

CHAPTER XXXV.

CONCORD LITERARY INSTITUTION.

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An urgent demand for more favorable opportunities for instruction in the higher branches of education than the common schools afforded, led to the early establishment of academies and seminaries in several towns in the state, in which young men might be fitted for college. The first of these to be incorporated was Phillips academy at Exeter, in 1781. The success of this school, which from the beginning took high rank, led to the establishment soon afterward of others of a similar character but not as liberally endowed. New Ipswich, opened 1787, was incorporated and the academy built in 1789. Atkinson, the first to admit both sexes, was established in the latter year, through the efforts of Reverend Stephen Peabody, the minister of that town, and a few of his friends. Amherst, Chesterfield, and Charlestown were established in 1791, Gilmanton in 1794; Salisbury, 1795, and re-established in 1809; Kimball Union, at Meriden, 1813; Pinkerton, at Derry, 1814; Pembroke, 1818; Sanbornton, 1820; New Hampton, 1821, and Hopkinton, 1827. In 1833 the number of these academies in the state had reached thirty-eight, of which about thirty, Dr. Bouton says, were then flourishing. Many of these enjoyed the patronage of students from this town.

The people of Concord, interested in school affairs, had often seriously considered the desirability of establishing an academy at the capital of the state, but without definite results until the fall of the year 1834, when, Dr. Bouton says, "Mr. Timothy D. P. Stone, a young gentleman from Andover, Mass., came to Concord and proposed to open a high school or academy, if a suitable place could be provided for its accommodation." A proposition to erect a suitable building and open an academy met with favor, and a canvass for subscriptions for that purpose was made and the required sum obtained. The location of the proposed building was, as usual, a cause of some embarrassment. A site was first offered by George Kent; then a proposition was submitted by people of the North end for the erection of the building on Stickney's hill, west of the court house. A third proposition was to accept a site offered by Richard Bradley, and a new subscription was taken up favorable to the last

location. In the meantime a board of trustees had been chosen by the subscribers in favor of the location on the lot offered by Mr. Kent, and another by those in favor of the site offered by Mr. Bradley, when it was finally agreed to unite all the contributors and erect the proposed building on the land offered by Samuel A. Kimball, on the hill west of Union street, since called Academy hill. A final subscription for the building and for the purchase of additional land of Mr. Kimball was accordingly made, in shares of twenty-five dollars each, mostly by individuals residing in the main village, as follows: ¹

Samuel A. Kimball, donation of land for building.

Woodbridge Odlin and Reuben Wyman, donation of land on the side of the hill east of Mr. Kimball's land,—needed for a street, etc.

George Kent, two hundred dollars.

David L. Morril, Isaac Hill, N. G. Upham, Joseph Low (part in apparatus), Nathaniel Bouton, Asaph Evans, Samuel Fletcher, Amos Wood, one hundred and twenty-five dollars each.

William Gault, Abiel Walker, Richard Bradley, Benjamin Thompson, John B. Chandler (part in apparatus), one hundred dollars each.

E. S. Towle (two subscriptions), ninety dollars.

Samuel Herbert, Robert Davis, eighty-five dollars each.

Joseph P. Stickney, Horatio Hill, John West, Thomas Chadbourne, seventy-five dollars each.

George Hutchins, sixty-two dollars and fifty cents.

Ezra Carter, Hall Burgin, Elisha Morrill, James Buswell, Peter Elkins, Isaac Clement, George W. Ela, Richard Herbert, Benjamin Damon (part in paintings), James Straw (in joiner work), fifty dollars each.

Samuel Evans, Edward Brackett, thirty-seven dollars and fifty cents each.

John Whipple, E. E. Cummings, Joseph Robinson, Joseph Grover, William W. Esterbrook, John C. Ordway, Bradbury Gill, Abraham Prescott, Enos Blake, Joseph C. West, Daniel Carr, William F. Goodell, Joseph C. Emerson, Ira H. Currier, Aaron Carter, Hazen Walker, Joshua K. Abbott, Hamilton Hutchins, William Low, George T. Pillsbury, Peter Renton, Joseph C. Wallace, A. B. Kelley, Samuel Coffin, Woodbridge Odlin, Josiah Rodgers, S. C. Badger, Gardner P. Lyon, E. S. Chadwick, Francis N. Fiske, Thomas Brown, C. H. Peaslee, Henry S. Robbins, J. B. Moore (note), John J. Ayer, William Green (Plymouth), John Farmer (in books), John Titcomb, Nathaniel Abbott, Jewett Bishop, James Whittemore, S. G. Sylvester, William Pearson, John Wheeler, each in work; Asa Parker and Richard Worthen in brick work; and Aaron Morse, Daniel Dunlap, Woodbury Brown, Jacob Abbott, Samuel S. Colby, Cotton S. Brown, Philip Watson, Reuben D. Morse, Thomas Butters, all in joiner work; and Porter Blanchard, Elliot A. Hill, Crockett & Worth, in cabinet work, each twenty-five dollars.

Edward Philbrick, Samuel Morrill, Nathaniel Wheat (in apparatus), each fifteen dollars.

Lewis Hall, John Miller, Reuben Wyman, Philip Sargent, Shadrach Seavey, Nelson P. Johnson, Isaac Emery, Jr., Henry M. Moore (in work), each twelve dollars and fifty cents.

John Goss, Michael Tubbs, A. Capen, Jr., Jonathan Herbert, Seth Eastman, David Kimball, William West, ten dollars each.

John McDaniel, five dollars.

¹Subscription papers were circulated several times; the above list includes the whole amount subscribed by each individual.

Total cash, three thousand eight hundred and forty-two dollars and fifty cents; work, seven hundred and twenty-five dollars; whole amount, four thousand five hundred and sixty-seven dollars and fifty cents.

A meeting of the subscribers was held February 18, 1835, for organization, and the following persons were chosen a board of trustees: Nathaniel Bouton, Ebenezer E. Cummings, Governor David L. Morrill, Samuel Fletcher, Samuel A. Kimball, Isaac Hill, Nathaniel G. Upham, Hall Burgin, Thomas Chadbourne, William Gault, Abiel Walker, and Ezra Carter. The following day the trustees organized by choosing Reverend Nathaniel Bouton, president; Reverend E. E. Cummings, secretary; and William Gault, treasurer.

An act of incorporation was obtained and the building was erected on the site given by Mr. Kimball,—a conspicuous eminence on what was then called Sand hill, about one hundred rods northwest of the state house. A portion of the building stood upon the lot now owned and occupied as a residence by H. E. Capen, No. 12 Academy street. The main building, facing the east, was fifty-eight feet by fifty-four, two stories high, surmounted with a cupola containing a bell; entrance by two doors in front, one for each sex. The two apartments on the lower floor, one for each sex, were separated by a partition with sliding doors. In the upper story were rooms for library, apparatus, and recitations, with a capacious hall, thirty-five feet in width, extending the whole length of the building, and a stage for exhibitions. The cost of the building, furniture, etc., was four thousand six hundred dollars. Shadrach Seavey was the principal contractor. The building was completed and publicly dedicated September 16, 1835, with appropriate exercises, including an address by the president, Rev. Dr. Bouton. School was kept in the town hall and adjacent rooms for a term or two before the building was ready for occupancy, and the female department, under the care of Miss Foster, was kept in the court house, in the winter of 1838, for the better accommodation of the young ladies.

The name of the institution was "The Concord Literary Institution and Teachers' Seminary." It comprised four departments:

I. The Teachers' Department, for the instruction of young men and women who wish to prepare themselves to teach district schools.

II. The Academical Department, for instruction in the classics, and for preparing young men for college.

III. The High School Department, for those desiring a business or general education, without classical studies.

IV. The Preparatory Class, for those too young or too backward to take any of the other courses.

The institution was opened for instruction in the fall of 1835,

with T. D. P. Stone, principal; Miss Elizabeth Fuller, preceptress; Miss Rowena Coffin and Miss Mary K. Coffin, assistants; and with an attendance of two hundred and fifty-seven students.

Mr. Stone continued as principal until August 30, 1837, when he resigned to pursue the study of theology, and the teachers who succeeded him were, in

1837. Two terms—Joshua D. Berry, and Miss Rowena Coffin, assistant. Mr. Berry resigned in February, 1838, to take charge of the academy at South Berwick, Me.

1838. Spring term—Eden B. Foster, Miss Sarah Foster; fall term—Charles Peabody, Miss Sarah Foster; winter term—Austin C. Heaton, Miss Sarah Foster.

1839. Spring term—Austin C. Heaton, Miss Sarah Foster; fall and winter—Charles Peabody, L. W. Peabody, assistant, and Miss Sarah Foster.

1840. Spring and fall—Charles Peabody, Miss Sarah Foster, Miss M. A. Rogers, music, painting, and drawing; winter term—Charles Peabody, Miss Dow, Miss Rogers.

1841. Spring and fall terms—William C. Foster, Miss Sarah Foster.

1842. Spring and fall terms—Clark S. Brown, Miss Foster, preceptress; winter term—Aaron Day, Jr., Miss Emily Pillsbury.

1843. Spring and fall terms—Aaron Day, Jr., Miss Emily Pillsbury.

The male teachers were all, or nearly all, college graduates. Mr. Stone was from Amherst college; he afterward entered the ministry. Mr. Berry was from Portsmouth, a graduate of Harvard, and a man of excellent attainments in science and learning. Eden B. Foster was a native of Hanover (Dartmouth college, 1837); associate preceptor, Pembroke academy, 1838; he afterward studied divinity at Andover, and entered the ministry; his first pastorate was at Henniker. Mr. Heaton was from Thetford, Vt. (Dartmouth college, 1840); he subsequently prepared for the ministry at Princeton; his first pastorate was at Harper's Ferry, Va. Mr. Peabody was from Newport (Dartmouth college, 1839); after leaving Concord he taught in New Bedford, Mass., and then studied divinity at Union Theological seminary, New York city; he traveled extensively through Europe, Asia Minor, Palestine and Egypt, from 1846 to 1859, as agent of the American Tract society, afterward settling in St. Louis, Mo. William C. Foster,—brother of E. B. Foster,—(Dartmouth college, 1841), after leaving Concord, graduated from Union Theological seminary, and entered the ministry; his first pastorate was at Wilbraham, Mass. Mr. Brown was from Chichester (Dartmouth college, 1838); after teaching at Concord and at Hanover, he went South and became principal of a school at Pontookuck, Miss., where he was brutally murdered by the brother of a pupil whom he had properly corrected for some breach of discipline, June 11, 1855, aged forty. Mr. Day was from Gilsum (Dartmouth college, 1842); he was subsequently a tutor and teacher

in the South and West until his death in White Water, Wis., in 1855, aged thirty-five years. Of the female teachers, Miss Fuller was from Milford; Miss Mary K. Coffin was from Boscawen,—a sister of Charles Carleton Coffin, the famous war correspondent of the *Boston Journal*, and author of the History of Boscawen and many other publications; she subsequently married Edmund Carleton of Littleton. Miss Foster had been a very successful teacher in the academy at Thetford, Vt., and Miss Rowena Coffin was from Waterford, Me.

Under the charge of Mr. Stone, an especially fine teacher, the institution attained a wide popularity, having students from all the New England states, from New York, Ohio, and Alabama, and one each from Greece and Spain. In the first six years, from 1835 to 1840, inclusive, the number of pupils was,—females, six hundred seventy-two; males, five hundred and eighty-seven,—a total of one thousand two hundred and fifty-nine, of whom about nine hundred were residents of this town.

Dr. Bouton, in a discourse delivered in 1875 on "The Growth and Development of Concord in the Preceding Half Century" (from which, and from files of original papers in possession of the New Hampshire Historical society, these facts have been obtained), says, "The whole number of pupils attending the academy up to 1843, was about nineteen hundred, among which may be found the names of many who have attained distinction in the various walks of life; nine became preachers of the gospel, nine physicians, sixteen lawyers, several, distinguished educators, and others, successful business men." Rev. Dr. J. E. Rankin, president of Howard university, Washington, D. C., says,—"I was a boy of twelve when I went to the academy in Concord, in 1840. The school was an excellent one. My schoolmates were the sons of ex-Governor Morril, Reverend Nathaniel Bouton, and George Hutchins. There were older boys I remember well,—George A. Blanchard and Josiah Stevens. I remember May-day excursions for the trailing arbutus; swimming in the Merrimack, skating on it, too, in the winter. Indeed, Concord seems to me in memory an ideal village—it was only that, then—with an ideal population, where boys and girls were very nice, and life was especially attractive." Henry Wilson, afterward vice-president of the United States, was, perhaps, the most noted of the alumni. Wilson lodged in the home of the late Joseph Grover, on Centre street, and spent considerable time in the practice of public speaking in a barn which stood in the rear of his boarding-place.

Without any endowment, and embarrassed with a debt of eleven hundred dollars,—for some of the original subscriptions were un-

collectable ;—the trustees, in March, 1841, applied to the town for relief, and received an assignment and transfer of six hundred shares in the Concord railroad, on which the first instalment had been paid. These shares were sold by the trustees to General Joseph Low for six hundred and seventy-five dollars. “Thus only partially relieved, and pressed with other difficulties, arising from sectional, political, and sectarian causes, the trustees, in March, 1844, decided to close the institution and offer the building for sale at auction.” It was accordingly sold on the 10th of May following. It was bid off by Richard Pinkham, for himself, S. C. Badger, and Asa Fowler, for five hundred and forty dollars. With this sum the debts were discharged, and the academy closed its mission in 1844.

Among the names of pupils attending the school in its closing years, who are still living in this city (1901), may be found the following : Daniel C. Allen, Frederic Allison, Lowell Eastman, Amos Hadley, Charles H. Herbert, Isaac A. Hill, George F. Hill, Abraham G. Jones, Horace F. Paul, Gustavus Walker, Joseph B. Walker, Mrs. Sarah (Sanborn) Adams, Misses Alma J. Herbert, Louisa L. Kelley, Harriet S. Ordway, Mrs. Mary (Herbert) Seavey, and Mrs. Elizabeth (Upham) Walker.

Private schools were kept in the building for a year or two afterward, when it was again sold to Isaac Hill, and removed. Out of it were constructed two large dwelling-houses and a part of a third, situated at the lower end of Main street, opposite Perley street.

The establishment of local high schools in many of the larger towns in the state soon greatly lessened the demand for such academies, and with a rapidly diminishing patronage their number was gradually reduced, only those liberally endowed or receiving denominational support, long surviving. There are at the present time, however, nearly thirty in the state in a fairly flourishing condition.