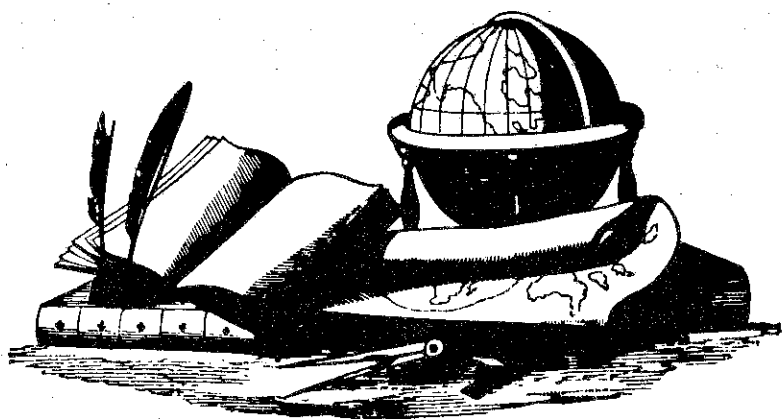


**"GOOD COMMON SCHOOLS"**  
**Education in York, Maine**  
**1700 — 1900**



by Juliet H. Mofford & Kerry A. O'Brien

**OLD YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
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Research Center  
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## P R E F A C E

What comes to mind when you think of old-time New England schools? Perhaps you envision small children being taught their ABC's in dame schools, using primitive hornbooks. Or do you picture dunce caps, the painful switch and whipping post? Do you pity somber youngsters seldom permitted to play as they painstakingly copy moral maxims with quill pens?

Probably you think of the one-room schoolhouse, that humble little building in which generations of Americans learned the skills needed for adult life. From the early years of settlement in the New World, New Englanders have legally enjoyed the right to a free basic education. First came municipal support for teachers; then local taxes provided funds for schoolhouses. By the end of the eighteenth century, the district school system was well established throughout the northeast.

The way a society educates its children is an expression of the values of that culture and expectations for its future citizens. What was the influence of religion and Puritanism in early New England schools, and when did this give way to the growth of sectarianism in education? What role did the family play in running the schools in their community? What were the effects on education of the class system, work ethic, attitudes towards women and apprenticeship training? What was it like to go to school in a one-room schoolhouse? Who attended school and for how long? Who were the teachers? Of what did the studies consist and what were some of the teaching methods?

A close look at the history of public education in one town, York, Maine, a fifty-four square mile municipality bordered by Kittery, Eliot, the Berwicks, Ogunquit, and the Atlantic Ocean, will give us answers to some of these questions and dispel some common myths about early schooling. An examination of the structure of the school system, its teachers and their effectiveness, the pupils served, and their studies also illustrates the strength and the limitation of the district school system.

Many one-room schools in this country have become the properties of historical societies, such as the mid-eighteenth century schoolhouse under the jurisdiction of the Old York Historical Society. The interpretation of many of these buildings is often based upon nostalgia and generalities. We have undertaken a project, funded in part by the Maine Humanities Council, to re-interpret the Society's schoolhouse.

The program began with research on the schoolhouse as it reflected local education and its place in the wider context of American educational and social history. Schoolmasters' diaries, town and district school records, student copybooks, class registers, and other primary source materials revealed methods of teaching, discipline techniques, attendance patterns, teacher training, classroom materials, and descriptions of school buildings in eighteenth and nineteenth century York, Maine. The evolution of education in York seems to be typical of the history of education in other New England communities.



## "IN ADAM'S FALL, WE SINNED ALL" : PURITAN EDUCATION

Contemporary American education has its roots in the colonial period. The people who settled New England three hundred and fifty years ago made some significant decisions about how they thought their children should use their time and how young people could be provided with educational tools to serve them in the society as adults. Massachusetts Bay Colony had been settled by people who believed they had a covenant with their God to start a new land in the American wilderness. They did not wish to separate from the Church of England, but to purify it by returning to the way they thought the earliest Christians had lived. The Puritans, as they came to be called later, believed that this life was but a path on the road to eternal salvation (if you were among God's elect), and this road was filled with Satan's snares and temptations.

The Puritans believed that children were born into sin and corruption. Constant discipline was required to mold them into good adults. A man's success in life and the amount of worldly property he acquired was correlated with goodness. The proper Christian was industrious and literate. Puritan Massachusetts was a theocracy in which religion, state, and education were closely related. Magistrates of the civil government and ministers of the churches had the authority to think and speak for the community. The first schools in New England were established to keep the Puritan religion intact rather than for the purpose of instilling secular knowledge.

In 1642, only twelve years after the settlement of Boston, the Massachusetts General Court decreed that children be educated enough "to insure their ability to read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of the country, and that all youth be taught to read perfectly the English tongue and knowledge in laws and be taught some orthodox catechism."<sup>1</sup>

Parents who neglected to have their children so instructed could be fined. Their children could be apprenticed to a craftsman who, in addition to teaching job skills, would also be legally responsible for teaching the youngster to read and receive religious instruction.

### "The Old Deluder Satan Law"

The Puritans emphasized education because they believed in a devil whose avowed purpose was to prevent mankind from obtaining knowledge of the Scriptures, which would lead him to God. They believed that the young and ignorant could be easily corrupted. In 1647 Massachusetts Bay Colony passed what was called the "Old Deluder Satan Law," which stated that every town with a population of fifty or more families was required to appoint a schoolmaster to teach the children to read and write. Towns with one hundred or more households were legally obligated to provide a teacher of Latin grammar "able to instruct youths so far as they may be fitted for the university."<sup>2</sup>

Despite the statutes of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, of which Maine was a province until statehood in 1820, many towns resisted or ignored the responsibility of maintaining teachers. York was reprimanded by the grand jury in 1673 "for not providing a school and schoolmaster for the education of Youth according to the Law." The selectmen promised to "use all means to procure a schoolmaster for York, each pupil to pay individual charges at no expense to the town."<sup>3</sup>

### Is Your Child's Education Worth 32 Pounds of Pork?

It is likely that until the end of the seventeenth century York parents either taught their own children at home or bartered for the services of a qualified tutor. Three years after the town's censure by the grand jury, a Cape Neddick resident named James Jackson paid a certain Mr. Wollcott "32 lb. of porke" for his "schooleing" of Jackson's daughter, Elizabeth.



### York's First "School Marster"

The first official action regarding schools in York was taken at the town meeting of May 13, 1700, when the selectmen hired Nathaniel Freeman (1670-1723) to teach for one year, beginning May 4, 1701:

Pursuant to a vote of the Town for a Scool Master the said Select Men Indented & Bargained with Mr. Nathall Ffreman to Ceep a free Scool for all the Inhabitance of our Town for which the Town to pay said ffreman for one year eight pounds in or as Money and three pence per week for Teching to Reade; and four pence:per week for Writing and sifering and no moor.<sup>5</sup>

In 1710 the town of York hired Freeman on a seven-year contract at thirty pounds per year paid quarterly, one-third in provisions and two-thirds in the money of New England. He could supplement his income by drawing up deeds and wills. The town built him a dwelling house twenty-two by eighteen feet, with a brick chimney, where he likely kept school until his death in 1723.

Formal stipulations were drawn up for York's educational policy in 1711. School was to be free to all children from five years of age. It was to be held daily from eight to eleven o'clock in the morning and one to five in the afternoon. Subjects to be taught were reading, writing, and cyphering, or arithmetic. The free school was to be held at several places designated by the selectmen.<sup>6</sup>

### A "Grand Schoolmaster"

In pre-Revolutionary New England, anyone who could read and write might apply to teach in a free, common school, provided he took an oath of loyalty to the king and possessed, in the selectmen's opinion, high moral character. A grammar school teacher, however, had to have a college education. The grammar schools represented the earliest form of secondary schooling in America. To early New Englanders an educated man was one who could read and write Latin and Greek, a concept they brought with them from Europe. New England Latin schools were modeled after British grammar schools.

York was once again in trouble with the Massachusetts courts in 1714, this time for not providing a grammar schoolmaster, the town's size requiring that public funds be appropriated for advanced study.<sup>7</sup> Town records three years later reveal the following plans:

Voted that this Town will have a Gramr School Master for one year to Tach our Children in the Larned Things and to Reade write and Cypher to keep said School in the senter of our said town of York: which said School Master is to be paid by and subsisted by our said Town.

Voted to have a school master to Instruct our Children & to Reading write and cypher said School Master to be Paid by said Town as aforesd and to Remove from Place to Place as the Town shall order.<sup>8</sup>

Town records do not refer to a specific building as a grammar school. The legal requirement was apparently fulfilled by employing a schoolmaster. By 1728 the grammar school was held six months at the schoolhouse near the Lower Meeting House, three months at Scotland, and three months on South Side.

### York's First Schoolhouses

The town constructed its first schoolhouse in 1725.<sup>9</sup> It is believed to have stood along what is presently Lindsay Road, near the site of the old meetinghouse. Any settlement with eight or more children could petition the town for a school.<sup>10</sup> In 1726 York voted forty-two pounds for the building of a schoolhouse in the upper end of the town above Mill

Creek (Scotland District). The selectmen designated the sum towards the completion of the Second Parish Church there, provided the new building also be used as their schoolhouse. At the same time, it was "voted that Selectmen provide a suitable person to teach a school at Cape Neddick for four months."<sup>11</sup>

In 1745 the residents of York Corner requested permission from the town to build their own school, twenty rods from Lewis Bane's house. Their petition was granted, but no funds were allotted and they had to construct the building "at their own cost and charges."<sup>12</sup> Ten years later the town voted two pounds three shillings and four pence (about \$13) to finish the upper schoolhouse. Built on land belonging to John Bradbury, this schoolhouse served children from Cider Hill and the Scituate area for over one hundred years. It sat several hundred yards from the present junction of Routes 1 and 91 and appears on Daniel Sewall's 1792 map of York. It was auctioned off for \$30 in 1850 to make room for a larger, more modern school building. The old schoolhouse was moved to a new site where it became a dwelling and later a storage shed. In 1935 Elizabeth Perkins, who was interested in its restoration, bought it for \$200 through the Old York Historical and Improvement Society. Miss Perkins had it moved to its present location across from the old burial ground in the center of York Village. It was opened to the public as a museum in 1938. The old schoolhouse is revitalized annually when York's fifth graders assume the roles of actual York school children of 1789 during the living history program sponsored by the Old York Historical Society and the York school system.

### Future Ministers Serve as Schoolmasters

Cambridge College, soon renamed Harvard, was founded in 1636 to provide training for Puritan clergy. During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the only college graduate in many towns was the minister. It was his duty to tutor the most promising local boys in the classical languages required for college. The Reverend Samuel Moody, who came to the frontier outpost of York six years after the Candlemas Day Indian Massacre of 1692 and served the First Parish nearly fifty years, referred to this teaching task in writing a friend:

I have not had the opportunity to wait upon you because one part of my Latin School has been my Dayly care all this winter...<sup>13</sup>

Early eighteenth century schoolmasters were usually recent Harvard College graduates who supported themselves by teaching several years while awaiting calls to settle in parishes where, once ordained as ministers, they served that congregation a lifetime. These young men, aged eighteen to about twenty-five, sometimes encountered problems in handling students who might be but a few years younger. Joseph Moody was twenty-four and teaching in York's moving schools when he made these entries in his diary:

January 15, 1724 - I hardly know what I am going to do with these rough boys.

January 23, 1724 - I was probably too free & hilarious with the young people, John Nowel, Moll Nowel & Junkins. Oh, if God would teach me how to associate with those of that age without too much familiarity & frivolity!<sup>14</sup>

### The Moving Schools

As the town was obliged to provide schooling for "all its Inhabitance" and distances between settlements were often great, it was easier to move the teacher than the scholars. By "removing from Place to Place" a schoolmaster could avail his services to all children. The moving schools were the forerunners of the district school system of the nineteenth century. Parents of the scholars provided the teacher with room and board and, if no schoolhouse was available, classes were held in a private home or meetinghouse. At the York town meeting of March 19, 1724/5 it was stipulated:

that school be kept at the Schoolhouse in the center village six



months and three months at the Upper end of town and three months on ye South Side of River during ye time is but one schoolmaster.<sup>15</sup>

Joseph Moody (1700-1753) and Samuel Chandler (1713-1775)

York's moving school tradition is well documented by the diaries of two strolling schoolmasters, Joseph Moody and Samuel Chandler, both Harvard graduates who fit that pattern of young men trained as clergymen who spent a few years teaching before settling in a parish ministry.

The son of York's famous Parson Moody, Joseph Moody graduated from Harvard in 1718 and received a Master's degree in 1721. He followed his friend and future brother-in-law, Joseph Emerson, as schoolmaster in York. During his active career he was registrar of deeds, town clerk, justice of the peace, and county treasurer. He supplemented his teacher's salary by drawing up indenture papers. When the Second Parish Church was established in the Scotland District of York, Joseph Moody was ordained its first minister.

A native of Andover, Massachusetts, Samuel Chandler graduated from Harvard in 1735 and assisted in the Chelmsford church before moving to York in 1742 to fill the position vacated by Joseph Moody's illness. Chandler seems to have kept school during his ministry at the Second Parish and also opened a private school to tutor navigation and astronomy. Most ministers and parishes in colonial New England considered their connection as sacred and lasting as a marriage, but Chandler and Scotland Parish decided they were incompatible, probably for theological reasons. On October 8, 1749, he delivered his farewell sermon to the congregation. Several months later the selectmen hired him to keep the school at York Village where he started with three students and soon increased his roster to eighty-three.

May 7, 1750 - I began the school in York. The schoolhouse not being clear I did not keep in the forenoon - in the afternoon had only Capt Moulton's three sons.

May 9, 1750 - Dind Benjamin Holts. Had 37 scholars - very much fatigued...

June 1, 1750 - I walkd down to school had abt 83 Scholars dined at Mrs. Moody. Came home.

January 19, 1751 - I finished the school over the river. Dined at Capt Sewalls.<sup>16</sup>

Chandler had difficulty getting the salary he considered due him and refused to teach the town's school for a week until "a plan" was provided.

January 21, 1751 - Began the School on this side of the river but enquiring of the Selectmen the plans - No plan provided - Mr. Frost gave us a dozen Cabbages I bought two pounds of tobacco 4/ I opened a Mathematicks School in the evening. To bed at 2 o'clock.

January 22, 1751 - I was at my private school all day & evening

January 28, 1751 - I opened the school at the Schoolhouse in the middle of town. Last week Lost to the Town

February 6, 1751 - I tend my two schools yet -

February 14, 1751 - Mr. Levet came & paid me 60 Pounds school salary.<sup>17</sup>

The Chandler and Moody diaries document how teachers were often paid in produce like corn, cabbages, and potatoes. Chandler, who was inordinately fond of chocolate and took it for medicinal purposes, was frequently provided this luxury by the parents of his scholars.

It was a struggle bringing up four children on schoolmaster's wages and as well as earning extra money from his private school, Chandler also did carpentry, masonry, fixed clocks, and provided for his family by "agunning," fishing, and farming.<sup>18</sup> Entries from his diary offer a vivid picture of the unsettling circumstances of the moving schoolmaster. He was then residing in the Scotland District, most easily accessible by the York River.

May 16, 1750 - Went down by water. 63 Scholars - dined at Edward Ingrahams Reached home at night

May 18, 1750 - Walkd to School morning went home by water. Very windy. Ab 67 Scholars. Dined at Mrs Blacks - pigeons plenty

May 25, 1750 - Went down by water. Dined at Mr. Ingrahams came home on foot had some freedom & enlargement in school instructing and exhorting -

June 6, 1750 - I moved my family down town in a Chamber at Mr Saml Sewells. The people who helped me move took no pay.

September 15, 1750 - I finish the school on this side had orders to move

September 17, 1750 - Began the School over the River - no school - There is a family in the house

October 25, 1750 - I moved my family & effects from Mr. Sewalls to Mrs. Prentice's house. Mr. Sewall gave me the rent of the house room. I have that of him very warm judgement - A little snow at night. Kept no school -

In November of 1751 Samuel Chandler accepted a call to the Gloucester church and left York.

Their Scholars

The law stipulated that any child, five through twenty-one, was entitled to a free education. Managing up to eighty-three children in a small schoolhouse or private home must have been a trial for any teacher and records indicate that classrooms were at times reduced to chaos. A small alphabetarian might be stumbling over her ABC's while several ten-year-olds recited their catechism aloud and, at the next bench, a fifteen-year-old student struggled to complete grammar exercises in his copybook. In a letter to Nathan Prince of Harvard, recommending his favorite scholar, Amos Main, Joseph Moody described classroom conditions:

(Main is) a young Man that has been exercising his Powers in the Latin and Greek tongues these six or seven years, but under inexpressible disadvantages - Our school is thronged with Writers and Readers and even Alphabeticians will intrude and claim an Interest in My Time and Pains for their instruction...<sup>19</sup>

Main did go to Harvard and returned to York to teach for about five years before becoming the first minister at Rochester, New Hampshire.

Schoolmaster Moody preferred instructing the college-bound boys in their classics to the common school curriculum of reading, writing, and cyphering.

March 5, 1723 - A rainy day. I could hardly help being morose among 30 smaller pupils.<sup>20</sup>

That the schools of the eighteenth century were coeducational is evident from the Moody and Chandler diaries, although this fact was clearly not to Joseph Moody's liking:

May 4, 1724 - I went too late to the school. They begin to send



their girls, which I can hardly bear. It pleases my father, however, that I should teach them.<sup>21</sup>

Samuel Chandler made a list of "The Names of my Scholars When I Kept School in York 1750" and "Over the River." Of 152 at the center village school, 102 are boys and fifty are girls. Of the sixty-six students at South Side, twenty-eight are female. Chandler's son and daughter are among his village students and he has a black student at each school, Scipio in the Center and "Prince, Negro," "Over the River."<sup>22</sup>

#### Master Samuel Moody (1725-1795): York's Special Contribution to Education

The most famous teacher of his generation was the eldest of Joseph Moody's four children. It is likely that his grandfather, "Father" Moody, groomed him for the ministry, and he graduated from Harvard College in 1746. He preached at Gloucester and Portsmouth before deciding to dedicate his life to teaching. In 1760 the First Parish of York voted and granted to:

Mr Saml Moody with the concurrence of the Revd Mr Lyman Liberty & Priviledge of Erecting a House for the Instruction of Youth in the Lerned Languages on Parsonage Land in front of Mr. Lyman's Field near the Pound<sup>23</sup>

A year later the town voted him a salary of seven pounds, eighteen shillings in money and wood from the old pound valued at two pounds 3/4... During the sixteen years he taught in York, Moody's gift for teaching gained him a reputation for excellence which attracted scholars from other towns to attend his school at York.

#### "Willard, You Must Go to College!"

This legendary pedagogue could recognize potential, even in a poor boy. Joseph Willard (1738-1804) was a minister's son from Biddeford whose talent for mathematics was so great that by the time he was fourteen he kept a school for navigation at Scarborough. Although he had been on coasting voyages, Willard wanted to become a physician but had no money for Latin tutoring, the advised prerequisite. Meeting the young man on the street and hearing of his abilities and ambition, Samuel Moody exclaimed, "Willard, you must go to college!" The teacher took up a subscription for his board and waived tuition so Willard could attend his York school. He found him a waiter's job to work his way through Harvard, where he graduated in 1765, "unquestionably the best geometrician, best astronomer, and best classical scholar in his class."<sup>24</sup> Willard served as minister at Beverly, then was appointed President of Harvard College from 1781 until his death in 1804.

#### Samuel Moody's Methods Herald Change

Moody's teaching methods marked a change in the history of New England education. Under his tutelage traditional Puritan religious training gave way to more secularized learning and a new emphasis on educating the whole person through a combination of mental, physical, spiritual, and cultural training. It was at Governor Dummer Academy that Master Moody's teaching techniques came to full realization. Having already earned a wide reputation for his abilities, he was unanimously selected as first preceptor of the new academy in Byfield, Massachusetts. His brother Joseph and his wife were also employed by the academy to run the school farm and board the twenty-eight boys registered for the first class in 1763.

Master Moody was first and foremost a teacher gifted with a rare knowledge of his subjects, and a way with his students. He had certain qualities of intellect, heart, and temperament, which made it comparatively easy for him either to curb or to stimulate the youthful mind... During his first twenty years as Master of

Dummer School, he was MASTER to all intents and purposes. He had the good sense to see that in the earlier stages of education, manner and quality are definitely more important than variety and quantity.<sup>25</sup>

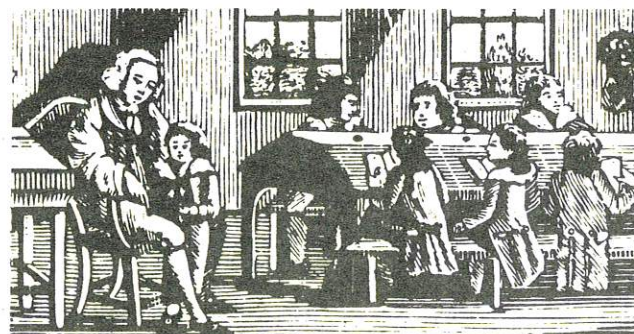
Samuel Moody was a stout, stalwart man with strong features and a number of eccentricities, the most noticeable of which was his usual costume, a long green flannel gown, and a tasseled smoking cap. His teaching methods at Dummer were innovative. He employed a French dancing master who also instructed students in manners. Moody believed that physical education was important and dancing was natural, graceful, and healthful exercise. In warm weather the master kept watch on the state of the tide and when it was favorable suspended classes to go swimming with the boys. He encouraged students to read lessons aloud and to walk around the classroom, talking to one another; one rap on his desk was all that was needed to restore order. Moody used to boast that in thirty years of teaching he had never had to use the rod.<sup>26</sup>

Moody believed that the purpose of study was not the acquisition of information so much as mental discipline. To him, Latin and Greek seemed the perfect means to that end. He made not the slightest pretense towards science and mathematics. He could not, or would not, teach arithmetic, declaring that his school was no place for boys to be fitted for the counting room or store. Dummer Academy became so famous under Moody's direction that Benjamin Franklin's sister wrote to her brother in Paris in 1778, about the son of their friend, Governor Green of Rhode Island, "Ray is at Mr. Moody's school and comes on bravely with his learning."<sup>27</sup> In 1790 the entire Harvard College faculty, which consisted of the President and three professors, had all been Moody's students. Numerous York boys also attended Dummer, including Judge Jonathan Sayward's grandson. Sayward's diary indicates that the young Sayward Barrell traveled from Dummer "by water" in 1785.<sup>28</sup> The diary also notes that he entertained Moody in York several times.

November 1, 1785 - Last evening Saml Moody Esquire, Master of Dummer School and other agreeable gentlemen supd & he lodged with us and spent an agreeable evening.<sup>29</sup>

In 1786 Sayward Barrell was suddenly withdrawn from the famous academy. "My grandson got home from Dummer's School he left it on the 14th his Master Moody Proving Distracted."<sup>30</sup>

December 26, 1789 - I hear Samuel Moody Esq Master of Dummer's Academy is dismissed from sd Academy, not from any misconduct but a certain gloomy cast of mind bordering on insanity. His trust cannot, consistent with its original institution be continued, to him he hath been very usefull - And he was in his element while instructing and improving the minds of Schollars from his School hath issued the ornaments of this State which are the Highest characters in Government.<sup>31</sup>





## DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISTRICT SCHOOL SYSTEM

The towns are divided into small districts in which schools are generally established and supported by the law. Thus it is in the power of every individual to obtain a good common education.

Smith's Geography of New England, 1762

The American Revolution changed the thinking of many regarding education, for if America was to be a self-governing nation, it needed a responsible, educated citizenry. In 1765 John Adams said, "Education among the lowest ranks is of more importance to the public than all the property of all the rich men in the country."

The district school system in York was typical of New England public education and was designed to afford a basic education to the broadest possible number of children. The district system insured that no scholar would have to walk more than two miles to school. Makeshift schoolhouses were raised wherever a growing population so demanded until 1733, when four districts were delineated in York for both common and grammar schools.

### Governing the Districts

By March of 1785 York selectmen urged that "as the number of children are increasing the schools for their instruction in Usefull Knowledge ought likewise to be increased."<sup>32</sup> Money was provided so the English or common school in the heavily populated Center District could be held five months. Money had to be drawn out of the town treasury so other school districts could keep up with the Center school in proportion to the taxes collected from the different parts of town.

While the districts drew financial support from town coffers based on their eligible student population, they remained fairly autonomous. A district clerk called annual meetings at which area freeholders were expected to be present to cast votes for a three- or four-man committee to oversee the school. At district meetings, generally held in the spring at the schoolhouse, the hiring of teachers was discussed along with repairs to the building and other school expenses. The schedule for the ensuing year was also determined by the freeholders. Consequently, the districts had different school schedules, held different standards for teachers at inconsistent rates of pay, and schoolhouses were in various states of repair. As can be imagined, the gamut from good schools to bad could be found in any school year.

In 1795 the town of York appointed a committee of seven to examine the situation of its schools. A resolution was passed at town meeting to appoint a committee to superintend and regulate the town's schools. The committee was also to seek funds to keep the Center school in operation fifty-two weeks of the year.

York's first superintending school committee consisted of nine men who were elected by ballot at town meeting in March 1799. Members were usually ministers, doctors, lawyers, or former teachers, and were expected to visit each school twice per term and report back to the town on the quality of education for which tax dollars were so reluctantly spent.<sup>33</sup>

Inconsistencies in the quality of the schools continued. By 1822 there were thirteen district schools, and the selectmen ordered each district to choose a paid school agent each year. The agent would be solely responsible for the management of his school. Agents, often men of little education themselves, worked independently of one another and the townsfolk, so that citizens had little chance to state their needs or opinions. Some agents were dedicated to availing students of all that the schools could offer. Others, less devoted, mismanaged funds, hired inept teachers, and let schoolhouses fall into disrepair. While some schools were well maintained and fitted out with blackboards, maps, and other study aids, some classrooms were dismal and forbidding. The school committee, year after year, endorsed the ideal schoolhouse:

Every district should have an attractive and commodious school room... In several the scholars are crowded into unsightly and comfortless buildings, mere ruinous mementos of former generations.<sup>34</sup>

### District Schoolhouses

Schoolhouse architecture changed little from the eighteenth through the nineteenth century. It was usually a clapboard structure of vernacular style, with a pitched roof, one or two front doors, and several windows. The schoolmaster often had the only desk, usually on a raised platform in the front of the room, which enabled him to oversee all the children in his crowded classroom. Scholars, seated on backless benches, worked at narrow shelves around the perimeter of the room.

Nineteenth century schoolhouse architecture reflected changes sought by education reformers like Horace Mann and Henry Barnard, who founded the Society for the Improvement of Common Schools in Connecticut in 1827. They saw the lack of proper lighting and ventilation as detrimental, not only to learning, but to children's health. They advocated improvements outside as well as inside, offering youngsters necessary recreational space.

The Cider Hill School District records offer a detailed description of the new school constructed in 1850. The building had an entrance vestibule with two inner doors. The interior walls were plastered, with wainscoting covering the walls up to three feet from the inclined floor. The room was well illuminated by nine windows. Scholars sat in four rows of eight desks facing the teacher's desk, and there was a row of seats in front of these for recitation.<sup>35</sup> In 1851 the district purchased a blackboard.

Although the district system guaranteed children equal access to the schools, there was little equality in the condition, size, or adequacy of school buildings. The very number of schools (fifteen by 1850) made maintenance a constant expense, and it was always difficult to secure public funds for their repair. Many schoolhouses were dilapidated, plagued with broken windows, cracked walls and floors, leaking roofs, peeling lead paint, and ruined desks and benches. In his reminiscences of boyhood, George Emery painted an unsavory picture of schoolhouse conditions:

The school commenced at 9 o'clock in the morning. It was rare that the effects of the fire were felt as early as this, nor could it have been of much avail had it done so, for the school room was as open as a sieve, letting in the bitter blast, often accompanied by rain and snow, at every window and door, and through an almost fabulous number of cracks and crevices in the thin plastering of the walls. Never were seen such a miserable set of blue-nosed, chattering, suffering creatures as were the scholars for the first hour after the opening of school on a cold winter morning.<sup>36</sup>

In 1874 the school committee reported that while five schoolhouses were "commodious and pleasant" and four or five "well designed," the building in the overcrowded Center District "originally designed for the primary department, is gloomy, dark, forbidding."<sup>37</sup> In the 1880's classes were held in the Old Gaol across the street to alleviate crowded conditions.

Most schools sat on barren patches of land near a crossroads. Few had playgrounds, although education reformers advocated physical as well as mental exercise as a prerequisite for a well-rounded education. In 1885 the new school in the Scotland District was lauded for being surrounded by an ample playground. The school committee suggested that "a few minutes to run, romp and sport, gives freshness to the cheeks, sparkle to the eyes, energy to the nerves, and a vim over the whole grand frame and filling of a person."<sup>38</sup> Scholastic sports as we know them are a twentieth century phenomenon.

### Educational Reform and Horace Mann

Public education was one focus of the reform movement of the nineteenth century. Horace Mann (1796-1859), the father of the modern public school system, resigned from his position as President of the Massachusetts Senate in 1837 to become head of the new Massachusetts Board of Education.



Mann insisted that every American had the right to a free education and that the state had the responsibility to educate every child, even if parents objected. He saw education as a civic duty which would liberate innate intelligence and train it to make sensible political decisions and promote higher standards of morality. He was against religious training in schools, and his ideas were harshly criticized as "godless." Mann thought that each state should develop a public school system, open to all free of charge and supported by taxes. Public expenditures were justified because schools benefited everyone. Common schools should be made superior to private schools so that parents would want to send their children to them. Mann's national free-school movement was attacked by those who did not want their tax dollars to go for education. Many people did not want to pay taxes to educate other people's children. Some thought that their authority as parents was taken away by the schools, and they preferred to keep their children at home to help with farm chores. Others felt that religion and state should not be separated, some parents believing that children should continue to learn about the Bible and Christian values at school.

Horace Mann advocated better trained, higher paid teachers, a longer school year, and improved school buildings. He believed that women, as well as men, should become teachers and fought for a trained teaching profession. Mann opened the first teacher training college, or normal school, at Lexington, Massachusetts, in 1839. He founded teachers institutes for continued professional training through lectures on education. Mann and other nineteenth century educational reformers saw public education as a means of social and civic improvement which would bring economic advancement to Americans.

#### Movement to Standardize the Schools

Through the 1880's the Maine State Superintendent's office and town school committees advocated the abolition of the district school system in an effort to distribute funds more equably, improve the condition of schoolhouses, and hire more qualified teachers. By 1889 the district system was finally voted out in favor of a Superintendent of Schools, assisted by a school committee. It was not until the turn of the twentieth century that improvements in transportation and revisions in educational theory precipitated the centralization of schools in York. While many one-room schoolhouses remained active until well into the twentieth century, they were more carefully supervised and better maintained.

#### York's Infant School: An Experiment in Education

York was the scene of an unusual experiment in public education in 1831. That year Solomon Brooks, David Wilcox, and several other local citizens, receptive to European educational theory, were instrumental in establishing a school for young children similar to the German kindergarten, which had recently begun to attract great interest from educators in America. The school was held in the middle jury room on the lower level of the town hall, with an outer hall used for marches and exercises that were part of the routine of the daily instruction.

New to local education was the school's emphasis on object teaching aids. The teachers used a globe, an orrery, astronomical figures and drawings, arithmetical drawings, wall maps, an abacus and wooden models of geometrical forms. In unison, the children recited poems and sang songs; even the multiplication tables were practiced in rhyme.

Because of the novelty of the infant school, parents often paid visits, and for the most part they were not impressed. Despite its dazzling start, school enrollment waned to mostly girls and very young boys, and before the year was up the school had closed its doors. The infant school is significant in that certain innovative teaching methods used there were not seen again in York until the mid-twentieth century. It is worth noting that this was not a private venture, but was supported by town funds, like the conventional common schools.

#### The Free High School

By the late nineteenth century it became clear to school committeemen that district schools could not provide advanced academic training. In 1873 the Maine legislature enacted a high school law by which the state would pay half the cost (up to \$500) for each town to match in providing a free high school of at least one ten-week term. No standards were set by the state, so many towns maintained grammar schools and high schools together.

York was again slow in responding to educational legislation. The town allotted \$250 for teachers, but not for any building. In the 1890's high school classes reverted to the moving-school tradition of the eighteenth century, being held one term each at the town hall in the center of town, at Scotland in the fall, and Cape Neddick during the winter. The lack of continuity in curriculum, with different teachers, made this system unsuccessful, and York's most promising students attended high school in Portsmouth or enrolled in private academies. It was not until 1900 that \$10,000 was appropriated for a new high school building in York, which opened in 1902.

This central high school, along with graded classrooms, public purchase of textbooks, and a standardized curriculum, ushered in the modern school system.





York's fifteen schoolhouses were occupied in both summer and winter terms. Like other New England towns, York's demand for schoolmasters grew, and teaching had developed into a profession in itself. What had once been a temporary job held by a future clergyman now became a lifetime career, albeit a poor paying one. Teachers were hired by district school committees (after 1822 by district agents), and were paid by the term. If they were not residents of the district they boarded with families, sometimes at the district's expense. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the schoolmaster not only taught, but was also responsible for cleaning the schoolhouse, making minor repairs, and procuring fuel during the winter term. In 1821 the Cider Hill District voted "that the School Master should make a tax for to buy wood for the school for the ensuing year."<sup>40</sup>

In 1849 Washington Junkins was paid one dollar per day to teach school for seventy-seven days at Cider Hill. In 1855 a Mr. J. H. Cutts earned \$90 for teaching sixty days and by the 1870's, W. True Moulton was making \$50 per month for keeping school at Cider Hill. Schoolmasters were not busy year round, as school terms generally ran from October to February and from May to August. This enabled teachers to take on other jobs to supplement their earnings. They might tutor privately or manage their own farms or businesses, or hold town offices.

#### Samuel Junkins (1841-1929)

Samuel Junkins was typical of the nineteenth century jack-of-all-trades schoolmaster. Junkins attended district schools in York before going on to Berwick, Lebanon, and Monmouth Academies. At the age of seventeen he began teaching in York and was a beloved and respected educator for twenty-two years. Like his eighteenth century counterparts, Junkins moved from district to district with each new term. His class register, now in the collection of the Old York Historical Society, is an invaluable source of information concerning teaching patterns, students, size of classes, and length of school terms. The register reveals the inconsistencies of the district school schedule. In 1868 Junkins taught a two-month term at Pine Hill. From November to April the same year he held classes at the Center School. His winter school at Cider Hill in 1880 ran just five weeks. Junkins' class register illustrates his popularity, for although his classes averaged about fifty-seven students, he had as many as seventy-nine students at the Center School in 1868. At the Cider Hill Schoolhouse, built in 1850 with a student capacity of thirty-two, seventy-two children were enrolled in 1869. An enterprising instructor, Junkins was praised by the superintending school committee in 1866:

Mr. Junkins has been remarkably successful in securing the cheerful obedience of his scholars to his rules of order, also inciting them to study, not from fear of punishment or failure, but from a sense of propriety and a desire to excel.<sup>41</sup>

Junkins' activities went far beyond the classroom. From 1870 to 1878 he operated a grocery store and post office with his brother at York Corner. He was active in real estate, particularly at York Beach where rapid development of the area as a summer resort was under way in the 1870's and 1880's. Junkins was also an incorporator of the York Harbor and Beach Railway, which brought tourists from Portsmouth to resort hotels at Long Sands, Short Sands, and the Nubble. He was a surveyor (a trade he no doubt learned at his father's side) and conducted probate work. Junkins also represented York in the state legislature in 1885.

#### Moral Qualifications for Teaching

Samuel Junkins was a model citizen, the perfect example of a hard-working, successful, church-going, civic-minded townsman. In fact, a major requirement for teachers was that they possess impeccable moral character. In the nineteenth century

the emphasis on religious doctrine in the schools lessened, but it was still considered a teacher's responsibility to mold God-fearing, upright citizens. The Maine statutes required that:

All instructors of youth shall use their best endeavors to impress upon the minds of the children and youth committed to their care and instruction the principles of morality and justice, and a sacred regard for truth; love of country, humanity and a universal benevolence; sobriety, industry and of frugality; chastity, moderation and temperance, and all other virtues which are the ornaments of human society; and the tendency of the opposite vices, to slavery, degradation and ruin.<sup>42</sup>

York school committee reports make frequent mention of teachers who, while academically adept, did not possess the "moral strength" required to train their youthful charges. In 1857, for example, John W. Greene taught the winter term at the Cape Neddick East School. The school committee had mixed feelings about his performance: "We were pleased with the interest he manifested in all the studies and in all the scholars, even the a-b-c-darians". Attendance waned and the committee regretted that Mr. Greene could have "displayed much higher moral and religious influences."<sup>43</sup> Although the mark of sound religious influences was still considered of paramount importance, few ministers taught in York schools in the nineteenth century.

#### Schoolmistresses

Although dame schools, day schools for small children run by widows or spinsters in their homes, were supposedly a common phenomenon in the American colonies, no documentation for their existence in York has been revealed. The best way for a woman to launch a teaching career in the eighteenth or early nineteenth century was to advertise her accomplishments to attract private students.

In 1827 Mary Jacobs instructed girls at her home by Sewall's Bridge. She taught reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, needlework, and fancy knitting. Tuition was six cents a week, but she would accept payment in sugar, tea, or coffee.<sup>44</sup>

The earliest existing record of women teaching in York's public schools appears in 1815, when the residents of the South Side District hired a woman "to teach the School for three Months at Nine Dollars pr month the School to begin the first Monday of June next." Five years later the freeholders of the Cider Hill District met to consider the issue of females teaching school. In an April meeting they voted unanimously "that they would not hire a woman any part of the season." Two weeks later a second meeting was called, evidently following heated debate:

Voted that the Committee be authorized to lay out the School District money to the best advantage for this district, and that they shall employ a school Master or a School Dame when they please.<sup>45</sup>

In April 1831 Cider Hill District "voted to have a School Dame four months and a man four months, provided he can be obtained as cheap as a woman can be."<sup>46</sup>

There were good reasons to begin hiring women to teach in York's schools. With an increasing population, the demand for teachers was on the rise. Women's lower wages must have appealed to York voters, who from the seventeenth century had resisted paying for public education. Women were paid roughly half of men's salaries, and sometimes less than one-third the salary of men keeping school. Hiring a woman to teach the summer session might save the district considerable money, which could be allocated for building repairs.

Schoolmistresses were first hired to teach during the summer terms when the older, more unruly boys tended to stay home for farming chores or to serve as



apprentices in shops. Her scholars were more often younger children and girls at that time of year. Women were occasionally hired to teach winter schools, but with mixed success. At Cape Neddick West in 1878 there was a "large school in winter, almost too numerous and diversified in age and scholarship for a woman's strength to manage easily."<sup>47</sup> There are references in school district records to male teachers losing control of their students as well.

Often a teacher's age was as much a problem as his or her gender in trying to keep order in the classroom. Young people, if qualified, could begin teaching as early as sixteen and might have several students older than they were. Ruth Putnam was sixteen when she began teaching in the Pine Hill District. Her mother noted the event in her diary:

May 9, 1887 - Beautiful morn. My little Ruth went to her school at P. Hill. May the dear Lord bless and give her wisdom and may she be successful in this, her first effort in teaching, is my humble prayer.<sup>48</sup>

In 1871 an exasperated school committee reported that, "of sixteen teachers in the summer schools, seven were females of sixteen years of age and no experience (and we think they've chosen the wrong profession)."<sup>49</sup>

Another problem for young teachers, both male and female, was keeping school in the district they had so recently attended. Many a school committee reported the behavioral disintegration of a school, only to add that the teacher had hailed from the district.

As the nineteenth century progressed women increasingly turned to teaching as a profession. National events such as the westward expansion left many towns depleted of young males, who had set off for new opportunities across the country. The Civil War devastated the American male population. There were fewer men available to enter the teaching profession, and perhaps more significantly, fewer men to marry. The number of single women increased throughout the century, and teaching was considered a respectable means of earning a living. In fact, a schoolmistress was usually not permitted to marry if she wished to keep her job.

#### Martha O. Barrell (1861-1924)

Mattie Barrell followed the pattern of many schoolmistresses of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Descended from one of York's leading families, she grew up on the family homestead at Barrell Grove. She attended district school and later boarded at Greenland Academy in New Hampshire. In 1884, at the age of twenty-three, Miss Barrell got her first teaching position at South Side School for which she was paid \$20 per month to teach a two-and-a-half-month term. Her winter counterpart, Mr. Wilson, earned \$50 a month. Miss Barrell had a class of fifteen students, only eleven of whom attended regularly. Still, the school committee was pleased with her first effort, "a very successful one."<sup>50</sup> Mattie Barrell taught in York many years and her younger sister, Theodosia, also made teaching her career and taught at York Beach in 1890. Their father, C. C. Barrell, had taught school and served on York's superintending school committee.

The Barrell sisters entered the teaching profession during a period when women began to outnumber men on the teachers' rolls. Women increasingly taught the year round in the 1880's, and by 1885 they dominated the profession. Gradually wages came to reflect experience rather than gender. By the 1890's a woman with fifteen years teaching experience could earn a higher wage than her male counterpart who might still be a student at Bates. In 1892 male teachers in York earned \$26 to \$36 per month, while women were paid \$28 to \$30.<sup>51</sup>

#### Teacher Training in the Nineteenth Century: Towards Uniformity and Quality

Teacher training was a growing concern in the nineteenth century. The Gaoler's Records of 1825 document two teachers, Masterson Young and Jesse Young,

Gentlemen, who were jailed on a warrant from the Court of Common Pleas "for teaching a Publick School not being qualified according to Law."<sup>52</sup> By 1840 only half of the schoolmistresses in York had teaching certificates.

As teaching became a bona fide profession teacher training became more sophisticated and teacher qualifications more demanding. While some York teachers received their training in colleges, many attended local district schools and private academies at Berwick, Lebanon, Saco, Yarmouth, Greenland, New Hampshire, and Dummer at Byfield, Massachusetts. Academy training gave teachers the skills required of them by the York School Committee:

Tact in management, facility in communicating, adequate literary attainments and a good moral character.<sup>53</sup>

Education reformers Horace Mann and Henry Barnard advocated a consistent and systematic approach to training teachers, more careful state supervision of the schools, and higher wages. Although Maine had normal schools in Gorham and Castine by mid-century, a teacher with normal school training was still the exception in York in the 1870's and 1880's. School committees took special note in their reports of those teachers trained at normal schools as "practical and professional." At the end of the nineteenth century many York teachers, particularly women, were receiving advanced teacher training during their free time. In 1874 the teacher of the Ground Root Hill West School "made efforts to qualify herself for the responsible duties of an efficient teacher by spending her vacations abroad in high graded seminaries and academies."<sup>54</sup> In 1876 Miss Phebe Weare taught only seventy days of the winter school at Pine Hill before she left to attend classes at the Salem Normal School in Massachusetts.

Nine York school teachers are listed among the participants of the Teacher's Institute for the County of York, held at Biddeford in 1851 and sponsored by the York County Teacher's Association. A total of one hundred and twenty-nine teachers from the county attended the Institute's lectures on educational theory and reform, delivered by leading educators from Massachusetts and New Hampshire. The two-day seminar included presentations of systems for teaching spelling, phonics, reading, arithmetic, geography, grammatical analysis, and natural philosophy. Lectures on school discipline, physiology, "The Best Mode of Teaching," and general education were also on the program.

#### Discipline in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Children of the eighteenth century knew what was expected of them at school. "The Idle Fool is Whipped at School" warned their first textbook, The New England Primer. The section on children's behavior at school from The School of Good Manners directs students to "bow at coming in, pulling off thy hat." They are instructed to "loiter not, but immediately take Thine own seat," and to keep "a profound silence." "A boy's tongue should never be heard in the school but in answering a question, or saying his lesson."<sup>55</sup>

Schoolmaster Joseph Moody frequently wrestled with discipline problems:

July 7, 1721 - The scholars remained in the school and behaved themselves well.

February 4, 1724 - More pupils were present than I was expecting. I was not in a very even frame of mind. There were hardly any whom I did not cuff.

February 5, 1724 - There were few present. I do not manage the school in an even temper. I have not so far whipped anyone in this part of the town.

February 11, 1724 - I got up with the sun. I went to Nowel's. I am beginning to strike the pupils. I struck two today with a ruler. I was exceedingly specific in the evening prayer in the school about the duty of the teacher and the pupils.<sup>56</sup>

Among the many myths which have been handed down to the present is that of all early schoolmasters as ogres - heavyhanded and insensitive. Perhaps in the



one-room schoolhouses of the past, lacking proper heat or light, with many children of different ages crowded together and studying different lessons, a teacher was hard put to find ways to keep order. Yet teachers were surely as varied in their approaches to learning and methods of discipline as they are today. While other towns may be able to document whipping posts, ear-boxing or "birchings," and have records of teachers who ridiculed pupils in dunce caps or with "bite-finger-baby" signs, York school records of the nineteenth century make no mention of such chastisements.

Letitia Perry who taught at Scituate was "so firm that many parents removed their children from her class." Lydia Preble was known to hang idlers on cords from high nails on the schoolhouse walls. And Marster Cape, a teacher at Center School, had a reputation as a flogger.<sup>57</sup>

Superintending school committees suggest that often the teacher was victimized by disrespectful students, and not the reverse. The committees find fault with parents for not nurturing in their children a respect for authority and a genuine desire to learn. Some teachers were criticized for their inexperience or "moral ineptitude," which resulted in discipline problems.

Julia Junkins' students at Cape Neddick West "resisted her authority and it was necessary to expel two larger ones."<sup>58</sup> In the winter term of 1860 the teacher quit half way due to three or four unruly boys.<sup>59</sup>

School committeemen generally supported local teachers, comparing a teacher in the classroom with a minister in his pulpit in terms of the moral influence they wielded.

We believe that under no circumstances should parents allow their children to leave schools for so foolish an excuse as a dislike toward the teacher. No teacher can do well without parental support of that teacher's authority.<sup>60</sup>

#### Absenteeism: A Continual Problem

It is difficult to discern how many years the average child attended school, as the time in the classroom was frequently interrupted. It seems likely that four to six years were necessary to secure the basic skills.

Poor attendance was a constant and perplexing problem throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tax-paying parents who supported education in theory, believing their children should be taught to read and write and keep accounts, seldom hesitated to keep them home whenever extra hands were needed for seasonal activities like apple picking, haying, or harvesting. As many as forty per cent of students registered for a school term might not attend at all. Such high absenteeism must have made it difficult to maintain any continuity.

Schoolmaster Joseph Moody had problems with student attendance in the eighteenth century. He writes in 1721 that

Shaw, Nowell and Grant went fishing. I considered them to have played truant. In the presence of all of them I issued a warning, to Shaw, in particular.<sup>61</sup>

Indications are that some schoolmasters could be as irregular about conducting their classes as students were in their attendance. Because the court was in session in March of 1723 Joseph Moody canceled school. When Nathaniel Freeman, York's first schoolmaster, was buried, Moody dismissed classes early. Occasionally Moody overslept or left his school day to chance:

May 31, 1723 - I cast lots as to whether I should teach school tomorrow or not. It fell out that I should.

June 7, 1723 - By lot I dismissed the school at noon and called on Elder Milbury, and with him, I went fishing.<sup>62</sup>

Illness and epidemics also had an effect on attendance. In March 1722 an outbreak of smallpox kept many children from attending Moody's school. In 1872 the Ground Root Hill West School "was very much injured by the prevalence of measles in the district."<sup>63</sup>

Inclement weather and poor roads often kept the scholars at home. Heating a drafty schoolhouse was a time-consuming activity. Joseph Moody often joined his students in gathering firewood. "My pupils chopped pines with me," he noted in his diary in 1721.<sup>64</sup> Samuel Chandler was not so willing. If the school fires were not burning, he might cancel classes altogether.

November 23, 1750 - I went over to the school. No wood. I came home again.

January 1, 1751 - I went over to school. Kept but a short school for want of wood.<sup>65</sup>

In the nineteenth century children continued to attend school when it was convenient for their families, rather than by law. A census of 1832 indicated that 1172 children were eligible to attend school. 830 of those children were registered for school, 459 attended regularly, 372 rarely attended, and 341 showed "no attendance whatsoever."<sup>66</sup> In 1847 the statewide average attendance of school-age children was only fifty per cent.

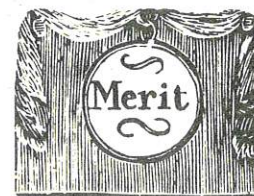
It seems that young people were learning their future work skills at their families' farms or shops. York school records are probably typical in showing a pattern of higher attendance of older boys during the winter term when fewer hands were needed around the farm. Attendance records kept by teachers show that fifteen and sixteen year old boys often attended a few days a week, rather than daily, indicating that they may have been serving apprenticeships at the same time. Records of 1853 note that "attendance was poor ... most over sixteen years are engaged in the active business of life."<sup>67</sup>

In 1857 of forty-four students registered at the Scotland School, only seven attended regularly. The school committee put the blame on parents who were apathetic about sending their children to school.

It were earnestly to be desired that parents would seek the true interests of their children, and endeavor to perform their duty to society and their Maker, and in securing the advantages of a common school education.<sup>68</sup>

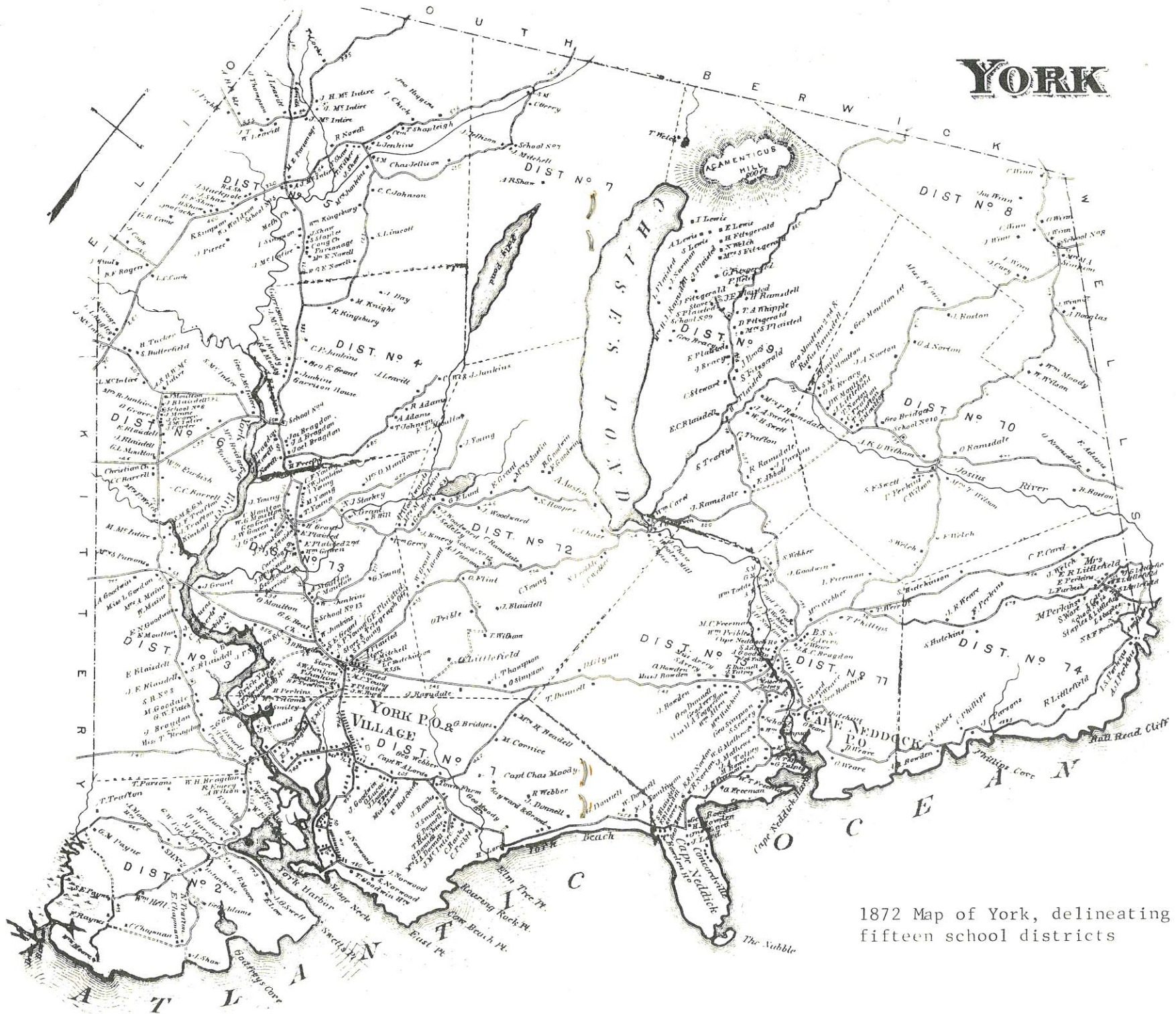
In 1872, however, the school committee blamed poor attendance on the teachers: "If the teacher fails to interest his pupils, by confining them to dry lessons of the textbooks, there will always be a falling off in the attendance."<sup>69</sup>

Even York's hiring of a truant officer in 1888 did not seem to alleviate the problem. The Town Report of 1891 inquired: "the few who are attending school are doing finely, but where is the truant officer?" The school committee concluded that parents were too lenient on their children: "They should send them to school after the busy farm time is over. The law against truancy should be re-enforced!"<sup>70</sup>





# YORK



1872 Map of York, delineating fifteen school districts



## THE CURRICULUM

The Art of fair correct writing, Arithmetic and reading well is a very valuable Accomplishment ... and should always be sought ... by all Ranks and Characters of people.  
Joanna Sewall's Copybook, 1770

Eighteenth and nineteenth century New England common schools offered the basics for literacy: reading, writing, spelling, cyphering or arithmetic, and geography. Before the Revolution, schools were generally considered more a means of perpetuating traditional religious faith than of advancing knowledge. Schoolbooks were rare in early New England, and often teachers had the only copies. Because of the scarcity of textbooks before 1790, when an increasing variety were available at village stores, rote memorization and recitation were the common methods of learning. Joseph Moody described some of his teaching techniques in his diary:

January 28, 1723 - The better pupils learned 25 verses.

April 23, 1723 - I got up late again and went to the school. The primary pupils recited one page well in the prayers, and Peter never better, and Shaw recited in Virgil beyond expectation. 71

### "The Little Bible of New England"

First published between 1686 and 1690, New England Primer was printed over three million times in some two hundred editions. Each volume was no doubt studied by several children, so the impact of this little book cannot be overstated. The Primer offered what early educators felt to be the most important elements of learning: twenty-four rhymes to aid memorization of the alphabet, spelling exercises, and page after page of Christian doctrine designed to instill religious values as the child learned to read.

The Primer went through many modifications in its one-hundred-and-sixty year history, but was roughly designed as follows. The first few pages were dedicated to the alphabet and list of vowel sounds, followed by lists of polysyllabic words, which in themselves had religious overtones, such as gratification, humiliation, mortification, purification, etc. Morning and evening prayers came next, including the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and illustrated verses on the burning at the stake of the first Protestant martyr, John Rogers. The "Shorter Catechism" was a series of questions and answers used to teach the doctrine which formed the basis of Puritan theology. This catechism was memorized and recited by generations of obedient Christian believers indoctrinated with Puritan values. Even the rhymes and tiny woodcuts which accompanied the letters of the alphabet made reference to Biblical characters or moral lessons: "Thy Life to Mend/ God's Book attend."

### The Old Blue Back Speller

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries spelling was phonetic and each teacher made his own rules according to his own pronunciation. The first speller in wide use was by the Englishman, Thomas Dilworth, published in 1760 and pirated to America by 1782. It was not until the publication of Webster's Dictionary in 1828 that spelling became standardized.

Noah Webster, a Connecticut schoolmaster and lawyer, was a leading advocate of an American language and culture distinct from the British. When he was twenty-five, he published Part I, the speller volume of Grammatical Institute of the English Language. Like the Primer and other English and American textbooks, it combined reading, grammar, spelling, and pronunciation, with a heavy dose of morality. The 1788 edition was re-named The American Spelling Book. It was the best selling American textbook of all time. Webster specified the use of a blue paper cover glued over cardboard or wood, giving it the nickname "The Old Blue Back(ed) Speller." With Webster's standardization of American spelling came a craze for spelling bees or matches in the classroom, surely a welcome relief from the tedium of drill work.

The other most prevalent text for learning to read was McGuffey's Reader, still fondly remembered by older people living today. William Holmes McGuffey was a minister and professor who, with his brother Abraham, produced a graded series of six illustrated McGuffey's Readers. They stressed the virtues of charity, patriotism, cleanliness, and temperance. Used throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, children learned the rewards of being good American citizens as they increased their reading levels.

### Writing - The Second Branch of the Three R's

Penmanship or orthography, "the art of writing words with proper letters according to grammatical usage," was practiced for long hours with great care, for a fine hand revealed an able and diligent mind. Those "rules to live by" crept into penmanship books. A writing exercise book in the Old York Historical Society collection warns that "Laziness is commonly punished with want" and "Man has much to learn and but a short time to live." Another copybook counsels that "A man's manners commonly shape his fortune." Joanna Sewall tells us that "Friendship is the wine of life." Like early American samplers, copybooks represent a rich historical record of the training and accomplishments of children of former generations. Many survive today because they were treasured by their writers.

For the "Art of fair correct writing" English grammars were available to aid the advanced scholar. They provided pages and pages of dry grammatical law, examples and exceptions to be learned by memorization and transcription. The study of grammar proved to be the bane of many an "advanced scholar."

### Cyphering

Arithmetic was an important skill to perfect in order to conduct business as an adult. Scholars did not usually own cyphering books but prepared copybooks by binding leaves of blank paper called foolscap between sheets of old wallpaper or newspaper. Upon the pages they penned arithmetic rules and exemplary problems called "practical questions." The material was copied directly from the teacher's text or transcribed from his dictation. The same arithmetic texts were evidently used for many years, for there is a remarkable consistency in York copybooks from the 1770's through the 1840's. Joanna Sewall was nineteen when she wrote simple equations in her copybook of 1770. Fifty years later, eleven-year-old Samuel Young was copying almost exactly the same information. Charles Clark's 1837 copybook features an exercise in English pounds and pence, with a date of 1807 in its text, obviously drawn from an earlier source.

Problems sometimes incorporated history lessons and exemplified the patriotism of the New Republic. In learning to measure time, Mary Smith had to calculate "How many minutes since the commencement of the American War which happened on the Nineteenth Day of April 1775?" In his math exercise book, Edward Young was asked, "General Washington was born in the year 1732. How old was he in 1799?"

Above all, math copybooks demonstrate the practicality of study. Pages of measurement tables for commodities such as wine and beer, dry measure, long measure, cloth, timber, and land are followed by exercises on the conversion of pounds and pence to dollars and cents, all to be "perfectly fixed in the memory." Just enough mathematical theory was provided to enable the scholar to understand and develop competence in the types of calculations he would need to make as an adult consumer, merchant, trader, or landholder in what was primarily still a barter economy.

While some students tackled geometry, trigonometry, and other advanced branches of mathematics, the minimum training considered necessary for mathematical literacy included addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, decimals, proportions, all types of weights and measures and computations "to the Rule of Three." The Rule of Three, mentioned in apprentice and indenture papers, was simply the law of proportion or the process of determining the value of an unknown quantity upon the proportional relationship of three other known values: if eight yards of cloth cost four dollars, what will two yards cost? Mathematical competency "to the Rule of Three" included almost all of the kinds of figuring required to meet the economic demands of eighteenth and nineteenth century daily life.



## Geography

A person who has never been out of his own country may still know how people look, and act and feel, in other countries, by studying geography. Peter Parley, 1836

The study of other states, countries, cultures, and natural wonders was presented to common school children at all academic levels. Texts ranged from elaborate atlases and fact-filled geographies to Jedediah Morse's Elements of Geography (1829) and Peter Parley's 1836 Geography for Young Scholars.

Information about foreign cultures and religions presented as facts were profoundly ethnocentric. There were repeated references to the uncivilized, ignorant, and heathen natures of non-Christian peoples. For example, the Hindus:

The Hindoos are a very singular people. They are dark coloured like our Indians. They are divided into classes and castes. Those of one caste are not allowed to eat with those of another. They are very ignorant, and sometimes, drown their children, thinking that they please God by doing so. Some benevolent men, called missionaries, have been sent among the Hindoos to teach them Christianity.

## A Teacher's Lesson Plan

Mary Ann Talpey taught in her native Cape Neddick and later in Wells. She left a note in a schoolbook in which she itemized her daily lesson plan at the Cape Neddick West School. It illustrates how much she had to attend to in the course of a school day, including three different arithmetic sessions. Subjects such as history and geography may have been taught to the entire class at once.

### Small Classes

Arithmetic  
Fifth Reader  
Primary Arithmetic  
Algebra  
Geography  
History  
Fifth Reader  
Rhetoric  
Physiology  
Grammar

Small Classes in Reading  
Arithmetic  
History  
Fourth Reader  
Algebra  
Geography  
Small arithmetic  
Fifth Reader

With a daily schedule like Miss Talpey's, it is likely that the scholar pursued his or her studies in short blocks of time throughout the morning and afternoon sessions.

## Textbooks

The teacher cannot give much oral instruction to those who do not cooperate with him by studying textbooks ... The parents who send their children to school without books, ought not to complain if they leave it without knowledge.  
Horace Mann, Secretary  
Massachusetts Board of Education  
4th Annual Report, 1841

After the Revolution American textbooks finally outsold those published in England. Nineteenth century curriculum was increasingly based on textbooks. By the 1840's there was a wide variety of choices, but parents had to supply their children's books, recommended by the teacher. However, if a new teacher was hired from the summer to the winter term in any district, he or she might request students to buy different texts.

Reminiscing about York schools in the 1830's, George Emery says that "each

pupil had either a spelling book and arithmetic and slate, a grammar and possibly an atlas and geography." 72

Investigating conditions in 1835, the school committee discovered:

a want of uniformity in instruction and discipline in arrangement of the classes, and particularly in the books used ... 1810 geographies tended to throw our scholars behind the age in which we live by a quarter of a century. There was almost a total want of Dictionaries in nearly all of our schools. 73

In 1873 the school committee reported that there was little chance for improvement without a radical change in textbooks. The readers were too numerous, arithmetic outdated, and geographies useless because the children could not read. The district agents recommended Mrs. Hall's Oral Lessons in Geography and Hooker's Book of Nature. 74

By the 1870's York school committees scorned teachers for pushing children ahead in their studies before they were ready and made repeated pleas for a uniform town-wide textbook selection, with books supplied by the town and lent to children. In this manner, all students would be guaranteed equal access to books.

In 1880 state statutes stipulated that local school committees design curriculum around a uniform system of textbooks, not to be changed for five years after purchase, without a consent vote of the town. The uniform textbook plan and the public provision of textbooks marked a major advance for the district system towards more equal education. Textbooks were not provided by the town until 1889. Throughout the nineteenth century, however, there are repeated references to purchasing books for poor children who could not otherwise afford them.

## Expanding Curriculum

Education reflected changes in American culture from a rural, agrarian economy to an increasingly technological society. Schools helped to integrate the new ethnic groups entering society. Religious teachings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were replaced by a new emphasis on developing the "good American citizen."

By the end of the nineteenth century, teachers who had been trained for their professions at normal schools were able to branch out into new subject fields. In 1881 Phebe Weare taught singing at the Cape Neddick School. Schoolmasters offered lectures in history, physiology and natural sciences such as botany. Bookkeeping, taught occasionally in the late eighteenth century, became common in nineteenth century curriculum. At the Free High School in 1896 subjects included commercial arithmetic, algebra, rhetoric, Latin and Caesar, elocution and recitation.

Temperance was an issue in the 1880's and teachers used Elementary Physiology and Hygiene by William Thaxter Smith, to warn students of the effects of liquor and narcotics. This led to heated debates at town meetings over the teaching of temperance. Mr. F. A. Oakes was so concerned about his students' moral welfare in District #11 that he got over twenty of them to sign a temperance pledge. 75





## AFTER THE COMMON SCHOOL - WHAT NEXT?

What options were available to young people after they had mastered reading, writing, and cyphering to the Rule of Three?

### Private Academies

By the mid-eighteenth century, fewer college graduates chose to enter the ministry. Boys who wished to continue their education beyond the common school might attend private boarding schools which offered promising students who could afford the tuition the classical curriculum required for college, as well as a more diversified "gentleman's education." The variety of subjects taught in private schools reflected a lessening of the hold of religion upon education.

In 1761 Lieutenant Governor William Dummer left an endowment for the establishment of a "Free Grammar School" at Byfield, Massachusetts. Samuel Moody was called from his teaching post at York to become its first headmaster. In 1778 two of his Dummer students, Samuel Phillips, Jr. and Eliphalet Pearson, opened Phillips Academy at Andover:

... for the purpose of instructing Youth not only in English and Latin grammar, writing, arithmetic, and those sciences wherein they are commonly taught, but more especially to learn them in the great and real business of living. Attention to minds and morals of the Youth under their charge will exceed every care; goodness without knowledge is weak and feeble, yet knowledge without goodness is dangerous, and that both united form the noblest character and lay the surest foundation of usefulness to mankind.<sup>76</sup>

Private schools like these eventually replaced Latin grammar schools and tutoring by local clergy so typical of the educational scene in eighteenth century New England. Puritanism gave way to a growing belief in the abilities of man to improve himself. Jacksonian principles of free enterprise and the nation's beckoning frontiers demanded ingenuity and preparation which was reflected in education from 1800 to 1850. It was the Age of the Common Man, and the academies, which had at first drawn only the sons of the wealthy, eventually stressed open enrollment and democracy. Young people, after all, needed to be prepared for citizenship. Private schools kept up with the times by offering more practical courses like accounting, bookkeeping, and surveying, - skills demanded in the burgeoning industrial society.

Berwick Academy, the first such private school in Maine, was founded in South Berwick in 1791. Samuel Moody, then retired from Dummer and ill, served briefly as its first preceptor in 1793 at 90 pounds a year. He could also collect six pence a week from each student and use the academy land, providing he keep the fence repaired.<sup>77</sup> Academies like Berwick were meant for boys alone. In 1798 Berwick Academy voted to admit girls, an unprecedented and bold step, but no females took advantage of the opportunity until 1828 when four girls registered. By 1854 there were "eighty-eight gentlemen" and "seventy-seven ladies," although classes were segregated by sex until the 1860's.<sup>78</sup>

Edwin Leigh Furness, a sixteen-year-old student at Berwick Academy, kept a journal of his school days in 1848. Terms at Berwick ran eleven weeks and Furness had difficulty paying Principal Payson the \$3.00 required for tuition. His Latin grammar and Latin exercise book cost 75¢ each. He paid a quarter for his Quarto Black Book and 12¢ for a bottle of black ink. Young Furness left a description of his typical school day:

I rise from my bed generally as soon as I awake which is between 5 and 7, dress myself, combe my hair, say my Prayers & go down stairs & wash. My first duty then is to milk and take care of the cows which being done I prepare firewood for the day, by this time breakfast is ready. This over I read a chapter in the Bible, do all the chores required to be done & go to school which begins at

9 o'clock. I study from Quarto Part 9 (prayers being finished at that time) till half past when I recite in Latin Reader till half past ten, then have a recess of 10 minutes & I study my lesson in the Latin reader till 12 at which time school is dismissed. The noon is occupied in doing chores, writing my journal, and eating dinner; school commenced at half one and my first recitation (Parsing) for the afternoon commences at that time & occupies half an hour. Study my Greek lessons till half past 3:00 recite till 4 study till prayer time after which school is dismissed (generally quarter before 5) I come home, do chores and take care of the two cows and after supper study with some little interruption till 10. read a Chapter, say prayers and go to bed.<sup>79</sup>

### Female Seminaries

The post-Revolutionary era brought an increasing emphasis on the education of young women, trained to be "agreeable companions, household economists, examples and proponents of Christian morals, and capable mothers of liberty-loving sons."<sup>80</sup>

From the 1790's through the mid-nineteenth century, daughters of well-to-do families frequently left home for several years to attend boarding schools which were usually located in cosmopolitan centers like Boston, Providence, and Newburyport. The years between childhood and the commitment to wifely duties and motherhood were considered a young lady's "season of gaiety." Attending a female seminary widened her horizons, enabled her to increase her circle of friends, and provided her with a variety of female accomplishments which were guaranteed to please her future husband.

Curriculum and tuition costs varied. Most young ladies' seminaries stressed training in Christian morality and offered basics like reading, grammar, and mathematics, as well as botany, history, rhetoric, and fancy needlework. Geography was taught with the latest aids of maps and revolving globes. French lessons, drawing, music, dancing, and "ornamental arts" like water coloring, painting on velvet, and drawing were available for additional fees.

Miranda Emerson, daughter of Edward Emerson, Jr., who made his fortune in the West Indies trade, attended the Misses Martin School in Portland, but in 1812, when she was sixteen, she wished to go to Boston. Her mother was determined to find a school which offered instruction on the pianoforte, and where the proprietess was "genteel and rates reasonable."<sup>81</sup> Mrs. Emerson sent her older daughter, Clarissa, to investigate various schools, and they finally decided on Miss E. Field's Academy at \$67.25 per quarter, with \$3.00 extra for Professor Mazzi's lessons on the pianoforte. Miss Field assured instruction in reading, writing, English grammar, arithmetic, and geography. "Rules of speaking got attention and the cultivation of Female Knowledge." Clarissa Emerson was impressed because Miss Field conducted evening prayers and "attended to the cultivation of the Mind and the heart."

Of all the courses taught at these seminaries for young ladies, needlework was the most highly regarded, for fancy embroidery in silk or crewel yarns graphically illustrated a girl's mental discipline, diligence, patience, and moral virtue, good advertisements to any prospective husband of those qualities commonly sought in a wife. Some of the finest examples of needlework existing today were worked at these female academies. Silk embroidered pictures were styled after popular contemporary English prints which usually had mythological or historical subjects. Mourning pictures dedicated to a national hero like George Washington, or a Memento Mori for a dear, departed relative were also popular themes.

Elizabeth Sewall was just thirteen and at school in Boston when she worked



the silk embroidered mourning picture mentioned in her letter to her father. The memorial is now in the collection of the Old York Historical Society.

I have been working a piece of embroidery in memory of my dear departed Mother, I cannot express my feelings to you when I think what a loss I have met with. <sup>82</sup>

In 1803 Betsy Sewall was "Deprived of a school,"<sup>83</sup> but by 1805 she was at school in Newton, perhaps a student of the famous Mrs. Susanna Rowson. Her needlework was selected for a school exhibition for the public, to be held in Boston.

I attend to the useful studies the same as the rest of the scholars, grammar, geography, writing, reading. I have worked they say a handsome vail. I am now working a pair of sleeves on linen cambric.

The exhibition is the 18 of October. I shall wish if convenient for you to send me some money to get some things that are necessary for that purpose & I know it will be pleasing to you to have me appear as well as the other scholars. I shant get any but what is necessary. <sup>84</sup>

#### Shipping Out

Many boys from seacoast towns like York must have yearned for the adventure of going to sea. Graffiti carved on the walls of York's Old Schoolhouse reveals that minds wandered from classroom lessons to schooners and brigantines which sailed in and out of the town's busy harbors in the eighteenth century. After signing on as a cabin boy at the age of twelve or fourteen, he might work his way up to be a regular mariner and eventually become a ship's officer or first-mate. If a lad was exceptionally clever and lucky, he might become a captain himself one day, ultimately holding shares in a ship piloted by others. It was common for retired sea captains to operate stores or taverns.

In 1727-8 at the age of fifteen, Abraham Nowell was studying geometry, the Julian Calendar, astronomy, surveying, and cartography. His fastidious notebook on navigation is embellished with ships on hypothetical courses, mathematical charts, and compass readings. It probably served as a reference book for him long after he finished these studies. Even fishermen in dories and sailors on coasters had to log weather conditions and chart out fishing stations by longitude and latitude.

The mariner's life required specific skills which were probably not taught at the common school. Nautical training in York was available through private tutors. The Reverend Samuel Chandler, who taught York's moving schools, also ran a private evening school of navigation around 1750. Retired mariners were also available to teach a new seafaring generation. Captain John Pell of York had a boat to lease and allowed Samuel Swett to take his quadrant on a three-month voyage to the West Indies in 1793. Pell kept accounts in his Day Book of several local boys whom he tutored in navigation. He was also employed by sea captains to teach crew members in port. In 1792 Widow Mary Lindsay bartered corn in exchange for Captain Pell's instruction in the nautical arts to her son, Matthew. <sup>85</sup>

#### Apprenticeship and Indenture

Labor was scarce in early New England and apprenticeship was an ancient custom settlers brought with them from the Old World. A legally binding contract for a fixed period of time, it required obligations from both sides. The master, as a surrogate parent, was required to guide his young charge in moral behavior and religious training, particularly if the apprentice was very young or orphaned. He had to provide clothing, food, shelter, and a specified amount of education, as well as teach "the art and mysteries" of his trade. The system benefited both master and apprentice, for the experienced artisan had years of free labor at his disposal and the youth learned a future vocation. Girls also served apprenticeships, though less often and in a less structured manner. Parents might offer a teenage daughter not needed at home to another family in the village. Assisting with child care and household tasks, the girl learned skills she would need when she married.

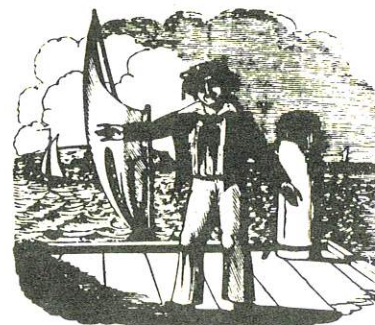
Apprentices were usually in their early teens, but orphans or children whose parents had become charges of the town might be bound out at a very young age as a means of caring for the town's poor and indigent. Such indenture contracts were drawn up by those whom the selectmen appointed the Overseers of the Poor. After serving the indenture it was expected that the youth would become a self-sufficient citizen.

Although most young people probably discussed opportunities for apprenticing different trades with their parents and had some choice regarding their futures, poor children were seldom consulted about being bound out and some masters proved unkind. Although beating a servant in one's charge was considered normal discipline, court records are filled with excessive punishments. Apprentices could bring legal action against their masters who broke agreements, as both parties were protected by law. If an apprentice broke his agreement, the master no longer had to provide for him. Early newspapers frequently contain notices of runaway servants and apprentices, with rewards offered for recapture, for most indenture papers contained the clause ... "from the service of the Master he shall not absent himself ..." Many boys in such circumstances ran away to sea.

The master's responsibility to educate his apprentice or servant was delineated in the legal document of indenture and varied according to the age and circumstances of the child. Joseph Avery was only five years old when he was bound out to John Barrell, Gentleman, "until 1819 when he will be fourteen years of age." His master was required "to furnish suitable meat, drink, clothing, lodging, and physic suitable for such a servant and to instruct or cause him to be instructed in reading." <sup>86</sup>

In 1817 a brother and sister, William and Mary Booker, were bound out as apprentices by the Overseers of the Poor in the Town of York. Their mother was a widow and "lawfully settled in and become chargeable to said town ... and thought unable to maintain herself." Seven-year-old William became the indentured servant of Esaias Preble who "as Master doth promise, covenant & agree to teach and instruct his apprentice or cause him to be taught and instructed in the art trade or calling of a farmer ... and also to teach and instruct or cause him to be instructed to read, write & cypher as far as the rule of three; or in lieu thereof, to give his apprentice nine months schooling at some good English school." <sup>87</sup>

In contrast, William's nine-year-old sister, who had also become "chargeable of said town as a pauper," received a less formal education. She was to dwell with and serve Jonathan Allen, Yeoman, until 1827, when she turned eighteen. Like her brother, she was obliged to "serve well and faithfully, her master's secrets keep and lawful commands readily obey." But Allen's responsibilities to his female servant differed. He "promises, covenants and agrees to cause the apprentice to be taught and instructed in housework, spinning and carding, and to give her twelve months of schooling at some approved English school or in lieu thereof to learn her to read well in the Bible." <sup>88</sup>





## FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN EDUCATION

It is a rare occurrence to meet a single individual who cannot both read and write, and who has not besides some practical knowledge of Arithmetic.

Roswell C. Smith  
Geography on the Productive System  
 (Hartford, 1836), p. 3

The "good common schools" of York are part of the whole tradition of American education. Along with private academies, female seminaries, colleges, and apprenticeships, the common schools provided the means through which our ancestors received the training needed to function in adult society. The history of schoolhouses and education illustrates both the limitations on learning and the great opportunity one had to a free education.

Public education has undergone innumerable changes in the last hundred years. Developments in transportation enabled students to travel greater distances to school, and the one-room schoolhouses were replaced with graded centralized schools. Larger percentages of state and local taxes were appropriated for public schools. Higher standards were required for the teaching profession. Teachers became better trained and more specialized in meeting the needs of their students. State attendance laws kept children in schools regularly until their mid-teens. Examinations were designed to measure student achievement and compare the strengths and weaknesses of the school system.

The common school curriculum of "reading, writing, and cyphering" formed the core of the modern course of study, but by no means set its boundaries. The sciences, history, foreign languages, and the arts joined the roster, and vocational training became available in schools. Extracurricular activities included sports, theater, and civic programs as the school became an important community center. Advances in technology modernized classrooms with projectors, television sets, and computers. New educational theories were reflected in school architecture. The open-classroom concept of the 1960's brought walls down so that several classes could meet together. In ways reminiscent of one-room schoolhouse activities, students worked independently or in small groups with peers from several grade levels.

A wealth of opportunities is available to today's students. Contemporary educators are challenged to adapt and enrich their education programs to meet the increasing complexity of American society. And yet, today's schools stand on the foundations laid by the "good common schools" of the 18th and 19th centuries and serve the same critical purpose: to guarantee to every child the right to a free education which will provide the skills required for adult life.



## CHRONOLOGY

- 1635 First Latin grammar school founded in Boston for boys nine through twelve years; tuition made it only for sons of the wealthy
- 1636 Cambridge College founded; soon re-named Harvard College; established for the training of Puritan clergy
- 1642 Massachusetts General Court decreed that children be taught to read and understand principles of religion and capital laws of the land; parents who neglected this duty would be fined
- 1647 Massachusetts Bay Colony required each town with fifty families to appoint a schoolmaster to teach children to read and write; towns with one hundred households had to provide a teacher of Latin grammar
- 1673 York censured by Grand Jury "for not providing school and schoolmaster for the education of youth according to law"
- 1701 The Collegiate School, later Yale College, established in New Haven, Connecticut  
 May 5 - First recorded action in York regarding schools; Nathaniel Freeman employed by selectmen to teach reading, writing, and cyphering
- 1711 York establishes first educational policy: school to be free for all children five years of age and up; school to be held daily 8:00-11:00 and 1:00-5:00; subjects taught to be reading, writing, and cyphering
- 1714 York censured by Massachusetts General Court for not providing a grammar schoolmaster, according to 1647 ruling
- 1717 York hires first "grand schoolmaster" or teacher of classical languages, to be paid at town expense
- 1725 First schoolhouse built in York; grammar school fixed at center of town at schoolhouse
- 1726 Town allotted forty pounds for building a school in the Scotland District
- 1728 York's grammar school kept six months at Centre, three months on South Side of the York River, and three months at the Upper End of Town in Scotland; schoolmaster hired to teach in Cape Neddick
- 1733 Four districts delineated for both common and grammar schools
- 1736 South Side schoolhouse built
- 1745 York Corner schoolhouse built (now owned by Old York Historical Society)
- 1763 First free grammar school, Dummer Academy, founded at Newbury-Byfield, Massachusetts; York schoolmaster Samuel Moody appointed its first preceptor
- 1783 Publication of Noah Webster's speller
- 1786 Lead pencils first advertised for sale in New York
- 1790 Federal census lists 504 households in York; school inspecting committee advises more schools built to serve growing population
- 1791 Berwick Academy founded in South Berwick, Maine  
 Three-month school terms begin at Ground Root Hill

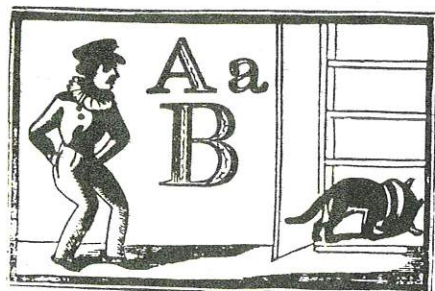


- 1792 Three-month terms begin in Tatnuck area
- 1794 Maine's first college, Bowdoin, founded at Brunswick
- 1795 Seven men appointed to Superintending School Committee
- 1796 Seven districts formally delineated in York; voted to have school all year in Centre District
- 1798 York censured by Massachusetts Grand Jury for failing to appropriate funds for a grammar school
- 1803 \$1100 expended annually on seven district schools, out of a town budget of \$2000
- 1806 \$20 spent above regular school appropriations to buy textbooks for poor children
- 1811 York schools received \$1000 of total annual budget of \$3500
- 1813 Colby College founded at Waterville by Baptists
- 1815 First woman hired to teach at South Side school
- 1820 Cider Hill District hires first woman teacher in that district; soon women are commonly teaching summer sessions in York; Maine becomes a state
- 1821 Boston establishes first public high school, the English Classical School for Boys, supported by public rather than private funds  
Maine legislature determines minimum amount of money which towns have to raise for support of their schools; York's usual appropriation of \$1000 raised by new law to \$1289.60
- 1822 York begins to hire district agents; each district has liberty to choose its own agent, solely responsible for management of that school; York forms committee to ascertain boundaries of thirteen school districts
- 1824 Superintending School Committee of three, at \$3 salary, required to visit each school twice a term
- 1827 Henry Barnard of Connecticut founds Society for the Improvement of Common Schools  
Massachusetts Free High School law enacted; towns of 500 families required to establish high schools for boys and for girls  
Mary Jacobs operates a private school at her home by Sewall's Bridge in York
- 1828 Publication of Webster's Dictionary standardizes American spelling
- 1831 York's progressive Infant School established at Town Hall
- 1832 \$1394 appropriated by town of York for its schools
- 1837 First state board of education established in Massachusetts, Horace Mann its first director
- 1839 First normal school established in Lexington, Massachusetts, offering one year of study to train teachers  
Average attendance of school-age children in Maine 57%
- 1844 Horace Mann advocates grading system

- 1846 Maine Board of Education established
- 1847 Attendance rate of school-eligible children in state of Maine only 50%; law requiring that child mill workers be given time and opportunity to go to school passed in Maine
- 1850 New school built at Cider Hill; old schoolhouse auctioned for \$30 to Moses Young; York has 15 district schoolhouses
- 1855 York spent least amount of money on education of all sixteen towns in York County
- 1857 Town votes that York dispense with present Superintending School Committee and choose a Supervisor with a salary of not over \$30; Luther Junkins selected
- 1858 Centre District broken into Primary (under 8 years) and Advanced (over 8 years); beginning of concern to have graded schools; Superintending School Committee system brought back
- 1860 Normal School established at Gorham, with sole purpose of training men and women for teaching profession
- 1864 Bates College established by Freewill Baptists  
Average annual expenditure per child in York \$1.85  
Three school terms held at Centre District: summer and fall - Primary; summer and winter - Advanced
- 1865 University of Maine founded at Orono as a land-grant college
- 1869 Free transportation provided for school children, including during inclement weather
- 1873 Maine enacts high school law with provision that state would pay half of cost of instruction up to \$500, so towns would provide high schools of at least one term of ten weeks each year  
School held in west rooms of Old Gaol due to overcrowded conditions at Centre School; Town Hall used for grammar school
- 1880 Summer, fall, and winter terms held in all York schools  
Uniform textbooks required in Maine towns by state law
- 1881 York School Committee requests teaching of music in schools  
Petition of 152 voters in York to introduce Dr. B. W. Richardson's Temperance Lessons in schools  
Total school budget is \$3315
- 1882 Schools now uniformly supplied with Independent Readers, Watson's Spellers, and Fish & Robinson Arithmetic  
Some parents register objections to their children being taught temperance in school
- 1884 School Committee requests playground for every school
- 1885 District #1 (Centre) votes to grade schools: lower to be called Primary, upper - Grammar School; town votes to grade all schools
- 1886 Standardized textbook program



- 1888 Town of York votes to hire truant officer  
Uniform course of study for all students in town of York  
Town votes district system be abolished; schools to be governed by Superintendent of Schools, assisted by school committee, which is responsible for finances, hiring, and building maintenance
- 1889 Town votes to furnish free textbooks to all pupils in each school  
Town votes \$500 for support of free high school; first year's class attends for one term in Town Hall
- 1896 Maine students required to pass entrance examination for high school
- 1899 First York high school graduates at Town Hall; two students graduate
- 1900 \$10,000 allotted by town for new high school
- 1902 New free high school opens on Organug Road (the present Middle School)
- 1930 Nine one-room schoolhouses still in use in York
- 1969 Elementary school fully consolidated to include York Beach



# FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Records of the Massachusetts General Court, 1642.
- <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 1647.
- <sup>3</sup>York Town Records, March, 1673. (See also, George Ernst, New England Miniature, p. 135.)
- <sup>4</sup>York Deeds, Book V, I, 4:33, 1676.
- <sup>5</sup>York Town Records, Vol. I, May 13, 1700, Article 10.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid., March, 1711.
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid., March, 1714.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid., March, 1717.
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid., March 8, 1724/5.
- <sup>10</sup>George Ernst, New England Miniature (Freeport, Maine: Bond Wheelwright Co., 1961), p. 139.
- <sup>11</sup>York Town Records, March 14, 1726.
- <sup>12</sup>Ibid., March 11, 1745/6.
- <sup>13</sup>Samuel Moody, Letter to Joseph Storer of Wells, Feb. 19, 1722, "Emerson Family Records," Vol. I, p. 51. (See also George Ernst, New England Miniature, p. 137.)
- <sup>14</sup>Philip McIntire Woodwell, Editor-Translator, Handkerchief Moody: The Diary and the Man (Portland, Maine: Colonial Offset Printing Co., 1981), pp. 174, 175.
- <sup>15</sup>York Town Records, March 19, 1724/5.
- <sup>16</sup>Samuel Chandler, Diary, 1750-51.
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid., 1751.
- <sup>18</sup>John Langdon Sibley, Biographical Sketches of Harvard University, 1735. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1917), p. 481-91.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid., 1729, p. 600.
- <sup>20</sup>Philip McIntire Woodwell, Editor-Translator, Handkerchief Moody, p. 132.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 190.
- <sup>22</sup>Samuel Chandler, Diary, 1750, fly-leaf.
- <sup>23</sup>George Ernst, New England Miniature, p. 141. (See also, John Langdon Sibley, Biographical Sketches of Harvard University, 1746, pp. 48-54).
- <sup>24</sup>John Langdon Sibley, Biographical Sketches of Harvard University, 1765, p. 258.
- <sup>25</sup>John W. Ragle, History of Governor Dummer Academy, 1763-1963. (Newburyport, MA: 1963), p. 20.
- <sup>26</sup>John Langdon Sibley, Biographical Sketches of Harvard University, 1746, pp. 50-51.
- <sup>27</sup>Newburyport Daily Herald. (Newburyport, MA: April 6, 1878), p. 1.
- <sup>28</sup>Jonathan Sayward, Diary, April 4, 1785.



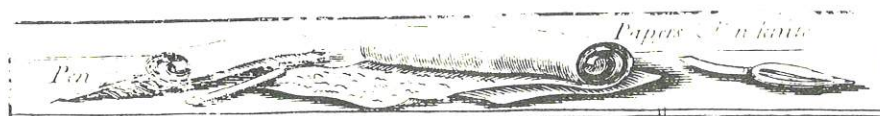
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., November 1, 1785.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid., July 15, 1786.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid., December 26, 1789.
- <sup>32</sup>York Town Records, March, 1785.
- <sup>33</sup>Ibid., April 1, 1799.
- <sup>34</sup>Report of the Superintending School Committee for the Year Ending March 1866, (Portsmouth, NH: Journal Steam Printing Establishment, 1866). p. 13.
- <sup>35</sup>Records of School District #13, Cider Hill, 1848.
- <sup>36</sup>George Alexander Emery. Ancient City of Gorgeana/Modern Town of York. (York, Maine: York Corner Courant Steam Job Print, 1894), p. 211.
- <sup>37</sup>Report of the Superintending School Committee for the Year Ending March 1872, p.31.
- <sup>38</sup>Ibid., 1885, p. 29.
- <sup>39</sup>George Alexander Emery, "Early Schools in York," York Courant, April 22, 1892.
- <sup>40</sup>Records of District #13, Cider Hill, 1821.
- <sup>41</sup>Report of the Superintending School Committee for the Year Ending 1866, p. 12.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid., 1874, p. 28.
- <sup>43</sup>Ibid., 1857, p. 20.
- <sup>44</sup>George Alexander Emery, Ancient City of Gorgeana/Modern Town of York. p. 230.
- <sup>45</sup>Records of District #13, Cider Hill, 1820.
- <sup>46</sup>Ibid., 1831.
- <sup>47</sup>Report of the Superintending School Committee for the Year Ending March 7, 1878, p. 26.
- <sup>48</sup>Ruth Frost, Letter to Mrs. Howard Peck, 1950, quoting Diary of Mrs. Albert Bragdon, 1887.
- <sup>49</sup>Report of the Superintending School Committee for the Year Ending March 1872, p. 30.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., 1884, p. 23.
- <sup>51</sup>Ibid., 1892, p. 47.
- <sup>52</sup>Court of Common Pleas Warrant, Gaoler's Records, May 5, 1825.
- <sup>53</sup>Report of the Superintending School Committee for the Year Ending March 15, 1877, p. 11.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid., 1874, p. 24.
- <sup>55</sup>"Of Children's Behavior at the School," School of Good Manners. (n.p.:1801 edition), p. 19.
- <sup>56</sup>Philip McIntire Woodwell, Handkerchief Moody, pp. 66, 176, 177.
- <sup>57</sup>George Alexander Emery, "Early Schools of York," York Courant, February 19, 1892.

- <sup>58</sup>Report of the Superintending School Committee for the Year Ending March 1871, p. 23.
- <sup>59</sup>Ibid., 1861, p. 18.
- <sup>60</sup>Ibid., 1888, p. 31.
- <sup>61</sup>Philip McIntire Woodwell, Handkerchief Moody, p. 61.
- <sup>62</sup>Ibid., pp. 142, 143.
- <sup>63</sup>Report of the Superintending School Committee for the Year Ending March 1872, p. 25.
- <sup>64</sup>Philip McIntire Woodwell, Handkerchief Moody, p. 53.
- <sup>65</sup>Samuel Chandler, Diary, 1750-51.
- <sup>66</sup>George Ernst, New England Miniature, p. 145.
- <sup>67</sup>Catherine Fennelly, Town Schooling in Early New England. (Sturbridge, MA: Old Sturbridge Village, 1962), p. 34.
- <sup>68</sup>Report of the Superintending School Committee for the Year Ending March 1858, p. 17.
- <sup>69</sup>Ibid., 1874, p. 24.
- <sup>70</sup>Editorial, York Courant. (York: January 1, 1892).
- <sup>71</sup>Philip McIntire Woodwell, Handkerchief Moody, pp. 127, 137.
- <sup>72</sup>George Alexander Emery, "Early Schools in York," York Courant, February 8, 1892.
- <sup>73</sup>George Ernst, New England Miniature, p. 145.
- <sup>74</sup>Report of the Superintending School Committee for the Year Ending March 1873, p. 31.
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- <sup>76</sup>Phillips Academy, Andover, MA: Founding Charter of Phillips Academy, 1778.
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- <sup>81</sup>Emerson Family Records, Vol. II, pp. 205-206.
- <sup>82</sup>Elizabeth Sewall, Letter to Storer Sewall, July 28, 1801.
- <sup>83</sup>A. B. Phillips, Sewall Papers, 1803.
- <sup>84</sup>Elizabeth Sewall to Storer Sewall, Sewall Papers, September 8, 1805.
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- <sup>87</sup>Ibid., William Booker to Esaias Preble, 1817.
- <sup>88</sup>Ibid., Mary Booker to Jonathan Allen, 1817.



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