



STATES' IMPACT ON FEDERAL EDUCATION POLICY
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

*M*ARGARET (*P*EG) *G*OERTZ



Narrative Biographical Summary

Supplemental to the recorded oral history interview
conducted with Margaret (Peg) Goertz in June 2015
on behalf of New York State Archives

compiled by Anita Hecht, Life History Services, LLC
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Project Background

While U.S. education policy is widely discussed and well documented, the impact of our nation's states on that policy has received much less attention. Launched in 2003 and led by the New York State Archives, the States' Impact on Federal Education Policy Project has worked to create and foster the use of a comprehensive, accessible, nationwide historical record that documents the efforts of states to affect U.S. education policy since the mid-twentieth century.

The Project has connected leaders in state and national education with archivists to ensure the preservation of and access to the record of education policy, and supported sustainable connections between the two communities. The policymakers are themselves repositories of stories and wisdom not captured in the written record. The interviews presented here enrich the written record of education policy during this dynamic and critical period. Our narrators helped to shape the course of education policy in the United States over the past decades. We invite you to learn from their unique experiences and perspectives.

To the Reader

This narrative biographical summary is supplemental to the oral history interview recorded in June 2015 between Margaret (Peg) Goertz and Anita Hecht of Life History Services, LLC, on behalf of the States' Impact on Federal Education Policy Project of New York State Archives. Accompanying this biographical summary is an oral history interview and print transcripts, also housed at New York State Archives.

Oral history interviews contain first-person accounts of historical events, individual experiences and significant memories. In this spirit, let it be understood that these interviews do not attempt to recount "absolute truth." Instead, they intend to relate the stories that hold meaning for the particular narrator. Interviews are not always chronological or complete with regards to specific data. Accuracy is always the goal, though there may be corrections, and certainly additions, to any oral history.

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Interviewing & Production by Life History Services, LLC
www.lifehistoryservices.com / 608.255.9669
Madison, Wisconsin USA

**A Narrative Biographical Summary of
Margaret “Peg” Goertz**

**States’ Impact on Federal Education Policy
New York State Archives
Oral History Project
2015**

A Narrative Biographical Summary of Margaret “Peg” Goertz

As told to Anita Hecht, Life History Services, January 2015

Margaret “Peg” Goertz (*née* Eckel) was born on February 12, 1947, in Evanston, Illinois, to Gertrude (*née* Michelson) and August Eckel. Peg has one older brother and the family resided on the far north side of Chicago in the Edgewater neighborhood.

Peg’s maternal grandparents were non-observant Jews who emigrated from Poland to New York City during the early 1900s to escape conscription into the Russian army. Her grandparents bought and ran a small candy and then hardware store in Bound Brook, New Jersey, and had four children. A great emphasis was placed on education in the family and all four Michelson children went to college.

Peg’s mother, Gertrude, attended Douglass College, now part of Rutgers University, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and studied economics. After graduation, she worked in her aunt’s business, Helena Rubinstein Cosmetics, until relocating to Chicago. At Rutgers she met August Eckel, Peg’s father, who was studying engineering at Rutgers. and the couple married in 1936.

August Eckel was born in South River, New Jersey, in 1912, to parents of German-Protestant heritage. Peg’s grandfather came to the US from Germany, was a Mason, and died in 1917 of the Spanish influenza. His wife and son then lived with an uncle in Milltown, New Jersey, where August attended public schools.

After earning his engineering degree, August spent the majority of his career as a technical reporter and writer for McGraw Hill Publishing, where he was the Midwest

editor for the *Electrical Construction and Maintenance* magazine.¹ Shortly before World War II, he was transferred to McGraw Hill's Chicago office, and the Eckel family moved to the Midwest.

Peg grew up attending Chicago public schools, first Swift Elementary through the eighth grade, and then Senn High School, graduating in 1963. Peg was a good student, interested in history and mathematics. College was the expected path, and Peg chose to attend Oberlin College in Ohio, a small, co-ed liberal arts college in line with her progressive values. The civil rights movement and Vietnam war informed Peg's politics, as did her family to a degree. While she states that her father was somewhat apolitical, the Eckel household was liberal in its orientation. Peg describes her mother as a Roosevelt Democrat, active in both the League of Women Voters and the local PTA.

At Oberlin, Peg focused her studies on American politics, primarily at the local and state level. Her senior paper examined a local election about a proposed school property tax levy, fostering her interest in studying the field of public education. Peg graduated with her Bachelors degree in Political Science in 1967. Since her goal at the time was to work within government, she decided to continue her studies. She applied for and received a HUD fellowship (US Department of Housing and Urban Development) for a one-year program in Metropolitan Studies at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. It was one of the country's top programs in public affairs and Peg earned her Masters degree in 1968. She then applied for and received additional HUD funding and a Woodrow Wilson dissertation fellowship to pursue doctoral studies. Peg earned her PhD in Social Sciences in 1971 and wrote her dissertation on the "New Towns" movement.²

¹ **Electrical Construction & Maintenance (EC&M) magazine** — published monthly since 1901 — is the technical authority for electrical professionals, electrical contracting firms, industrial plants and consulting electrical engineers. (<http://ecmweb.com>)

² The **New Towns Movement** refers to towns that were built after World War II and were purposefully planned, developed and built as a remedy to overcrowding and congestion in some instances, and to scattered ad hoc settlements in others. (www.wikipedia.org)

From 1971 to 1976, Peg taught courses in American government, and public administration and urban studies in the Political Science department at Trenton State College (now The College of New Jersey). In 1976, she was recruited by a former Maxwell School colleague to ETS (Educational Testing Service) in Princeton New Jersey, to be an education policy research scientist. What she intended to be a one-year stint turned into a sixteen-year position. By 1985, Peg was a senior Research Scientist at ETS, and in 1987, she became the Executive Director of the entire Education Policy Research Division at ETS, remaining in that position until 1992.

During her early days at ETS, Jim Kelley, a senior program officer at the Ford Foundation, was funding nascent work on school finance. The federal government was also funding states to examine their school finance systems. In her early years at ETS, Peg co-directed studies in Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont that looked at the equity of their education finance systems, and started a career-long research agenda on New Jersey school finance.

Starting in the early 1980s, Peg undertook a series of studies on state and local districts' implementation and allocation of federal Title I dollars, and implementation of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in different states. Early studies affirmed that some states, such as California, New York, and Massachusetts, led the way in shaping and implementing federal policy, while in other cases the federal government used federal aid and related regulations to incent states to provide services for economically and educationally disadvantaged students and students with other special needs.

In 1992, Peg left ETS to join CPRE, the Consortium for Policy Research in Education at Rutgers University, and then in 1995, to teach and serve as co-director of CPRE in the Graduate School at Education at the University of Pennsylvania. At this time, the

systemic reform movement was bubbling up from the states, and state governors were becoming more active in the education reform movement. Peg's work became less fiscally oriented and more focused on teacher and curriculum policy, and assessment and accountability systems across the states. States had undertaken numerous reforms in these policy areas, largely in response to the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, and the focus of education and education policy research swung back to the states and shifted from equity to excellence. Peg conducted studies of how states and their school districts designed and implemented standards-driven policies, and of the role of federal policy, particularly through the Title I reauthorizations of IASA (Improving America's Schools Act of 1994) and NCLB (No Child Left Behind of 2001), in supporting and spreading these reforms.

Peg's research also examined the interaction of special education and general education policy, the responses of elementary and secondary schools to state, standards-based reform initiatives, and the interface between federal and state accountability and school improvement policies. She has also written on high stakes testing, formative assessment, and the redefinition of government roles in the era of standards-based accountability. She recently completed a study of how state education agencies are organized to manage and use evidence in their policies and practice to improve low performing schools. Over the years, she has been a member of the NRC's (National Research Council of the National Academy of Science) Committee on Understanding the Influence of Standards in Science, Mathematics and Technology Education, and Committee on Goals 2000 and the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities, and of numerous technical advisory committees for federal studies of state and federal education policy. Peg also served as president of the Association for Education Finance and Policy.