CHAPTER XXXIV.

SCHOOLS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE.

JOHN C. ORDWAY.

"In that old garden of the yesterday
The seeds were sown that stirred and woke
And sprang into the growing, fresh to-day."

When the Puritan settlers of New England laid the foundations of our republic, the system of free schools which they instituted was made one of the corner-stones. While a determination to secure for themselves entire religious freedom was the first motive which induced the coming of these builders of the nation, but little less significant was that other desire to educate their children under more favorable conditions than those prevailing in their former home, and in a purer moral atmosphere than that by which they had been surrounded during their exile in Holland. The latter they declared, on the authority of early historians, to be a place of great immorality, where the young were not held in proper restraint, and where every attempt on the part of godly parents to improve and properly direct the moral training of their own children, was sure to bring upon them the reproach and censure of their unsympathetic neighbors. This intensified their longing and hastened their decision to seek a home where they could not only assert the right of self-government, but also establish, with a reasonable hope of perpetuating, an unhindered form of religious worship, and educate their children under methods of their own choosing. The adverse conditions under which their advent was made, and the no less discouraging years which immediately followed, hindered for a time, but did not prevent, the ultimate consummation of their first formed plans. The home secured, the little primitive church was established and the school begun in due time. One of the first recorded acts of the little colony, after completing its organization, was to direct the selectmen to have a vigilant eye over their brethren, and to see that the children were taught as much learning as would enable them to read easily the English language and properly understand the laws.

Almost a century had elapsed between the early settlement of Massachusetts Bay and that of this town—a period in which the inflow of immigration had been large and constant. The population of the colonies had greatly increased. There was a constant spread-

ing out, a pushing farther and farther into the wilderness. Considerable progress had been made in all directions of usefulness, and the advantages of Harvard college, since it was established in 1638, had greatly increased the number and efficiency of teachers. The settlement of this town was in many respects a duplicate of others of this period, particularly in the provisions made for formal organization.

In the division of lands among the original proprietors of the town, one of the one hundred and three shares or portions was reserved "for the use of the school forever." This reservation was not exceptional, but was made in all, or nearly all, of the grants for townships by both Massachusetts and the Masonian proprietors of New Hampshire.

The first school meeting in the new settlement was held in the meeting-house on Wednesday, March 31, 1731, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and this time of the year first selected for a school meeting has been closely followed, with but little deviation, to the present day. It was an adjournment of the annual meeting of the grantees, held two days before, and was called for the sole purpose of making provision for the opening of a school. The action resulting was business-like and to the point. The record is as follows:

Voted. That ten pounds be levied on the grantees for to be laid out for the instruction of the children in reading &c.

Voted. That the school shall be kept in two of the most convenient parts of the township.

Voted. That Mr. Ebenezer Eastman and Mr. Timothy Clement be a committee to lease out the six acre lot belonging to the school to David Barker for the term of four years from the date hereof.

Voted. To adjourn to the 13th day of May next at ten o'clock in the forenoon.

Henry Rolfe officiated as moderator, and Benjamin Rolfe served as clerk.

This appropriation of ten pounds (perhaps fifteen dollars) led without doubt to the opening shortly afterward of the first free public school in the settlement.

No schoolhouse had as yet been provided, and this first school was, perhaps, kept in the little church, but more likely held in some unused room that could be spared for the purpose in one of the rude houses belonging to the settlers.

Records, if any were ever kept of the early schools, cannot be found. The most diligent search for trustworthy information is poorly rewarded, and the consequent lack of material renders it quite impossible to restore fully the quaint picture of those early days. While the faithful town clerk made careful record of the

names of all the petty town officers, including those of fence-viewers and hogreeves, whose official duties could have been neither arduous nor important, as but little fence had been built or even thought of, and hogs, by vote of the town, were for many years permitted to go at large, the names of less than a half dozen teachers are to be found upon the records of the town in all those vanished years. While the election of the former in annual town-meeting, and the appointment of the latter by the selectmen, may be a sufficient explanation for the omission, it is none the less unfortunate and to be greatly regretted. The name of the first female teacher employed has not been preserved, even in misty and unreliable tradition; but in the library of the New Hampshire Historical society, rich in treasures of antiquity, among a collection of school books, carefully preserved relics of the early days, may be found a teachers' text-book, "The Compleat English Schollar. By E. Young Schoolmaster in London. 1704." This old book bears upon the fly-leaf the autograph of the owner, "Hannah Abbot—Her Book," and underneath this superscription appears the name of a later owner, in 1740. Hannah Abbot was a daughter of Thomas Abbot, one of the early settlers, and was born in Andover, Mass., September 10, 1700. She came to Concord about 1730, of suitable age for a teacher, united with the church in 1736, escaped the perils of matrimony, and died ten years later, 1746. She was from a scholarly family, the Abbots of Andover, and her death is the first one recorded in the Andover records as occurring at Rumford, as above mentioned,—which would indicate that she was a person of some consequence. These facts, taken together, lead to the belief that Hannah Abbot may have been one of the earliest and perhaps the first female teacher in town, although further verification has been found impossible.

There were, in 1731–'32, upwards of eighty little houses or places of abode in the settlement, the most of which were occupied by their owners, many of whom had brought their families with them. Conspicuous among the names of the children in these first schools must have been those of Abbot, Ayer, Bradley, Eastman, Hoit, Rolfe, Virgin, and others, many of which are still prevalent in this vicinity.

If the first school was kept in two places, in compliance with the town's vote, it is probable that one was in some dwelling-house at or near the north end of Main street, and the other at the opposite end of the town, one following the other in point of time, and the same teacher presiding over both schools.

At the annual town-meeting held in March, 1732–'33, under an article in the warrant "to see whether the town or inhabitants will allow anything towards the defreying of school charges for the time

past and to come for the year ensuing," proving that a school had been kept the past year,—the town voted "two hundred pounds for ye defreying of necessary charges," a part of which probably covered the deficit of the past year, and made some provision for the immediate future; however that may have been, another meeting was held in December following, at which it was voted, "that there should be sixteen pounds drawn out of the town treasury for to pay a school for this present winter and spring following." That the people, even in these very early days of the town's history, were very much alive to the needs of the boy or girl without means, is evidenced by a further vote passed at the same meeting, that "the selectmen shall find books for the use of the inhabitants and freeholders of this town or plantation on the town's cost so far as they shall think necessary." The next year, March 11, 1733–'34, it was "voted that the selectmen be impowered to provide a school so far as the money shall go," and again, in December, "That about one hundred and ten pounds be raised on the poles and lands within this township for defraying the ministerial and school charge and the other necessary charges of the town." March 11, 1734–'35, "voted that the selectmen shall let out the school right (rent the lands belonging to the school) for the year ensuing to the highest bidders, or as they shall think best for the most advantage of the town;" and a nearly similar vote, covering this purpose, was continued from year to year for almost half a century; the rentals received being paid into the town treasury and probably applied to the support of schools. In September of the same year a further sum of about sixty-two pounds was voted "for schooling and building part of a bridge over Sun-Cook river," and Deacon John Merrill and James Abbot or either of them were desired and empowered to hire a man to keep a school in this town four months the next winter and spring." The usual appropriations for general town purposes, including the school, were made each of the three years following, and a vote passed in 1739 "that the school shall be kept from the 20th of October (1739) to the 20th of April (1740)."

James Scales was the first male teacher whose name is to be found upon the Proprietors' records. He was a native of Boxford, Mass., graduated from Harvard college in 1733, and came to this town two or three years later. He married Susanna Hovey of Topsfield, Mass., September, 1736, united with the church in Rumford, July 3, 1737, and in the same month was given liberty "to build a pew in one half of the hindermost seat at the west end of the meeting-house that is next the window." He had three children born during his residence here, John, 1737, Joseph, 1740, and Stephen, 1741. He is under-

stood to have been a very acceptable teacher and a diligent student as well, employing his leisure hours in the study of theology, giving some attention also to the acquirement of a knowledge of law and medicine. He removed to Canterbury in 1742, where he was licensed to preach in 1743. He served as town clerk there for several years and as a justice of the peace, and also enlisted in a company to go in pursuit of hostile Indians in 1746, after the massacre in this town. He was in Canterbury as late as 1754, afterward removing to Hopkinton, where he was settled as pastor of the Congregational society in 1757. No house of worship had been erected at that time, and the ordination was solemnized in[1] "Putney's Fort." He continued in the ministry until about 1770, after which he practised law in a small way until about the time of his death, July 31, 1776.

In 1742, the number of school children having considerably increased, and the people tiring of further dependence upon private houses for school purposes, determined upon the erection of a temple of learning, and, at a meeting held March 31, it was voted "That Edward Abbot, Dea. John Merrill and Nathaniel Abbot be a committee to take care and build a schoolhouse for this town as they shall in their judgment think best, the said house is to be built between the Widow Barker's Barn and the Brook by the Clay Pits." Three hundred pounds were voted to be raised for building the schoolhouse and defraying the other annual expenses of the town. The "clay pits" were in the ravine running parallel with, and a few rods south of, the present Pitman street, the brook which formerly ran through this hollow crossing Main street a few rods north of Montgomery street near the present site of Lyster's market. The locality was long and familiarly known to older inhabitants as "Smoky Hollow," probably so named from the smoky brick-kilns formerly located there; but the Widow Barker's barn, alas! its fame, even as a landmark, must have been but transitory. Its precise location is unknown, but it is thought to have stood on land within what is now the state house yard, and the schoolhouse was probably built a little north and on or near the present site of the opera house. Mr. Isaac Shute, born 1775, said in his eightieth year, "I remember distinctly when there was but one schoolhouse in the main village, and that was near what is now the state house yard."

A brief description of this first school building in the new settlement will afford opportunity for comparison with the structures of to-day. It was probably constructed of lumber grown near by, perhaps sawed from trees which had been felled on the lot to make room for the intended structure. It was about eighteen feet

[1] Lord's History of Hopkinton.

square, covered with a hip roof, the four sides of which sloped from a central point. Like others built in the early years, it was sure to have been heavily timbered, and was, no doubt, boarded without and within with rough boards. The nails were of wrought iron hammered into shape by the village smith. The rafters were left exposed, a custom then in vogue and renewed in later days. Long, hand-shaved shingles were used, held in place with wooden pins. It was provided with the customary fireplace, made large enough for the use of wood without sawing. The requisites for a good school in those days were only three,—"a convenient place, a good teacher, and plenty of fuel." The specifications for the building of schoolhouses, even at a much later period, were neither complex nor tedious in detail,—"24 ft. long, 18 ft. wide, 8 ft. stud, and furnished so as may be convenient." The furniture consisted of the usual table for the teacher, and rough seats or benches of varying heights for the pupils. The boys were seated on one side of the room and the girls on the other, an invariable custom prevailing for more than a century. The workmanship of the building both outside and in, was rough, with nothing in the way of embellishment. The completed structure was primitive in every respect, but later on the boys made up for any deficiencies in wood carving with decorations both striking and profuse. No starry flag floated o'er the roof, as in these later days, to inspire the youthful mind with patriotic impulse, but underneath it, it is safe to say, flagellations took place in after years with woeful frequency, in which, no doubt, hurried glimpses of the heavenly constellation were occasionally revealed to turbulent offenders.

In 1743 the usual appropriation was made in the spring and the new building occupied, but in 1744 Indians from Canada, instigated by the French, who were at war with England and her colonies, became more troublesome than ever before. In the winter season the intense cold and deep snow rendered it impossible for the Indians to undertake long marches, so the inhabitants felt more secure from molestation, and the master's school suffered little or no interruption, but with the opening of spring danger became imminent, and the attendance of pupils from a distance was extremely hazardous. While those living near were anxious to continue the school, those farther away objected to being taxed for its support while wholly unable to avail themselves of its advantages,—so that, seemingly by way of compromise, the town voted, "That such persons as shall incline to hire a schoolmistress at their own cost may have leave to keep the school in the school-house until the town shall have occasion for such house." It was a year of overwhelming apprehension and dread. Another town-meeting was held in September, at which

the town voted to raise seventy-five pounds for the support of the minister and for the purchase of a town stock of ammunition, but no provision was made for the school.

The year 1745 was not unlike the two preceding years. The usual town-meeting was held in March for the transaction of the usual town business and "to consider what to do relating to a school," but no provision was made for the latter. Some relief from danger was experienced, however, from the raising of two small companies of scouts for the defense of the town, while Massachusetts sent another small detachment of militia for the same purpose. In consequence of this increased feeling of security a small appropriation for the winter school was made in November.

March 31, 1746, another small appropriation, seven pounds ten shillings, was "voted to be raised for schooling," but it is doubtful if any school was kept. The Indians were hovering near, and attacks were constantly feared. The massacre on the Hopkinton road occurred August 11 of this year. Additional garrisons were completed, making six in all, and many families left their homes and put up in small buildings within the forts for temporary occupancy. Many of the young children, particularly those living in out-of-the-way localities, received their only school instruction during this period from their parents while living in these temporary abodes. Jonathan Eastman, born in Concord, 1746,—who lived on the east side of the river, near the old garrison house of his grandfather, Captain Ebenezer Eastman,—told Dr. Bouton, in 1833, that his parents taught him to read when they lived in the fort, and that he learned to write on birch bark.

November 30, 1747, a town-meeting was held to provide such a sum of money as shall be thought best for the support of a school, and also "to vote whether or no the inhabitants on the east side of the Merrimack river shall be discharged from defraying any part of the charge that shall be raised for the hireing said school;" but the first proposition being put to vote, it was negatived, the town thus declining to make any provision for the school of that year. In October of the next year, 1748, appropriations for the school were resumed, two hundred pounds, old tenor, being voted for maintaining the school and paying the other expenses of the town.

The records of the town's proceedings were abruptly suspended, March 29, 1749, and were not resumed until January 21, 1766, when the town began a new existence, under the name of the Parish of Concord, by an act of incorporation from the state of New Hampshire, obtained the preceding year. During this period of seventeen years of litigation (covering the controversy with the town of Bow,

described in the narrative history), the town, though reduced to a parish, probably maintained its school much of the time, by voluntary contributions and by a tax "levied without the usual forms of law but in most cases cheerfully paid."

The next year following the suspension of the records, 1750, it appears by documents which have been preserved,[1] that Benjamin Rolfe, in behalf of the inhabitants, presented a memorial to Governor Wentworth, praying for the incorporation of the town, with the right to assess taxes and such other privileges as other towns enjoyed, without which their condition would be deplorable. One of the special reasons urged was that "Our public school will of course fail, and our youth thereby be deprived in a great measure of the means of learning, which we apprehend to be of a very bad consequence. Our schoolmaster, who is a gentleman of a liberal education, and well recommended to us, and lately moved his family from Andover to Rumford, on account of his keeping school for us, will be greatly damaged and disappointed." This teacher appears to have been Joseph Holt, born in Andover, Mass., 1718, and graduated from Harvard college in 1739. Returning to Andover, he taught the grammar school in that town for ten successive years, 1739–'49, with great acceptance, after which he came here with his family. He had a daughter Dolly, born here in 1751, who married Benjamin Farnum. Mr. Holt is thought to have taught our schools several years, but returned to Massachusetts prior to 1758, in which year he served for a few months in an expedition to Canada.

In 1766, the town contained about seven hundred inhabitants widely scattered, of whom probably one hundred and fifty or two hundred were children of school age, as the proportionate number of children was much larger then than now; and at the annual meeting in March the town voted that the school should be kept in four places, viz.: "On the easterly side of the river such a part of the year as their rates for the school shall come to of the polls and estates that lay to the northward of Sugar Ball. Also at a place that will best accomodate those persons that live upon Contoocook road northward of Nathan Colby's and those persons that live westward of said road, such a part of the year as their rates will pay. Also at a place that will best accomodate those persons that live upon Hopkinton road, westerly of Theodore Stevens' and westerly of Turkey river such a part of the year as their rates will pay, and the remainder of the year it shall be kept in the town street about the middle way from Capt. Chandler's to Lot Colby's." Captain Chandler lived on what is now Penacook street at the north end of the town street, and

[1] Moore's Annals of Concord, 1824.

Colby lived at the "Eleven Lots," at the extreme south end. The next year a similar vote was passed. No further reference to the school appears until 1774, when the town voted that eighty-three pounds be raised for the school and other charges of the parish. It is probable, however, that the annual appropriations for the general expenses of the town during the intervening years covered, in part at least, the usual expense of the school. It is known that Timothy Walker, Jr., afterward Judge Walker, a graduate from Harvard in 1756, taught school in 1764 and 1765, and that Benjamin Thompson of Woburn, Mass., afterward Count Rumford, was a teacher in our schools about 1772 or 1773. The latter was the first to introduce physical exercises, and is said to have further entertained his pupils with interesting and amusing experiments in natural philosophy. A stray leaf from the old records containing the expenditures of the town, published in Dr. Bouton's history, shows that during the four years between March, 1771 and 1775, the following additional teachers were paid for "keeping school": "Jo Emery, £10.6s; Patrick Guinlon, £31.17s.6d.; Robert Hogg two years at £30 per annum—£60; Abiel Chandler for keeping school and surveying for the parish £55.14s.2 1-2d, and John Blanchard for boarding a school mistress £7.6s."

The school, however, was not wholly forgotten, for inquiry was made by the insertion of an article in the warrant for the annual meeting in March, 1775, "To see if the parish will establish a number of schoolhouses in Concord, and choose a committee to fix the places for said houses, and raise money to enable said committee either to purchase or build houses as soon as conveniently may be," but the proposition was received with little favor and laid aside.

The warrant for the annual meeting in 1778 contained another article of inquiry and persuasion, "To see if the parish will vote to hire a reading and writing school for this year and raise money therefor"; but even this very modest request came to naught, the town apparently easing its conscience by choosing a committee to repair the meeting-house, which no doubt needed repairs badly enough. It seems probable, however, notwithstanding these refusals, that one or more schools were kept more or less regularly during this period, probably supported wholly by contributions, as an attempt was made in 1781, "To see if the town will excuse those persons who have kept constant schools in town from paying taxes the current year," but this request fell upon deaf ears.

One of the earliest and probably the first schoolhouse erected on the east side of the river was built in the fall of 1781, in what was then called the "Bow Gore," a portion of land set off to the Par-

ish of Rumford in 1765, which afterward became district No. 15, in the Potter neighborhood on the Oak Hill road, near Turtle pond, and not far from the Loudon town line. The proprietors were Henry Beck, Richard and Ephraim Potter, Major Asa and Mellen Kimball (father and son), Benjamin and Joshua Thompson of Concord, and Joshua Berry, Cornet Eastman, and Daniel True of Loudon. The site selected was near the present residence of John T. and Arthur H. Tenney. The building was about eighteen by eighteen. It was built of large hewn timber and framed by Ephraim Potter, who at that time was the only framer of buildings in that section. Potter was assisted by Benjamin Thompson, a carpenter living at the Gore. It was covered with rough boards only. The benches were movable, and large enough to seat six pupils each. Major Kimball gave the timber, and the Loudon proprietors furnished the boards. Tradition reports this to have been the second school building erected in the township. Robert Hogg was the first teacher.

January 2, 1784, by legislative enactment, the parish of Concord became the town of Concord. In 1785 the annual appropriations for the schools were resumed, and have been continued without interruption to the present day.

As the town increased in school population, the teachers were obliged to go about from place to place, so as to accommodate the children in as many neighborhoods as possible. Though not so migratory in their habits as the tailor and the shoemaker, who, in supplying the needs of their patrons, went from house to house, it was yet the custom of the early instructors to teach a few weeks in one neighborhood or district and then remove to another, officiating in one place not longer than a month or two at a time. One veteran teacher used to remark that the vocations of the tailor and the teacher were not wholly dissimilar, for while the former cut and made the garments for the older lads, the latter could be quite as fully depended upon to give them regular fits.

The early schools were divided into two classes or grades—the first, for the younger children only, was called the "Dame's" or "Woman's school." It was held in the spring or early summer, a female teacher, becomingly adorned with a white linen or muslin cap, presiding. The pretty custom of wearing this attire was long in vogue both in England and in this country.

The other, the winter school, for the older or more advanced pupils, was under the charge of a male instructor, and was known as the "Master's school." It was the practice for many years to begin the former in March, on the Monday following the annual town-meeting, and the latter on the Monday after Thanksgiving, which

was generally observed, as now, in the last week of November. The terms varied in length from year to year, but from six to nine weeks, "as the funds would allow," was the rule; but when the school funds were exhausted the teachers were generally inclined to continue the school for a few weeks longer if the parents of the children were willing to provide for their compensation by the payment of a small weekly tuition fee. As a rule parents were generally glad to do this, but occasionally such propositions were received with less favor, and once in a while were met with great indifference or positive refusal. An old teacher used to relate that when he went to one of the families in his district, the man treated him politely, yet gave him no encouragement; but the good wife said, "I have no notion of these schoolmasters; it is only to make money. I know as much as most people do, and when I was young a schoolmaster came 'round, and I was signed for a quarter, and I went two or three days and I did not know one bit more than I did before, and I reckon I know as much as most people do who go to these schools, and our children can do as we did."

About this time, 1785, the second school building in the village proper was erected on the west side of Main street, this time at the South end. It is shown on a map of the street made in 1798, and its precise location given as "85 rods from the stone bound at Shute's Corner." It stood a little north of the lot formerly occupied by the residence of George Hutchins, now the home of Mrs. Frank Holt, but in later years was moved a little farther up the street. It was a little more pretentious and convenient than the first one, but by no means imposing in appearance or sumptuous in its appointments. Mr. Shute, before mentioned, said, "I first went to school in this building to a Master Shepard, who was a teacher there for some time. The school was 'small in numbers and the attendance irregular, the larger boys working when work could be had to aid their struggling parents. School books were few in number. The primer and Dilworth's spelling-book were all the books I first had. Samuel Butters had a Psalter, and in those times it was considered a great thing to own one. In their homes then people had hardly any books. My father used to stitch the almanacs together, in bunches of six years each, and we read them through and through. Deacon Joseph Hall and Mr. Lot Colby together took a Boston weekly paper, and we sometimes had it at our house. I think at that time no other newspaper was seen among the Eleven Lots people. The post went once a week to Boston, carrying the mail on horseback."

The first schoolhouse, erected in 1742, was standing as late as 1780,

or perhaps a little later—old and weather-beaten, but still in use. But not long afterward the site was probably needed for other purposes, and the old house was either removed a short distance up the street, in response to such demand, or went the way of all things perishable.

The third schoolhouse built in the town street was located at the North end, on the West side of Main street, at the present point of intersection of Main and Fiske streets. In the summer of 1775, as related by Dr. Bouton, Dr. Philip Carrigain, a physician at the North end, in visiting a patient in a neighboring town who proved to be afflicted with smallpox, contracted the disease himself, and a little later several members of the family of Nathaniel West, who lived on the opposite side of the street, came down with the same disease. The people became alarmed, and made arrangements to assemble next morning in force and build a pest-house at once; and notwithstanding the fact that the next day was the Sabbath, the house was put up and made ready for occupancy between the rising and the setting of the sun on that day. It was built in a little grove then standing west of the residence of the late Captain Towle, now the home of John H. Stewart, corner of State and Franklin streets. The house was probably never used for the purpose for which it was intended, and in 1790, when the need of a schoolhouse at the North end became urgent, the inhabitants of the town, practising that spirit of economy under which they had been reared, voted, "That the pest-house be moved into the town street near the meeting-house and used for a schoolhouse." This order was promply carried into effect, and the building remained there for many years under the shadow of the sanctuary. On Saturday forenoons Parson Evans, or later Dr. McFarland, was likely to be present when the pupils were given instruction in the Catechism, preparatory for a further study of the Scriptures on the morrow.

An article was inserted in the warrant calling a town-meeting in 1792, "To see what encouragement the town will give to hire a singing master," but the town was not lavish with its funds in those years, and nothing came of the request; but the next year Asa McFarland, afterward pastor of the First church, came down from Hanover, and kept a singing-school for a time, and four years later the singing society had grown both in membership and influence, and permission was given "to make use of the Town House to sing in when it could be spared, if the society would agree to leave it in good order."

About this time the church and school had become equalized so far as the expense of maintenance was concerned,—the town appropriating annually about one hundred pounds for each department.

The fourth schoolhouse in the main village was far more pretentious than any of its predecessors. It was built, probably, between 1792 and 1795, by the united efforts and generous subscriptions of enterprising and public-spirited citizens. A list of the subscribers, or shareholders, cannot be found, but the names of Ebenezer Duston, Jacob Carter, Timothy Chandler, John West, and Abel Hutchins appear in an advertisement a few years later as a "Committee of the Proprietors." The lot upon which it was erected is that now occupied by the high school building, a site which has now been devoted to school purposes for considerably more than a hundred years. This lot was purchased, or title to the same obtained, November 15, 1808, many years after its first occupancy for a school, from Ebenezer Dustin and Betsey his wife, for thirty dollars paid by the tenth school district of Concord, as appears by a deed recorded at Exeter. This schoolhouse was described in after years by Asa McFarland, Woodbridge Odlin, and others, "as built upon the more easterly portion of the lot, nearer State street than the present edifice, while the westerly half of the lot was left unimproved, part frog-hole and part sand-bank. The ground was much lower than now, so that in all seasons there was standing water near the house. In summer frogs and yellow slime were to be seen in the pool, and when swollen by late autumnal rains, as was nearly every year the case, the smaller boys and girls found great sport in sliding upon the ice while the older boys were engaged in skating. The building was only one story high, covered with a gable roof from the apex of which arose a modest cupola, or belfry. On the spire of the latter was a weather-vane, or 'potter,' (the name by which it was called in the olden time), made of a tough metal that withstood the peltings of unruly urchins for half a century. The building was painted outside, and had a wonderful window, with a circular top, in the eastern end or side, and other peculiarities by which it was distinguished from any other schoolhouse of that period. The interior was divided into two unequal parts, the easterly section, the larger of the two, was assigned to the master's school, and the westerly, or smaller part, was devoted to the mistress's department. In the former, the boys were seated on the south, and the girls on the north, side, so that they sat facing each other. The platform for the teacher was at the

Bell Schoolhouse.

east end, with a large stove in the center of the floor after stoves came into use. This building was at first called the "Union School House," but some years after its completion and occupancy a bell was procured by the contributions of citizens, after which it was generally called the "Bell School House." The edifice was a wonderment in its day, and people came miles to see it.

The East and West villages both had small school buildings in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The first schoolhouse in the West village was a frame building of one story, and contained one room. It was built upon the Putney lot in the bend of the road, now Hutchins street, a few rods northwest of the present building, on the site now occupied by the residence of Deacon Barrett. Here Christopher Rowell taught school for some time, and Reverend Robie Morrill of Boscawen was the presiding genius for a term of years. He is described in the history of Boscawen as "a gentleman of the old school, punctilious in dress, wearing to the close of his life, in 1813, his black silk stockings, silver shoe- and knee-buckles. He was small of stature, and very bald-headed, but the loss of hair was supplied by a wig and cue, which the roguishly-inclined, roystering school-boys had the temerity to dandle at times, not unfrequently paying for it with aching palms." He walked down from Boscawen every morning and walked home again every night. His grave may be found in the old cemetery at Boscawen Plain, where some of his descendants reside.

The first schoolhouse in the East village stood on the north side of what is now Shawmut street, opposite the Old Fort cemetery, where so many Revolutionary heroes are buried. It was an ideal location, situated on the hill which overlooks the valley of the Merrimack. There are few places where the view is prettier. The building was of one story, facing the south. It contained, beside a small entry, a single school-room of good size with a large open fireplace on the north side. There were probably small buildings also at Millville, Horse Hill, and the Borough.

The first mention of schools is found in the *Mirrour* of March, 1793: "On Thursday last Master Eastman closed his school in this town with an Exhibition of Various Scenes of Entertainment, in which each of his pupils, about eighty in number, participated. They performed their various Exercises to the general Satisfaction of their Parents, and the Honor of their ingenious Preceptor and themselves, by which they gained the applause of a very crowded and respectable audience, which was expressed by frequent clapping of Hands, and Smiles of approbation. It is but Justice to observe, that Mr. Eastman performed his Tutorship with great Judgment,

and has given universal Satisfaction to all his consituents and 't is the united Wish of all that he may soon return to give instruction to the youthful Mind, and teach the young Idea how to shoot." This Master Eastman was probably Edmund Eastman,—not a descendant of Ebenezer, but a son of Benjamin, who came to Concord in 1749. He graduated at Dartmouth college, 1793, and after teaching school here for a few years entered the ministry, and was settled as a pastor in Limerick, Me., where he died in 1812.

An attempt was made in 1794 "to district the town and build a number of schoolhouses," but the proposition was promptly voted down in town-meeting.

The appropriation for school purposes was sixty-five pounds in 1791; one hundred pounds in 1792 and '93; one hundred and five pounds in 1794, '95, and '96; one hundred and fifty pounds in 1797, and three hundred and fifty dollars in 1798 and 1799. In the latter year the state made a further advance in the tax for the support of schools,—this time expressed in dollars and cents,—to thirty-five dollars, for every dollar of the town's proportion of the state tax. Concord's proportion of the latter at this time was eleven dollars and thirteen cents, which fixed the sum required to be raised by law at three hundred and ninety dollars annually. In 1807 the rate was again increased to seventy dollars; requiring an annual appropriation of about seven hundred and eighty dollars.

In 1800 there were nine school buildings in the town,—three in the main village and six in the outside districts. They were all small and inexpensive buildings of one room each, except the "Union," which contained two. It is probable that the cost of all did not exceed three thousand dollars; the smaller ones costing not more than two or three hundred dollars each. All, or nearly all, except the first, which was paid for by the town, had been built by voluntary contributions of the inhabitants. They were provided with open fireplaces (cast-iron stoves did not come into use until about 1815 or 1820), and in cold weather, when the faces of the pupils nearest the fire were almost blistering with the heat, the occupants of the benches in more remote parts of the room were shivering with the cold. This naturally led to an exchange of seats at intervals, and a procession, moving to and fro, became a very frequent spectacle. The rooms were scanty in furniture (some children bringing their own chairs), and devoid of anything in the way of adornment or decoration.

The school population was between four and five hundred, but probably not more than three or four hundred were attending school, many living too far away, while not a few of the older boys were

kept at home to care for the stock and the farm. Indeed, the rule with many families would seem to have been to send the larger boys to school when nothing else could be found for them to do.

The text-books for many years were few in number and scarcely any two alike, except the Testament and the Psalter, which were used for reading and spelling in the more advanced classes. The New England Primer was about the only book used by the younger pupils. It contained "The Alphabet," "Easy lessons in spelling," "Proper names of men and women to teach children to spell their own," "The Shorter Catechism," "Prayers for the young," general rules to incline children to lead pious lives, and religious verses like the "Cradle Hymn" of Dr. Watts, beginning,

"Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber."

The Catechism was the most distinguishing feature of the book. A preface to the reprint, published some sixty years ago, says: "Our Puritan Fathers brought the Shorter Catechism with them, across the ocean, and laid it on the same shelf with the family Bible. They taught it diligently to their children every Sabbath. And while a few of their descendants, now in the evening of life, remember every question and answer; many, not yet advanced to life's meridian, can never forget when every Saturday forenoon they had to take a regular catechising in the common school, commencing with the a, b, c, oaken-bench class, 'What is the chief end of man?'" This "Shorter Catechism," for schools, was published by George Hough, Concord's first printer, in 1806, being a revised copy of earlier editions. One of the earliest text-books, published about 1775, perhaps earlier, was "The Universal Spelling Book, An easy Guide to English Grammar," bearing upon the title page the motto,

"Let all the foreign Tongues alone,
Till you can read and spell your own."

The purely secular instruction was largely confined to the essentials, —reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic,—but some attention was necessarily given to grammar, geography, and history.

Some of the old-time teachers, if whispered tradition may be relied upon, were unique in personal appearance and very interesting intellectually. They were not, as a rule, liberally educated. It is true that, prior to 1800, and perhaps for a decade later, a considerable number were college graduates who made teaching a specialty, or at least a stepping-stone to some of the other learned professions; and, later on, a custom prevailed for young men in the universities to teach district schools during the college vacations, the latter being arranged with that object in view. The most of the pioneer public school teachers, however, were those whose educational training had

been limited to the country schools, with a few terms at some academy. They pursued other avocations during the summer season, and taught school only in the winter months. They were generally self-reliant young men, conscious of the importance of their calling, and anxious to prove worthy of their vocation. They sought to assist pupils to obtain a good knowledge of the plain essentials, never perplexing them with the distinctions to be observed in the proper use of "will" and "shall," but rather to well equip them for the ordinary duties of life, with Christian principles, steady habits, and good manners. Their methods, as a rule, were very practical and business-like. They were given to little eccentricities in manners, and somewhat inclined to pattern after the minister in dress. A costume much worn in this period comprised trousers of gray homespun, made long, and turned up a few inches at the bottom as if to provide for future growth, irrespective of the age of the wearer; a long, single-breasted frock coat, with wide collar and broad tails, made of black doeskin or broadcloth; a standing white collar reaching nearly to the lobe of the ear, and a huge cravat of black silk. From the pocket of the coat protruded the corner of a red silk handkerchief. They were closely shaven, without whiskers or beard, and wore their hair much longer than is general now. They were austere in deportment and sober in conversation,—indeed, the latter was a qualification required by law. Occasionally a description is found of one who was fat, florid, and jolly, with a lively sense of humor; but by far the larger number are represented to have been long, lean, and lank, like Ichabod Crane, and inclined to treat the mischievous and indolent boys who had pretty sisters with great leniency, and then even up the discipline by flogging into obedience those less favored. Their duties were many and arduous,—one of which was to prepare the quill pens for the younger pupils. The master was also required to set the copies for writing, sometimes using small slips of paper and passing the latter from one pupil to another. Few schools were provided with even a hand-bell until comparatively recent years, and the children were called in from recess by the teacher's rapping with his heavy ruler upon the door-casing or side of the house, and calling in a loud voice, "The scholars will come in," or, "'T is time to resume our studies." Janitors were unknown,—the care of the rooms devolving upon the pupils. The building and care of fires was assigned to the older boys by turn, while the sweeping and dusting was performed by the girls. One of the formulas for dismissal at the close of the day, was

"Put up your books, and you, Josiah,
Help Jed to make the morning fire."

The first division of the school funds by districts appears in a vote of the town passed in 1766, that the school shall be kept in four different parts of the parish such portions of the year as their tax rates in such districts shall allow. In 1789 another vote authorized the school money to be divided into several parts or districts as usual.

The town, probably as early as 1767, had been partially divided into neighborhoods or parishes for school purposes, and the school money raised by the town distributed equitably among them by the selectmen. But at the town-meeting in 1800, it was voted that the selectmen be a committee for dividing the town into school districts, and that one man from each district where there is a schoolhouse be added to the committee. The selectmen were John Odlin, Jonathan Wilkins, and Henry Martin, to which committee were added the following: Jacob Carter, who lived at Millville, Isaac Dimond of Dimond's Hill, Samuel Davis, West Village, Timothy Dow of Horse Hill, Enoch Brown of the Borough (Fisherville), and Joseph Potter of East Concord. There was probably a small school building in each of the locations named. Under this vote giving the committee authority to act, although no subsequent report of their proceedings appears, one or more districts were probably established soon afterward. Notable among the latter was the Federal School district or society, organized in 1801, the records of which have been preserved and are in the possession of Isaac N. Abbott of Dimond Hill. It embraced the territory now familiarly known as the Dimond Hill neighborhood. The proprietors were Asa Herrick, Isaac Dimond, John Batchelder, Israel Dimond, Daniel Clark, Oliver Flanders, John Shute, Jr., David Blanchard, Warren Bradley, Abner Dimond, Eben Fisk, John Dimond, and Samuel Whittemore. A constitution was adopted, defining the objects of the society and providing for the annual election of a moderator, clerk, and three directors, and prescribing their duties.

The first meeting was held October 29, 1801, at Ensign Dimond's, for the purpose of agreeing upon some method for uniting the two districts hitherto known by the names of Mill Road and Hopkinton Road districts. Asa Herrick was moderator, John Batchelder, clerk, and Lieutenant Asa Herrick, Daniel Clark, and Daniel Stickney were appointed to agree upon a location that would accommodate both districts, and report. Warren Bradley offered to give a half acre of land for the schoolhouse, which offer was accepted. Subsequent meetings were held November 12 and 19,—at the latter it was voted to unite the two above named districts and build a schoolhouse. The signers to this agreement, in addition to those given above, were Abner Flanders, Robert Knowlton, Benjamin Powell,

Benjamin Clark, Murray Bradley, James Currier, Joseph Sherburn, Stephen Hall, and Nathan Ballard. It was also voted to build the schoolhouse on Pine Hill, near Stephen Hall's, and that it should be twenty-four by twenty-eight feet, with twelve-foot posts, a hip roof, and the sides covered with sawed clapboards; and Isaac Dimond was given the privilege of building a pulpit in it for his own benefit. The completed structure was to cost one hundred and forty dollars. It should then consist of seventy-five rights or shares, and each member should have the privilege of sending all his children to school. Tuition for outsiders was fixed at fourteen cents per week, but after a year or two this was thought to be a little excessive, and it was reduced to ninepence. The cost of maintaining the school was to be assessed upon the inhabitants according to the proportion of their town tax. Jacob Dimond, the son of Ezekiel Dimond, one of the original settlers, kept the school in that district for many years. It is probable, Dr. Bouton says, that he kept the first school ever taught in that district, in an old, uninhabited house. This Federal district was continued as an independent district until November 2, 1807, when, by a vote of the inhabitants thereof, it became the seventh school district in Concord, and organized as such. The new district voted to pay two hundred and thirty-five dollars to the proprietors of the former district for the schoolhouse owned by them and the land on which the building was located. It is probable that other rural districts were organized about this time and in much the same way. Some of the old district records, fragments of which have been preserved, are a curiosity.

It was the custom at annual meetings, after the election of officers, to provide for a supply of fuel and the board of the teacher. This was done by auction, the awards being made to the lowest responsible bidders. The records of these transactions, by the clerk, begin properly enough, by votes to vendue the wood, and the board of the school-mistress, but some of the unlettered scribes soon hit upon a more abbreviated but less elegant form of expression, so that after a few years the entries simply read, "voted to vandoo the wood," "voted to vandoo the school-marm," etc. The prices thus obtained by competitive bidding would seem to have been ridiculously low at times, but it is to the credit of the well-to-do people that care was always taken to provide a comfortable boarding-place for the teacher, where she would be treated as an honored guest,—the privilege and benefit of her society being considered an equivalent for any pecuniary sacrifice. In some periods teachers were obliged to "board around" with the parents of all the pupils, a few days in a place, the saving thus made being applied to lengthen the terms of school-

ing, but this plan was not always acceptable, and some declined to serve under such conditions. The names of teachers employed in the early years seldom appear upon the records,—the choice of the latter generally being left with the committee.

The school appropriation was four hundred dollars each year from 1800 to 1804, inclusive; five hundred dollars in 1805–'06, and eight hundred dollars in 1807. In the latter year the town voted "That Samuel Butters take care of the boys in the meeting-house on Sundays." Butters had a way of managing the boys when others failed.

> "Perhaps, at times, the switch with emphasis applied
> And left those deep impressions which very long abide."

In 1805 the state passed a law permitting towns to form and organize school districts, define their boundaries, and erect new, or purchase and repair schoolhouses already in use; and in 1807, by another law, made such action imperative upon the town authorities. In April of the latter year, the town appointed a special committee to carry the provisions of these laws into effect. This committee was made up of the selectmen, Ebenezer Duston, Enoch Coffin, and Edmond Leavitt, and one man from each section of the town where orders have been drawn annually for school money; from the latter were added, Richard Ayer, Nathaniel Rolfe, Samuel Davis, Nathan Ballard, Jr., Asa Herrick, Asa Kimball, Abel Baker, Stephen Farnum, Levi Abbot, John Garvin, Moses Abbot, William Eastman, and Jonathan Virgin. The committee reported May 25, recommending a division of the town into sixteen districts, as follows:

No. 1. At Horse Hill, embracing the most northwesterly section of the town, north of Contoocook river. (In 1837–'38, this district was subdivided by the selectmen, and for a few years two schools were kept, one at the East and another at the West end.)

No. 2. The Borough, west and southwest from what is now Penacook village. (This district was subdivided by the selectmen in 1817.)

No. 3. West Concord village.

No. 4. That part of West Parish south of Horse Hill, formerly the Ezra Abbot, now the Elbridge Dimond, neighborhood.

No. 5. Beech Hill, west of Long Pond to Hopkinton town line. The Flanders and Emerson neighborhood. Formerly known as the Carter district.

No. 6. Little Pond, the Ballard neighborhood.

No. 7. Ash Brook, on the old road to Hopkinton, three and a half miles from Main street.

No. 8. Millville, now vicinity of St. Paul's School.

No. 9. The southerly section of the main village below Pleasant street.

No. 10. The middle portion of the town, embracing that section lying between what is now Pleasant and Centre or Montgomery streets.

No. 11. The north end of the village, that portion north of Centre street.

No. 12. East Concord village, from Federal Bridge southeasterly.

No. 13. North Concord. Sewall's Falls section.

No. 14. Snaptown. The extreme northeast section of the town, between Snow's

and Hot Hole Ponds and the Canterbury town line. Now known as the Rufus Virgin neighborhood.

No. 15. Turtletown. About Turtle Pond, on the Oak Hill road to Loudon.

No. 16. The Garvin's Falls section, on the east side of the river near Pembroke, between Merrimack and Soucook rivers.

The report of the committee, confirming that which had been partially done years before by general consent, and completing the division of the town into districts, was ratified and approved.

In later years other subdivisions were made and new districts formed as follows:

No. 17. In June, 1816, a portion of district No. 7 was annexed to district No. 8, and a portion of the latter set off and made a new district, No. 17, at Stickney Hill. This latter district included a part of Hopkinton, for school purposes, and in 1848 formed a union with a district in that town. Subsequently these districts separated, but were again united in 1857.

No. 18. In 1819 the selectmen by a vote of the town formed another district, No. 18. It embraced a part of the territory between the Bog road and the Bow town line, and has since been known as the Iron Works district. The Concord part of the latter was set off to No. 23, in 1849.

No. 19. March, 1818, the northerly portion of No. 12 was set off and made a new district, No. 19. The schoolhouse was built on the main road leading from the East Village to Canterbury where the Shaker road begins, near the Congregational church. In 1843 districts Nos. 12 and 19 had one school together again, and in 1871 the territory embraced in No. 19 was added to No. 12 once more, and No. 19 abolished.

No. 20. District No. 2 was divided by the selectmen in 1817, the easterly portion, known as Chandler's Bridge, afterward Fisherville village, organizing as No. 20. A part of Boscawen, contiguous, was united with this district, the latter then furnishing the larger number of pupils.

No. 21. District No. 13 was divided in 1833, and the southerly portion made a new district, No. 21. A new schoolhouse was built on "The Mountain," about midway between the church at the East village and Sewall's Falls on the road to Canterbury.

No. 22. In March, 1834, a portion of No. 4 was disannexed or set off and made a new district, No. 22. A part of Hopkinton was included in the latter. In March, 1847, this new district, except the farm of John Alexander, which was assigned to Hopkinton, was added to and became a part of No. 4 again; and No. 22 was abolished.

No. 23. In the southwest corner of the town near the Bow line, No. 23 was formed in 1834, and a school established the same year. Subsequently, this district uniting with Bow, its number was assigned to a district in the northwest part of the town. In 1848 the latter was abolished. Afterward, old district No. 23 severed its connection with Bow, but in 1878–'79 the union was again restored by a decision of the supreme court, adverse to the legality of the action by which a dissolution of the districts had taken place; following this decision a new schoolhouse was built in 1878, but the district was so entirely controlled by Bow that pupils from the Concord portion of the district would not attend the school for some time.

No. 24. In 1835 No. 12 was further divided, and that portion of the district lying east of Sugar Ball and extending to Soucook river, was set off to form a new district on the Plains, No. 24. A schoolhouse was begun the same year, but appears not to have been completed until 1841, when the town gave some assistance. A master's school was kept for the first time in the winter of the latter year. Some changes in the boundary lines were made in 1846, and in 1847 the number of the district was changed to 22. Later still, a portion of old district

No. 17, in Concord, and 18 in Hopkinton, in the Farrington's Corner and Turkey River neighborhood, appear to have organized as a district once more and taken the number 24.

No. 25. In the extreme northerly portion of the town; probably formed by the selectmen in 1843 or 1844.

Nos. 23, 25, and 1. An attempt was made to unite these districts in 1845, but no definite action was taken until March, 1848, when the town voted that a considerable portion of district No. 23 be disannexed from said district and united to No. 20, and that the remainder of said No. 23, together with all the territory now included in Nos. 1 and 25, embracing all the land in said town north of Contoocook river, except what is hereby annexed to No. 20, be united and constitute district No. 1, and Nos. 23 and 25 be abolished.

The boundaries of districts Nos. 7, 8, and 10 were somewhat changed in 1846. The farm of Josiah Stevens was disannexed from the latter and annexed to district No. 8. The latter included what is now known as "Pleasant View," the residence of Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science.

District No. 4 (West Parish, south of Horse Hill and the Contoocook river) was organized February 1, 1808, with Captain Samuel Davis, moderator, and Timothy Carter, clerk. The inhabitants voted "that the schoolhouse now in said district be a district house, and that Timothy Carter, Lt. Ezra Abbot and Moody Dow be a committee to repair the same." Captain Davis, Ephraim Carter, and Ezra Abbot were elected the first school committee. The board of the master was struck off to Captain Davis for one dollar and fifteen cents per week. The latter served as moderator and Captain Timothy Carter as clerk almost continuously from 1808 to 1821, and Elbridge Dimond was clerk nearly every year between 1841 and 1874; the old records are still in the possession of the latter. Lucretia Farnum, elected in 1833, was probably the first woman elected a member of the school committee in this town. Long neglected repairs made to the schoolhouse, and the mending of the andirons for the fireplace in that year, give evidence of her industry.

In 1808 the tax for school purposes was extended to include the unimproved property belonging to non-residents, hitherto exempt, and the law was further amended so that the money thus raised should be appropriated "for keeping an English school or schools for teaching the various sounds and powers of the letters in the English language, reading, writing, English grammar, arithmetic, geography, and such other branches of education as it may be necessary to teach in an English school." The standard for teachers was again advanced and a certificate of good character from the minister or selectmen required. The appropriations for the support of schools continued to be made in annual town-meetings, the selectmen distributing the money among the several districts in proportion to the tax paid by the inhabitants residing therein.

Up to the time of the organization of school districts, the selectmen had managed all the affairs of the town. They were generally men of excellent character, but with only a common school education, sometimes almost wholly unlettered, yet possessed of good business ability, sound judgment, and practical common sense in the administration of public affairs. These officials had not only hired the teachers and managed the schools for nearly three quarters of a century, but had cared for the church, rented the pews, and furnished a supply for the pulpit when the town was without a settled minister; but henceforth the schools were placed under the direction of prudential committees, composed of from one to three members chosen annually by vote of the inhabitants.

Joseph B. Walker, in an address delivered in 1864, at the dedication of a new high school building, recalls the names of a few of the early teachers, prominent among which are those of "John Coffin, a native of this town, and a graduate of Dartmouth college 1791." Coffin afterwards taught school many years with great distinction in New York city, where he died in 1852. Master Hogg, before mentioned, and Master Parkinson, were two excellent old Scotch-Irish teachers, who for years "wielded here, with equal skill, the primer and the birch." Robert Hogg was a resident of Dunbarton. He taught the winter schools in this town in more than one of the districts, from about 1770 to as late as 1804. He was employed in the East village in the latter year, and one of his pupils has said: "He taught arithmetic verbally, using the fingers, kernels of corn, or pieces of chalk in demonstrating his work. He was very severe upon offenders against his rules in school." The boys used to call him, in sport, "Old Birch." He died in Dunbarton in 1806. Henry Parkinson taught school in this town for several years. He was a graduate of Princeton college in 1765. At an early period of the Revolutionary War he entered the army as quartermaster. After the war he spent the most of his time in teaching, and later removed to Canterbury, where he died May 23, 1820, aged seventy-nine years. Upon his tombstone in the old burying-ground at Canterbury Center is inscribed the following brief epitome of his life, written by himself in Latin:[1]

'T was Ireland that gave me birth and America that reared me.

I was trained at Nassau Hall. I became a teacher and soldier and I toiled with my hands.

Thus have I run my race, and now the earth enfolds me and I slumber in the quiet dust as peacefully as on my mother's breast.

Hither come, my dear friend, behold, and forget not that you, too, must surely die. So farewell, and take heed?

[1] Translation by John F. Kent, principal high school.

Master Caleb Chase, a graduate of New Jersey college in 1766, came to Concord about 1771, taught school for some time, winning favor, and was town clerk from 1787 to 1795. "Solomon Sutton did valliant service at East Concord."

William Rolfe, a native of this town, taught school both here and at Sanbornton between 1795 and 1802; "pretty harsh in discipline, but a superior teacher." He entered the ministry and settled in Groton in 1803, and died there in 1828. Reverend Abraham Burnham, of Dunbarton, taught school in the "Old Bell" in this town about 1805–'06. Levi Woodbury, afterward governor of the state, taught the school at Millville about 1808, and Joshua Abbot was the teacher at Oak Hill the same year.

Nathaniel H. Carter, author and poet, the most gifted intellectually perhaps of all our early teachers, kept the schools in districts Nos. 4, 5, 7, and 8, beginning as early as 1808 or 1809; and Peter C. Farnham was a teacher in the 5th district in 1810.

The names of other early teachers in the rural districts, mentioned by Dr. Bouton, include those of Timothy Carter, about 1787, Abel Wheeler, about 1794, Jacob Farnum and Nathan Ballard, Jr., about 1795, Christopher Rowell, Jr., about 1796, Moses H. Bradley, about 1808, and later still Isaac Farnum and Richard Potter, Jr., all in district No. 3; Dr. Thomas Carter, Henry and Abial Rolfe, Robert Davis, and Samuel Coffin in district No. 4; Richard Bradley, George Kent, Thomas D. and Jacob A. Potter, in district No. 5; Abel Baker, Ezra Ballard, Jacob Eastman, and Henry E. Rogers in district No. 6; Timothy Johnson, John Bradley, Samuel Whittemore, Richard Potter, and Albert G. Wilkins in district No. 7; Thomas and Ezra Carter, Jonathan and Seth Eastman, John C. Hall, William B. Wilkins, and Charles Ballard in district No. 8.

The late Asa McFarland, in a small volume of biography, published after his death, makes mention of another small school building in the center of the town in 1809, saying: "I think my first teacher was a Mrs. or Miss Clough [then pronounced Clow] and the apartment in which her pupils assembled in the latter year was in a one-story building standing on the northeast corner of Centre and Main streets."

The number of school children in town in 1810 was a little more than five hundred, and one or more new school buildings had been erected in the outside districts during the few years immediately preceding.

The records of district No. 5 date from January 31, 1816, at which time a meeting was held at the house of John Flanders for organization. Moses Abbot was chosen moderator and John Flanders clerk.

April 1 another meeting was held, at which the district voted to purchase a lot, two rods square, of Isaac Emerson, "west of the mudhole near his house, and as nigh the mudhole as will be convenient on the west side of same." It was further voted to build a new schoolhouse 18x22, "and that it be finished as well as the schoolhouse by Corporal Ezra Abbot's." The contract for the building was given to John Dimond, Jr., and the cost was one hundred and fifty-eight dollars and four cents.

Asa McFarland, in the volume before mentioned, says of later years: "In 1816 I passed under the control of Miss Sarah Thorndike, who was a teacher in one of the apartments of the Bell schoolhouse. It was regarded as a privilege of no small character to be a pupil in this house, especially after the winter schools ceased and tuition terms were kept. This building, in the first years of my being beneath its roof, was superior to any other in the town used for educational purposes. The bell was one of the cherished institutions of the central portion of the town. Our diversions did not differ very much from those of school children of later days, but we were taught to respect the aged. Colonel Gordon Hutchins, a soldier of the Revolution, resided on the corner of Centre and Green streets. This venerable man often passed the schoolhouse, and when we were out at recess, and Colonel Hutchins passed, leaning upon a staff, all the pupils ranged themselves in line and bowed or courtesied to the honored pilgrim. Respect for superiors was a fundamental and constant inculcation at that time in the Bell schoolhouse. In due time I passed into the higher department, or "man's school," as it was then called. Master Johnson was the first male teacher I remember in this school. He had very heavy eyebrows and chewed tobacco to excess. Beneath a broken square in a window back of his desk there usually lay a large pile of quids of exhausted tobacco. He used to make excursions home during recess to refresh himself, it was said, with other drink than cold water. I call to mind as subsequent teachers, Allen Fisk, Addison Searle, afterward chaplain in the navy, Charles F. Gove, afterward attorney-general of New Hampshire, and Dudley Leavitt, who achieved wide reputation as a mathematician and as author of the almanac which bears his name. Mr. Fisk was a good but not too severe disciplinarian. Gove was a very passionate man, and punished refractory pupils as some ship-masters deal with men under them upon the high seas. Of Mr. Searle I have only faint recollection. Dudley Leavitt was all bows and smiles to the school. He was good nature personified." Another gentleman describes the latter, whom he knew intimately, as an excellent teacher, excelling in mathematics, and in mental arithmetic was nearly the equal of that

wonderful prodigy, Zerah Colburn. He was excessively affable, and would often cross the street, when time permitted, to greet and pass a pleasant word with his pupils or other acquaintances.

The late Woodbridge Odlin said, some years ago: "My first teacher, about 1815, was Miss Thorndike, in the dame's school. She used a small birch stick to quicken the moral faculties when I was at a tender age. The next teacher was a Mrs. Carter, whose instrument of punishment was made of two pieces of leather sewed together, with a piece of lead in one end and a sort of handle on the other. When she took us into her lap, we fixed our eyes upon the earth and accepted the situation with such fortitude as we could command. One application extinguished all desire to have the experiment repeated. The first teacher in the master's school after I entered was Reverend Jacob Goss. He was a good teacher and gave excellent satisfaction. He was followed by George Stickney, James Moulton, Jr., John Bartlett, Samuel G. Wells, and others. There was not then, as now, sufficient money to keep the schools in session throughout the year. The amount raised was divided between the female department in the summer and the male department in the winter season. Consequently, the larger room was generally occupied in summer by some one who taught a private school. Mr. Wells was a very successful teacher. Like some other teachers of that time, he usually had an enormous quid of tobacco enclosed between his cheeks, and his frequent and copious expectorations made the platform in front of him a sight to behold."

The school appropriation for 1808 was eight hundred dollars; 1809, '10, and '11, nine hundred dollars, and one thousand dollars annually from 1812 to 1817, inclusive.

The first superintending or visiting school committee was appointed in 1818, in compliance with a law of the state making it the duty of towns to appoint committees to visit and inspect schools in a manner "conducive to the progress of literature, morality, and religion." This committee was composed of twelve of the leading citizens of the town, viz.: Thomas W. Thompson, Dr. McFarland, Captain Ayer, William A. Kent, George Hough, Abiel Rolfe, Stephen Ambrose, Thomas Chadbourne, Moses Long, Richard Bradley, Samuel A. Kimball, and Samuel Fletcher.

Lancastrian schools were introduced in this town in 1819, in which year the town voted "to allow the south end of the town house, called the senate chamber, to be prepared and occupied by a Lancastrian School, provided the town be at no expense," and the same vote was renewed the following year. These schools were principally private or tuition schools, in which a large number of pupils

were offered instruction at very low rates. It was a system first introduced by Dr. Andrew Bell, a distinguished English clergyman and chaplain, in India, and later improved and perfected by Joseph Lancaster, an English educator who came to this country in 1818. John Farmer, our historian, met him in 1819, and describes him as "a large, fat man, forty-one years of age, a man of wit, easy in his manners, free in conversation, and a Quaker."

These schools were conducted on the principle of mutual instruction, the most of the teaching being done by the pupils themselves. The school was divided into several classes, and pupils in higher grades gave instruction to the children in lower grades, the whole under the direction of a single principal instructor or master. It was maintained by its advocates that children, particularly the very young, would more readily receive instruction from older children than from adults, and by this means a great saving might be effected in lessening the number of teachers to be employed in the conduct of large schools. A committee of citizens, of which Timothy Chandler was chairman, arranged for the introduction of the first school of this kind in April, 1819. A second was kept in the town house, beginning March, 1820, of which Joshua Abbot was principal, with a preceptress to superintend the female department, in which instruction was given in sewing, tambouring, embroidery, drawing, and painting. Mr. Abbot was a son of Captain Joshua Abbot, who commanded a company in the battle of Bunker Hill. He was born in this town in 1782. He began teaching about 1806 and kept school for many years. The Lancastrian system, when first introduced, found ready followers, but after a little while the experiment proved less successful than its friends had anticipated; the schools degenerated and were finally given up for lack of support.

"The first schoolhouse in what is now Penacook village was a union schoolhouse built by the districts of Boscawen and Concord in 1817, near where the Gahagan house now stands, on Crescent street. This was on the main road, which at that time passed through what is now the yard of the Concord Axle Works, before the road was changed to cross the new bridge at Main street. It was built on the line between the two towns, half in each town. The boys were seated on the north side of the room, in Boscawen, while the girls' seats on the opposite side were in Concord."[1] This may account, in part, for the very amicable relationship which has always existed between the two places. The house was a small, wooden building. Both towns united in the support of the school, Boscawen generally furnishing the larger number of pupils. About 1826 the house was

[1] D. Arthur Brown's "History of Penacook."

taken down and rebuilt on Brown's hill, near the present residence of Charles H. Sanders. School was continued there for ten years, until the union district was dissolved in 1835 or 1836.

As early as 1814 an attempt had been made to secure the removal of the old schoolhouse at the north end of Main street, which had been in use since 1790, and build a better one in some other location. One of the reasons urged was the necessity for laying out a road "at the east end of the meeting-house from the road opposite Francis N. Fisk's house to the road opposite Capt. Enoch Coffin's barn," but the attempt was not successful until six years later. One of the best remembered teachers in this old building was Mrs. Sarah Martin of Boscawen. She was a daughter of Captain Peter Kimball, a brave and efficient soldier of the Revolution, and was born December 31, 1778. After thirty years of age she fitted herself for a teacher under the instruction of Reverend Samuel Wood of Boscawen, the tutor of Daniel Webster. Mrs. Martin was large and matronly in personal appearance, with an amiable disposition and gentle manners,—combining good ability and natural tact in the exercise of her calling. She had a great love for children, was a favorite with her pupils, and on the way to school was generally accompanied by a large number of the younger members of her flock. After a service of nearly twenty years in Boscawen and Concord, she removed, with her daughter, to Wisconsin, continuing in service as a teacher until upwards of seventy years of age. The late S. S. Kimball, the late Mrs. Mary Herbert Seavey, of this city, and Mrs. Abial Rolfe and Miss Harriet Chandler, of Penacook, pupils in her school in early life, have borne testimony of her great excellence as a teacher and friend.

Another teacher of marked superiority was Miss Ann Sawyer, daughter of Deacon Moses Sawyer of Salisbury, and a graduate of the academy in that town. She gave up her school to become the wife of Captain Joseph Walker, in 1820, and died four years later. One of the last male teachers in the old building was John Bartlett, of whom the late Reverend John LeBosquet, writing in 1884, said: "I lived in the North End district when I first went to Concord, and Bartlett was the teacher in the old, low-studded, hip-roofed schoolhouse that stood near the old elm tree, between the main street and the road that went up by the Old North church to the left, in 1818. He was a severe teacher, and almost knocked out of me all the sense I ever had, with a large, heavy, round ruler."

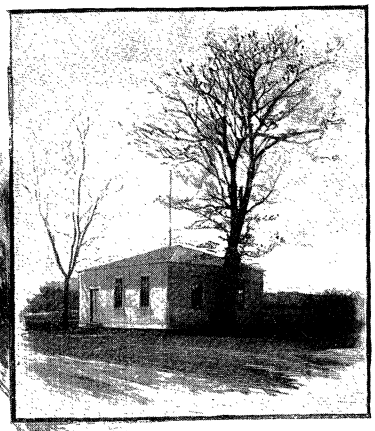
In 1820 the town voted "That the selectmen be directed to lease to the 11th school district, for such length of time, and on such terms as they may think proper, so much of the parsonage lot near

the house of David George as will be needed by said district for the purpose of building a schoolhouse, provided Dr. McFarland, or those who may claim to a right to said lot under him, shall give his or their consent." In 1820–'21, a two-story brick building was erected on this lot, on the corner of State and Church streets, the site now occupied as the home of Frank W. Rollins. Captain Joseph Walker was chairman of the building committee and Nathan Call the contractor. The house contained two rooms, one on the first floor for primary grades, and one above for the grammar school. It was the best schoolhouse in the county, and perhaps in the state, at the time of its erection, and the building committee were subjected to some criticism for alleged extravagance. At a subsequent meeting of the district, Captain Walker presented a claim which the voters refused to allow; whereupon he obtained possession of the key of the house and notified the district that there could be no school until his bill was paid. A settlement was soon effected, and the house reopened. The old schoolhouse, corner of Fiske and Main streets, was sold at auction, April 22, 1820. The first male teacher of the grammar school in the new building was the late George W. Nesmith, of Franklin, a close friend of Daniel Webster, and afterward judge of the supreme court from 1859 to 1870. Judge Nesmith said, in 1875: "The brick schoolhouse was erected in 1820, and I was the first teacher. I taught the school from November, 1820, to March, 1821, and was employed by Francis N. Fisk, and boarded at the tavern then kept by Lemuel Barker. I cannot state the exact amount of wages per month, but think about twenty dollars. The price of board was two dollars per week. The school was above the average of district schools in this state at that time, in point of capacity and acquirements. Among the pupils I recollect Paul George, Charles West, Charles Emery and his sister, Mrs. Towle, Miss Coffin, who married in New York city, and Emeline, the daughter of Nathaniel Abbot, the wife of Judge Perkins, Rev. Mr. LeBosquet, Calvin Thorn, and a few others." Other notable teachers in this building in later years were, Edwin D. Sanborn, afterward a professor in Dartmouth college, Chandler E. Potter, Joseph Robinson, Miss Ann Morrill, and Moody Currier, afterward governor of the state.

Old North End Schooi.

By a vote of the town in 1822 the selectmen fixed upon a location for a new schoolhouse to be built in district No. 1, describing it as "within the corner of the orchard owned by Ezra Hoit, nearly opposite the Horse Hill burying-ground, and within the corner made by the road leading from said burying-ground to the old school-house, and the road leading from the same burying-ground to Boscawen." The old building stood about a third of a mile directly north of this later site, on the cross road running between the Bog road and the upper road leading from Penacook to Warner. The foundation walls of the latter are still visible.

In September, 1823, district No. 9 purchased a lot of Isaac Shute, 3 x 4 rods, on the north side of what is now West street, a few rods back from Main street. This building was the second in town for school purposes to be constructed of brick, and contained but one large school-room originally, which was furnished with old-fashioned double desks with enormously heavy lids or covers. The girls' seats faced to the south, and the boys' to the west. The teacher's desk was near the window on the south side. A large cast-iron stove was in the center of the room. The building was very low-studded, with no means of ventilation except through open doors or windows. Fuel was plenty and cheap in those days; a roaring fire was kept in cold weather, and the heat was so oppressive that the boys used to call their school the "bake house." Some years later a thin partition was put in the building, dividing the interior into two rooms, the smaller of which was used for a primary, and the larger room for higher grades.



Dimond Hill School

West Street School.

The visiting school committee, by a vote of the town in 1824, were requested to prepare a small hand-book for the government of schools, and furnish a copy to each district. One of these little manuals has been preserved in the library of the State Historical society. It prescribes the duties of district committees, which must consist of one person for each district, to select and hire teachers,

provide for their board, and furnish necessary fuel. Teachers must be persons of sober life and conversation, and well qualified to give instruction in the various sounds and powers of the letters in the English language, reading, writing, English grammar, arithmetic, geography, and such other branches as may be properly taught in an English school. Pupils are forbidden the use of the lips in study and any unnecessary moving of the feet. The committee recommend that writing be taught three afternoons in each week and no more. The following text-books were prescribed for use: The Bible or Testament, Cumming's or Marshall's Spelling Book, Murray's English and Blake's Historical Readers, Putnam's Grammar, Cumming's, Woodbridge's, and Morse's Geographies, Colburn's and Adams's Arithmetics, Whelpey's Compend of History, and Bascom's Penmanship. Nathaniel W. Williams, Samuel A. Kimball, and Elijah Colby were the superintending committee. Rev. Mr. Williams, who prepared the rules, was pastor of the Baptist church.

Whenever the original proprietors of the township, or their successors, made a further division of the undivided lands, as they were wont to do from time to time, "the school," as in the original grant, was a beneficiary, until its accumulated holdings could be found in all parts of the township. In the first allotment "the school" became the owner of a house or home lot in the village proper, and by subsequent divisions secured other tracts of land on the far-away hills to the west. It acquired title in the same way to others on Contoocook Plains. Its possessions were increased by other parcels of land described simply by the number of acres which they contained, as the "six-acre lot" and the "eighty-acre lot." Others yet, of plow land, rich in soil and tillable, situate on the intervals or flat meadows that surround the winding river.

The home lot originally laid out for the school was that considerable tract of land on the south side of Penacook and the west side of Bradley street, now owned and occupied as the residence of J. N. Patterson. This was rented, as opportunity offered, sometimes for a single season and at other times for a term of years, until, finally, in 1790, it was exchanged by the town for one on the south side of the old burying-ground, owned by Lieutenant Robert Davis, and in 1842 the cemetery was enlarged by the addition of the latter. The other lots were leased for shorter or longer terms, like the home lot. The land was of little value, the rents were small, and some of the lessees were slow to pay and frequently delinquent. People were also found to be cutting timber and fuel from the forest lands without authority, and the parsonage lands suffered occasionally from the same causes, so that after considerable deliberation,