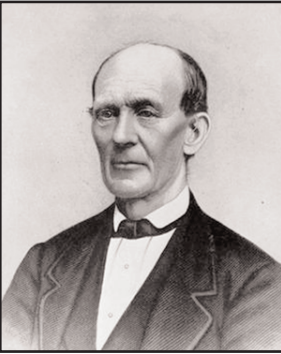


'Readin', 'Ritin' and 'Rithmetic



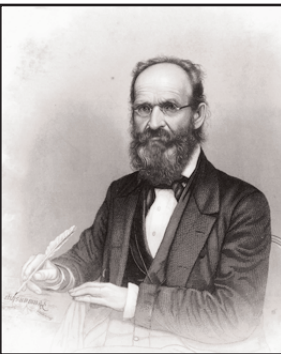
William Holmes McGuffey
Courtesy of the Ohio Historical Society

There are three men with ties to Ohio who made were major innovators in American education during the 19th century. They are said to have revolutionized the teaching of the "Three R's" of elementary education – "readin, ritin, and rithmetic". These men were William Holmes McGuffey, Platt Roger Spencer and Joseph Ray.

William Holmes McGuffey was born on September 23, 1800 in Washington County, Pennsylvania. At the age of two, he and his family moved to Tuscarawas County.

McGuffey received most of his education from his mother, Anna McKittrick McGuffey. In 1818, he got the chance to attend Old Stone Academy for two years. He then attended Washington College in Pennsylvania.

Once he completed his education, McGuffey accepted a teaching position at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He taught Greek, Latin and Hebrew but had a difficult time teaching these because his students spoke many different forms of English. This experience led him to write a "reading" book. The book's success led him to write five more books. The McGuffey Eclectic Readers, as the books were known, revolutionized the teaching of reading. McGuffey died on May 4, 1873.



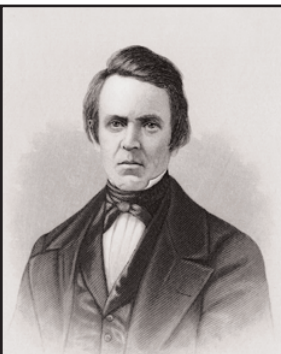
Platt Rogers Spencer
Courtesy of the Ohio Historical Society

Platt Rogers Spencer was born in 1800 in New York State and became fascinated with writing by the time he was nine.

Spencer often had no paper on which to write, so he used birch bark with a quill pen with ink made from berries. He also wrote in the sand with a stick.

Spencer and his family moved to Ashtabula County, Ohio in 1810. He was enrolled at Conneaut school. It was here he started teaching his classmates to write clearly.

After he completed school, he found it very easy to find jobs that required legible handwriting. Some of Spencer's employers paid him to teach them to write. His system of handwriting became known as Spencerian handwriting and was used in schools throughout the United States. Spencer died in 1864.



Joseph Ray
Courtesy of the Ohio Historical Society

Joseph Ray was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1807. By the age of fifteen, Ray was studying algebra, geometry and surveying. At the age of sixteen he began teaching mathematics.

Ray went off to school at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, but money was short so he came back home to Cincinnati to study medicine.

He was later hired to teach mathematics at Woodward High in Cincinnati, Ohio around 1835. It was here that he wrote fifteen books on mathematics that were used throughout the United States. Ray died in 1855.

These three men from Ohio made a remarkable impact on education in the United States.

