declared that it was unable to “maintain the rentals” and ordered the directors to move the files and materials “to rooms set aside in the buildings where the municipal councils operate,” recommending that they send “to the Interior Secretariat a detailed inventory of everything” as soon as the transfer was completed (*Gazeta de Uberaba*, 1905 a, p. 2).

Research on the Minas Gerais normal schools of the period “highlights that the lack of investment, lack of qualified personnel, precarious operation, incipient results, among other factors, were hallmarks of these establishments”, becoming justification for their closure in 1905 (Sousa, 2021, p. 52)³⁴. After the public normal schools were closed, the normalist institutions linked to the Church were equated with them and, in this sense, Sousa (2021) argues that transferring teacher training to the private sector and, subsequently, promoting the establishment

of School Groups, a fact triggered in 1906, corroborated the modernity project in force in Minas Gerais at that time, since the existence of these two [training modalities] allowed the organization and systematization of both primary and normal education, aiming to address the problems with public education (Sousa, 2021, p. 231).

Closed in 1905 after 23 years of operation, the Uberaba Normal School exemplified the intermittent character of such institutions during both the imperial

³⁴ In Juiz de Fora, “there was a mobilization of teachers and the local population” so that the Normal School would not be closed (Ferreira, 2013, p. 33).

period and the Republic. Its closure underscored the persistent indifference of the elites toward the training of Normalists for elementary education and, consequently, toward the broader goal of universalizing primary schooling.

In a clear transition from public to private ownership, the government authorized, by official letter dated November 26, 1905, the donation of the Normal School's assets to the Ginásio Uberabense, now home to the Marista Diocesano School. The Uberabense received "the physics and chemistry offices and laboratories, a library, and other school supplies" (APM, código SI 4.2, cx.64, pc.42). The transfer of public assets to the private sector is another characteristic of Brazilian liberalism. According to Pontes (1970, p. 405), the library once again became a public asset when it was donated to the Bernardo Guimarães Literary Student Council. The Council's collection was later incorporated into the current Bernardo Guimarães Municipal Public Library, which today holds approximately 86,500 volumes—the oldest of which almost certainly originated from the former Normal School.

FINAL REMARKS

We have seen that the teacher training institution model that gave rise to the Brazilian Normal School was French and that they were the *loci* for the transmission of technical and standardized knowledge, a model that gained traction in Brazil at the end of the 19th century. Furthermore, as part of an initiative linked to progress and intellectual development, Uberaba became the site of one of the eight institutions created by the Minas Gerais government in the interior of the province. It was the most developed city in the Triângulo region and became a hub for teacher training and certification, demonstrating the model's expansion beyond the capital cities and the fact that Uberaba's elite were connected to liberal ideas circulating in Europe and major centers of the Empire.

In response to the question about the school's responsibilities, we demonstrated that it fulfilled the role of training and graduating individuals for teaching, also qualifying those interested in other public positions. We highlight the work of the attached school, a kind of pedagogical laboratory for teachers and professors, which served hundreds of children, many of them from over 30 locations, and launched students into higher education. As a public institution, the Normal School kept its doors open to students from diverse groups, among them students from a village and Joaquim Roberto, the son of an enslaved woman. In this sense, we appropriate the words of Nosella and Buffa (1996, p. 8) to affirm that the "Normal School remains a fundamental reference for Brazilian educators," and to remember it is "to refer to a serious, competent, and, in part, successful institution; it is to value basic, public, quality education for all." The Uberaba Normal School fulfilled its role, despite having its trajectory permeated by precariousness, political disputes and

having been rigged by liberals during the Empire, and instrumentalized by government supporters, in the Republic.

Regarding the curriculum, we demonstrated that during the imperial period, in addition to scientific content, moral qualities and religious themes were also required. We concluded that, during this period, the school trained and qualified teaching candidates within the Catholic *ethos*, a situation that led teachers who advocated secular education to protest, highlighting the presence of the republican movement within the Normal School. We identified that, in teaching and learning, attempts were made to apply the intuitive method; however, the traditional approach, focused on memorization, predominated. The institution's coeducational nature generated distrust, and, at a time of growth in female teaching, the state-run, secular Normal School was closed, and the training of teacher educators in Uberaba became the exclusive responsibility of the Nossa Senhora das Dores School, which was subsidized and specialized in women's education. In the clash between private, denominational education and secular public schools, the closure of the Normal School in 1905 signaled the victory of the private, denominational model, which offered Catholic-biased education aimed at women. We note, in line with other researchers, that this movement marked the normal education system in Minas Gerais during the period analyzed.

The research was revealing in answering questions about the Normal School's operating conditions and its organizational structure, comprised of the director, the faculty, a secretary, and a doorman. It was found that outsiders were attracted to teaching positions, including Alexandre Barbosa, Antônio Pereira de Artiaga, and George Chiréé. We identified two periods of euphoria in its history: at the time of its establishment and during the Antonio Pereira de Artiaga administration, which coincided with the Afonso Pena Reform. During this period, the physical structure underwent improvements. Highlights included the acquisition of offices and laboratories, the organization of the library, and the construction of a gymnasium. The end of the Artiaga administration marked the beginning of a new cycle of crisis.

In its 23 years of existence, the school suffered from distrust and various precarious situations, such as the lack of a suitable, educational space, having operated for years in a cramped, rickety two-story house with almost no equipment. Similar situations were identified in the investigations mentioned here about other Minas Gerais normal schools. We saw that, in an unusual move, the teachers purchased property to house the school, demonstrating the state government's willfulness and negligence. Among other precarious situations illustrated by the sources, we have: initially, there was a lack of basic items, such as tables and chairs; the use of furniture unsuitable for teaching, belonging to a workshop; and teachers who were absent and/or abandoned their positions, all of which contributed to the decline in the number of normal students.

Finally, the government cited a lack of resources as the reason for the closure of the Uberaba Normal School in 1905, a move that reinforced the intermittent nature of Brazilian normal schools and demonstrated the elites' insensitivity to the idea of training normalists to work in elementary education. Along with the alleged lack of resources, the establishment of a private, denominational competitor also contributed to the institution's closure. In a clear shift from public to private ownership, the government authorized the donation of the Normal School's assets to the Uberaba Gymnasium.

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