

# **History of the Walpole Schools**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

These remarks on the history of the Walpole Schools have been written over the years by a great many earlier residents of Walpole. All that I have done is collate the material chronologically from the various sources. When duplication was evident, my judgement was used to determine which to retain. In some instances, my comments have been inserted, but always within parentheses; often to update a comment such as "now" written in 1897.

Most of the material came from several talks given by Mrs. J. Ella Boyden between 1896 and 1899 and a history of the old Stone School written by Miss Eva Thomas in 1967. Other authors or contributors were Willard DeLue, Major John Gould (1785-1860), Isaac Lewis, Captain Edmund Polley (1812 -1908), Alton Roberts and Carolyn Towle.

The more recent activities such as the closing of the Plimpton School, the closing of the Bird School, the closing of the new Stone School, the closing and reopening of the Boyden School, the town's rejection of the building of a new four year high school and the realignment of the grades, all due to population changes are well documented. These topics, along with the move of the School Administration offices from the house on Washington St. to the new Town Hall and Proposition 2 1/2 are well documented in print. If the history is to be expanded, at least all of the earlier remarks are recorded.

Karl H. West, Jr.

Thanks also go to members of the Walpole Historical Society who contributed materials from their own files, and to Mary Locke who dug out the pictures.

## **WALPOLE SCHOOLS**

Anyone who takes an interest in the story of Walpole's schools should know that the Town of Dedham, of which this area was then a part, was the first town in the American Colonies to provide for public education. In 1644, Dedham voted to provide a public school, supported by taxes, for the children of that town and in 1649 erected the first public school building in America. It was on High Street and was 18 feet by 16 feet.

In 1698, Ezra Morse who lived near Ellis Brook, which was then considered part of the future Walpole, pressed the Dedham Selectmen for, "Sattisfacshun for ye use of his Hous laste yere toe keepe ye skule in."!

When Walpole was incorporated, December 10, 1724, the founding fathers were told "to provide a School Master to Instruct their Youth in Writing and reading."

It was this heritage that led our forefathers eight years after the Town was set off from Dedham to vote 30 pounds for "Instructing ye little children in ye Summer time to be for a women school and half for a writing school in the Winter season to be for a moving school". They were to divide their time between Easy Plain (West Walpole) and near the Meetinghouse (Center) and about a mile and a half Northeast of ye same (North Walpole).

Schools were held in private homes until school buildings could be erected. According to Mr. Lewis' History of Walpole, one of these homes was the house which is now numbered 283 East Street, a picture of which is on page opposite 136 of his book. In 1739, the Town voted to build three schoolhouses, each part of town to build its own house at its own expense. Nothing was done about this, although school sessions were being held in the North, Central and West sections of town.

In 1757, Walpole's first school house was built by a private citizen on land given by the minister, Rev. Phillips Payson and in 1758, the Town voted to accept this building as a gift of these two men. It was tavern keeper, Ezekiel Robbins, who built and gave this building, which was located near the corner of what are now Elm and West Streets. To be able to read and write was the education provided and until 1784, no provision was made for the education of the girls.

In 1763, reports show that school sessions were now being held in the Center, North, West and South parts of the town. In 1768, a school house near Willett's is mentioned for "wreading and writing". (Assuming Willett's is probably the family associated with New Pond or Willett's Pond of a later date, it is appropriate to think we are talking about the North Walpole school.) Captain Edmund Polley of East Walpole recollects "there was one at North Walpole, off Fisher St. As there was no road to the schoolhouse, the children were obliged to go "cross-lots" which must have been very unpleasant in the winter when the snow was three or four feet deep. The object in having this school house unhandily situated was to have it as near the center of the school district as possible. All the school children were obliged to go to the center school once a year to recite catechism to the Rev. Mr. Morey, pastor of the First Church." (This school was later moved across the field and became the ell of the house at 186 Gould St. Checking out this story, both the ell and the foundation of the school are about 14 feet by 22 feet. The foundation and a 4' well still exist in the woods. The house was built in the early 1860's, which is about the correct time for the school to be vacant. )

(The school in East Walpole has not been located, but early maps show it to be located on the west side of East Street between High Plain Street and Plimpton Street.)

The East Walpole schools continue to be confusing. The records show the first Bird School was a house on Bird Street in East Walpole, built in 1906. It had four rooms. It was torn down in 1920. It didn't last long, if this is true. If one looks at the 1876 map of Walpole, there is a school situated on the east side of East Street, just about where Bird Street will eventually be constructed. In the Town Report for the year 1892, the School Report states, "On account of the opening of a new street at the East School, a fence had to be built." I have been told that a school from that area was moved to the site of the later Bird School. Looking at the wooden Bird School

in the picture, it is claimed the right end is that school which was moved. Later, the middle section was built and finally the left end was built. In the 1903 School Report states, "Now your Committee recommends, that an eight room building be erected at the East and four rooms on the ground floor be finished at once, the other rooms to be finished when needed." The larger building on the south end was the primary school and the middle and north end were called the grammar school. In 1930, the brick Bird School was built on this same site. This is now part of the Washington Green housing complex.)

In 1722, a school house had been built on Walpole Plain by the people living in that section. It was to be 21 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 9 feet from the Floor to the eaves. (A general meeting of the Proprietors was called and voted on such things as: "To see if the proprietors will agree to Gett Shingels for the roof of the Schoolhouse at Eighteen Shillings The thousand, good shingels." A complete copy of the warrant is at the back of this story, near the pictures. This building is now part of the house at 758 Cedar Street at the corner of West Street. Sometime ago, when being remodeled, a "blackboard" was discovered on one wall. The back ell of the building had been the old West Walpole train station, which was moved to this site.)

(Although we don't have a picture of this school, its history is rich. The School Report of 1880 states, "The West Walpole school was closed as an experiment, with the pupils transferred to the Center." Also, at that time the results were in, and I quote from the School Report: "At the last written examination by which the schools throughout the town were tested, those from the West school fell decidedly below the average, while in the oral exercises a marked deficiency in quickness, enthusiasm and self-confidence was still apparent."

The conclusions which may be deduced from this experiment are:

- 1st. That sufficient materials for a successful school does not exist in the West district.
- 2d. The anticipation of the Committee of benefits to pupils from attendance at the Centre have been fully realized.
- 3d. The parents who have given the plan a trial have been satisfied with the Progress of their children, and with the manner in which they have been cared for while being conveyed to and from the village.
- 4th. None of the alleged injuries to health and morals, from intercourse of the children from the West with those of the Centre, nor in their conversation to and from school have come to the notice of the Committee, although repeated inquiries have been made.
- 5th. Better instruction has been afforded, and increased self-confidence on the part of the children has been gained by this method, without increased cost.

Evidently the West school opened again because in the 1884 School Report we read "The West Walpole school is still in charge of Miss Stanley. Very few teachers would be willing to remain in a school so small and remote from the Center."

In the 1889 School Report, we read, "The West School is the only ungraded school we have ... An improvement was made at this school by removing the old wood stove, and replacing it by a coal stove equal to all demands put upon it for heat. The banishing of the old, smoky wood stove was a relief to both teachers and pupils, and if its walls, now blackened by smoke could be

whitened, the room would present quite a neat and attractive appearance." It appears it was closed again in 1893. The School Report states, "The Bubbling Brook school had burned and the cost per pupil for the schools in town were Center \$11.80, North \$19.10, East \$12.02 and South \$13.94."

In 1899, the Report states, "The West school is now closed, since we commenced to transport students from that district to the Center." Finally, the 1912 Report states that at Town Meeting, the "Selectmen be authorized to sell and convey any interest which the town may have in the Schoolhouse lot at West Walpole to such person and upon such terms and for such price as to them seems just and proper."

For the building of this school, fifty cents a day was paid for labor. In the Town Meeting Warrant, the article relating to this reads as follows: "To see if the Proprietors will choose a committee to see the work done in building a school house and to let everyone of the Proprietors do their equal part or, proportion in said building in labor and in money according to agreement." According to the records at this time, the school numbered forty scholars, but no provision was made for the education of girls until 1784, so this was the number of boys.

Some of the early teachers in Walpole were Samuel Kingsbury, Seth Claip, Joshua Fisher, Widow Kingsbury, Aquilla Robbins, Mrs. Jeremiah Day, Peter Lyons, Ebenezer Bacon, Nathan Boyden and Seth Kingsbury. (As one reads the history of Walpole, many of these names are mentioned for other service.)

In 1783, the town was still using homes for schools as Abel Allen and Asa Kingsbury were paid for the use of their houses as schools. (Local people not only taught in Walpole, but in Norwood or South Dedham in the early days. A newspaper history of Norwood, printed in 1947, describes two.) The Norwood South Precinct in 1769-64 employed Seth Bullard of Walpole as a schoolmaster. He ran the school again in 1769-70. A Walpole patriot, he was a member of the Committee to prepare resolutions on public affairs in 1773, a Captain in the militia in 1775 and town representative to the Legislature for 11 years. Francis W. Bird, Brown University, 1831, also taught in the Mill School district of Norwood in 1829, before he joined his father, George Bird in the paper making business in East Walpole, in 1833. In 1831, he taught a private school in Dedham Village.

In the year 1776, 40 pounds or \$200 was voted for the support of schools and at the close of the Revolution the amount had been increased to \$300 English money was used until February 19, 1796; after this date, all expenditures are given in dollars and cents. On the report we find the following, February 16, 1789 to James Dupee for keeping school at the West part of town LIO.O.2 April 1790 Jas. Dupee for keeping school eleven weeks L8-5-0. In those early times the schools were often kept in some farmer kitchen while the good wife mixed in her household duties with those of teaching and the length of the term was in proportion the amount, of money allowed for that section. In 1792, the different sections of our town were allowed the following amounts for that year. Center 2L,2,6S North 17L West 12L 19S, 10d(?) South IOL, 9S, 2d . In 1797 Dollars and Cents with an additional school at Ellis Corner(?) Center \$119.27, North \$12.66, Ellis Corner \$19.18, West \$61.45, South \$39.94

The method used in apportioning the school money to the different sections of our town was the method handed down from early times: one half was allowed in proportion to the number of scholars and one half according to the valuation. At the Center was the largest number of scholars, also the valuation of taxable property exceeded that of the property in other sections so it happened that the children in this part of the town had the largest proportion of the school money and could have a longer term of school. A change in this system was made through the efforts of Mr. Frank D. Lincoln who taught school in 1847 in the building now occupied as a dwelling by Dr. Runnels, (in the Center); afterwards, while a resident of the town and in the employ of Mr. Smith Gray, he became a member of the honorable board of the School Committee and urged that the children of other sections of the town were entitled to the same advantages accorded to the most favored section; this was a new principle, but the people were not long in seeing the advantages of his plan and our present system was adopted. Today, the schools are intended to be managed in similar manner so as to permit a child to change from one section of the town to another without any inconvenience or lack of advantage.

In 1784, provision was made for the education of the girls in our schools. In 1797 there were five schools kept in Walpole, but the length of the school term are not the same in the different sections of the town. This difference was based upon the amount of money raised in the various sections of town. This method of apportioning the money for the districts was followed until about sixty years ago (1830's). It is plainly seen that the story which tells the history of our town is really the happenings incidental to the existence and support of our churches and schools. (Until 1808, it appears that in South Walpole, school was probably held in houses.) Isaac Newton Lewis, in his "History Of Walpole," notes that Timothy Mann taught school in the south part of town during the winter of 1783. Where that took place is not recorded, but perhaps in his house. Roy Belcher writes that in 1808, Benjamin Mann gave to the South School District a piece of land of about one-quarter of an acre, upon which to build a school. The site was near the Terrace Hill Cemetery, approximately where the Jackson Memorial stands today. That schoolhouse remained there and served the town for 47 years.

In 1855 a building committee of Truman Clarke, Newell Boyden and James Ellis undertook the construction of a new school. This school was located on a piece of land 85 by 85 feet, purchased from James R. Fuller (of Fuller Tavern fame?) and which is now part of the present Boyden School site. The total cost of the building and land was \$3,643.53. The old school building was sold to Josiah Hall, Jr. (I wonder if he moved it up onto South Street near his father's house?) He paid \$145.00 for it. The principal (sic) carpenter was Jeremiah Boyden, but the school didn't become "Boyden" School until 1902 when the school committee named the district schools after local citizens prominent in education. This school building served long and well, being replaced in the 1930's. In 1876, the Report noted the Primary room at South Walpole is in no respect a fit place for a school. With the closing of the "New" Boyden "School" in 1981, the "South Village" is without a school for the first time in almost 200 years. In 1892, the Report states that South had an addition with 2 rooms expanded.

It is interesting to note that a petition was presented to the town to annex to Walpole a certain portion of land, then a part of Foxboro. This was to allow the children living near the boundary to attend the school belonging to Walpole. The school house in their section of the town was located near

the present cemetery and was used not only for daily educational purposes but religious services were held there on Sunday and it served for other gatherings in a similar manner to halls of the present time. Lorenzo Dow was one of the religious teachers who frequently came here to hold religious services. The Westminster Catechism served for one of the school books. At the beginning of this century (1800's), the early history of our country had begun to be studied in the schools and also elementary geography. An account of one of the parties held at the schoolhouse was given me by one of our oldest residents and lived over again by him as he told it; they were invited to meet at one of the houses and then march to the schoolhouse where they had some recitations and other speaking; on arriving there, they found two cords of wood piled in front of the door, but not to be hindered they all marched up the wood pile and down the other side. At stated intervals, a gun was sounded outside and the evening closed with music by the band. (The next incident would have taken place about 1815.) A broadcloth mill was one of the industries located at South Walpole with machinery for fulling the cloth. It was situated just below the Clark homestead of today (Roy Belcher) and the mill lately known as the woolen mill was used for carding and spinning the yarn for the broadcloth mill; the broadcloth mill was burned and the two privileges united and a fine apple orchard is in the place of the old mill. Mr. Timothy Mann, the proprietor of this mill, was called upon by Warren Colburn, the author of Colburn's Arithmetic, who lived in Plimptonville; his errand was to negotiate for sufficient cloth for a suit of clothes, but he was entirely without means to pay for it; he had his Arithmetic ready for publication, but must have a new suit to wear in visiting publishers. He offered to pay as soon as he could receive in return for his book and Mr. Mann furnished the cloth accordingly. Colburn's Arithmetic was a success and the cloth was easily paid for out of receipts. (The book was published by Houghton Mifflin and continued through several editions, even by his estate after he died. Professional mathematics educators felt this book had the impact in the 1800's that the MSG program had in the 1960's, with regards to changes in mathematics education.)

In the 1700's and early 1800's, students kept their own books, which had been lined by the teachers after school the day before. The Historical Society has many early books or manuscripts of this type. It has Joshua Clap's Book of Forms, which dates from 1773, Lemuel Allen's manuscript arithmetic of 1816 and Horace Guild's arithmetic of 1810. In 1826, the first School Committee was elected. It consisted of Dr. Ebenezer Stone, John Gould, Harvey Ruggles, David Morse and Daniel Kingsbury.

In 1851, it was reported that the Town had six schools with an enrollment of 389. Sometime between the years of 1825 and 1831, the Town, having outgrown the little school house at Elm and Center Streets, which had been provided by Deacon Robbins and Reverend Payson, built its first two story schoolhouse on Front Street where the United Church Parsonage now stands, formerly the site of the Methodist Church. (This information is incorrect, because the Center School was not built until the 1850's. The Center School was sometimes called the Temple of Learning, I imagine by those who did not appreciate the pillars on the front of the building.)

On October 21, 1822, the people voted to build a second school adjacent to the first school on the corner of West and Elm Streets. It was voted to build one 32' by 28' with 10' high ceilings. This building, which was built in 1822/3, was designed as a one story school. Later, as more students enrolled, they made another classroom in the cellar with benches attached around the walls. Later, when Dr. Runnells bought the building, he had a second story added. Another

interesting story about the second school on the corner of West and Elm Streets - it housed the first school library.

In 1841, the town accepted some books for the school. A closet on the top floor of the school became the first school library. Also, that year the town voted to replace the old shutters with blinds on the windows and to sell the shutters. That same year the school was remodeled using the North Walpole plan with a raised platform across the whole back of the room in the rear of the seats. Earlier in 1834 they voted to sell the stoves in the school. (A lot of remodeling took place in those days, too.)

In 1850, the Center School District sold the land and buildings of the second school to Edmund W. Clapp, with the understanding the town could use it until the school on Front Street was built. The Center School, built in 1850, housed the High School as well as the grades. In 1862, the Center School on Front Street was totally used. The best room had been formally used as a private school. (Walpole English and Classical School housed here? In 1864, such a school was operating in town and it appeared to be more formal than the regular Center School, although Dr. E. Stone was on its committee.) The Center School burned to the ground on December 19, 1884 and the 181 pupils were accommodated by combining classes in the Village School, later the old High School and now part of the Hill Machine Shop, placing some primary classes in private homesteads such as the Fales Estate, at the site of the Post Office and fitting up the lower Town Hall for High School classes. (The Hill machine shop is now owned by Ingersoll-Rand. It is located on School Street and the peak of the old Village School is still visible through the roof of the new plant.) The Village School was called by that name to distinguish it from the other school downtown, the Center School. After being built, it first had a two story addition built on the north side of the building. Still later, a one story addition was made to the south side of the building. This building was remodeled and occupied as a High School in February of 1898. It was used until the erection of the original section of the present High School in 1908.

There are at least two theories to the final history of Walpole's first school house. The map of Walpole in 1832 shows the school standing at the corner of Elm and West Streets. Yet James Hartshorn in his Recollection said, "After 2 or 3 years in the old school house, we moved into the new school house which was the lower part of the house now occupied by Dr. Reynolds." This was in about 1826. DeLue claims the Robbins School was moved twice. After being built in 1757 or earlier, town records claim it was moved in 1762. Later it was moved to the southwest part of the lot of Robbins. Lewis claims the addition to the side of the Deacon Willard Lewis House is the school. It was sometimes called the Gay House, but is the old school. The theory that it was a separate building placed it in the way of Station Street and was raised when the street was put in and Kendall Company expanded. The map of 1888 shows a building at the site of the school as well as a large addition on the side of the Lewis house.

Board of Selectmen,  
Town of Walpole, Mass.  
Gentlemen:

Deacon Ezekiel Robbins on Mar. 7, 1758 presented to the Town of Walpole its first Public School building. By the terms of his will he also left a sum of money for the "use of the poor of

the Town of Walpole." The residue of his estate, which later realized over 800 pounds, he bequeathed to the "Church of Christ" in Walpole to "support and maintain a minister" which, at that time, was an obligation of the Town. He served as Selectman and in most other town offices and on many early committees. The schoolhouse stood on the N.W. side of West St. a short distance S.W. of Elm St. and it was the Town's only center school building for more than half a century. It was then moved to the southwest in order to allow creation of a larger building. Later it was remodeled as a dwelling and razed in 1928 when the Kendall Company office was built - its history apparently long since forgotten by townspeople. The venerable James Hartshorn, who was living near the close of

the last century, had been a pupil in this schoolhouse and about 1895 I had several conversations with him. He pointed out to me its original location and related much of the early school history which, at the instance of George A. Plimpton, was afterward recorded in manuscript form.

For many years it has been a praiseworthy custom in many New England and other communities to preserve by various means the memory of exceptionally meritorious public service by early settlers. More recently there have been state-wide movements to mark historic spots throughout the Country. Now, more than ever before, it seems essential that the beginning of our educational system and of the struggle for the liberties we enjoy should not be forgotten. Therefore, inasmuch as the Town of Walpole has never heretofore taken any appreciative action in connection with this gift of its

first school building, I respectfully suggest and request that the Town erect a durable metal marker, similar to those being placed on many other historic sites, inscribed to show the place and origin of its first schoolhouse. If this marker is placed at the intersection of the N.W. side of West St. with the dividing line between the Runnells-Hartshorn property and that formerly known as the "Deacon Willard Lewis" property it will be within the original area covered by the building, as pointed out by Mr. Hartshorn. Trusting that this request will meet with the favor of your Board and of the townspeople, I am,

Respectfully,

Dana W. Robbins

North Miami, Fla.

March 20, 1941.

(The mystery still continues regarding the site of the First Schoolhouse. After reading the different comments by DeLue, Lewis, and Hartshorn, I asked Betty Cottrell what she knew about the site. She informed me that there had been two schools in the Center before the school on Front Street was built. The first one was the school built around 1757. Later, this became too small and a second school was built. That explains why James Hartshorn said that after 2 or 3 years in the old building, the school moved into the new building, around 1826. The monument on the corner of West and Elm Streets. implies the site of the first school house, but I feel it is, only the site of the second school. After further study, the report of Dana Robbins sheds new light on the question.) "The school house is spoken of in the records as being "Near the meeting house" and the town a few years later (in 1762) voted that it be moved providing "those that it will accommodate be at ye charge of moving it". There seems to be no doubt, that, wherever it may have originally



stood, the building referred to is the one which, until many years later and within the memory of our oldest citizens, was situated near the present residence of Dr. Runnels; a little further west than the building and close to the street line. The town records contain no records of any steps taken by the town toward the erection of a school building until many years later, when the old building was moved away to make room, for a new one. The old building, was this time moved a few rods west and remodeled, as a dwelling house, and as such is still in use, having in the last few years had many narrow escapes from destruction by fire." Dedham Hist. Reg. Vol. XI, page 35 (1900) (The other theory about the building is that it was moved to become an addition on the side of the Lewis house. This addition obviously was a complete building, as noted by the double thick wall between the house and the addition. Second, the floor of the addition is at a different height than the floor of the house. Third, when the Lewis House was remodeled to become the Historical Society building, it was discovered that a door frame was in the wall of the addition abutting the house. The door would be at a low level for use as a passage way, but could have been the entry to the school. Getting back to the site, Wood and Lawrence owned a mill on the Neponset River at the West St. crossing. In 1823, they sold 1/2 acre of land on the corner of West and Elm Streets to the Walpole School District for \$10 with the restriction that it had to be used for a school, otherwise it would revert to the original families, (Norfolk Vol. 85, page 213). If the town already had a school on the property, how could Wood and Lawrence own it and why would the town now have to acquire it? The first school was elsewhere!

In 1858, Horatio Wood sold to Harvey Clap 11 @ acres of land and his homestead, excluding the schoolhouse, Vol. 268 p311. In 1850, the Walpole School District had sold an option to E.W. Clap for the 1/2 acre and the second schoolhouse was still standing , 195,139. In 1864, E.W. Clap, as agent for Harvey Clap's estate, sold the two acres to Willard Lewis, 324,124. Walpole had sold back the 1/2 acre to Clap, 324,123. Then in 1879 Willard I. Lewis sold the 1/2 acre to Andrew J. Runnels, 514, 174. If the old schoolhouse was on the 1 1/2 acres, it would seem to have been further up West St. and not in front of Wood's house. It could not have been north of the house because he didn't own the land, he had sold it to the School District in 1823. When Dr. Runnels purchased the second school-house, he made it into his home. Later extensive remodeling took place and it became a two story house known as the Runnells-Hartshorn House. Probably the heavier joists, discussed when the building was first built, were added at this time. Now comes the clincher when the Society building was being remodeled, Frank Larrabee was looking around in the attic of the addition and found two plans. One was the plot plan of the piece of land sold to the Center School District. The other was the plot with the outline of the second school. as well as the outline of the smaller building west of the school lot. On that smaller outline are two lines which locate the west and south sides of Wood's house. The theory, (which is a strong one), is that the smaller building is the first school on its foundation. In 1826 Wood built his house and in about 1826 the scholars moved into the second school. Wood left the school where it was and built his house up against it, providing him with an ell. This is not unreasonable, my grandparents built an addition up against their barn to make a new house with a double wall between the kitchen and dining room. Whereas the plan has only two details on it and one is the second school, the other detail must be the first school. Dana Robbins was in error.)

In Major Gould's Diary, he writes that in 1853 the North School District agreed to build a schoolhouse on the hill on Main St. The building, committee for the school was John A. Gould,

Isaac Fisher, William Hartshorn and Friend Tilden. The school was dedicated Dec. 23, 1853 and school commenced Dec. 26. (This time agrees with the time when the old school could be moved to make an ell on the house at 186 Gould St.) The school was about 20 rods east of the intersection of Gould and Main Streets. (This was previous to the Old Fisher School at 402 Main St., now called the Santos Building.) The School Report of 1889 states, "At the North School there has been an average attendance of twenty seven in the Primary Dept. for the past year. These 27 pupils, with their teacher, have been crowded into a room not large enough for more than fifteen at best, All the light comes from three small windows on one side of the room, and the only means of ventilation is by opening the doors to cold halls. This room is heated by a small wood stove in one corner, and as there is no means of regulating the heat, it is either too hot or too cold. Pupils are compelled on account of the crowded conditions of the room, to sit within less than three feet of the stove. The condition of the South school is somewhat similar although the smaller room is used only as a recitation room. This school has an average of fifty two, although 72 registered. It would seem expedient to divide it into a grammar and primary school, as at the North and East schools. If it were done, conditions would be identical with those at the North School as the buildings are built on the same plan (?).

In the School Report of 1912 it is noted that the town has voted to authorize the school committee to acquire land within the limits of said Town, as specified herein, for the purpose of a public playground at the North Walpole School. The Grammar School building on Stone St. now known as the Stone School,(later known as the Old Stone School and later dismantled), was built in 1885.

Back in 1880 the Methodists had acquired land for a church on Main St. right next to the Town Hall. After the schoolhouse burned on Front St. in 1884, the Town willingly exchanged this site for the Main St. property of the Methodists. Shortly after this transaction the Town laid out a street from Main St. to School St. The new Center School which replaced the one that burned was built at the corner of this new street and School St. This new school house was completed in 1885 and occupied in January, 1886. The new street was named Stone St., probably in memory of Dr. Silas Emlyn Stone, who besides being a prominent physician was also Chairman of the School Comm. at the time the school was built. It was named the Stone School in 1902. Dr. Silas Stone was the son of Dr. Ebenezer Stone of Walpole who had also been a member of the School Comm. in 1826 It was during the winter of 1884 also that the Legislature passed the Act requiring all cities and towns to furnish, free of cost, all necessary text books and supplies parents had furnished the books for their children up to this time. With these changes all coming so near together the school question was brought before the people as it had not been before and in 1895 a Superintendent was engaged and the progress has certainly been onward and upward since that time. Obviously things did not progress "onward and upward" immediately, as is reported in a Norwood paper dated Sept. 23, 1898.

Walpole is greatly exercised over certain school questions, and it looks as if our neighboring town was in some danger of taking certain steps backward. A town meeting will be held tomorrow (Saturday) evening, and the two principle articles in the warrant relate to the questions of whether the town shall employ a superintendent of schools or not, and whether the town shall raise money for the transportation of scholars to the High school or not. As for the last question it looks like a very one sided one, Walpole is composed of several villages a number of miles apart, and all the scholars in these districts should be clearly entitled to the same school

privileges that the Centre scholars enjoy. The arguments against transporting scholars seem old fogyish and idle. As for the superintendent question, it is likely that the fight over it will be a warm one. A good deal of fault seems to be found with Superintendent Potter. While he may or may not be an ideal superintendent, he certainly shows a great interest in the schools and is a man of very progressive ideas. Whether the town retains him or not, it would hardly seem just the thing to do away with the superintendent system entirely. School boards are not always the best means of securing good teachers. Walpole schools have done well under the superintendent system. Friction over many school matters is entirely avoided. The entire management of the teaching end of school work has devolved upon the superintendent, and while representative men have been placed on the school board there has been as little contest over their election as over the election of library trustees or fence viewers. It looks as if all this was much better than to turn the schools into a bear garden for politicians. Walpole ought to remain a progressive town and keep up with the procession. (Note this was not an editorial, but a news item.) (Mention of the old Town Hall and old Stone School brings to mind the reminiscences of Carolyn Towle when she was a student at the old Stone School.) Today we think of the Walpole Town Hall, built in 1881, as a place for the various Town Offices. We go there to pay our taxes, to receive our necessary licenses, to consult our elected officials and to attend hearings.

Did you ever consider, however, what this building meant in the early days? Just about every important event was held in our Town Hall. My memory commences when I was a pupil at the Stone School. We had no assembly hall or all purpose room in the school so we always went to the Town Hall for any important gatherings. I particularly recall marching in a body to the hall at Memorial Day events, at which time the dwindling members of the GAR were honored guests. All High School graduations took place in the Town Hall. This reminds me of a story told to me by one of the graduates at that time. Someone had erred in calculating the number of those graduating and when the procession reached the platform., there were not sufficient chairs for all. The music stopped and the group were motioned to sit. The four or five students without a seat were left in a most awkward position. they stooped until help arrived. Also, all of the High School plays and other events took place there, including school proms. The school basketball games and other indoor athletic events were always in the building, and the cheering squad sat or stood in the gallery or as some called it, the balcony. Until the year 1902, none of the Walpole School-houses was officially named, although the building at the corner of Stone and School Streets. was usually referred to as the Stone School. In the report of the Superintendent of Schools for that year, he has this to say: "We have been thinking for some time that it would be a good plan to name the different school buildings for some person who has lived in that section and has exerted a good influence on education.

We accordingly suggest that the schools be named as follows:

The High School be named the Robbins School  
Center Stone School  
East Mary Bird School  
North Fisher School  
South Boyden School

If anyone has more appropriate names to offer, please communicate with the Superintendent of Schools." All the schools were named as suggested except the High School which still has no

name. We believe that this is as it should be, but we also think that it is a very grave omission, not to have honored the name of the man who gave the first school house to his town, and in as much

as our newest school building (West Jr. High) has been placed on land which once belonged to his family and within a few hundred yards of the spot once occupied by the school-house he built for the town, we should honor him by naming it "The Ezekiel Robbins Junior High School".

(Here is one final interesting note to share.) In 1913 the first Fisher School of brick was built. Around 1915, a Mr. Mingles bought the old wooden Fisher School. According to Carl Thomas, a local carpenter, he and his father took the building apart and rebuilt it as a barn on the corner of High Plain and Old Post Road. A house was built near it, but burned down. Another house was built on the site of the old house.

## NOW FOR OTHER SCHOOLS IN WALPOLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

### THE KEBLE SCHOOL

### **MRS. DUKE'S PRIVATE SCHOOL FOR YOUNG LADIES**

1 - We would like to call the attention of our readers to the home school of Mrs. Dukes, knowing that upon an investigation of its merits, it will be well patronized. Mrs. Dukes and her daughter are thoroughly educated ladies, and scholars entrusted to them can make rapid progress. Give them a call. 'The Walpole Star' for May 12, 1883; P-3

2 - The second term of the regular school year of Mrs. Dukes' private school commenced last Monday. Private schools of this kind where the higher branches are taught are not found in every town, and Walpole people should appreciate such an advantage. 'The Walpole Star' for Nov. 17, 1883; P-3

3 - Among the recent additions to the list of pupils at Mrs. Dukes' school is one from Norwood, who comes daily by train. The school is prospering. \*'The Walpole Star' March 28, 1884;

4 - The educational advantages of Mrs. Dukes, private school (Keble School) are excellent, but in order that they may be better and fully up to the times, a professor of music from Boston will be engaged before long and also a teacher of painting. Thus the school is being built up and will compare favorably with other larger academies of the State. 'The Walpole Star' April 25, 1884 p-1

5 - Keble School, Walpole, Mass. Mrs. Dukes, Miss F. Dukes. The 3rd year opens on Monday, Sept. 1st. Superior advantages offered and careful instruction guaranteed. For terms & further particulars apply to the Principal. Ad in Walpole Star of July 26, '84 & August 9, '84.

6 - Keble School, Walpole, Mass. - An evening class for the study of the German language will

be formed on Tuesday, Oct. 14th. For terms & further particulars apply as above. (?) July 26, & Oct. 10, 1884

7 Mrs. J.W. Dukes & daughter on Monday moved from their residence on Common St., to her future home in Hingham. During their residence in town they have made many friends and shown their ability to conduct a model private school. They take charge of 'Keble House' in Hingham and we trust their ability and patience will win them success they so well deserve. 'The Walpole Star' April 11, 1885 P-1

\*(Where? No family by the name of Dukes is shown on the 1876 map of Walpole.)

### **The Norfolk, Bristol, & Plymouth Counties' Union Training School off Spring street. "The Truant School".**

Originally the Fales Mansion; later Dr. Cullis's Hospital.

In 1885 (or possibly not until 1889) the Counties of Norfolk, Bristol, & Plymouth established a "Truant School" in Walpole on Powder House Hill off Spring Street, for runaways and boys who refused to go to public school in order that they might receive some education. This was not a "reform school" as we think of it today. They could house between 50-60 boys. The counties acquired the (?) T.B. or Cancer Hospital on Powder House Hill off Sprig Street, formerly owned by Dr. Cullis. (On Jan. 1/1885, according to the Walpole Star, there were only 4 patients in the Cancer House.) They also acquired some land nearby (now McDonald Circle) for \$1500 for crops. Rumor says that a Fales (? Squire or Charles) built a mansion on top of Powder House Hill prior to 1834. When Fales chose to live there no longer Dr. Cullis bought the property and operated a hospital therefrom 1834 - 1885. There seems to be a question as to whether it was a cancer or tuberculosis hospital. The Walpole Star speaks of the "cancer house" but long-time residents speak of it as a T.B. Sanitarium (There were many T.B. san. at that time but few hospitals specializing in the care of cancer patients unless Dr. Cullis operated a hospital for either T.B. or Cancer terminal cases). It is said that Dr. Cullis also owned another hospital in Boston and according to the Walpole Star, "bought the farm of Capt. Mealy at the Northend for \$1800. It is expected Mr. Moody, now living at the Cancer House, and his sister, will go there to run the farm" to provide fresh produce for the hospital. On March 31, 1883, the Walpole Star also reported that "M.W. Allen is to erect a stable for Dr. Cullis on Powder House Hill. The lumber being already ordered."

The Walpole Star also reported Dr. Cullis would preach at an open air prayer meeting in the grove in back of the Cancer House on June 30, 1883. The June 28th, 1884 edition of Walpole Star reported that: "Dr. Porter is the new doctor at the Cancer House. Dr. Emma F. Angell, (a woman doctor), one of the recent doctors at the home, spent a few days in town this week. She is now married to Mr. Drake of Northfield Seminary July 7, 1883."

On July 12, 1884, The Walpole Star reported that Dr. Cullis and family have moved to town a few days since and have taken up their home on the hill. There were several buildings when the Truant School was in operation. The main building housed the schoolroom, dining area,

dormitories, and hospital area. There was a residence for employees and a barn which could be reached by an underground tunnel in inclement weather. In 1900 a two-story addition was put on to the mansion (25'x 60'- the plans are in the possession of Carl Thomas whose father Daniel Thomas worked on the project). The first floor housed a classroom with 56 desks. The second story housed the dormitories and hospital areas. The boys all wore blue uniforms and on Sunday mornings they marched to the Orthodox Congregational Church on last Street for worship services led by drummers. They sat in the balcony and after services were led back to the hill by their drummers. According to the annual reports of the county, the health of the boys was generally good - experiencing only minor colds and minor medical problems which never necessitated hospitalization or major expenses. However, very few of the boys had ever had any dental care prior to their commitment so the counties provided dental care for them. The average age was 13+ and they averaged between 45-50 boys per year. They were released by coming of age or were paroled. The average length of stay was 13 months, 25 days. The boys all worked on the farm under strict supervision. They raised and fruit and vegetables for use at the school on the land which is now McDonald Circle. Their good harvests would carry them through the winter until next harvest in most cases. Aaron Morse was the first superintendent and was assisted by his daughter, Kate Morse, who also taught in the Walpole Public School System. Alton Roberts was one of her 8th grade pupils. Kate Morse later married Ralph Bullard of Norwood (banker) who was an uncle of Eleanor Edwards of Walpole. James Craig became his assistant in 1897. In 1900 James Craig became superintendent and, with his wife, Florence, and their children, moved up to the hill. They had come to Walpole from Essex County. Mrs. Craig was head matron until around 1915/16. According to the Walpole Directories Elizabeth Hutchinson was head matron from 1916-1918. It is thought that she had previously been the cook from 1909 to 1916. One story is that she was called upon to return from a vacation to fill in as cook during an emergency at the school and while reaching for or to put something away slipped, fell and broke her hip. It is presumed that Florence Craig died for Mr. Craig later married his niece, Phyllis. By an act of the Legislature of Massachusetts the Union Training School in Walpole was closed August 31, 1933. The boys were either paroled or transferred to Middlesex Training School. A public auction was held on October 21, 1933 to dispose of the property under the direction of Chauncey O. Davis, Auctioneer. There were 428 articles (school room supplies, furniture, farming tools, laundry-equipment, etc.) and the net amount of \$1,591.05 was received. The land and building belonged to Norfolk County but the other money was divided proportionately amongst the 3 counties. The population on August 31, 1933 was 29. When the school closed 13 were paroled to their home; 9 were discharged by attaining age limit; 7 were transferred to Middlesex Training School. In his final report, Mr. Craig states that he spent 36 years at the school which had been active for 44 years. He had 39 years of county service before moving to a similar position in Plymouth. It is reported that the buildings stood vacant for some time before the property was sold to the Dedham Sand & Gravel Company. Eva Thomas states that Mr. Arthur T. Lyman, Commissioner of Youth Service for the State used to come out and see to the property (the Lyman School in Westboro is named for him). Roderick Bruce relates that there was a serious fire in the Industrial arts building on Halloween night 1938. Kerosene had been sprinkled on the barn but it did not burn

On May 20, 1773 the Town of Walpole appropriated 5 pounds to build a 6 foot square powder house on 'Widow Robbins' high hill IF she will consent". She did consent and the powder house was built causing the hill to be called "Powder House Hill". Alas! Now the Fales mansion, Dr.

Cullis' hospital, the Truant School, and even the hill itself are all long gone and few remain who remember these parts of our town's history.

Compiler by Betty Cottrell from information provided by Frank Larrabee, Alton Roberts, Walter George. Carl, Eva, Bessie Thomas, Roderick Bruce, Evelyn Ryan Coletta Hazlett, Eleanor Edwards, Edith O'Neil, Arthur Barnes Walter Barnes, & Norfolk County annual reports. (Betty Cottrell)

### **Bubbling Brook Schoolhouse**

The South or District #10, was located by Bubbling Brook, near the corner of North and High Streets, or on Corner Street, according to one designation. It was started in the 1790's in a building near the present Bubbling Brook Restaurant, then later moved, or a new one built, across North St. Pupils attending this Union or Walpole Corner School came from Dedham., Dover and Walpole, returning to schools in their respective towns when the building burned in 1893. Copied from the History West Dedham and Westwood, 300 Years by Marjory R. Fenerty, 1962 p64. The map on p66 shows the location of the school. (FRL) Following are excerpts from a long article on the Bubbling Brook Schoolhouse, written by Annsel K. Tisdale, which appeared in the "Dedham Transcript" in 1910 in issues of May 28, June 11,18,25; July2, Aug. 20 and Sept. 3.

The building stood on Dedham land, near the junction of North Street in Walpole and High Street in Dedham. It faced nearly north and the only door for entrance was on the front, as shown in the picture. Entering this door you found a partition across the entire width of the building perhaps ten feet from the front door, which space was used for coat rooms. on the right for girls , on the left for boys --- and also for storage of wood, prepared for use in the one stove, which was the only heating apparatus in the building. On entering the schoolroom from the coat room was to be seen the teacher's large desk on a platform in the right-hand corner of the room, while in the left-hand corner was placed the box (or sometimes called the omnibus) stove fed by wood cut in two foot lengths. Extending from this stove to the chimney in the rear of the building were lengths of funnel, which not only took away the smoke, but furnished a very large amount of heat. Unfortunately, however, the funnel had to be so near the ceiling that much of its value to the scholars was lost. Across the rear of the room extended the recitation platform, which was perhaps five feet wide, while on the walls in the rear of the platform were the principal blackboards that were used for school work. Around the side walls were hung maps and one or two notice boards. There were four rows of seats (properly graded) extending from the front floor space to the recitation platform. Three of the rows were double seats and the other single. The windows, as may be seen by the picture, were high up in the wall, arranged that way as to prevent the children from seeing what was going on outside the room while sitting at their seats. During my school days spent in this building (about twelve years) it was painted buff and yellow, and I think it continued to have that color for long afterwards. In this unpretentious building, located in a quiet spot, many persons for several generations received all their scholastic education while on the other hand it prepared the way for further education along the line of professional, mechanical and many other pursuits of life. Around this place are centered many pleasant memories of companions living, of companions who have gone to the better land,

of relatives of several generations, some of whom not only got their education in this school room, but later on became teachers in this same room. Many ministers. lawyers. doctors and men of high in the mechanical art and leaders in educational and musical circles took their first start in the 'Bubbling Brook School'.

Right here let me say that the school was sometimes called the "Walpole Corner School" and the Union School. First let me describe the "Union District", the like of which I have never known of existing elsewhere, or perhaps I might say exist to such an extent. Its makeup was as follows: From corners of Dedham, Walpole, Medfield and Dover. The Dedham contingent was called the Pond Plain. The Walpole contingent was called Walpole Corner. The Dover and Medfield contingents were called Lean End. In school matters it was a little town by itself. Each town contributed a certain amount to this district treasury, it generally being such amount as would be the average cost off schooling for each scholar in said town and then multiplying it by the number of scholars sent to the Union School. The affairs were quite carefully managed by a committee of three and a secretary and a treasurer. The teachers were hired by this committee and paid by the treasurer as were all other running expenses. Teachers, if not known or highly regarded, might be sent to the school committee at Dedham for examination and as the building was in Dedham, the school committee of that town was, until a few years before the destruction of the building, expected to act as a visiting committee and also to act at the examinations at the close of the several terms of school. It was the custom to employ female teachers for the summer terms, and male teachers for the winter terms until its latter years, when lady teachers were employed all the year round.

The teachers employed were first class in every respect and always seemed to enter into the social life as well as the educational life of the district. In 1959 the school was taught by Mr. John J. Dana from Perry, Maine. He was an energetic able kind hearted young man, untiring in his efforts to assist the scholars in their work not only during school hours but at any time out of school that might be at his disposal. His scholars became much attached to him. Belonging to the school was 46 scholars (?) average attendance 34 1/4. Number of held days in term 176. Perhaps I had better name some of the most interesting "play" and "recreations" features of this historic old place. Perhaps 250 feet from the front door was the point where Bubbling Brook crosses the highway at the junction of the street in Dedham and the street in Walpole. At this point there is a watering place for horses on the right side of the culvert under the highway, and this made a safe and pleasant place for children to play in the summer time, and quite a pond could be raised in a few moments and children could wade to their hearts content. Directly opposite in the pasture on the other side of the road a dam was built across the brook which allowed the making of a pond which would rise water to a depth of nearly two feet. The dam which was there when I first went to school remained during the 12 years that I attended school there. Sometimes a boy of mechanical genius would put in a water wheel to which would be attached a saw or some other piece of toy machinery. On the road side, near the brook, stood a very old cedar tree with a branching top which offered a fine opportunity for boys to practice climbing and the chance was thoroughly improve. As this tree was adjacent to the school ball field, it made a convenient refuge for those boys who now-a-days would be styled "fans" and well they did exercise their lungs in keeping tabs on the successes and mistakes of the ball field. About a quarter mile from the school, on the road to Dedham, was a hack mattack tree which at certain times of the, year afforded a source of excellent gum and it was faithfully patronized by the children,



## **NORFOLK COUNTY AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

For years, educators realized there was a need for vocational education, and in this area, where farming was a major occupation, the educators saw that it was important for farmers to know about and understand how to use newer methods and equipment. In 1915, Massachusetts started its program of developing vocational-agricultural education. Governor Walsh signed a bill authorizing the establishment of the NORFOLK COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL. The first land was purchased in May, 1916. The first main building was constructed in the same year, on Main St. Walpole.

In 1923 a "Weymouth Branch" was included as part of NCAS, with an enrollment of 33 students from that area. By 1927 the students could qualify for entry into a four year degree course at Massachusetts Agricultural College in Amherst. In 1939 a four year course of study was approved by the Massachusetts Department of Education with 50% agriculture, 30% related subjects and 20% academic.

In 1947 a Veterans Training Program was set up with forty World War II veterans enrolled. Several land acquisitions have been made over the years, including "Hilltop Farm" at 1377 North St. This farm was run by the Norfolk County House of Correction in Dedham, using trustees as laborers. Presently, NCAS consists of about 300 acres. As enrollment increased and girls were admitted, the need for more classrooms and laboratories was evident. Kemp Hall, the ANIMAL SCIENCE building and the PLANT SCIENCE building were built. An addition to the FARM MECHANICS building took place. Renovations took place in the original main building, for more Extension Service" and 4H headquarters.

The COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE started in Norfolk County in 195 with programs developed to meet the needs of the people. The 4H Clubs, organized in 1928, have contributed greatly to the economic and social needs of young people. One of the newer programs is the INTERNATIONAL FARM YOUTH EXCHANGE, (IFYE), which is the exchange of members of United States 4H clubs with similar groups in other countries.

Betty Cottrell

### **Ye olds West-Walpole School-house 1772**

"Whereas the Proprietors of a School at the westerly part of the Town of Walpole have agreed to Build a New School-house and to sett the house at the corner of Mr. Ephraim Clark's Land where the New Road comes into the Great road. By a Subscription and now att Generall meeting of the Proprietors, it was motioned as followath-- Walpole April the seventh 1772--

1 Article firsts , To Choose a Moderator.

2 Second -- to choose a Clark.

3 Thirdly--To see if the Proprietors will choose a committee to see the work Done in Building a Schoolhouse and to let everyone of the Subscribers Do their Equal part or proportions in said Building in labour and in money according to the agreement.

4 Forthly--To see if the Proprietors will agree to Build school-house twenty feet long and eighteen feet wide and nine feet high Between joynts.--

5 Fifthly--To see if the Proprietors will agree to find oak Board at three shillings the hundred three quarter board and Slitwork at the some Price as Board att the Place where the Schoolhouse shall stand. Being good Board and Slitwork.--

6 Sixly--to see if the Proprietors will Gutt half entch oak board att two shillings and five pence the Hundred--

7 Seventhly--To see if the Proprietors will agree to geett wight oak Sells att two pence the feet, 7 by 8.

8 Eightly--To see if the proprietors will agree to gett the timber for Plates and other Timber seven matches square att one penny two farthings and one half farthing the feet at the place.

9 Ninethly.-To see if the Proprietors will agree to gett Plank one to be three entches thick and eight more to be two entchos By seven and att eight Shillings the hundred and to be Nineteen feet long and to Spring 15 Entches.

10 Tenthly--To see if the Proprietors will agree to Clapboard the Schoolhouse with pine, the sides and ends on the outside.

11 Eleventhly To see if the proprietors will agree to Gett Shingals for the roof of the schoolhouse att Eighteen Shillings the thousand, good shingals.

12thly--To see of the proprietors will agree to Give two shillings per Day work for Labor Done at the Schoolhouse."

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This is a copy of an old document loaned and exhibited at the Town's 200th anniversary in 1924 by Mrs. Susan Bonney of Weymouth, Mass., a former Walpole resident.

F.R.L.