

Wallingford Historical Society
75 School St.
Wallingford, VT 05773

Wallingford Perspectives

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Greetings,

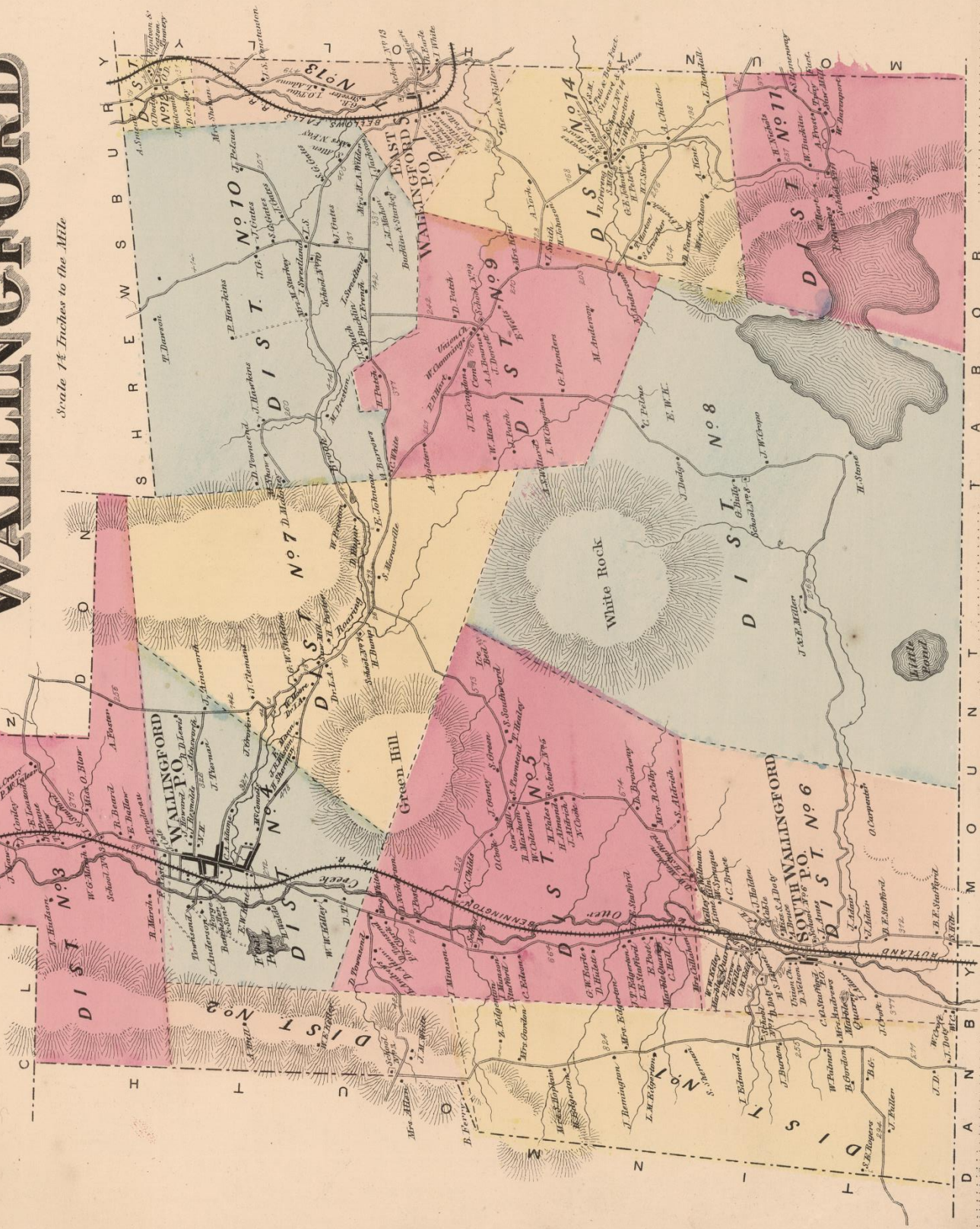
The year 2015 marks the fortieth anniversary of the closing of Wallingford High School. To commemorate this event we are dedicating this issue to all alumni of W.H.S. We are fortunate to have a very informative and well researched *A History of Wallingford Vermont* edited by Julian Klock, Ruth Barnard, and Eleanor Klock and published in 1976. I hope you enjoy reading the chapter on Wallingford schools reprinted from this book. Also included is a copy of the map of Wallingford from F.W. Beers' 1869 *Atlas of Rutland County, Vermont* that shows the original fourteen school districts. The photos have been gleaned from the two photo pictorials compiled by Alice Rist with the help of numerous other people.

Joyce Barbieri, President

TOWN OF

WALLINGFORD

Scale 1 1/2 Inches to the Mile



Schools

From the earliest years Wallingford Township was divided into school districts and by 1869 there were 14 with a schoolhouse in each. The schools were named according to their location – Centerville, West Hill, South Wallingford – or for a neighboring family – Munson, Sweetland, Hemenway. By 1897 the Town Report shows that the number of schools had been reduced to seven. In the six rural schools there were from 9 to 28 pupils; at Wallingford village there were 139, with a total for all the schools of 258. In these several schools “All the blackboards are wood except one stone one in the Sweetland school building. All are so located, in relation to windows, as to receive light from each side and in front. All the school grounds are provided with the necessary outbuildings. There is no plumbing in any of the school buildings except the High School building and this is in good condition.”

The first school building in Wallingford village was the present Rotary Building, and there were also various “select” or private schools. The building on School Street, known at first as the North School, later as the High School, was built in 1865 and graded throughout in 1871. According to the Superintendent’s report in March, 1909, an addition to this building had been made, the lower room was finished and had been used for the high school classes during the preceding year. The upper room was not finished until later, although the Superintendent fitted up a temporary office in one corner.

At a special meeting in 1910, a proposition to have a first class high school was voted down. The village building remained the same through 1911 except the one room had been “ceiled up” for high school use. Minor improvements had been made to freshen up the rooms with paint “at a small cost.” However, sanitary and safety conditions were neglected, and on July 1, 1912, the school was condemned by the State Board of Health. That fall, classes were conducted in the Congregational Chapel and the Town Hall, and work was started on the renovations to the village building. At the town meeting in 1914, school was dismissed for the day so that all could inspect the renovations, which included flush toilets throughout and a fire escape to the south of the building. After noting that the State Health officer had recommended some of these improvements as early as 1906, Dr. J. H. Miller, a long-time school director, commented, “Good things come slowly.”

The elementary grades for Wallingford village, and high school classes for the town, were housed in this building for many years, with improvements being made whenever possible. In 1928, after an oil burner had been installed, a science laboratory was built and fitted in an area in the basement formerly used for coal storage. Enrollments continued to increase and more classroom space was needed; some classes were being held in the Town Hall. In 1934, work was completed on an addition to the west side of the building, which included a gymnasium and two new classrooms. The gymnasium was made possible by the generosity of Mr. Birney C. Batcheller; it was dedicated at the graduation ceremonies in 1935.

Until the gymnasium was built, basketball games were played in the old True Temper Inn garage which accommodated only a few spectators. The new gym provided much more seating capacity and was welcomed enthusiastically by parents and friends. Accordingly there was great disappointment when it no longer met established standards and was outlawed for interscholastic competitions in the 1960’s. However, it still served a number of useful purposes.

One day in 1942, the oil burner exploded causing \$400 damage two hours before time for school. Plaster fell and windows were blown out and the whole school was covered with black soot. There was no fire after the explosion, and as it happened so early in the morning no one was in the school and there were no injuries. The room which had the most damage, including fallen plaster, housed children of grades one and two, so there was much to be thankful for. Many of the older boys and girls pitched in to help clean up, even if it did mean that the school bell would ring again all the sooner.

The school population continued to grow, and in the 40's some elementary classes were once more housed in the Town Hall, and in the Masonic Temple. In 1952 a new elementary building was constructed in back of the old school. It contained five grade rooms, a multi-purpose room, a kitchen, a health room, a conference room, and a teachers' work room. There were 141 pupils. In 1969 an addition was made to this building, providing more class rooms to accommodate two sections for each grade, thereby lowering the teacher-pupil ratio for a better education. Also included were a kindergarten room with its own entrance, a gymnasium/auditorium with a stage, a larger kitchen, and storage rooms. The former multi-purpose room was converted to a library, which for a time was used by both the elementary grades and the high school.

For many years there were nine grades, and graduation exercises were held at the Town Hall for those who finished. Few went to the High School, which offered only a two year college preparatory course; a three year course had been tried but found not satisfactory. In 1897 German was added to the course so that students could have the subjects necessary for entrance to college. In 1906 and 1908, some students completed two years in Wallingford High School and then went directly to institutions of higher learning.

Around 1915 the Grammar School was changed from nine grades to eight, and a commercial preparatory course was offered in the High School. Enrollment increased; six boys and nine girls elected the commercial course, while one boy and two girls followed the college course, a total of 18. In the next two years enrollment increased to 42 in the High School. Those following the commercial course usually found jobs at the completion of two years' study or went on to business schools before being employed. In 1918, Eveline Houghton completed four years of High School and became the first four-year graduate and the only one in her class. Since that time there have been four-year graduates every years—small classes at first and in later years over forty.

Commencement exercises for the early four year graduates were combined with the customary exercises for those finishing Grammar School. In 1920 this practice was changed, and exercises held only for those finishing High School. It was about this same time that the term Junior High School began to be used for the 7th and 8th grades. One reason for both of these changes was to encourage students to continue on to High School and not think that the 8th grade was a good stopping place.

By the 1920's there were more than a hundred students in the Junior-Senior High School, enrolled in either a standard or a college-preparatory course. Two years of French and four of Latin were offered instead of German. Commercial courses had been discontinued, but agriculture and home economics were being taught, and for a time a special shop course was conducted with the cooperation of the American Fork and Hoe Company. The boys worked at some trade at the shop under the guidance of shop personnel and had their academic work at school; this was discontinued in the 1930's.

Later, shop courses were taught at the school, at first in the basement of the school, and then the building which had been Harry Townsend's garage was rented and renovated for shop work. Juniors and seniors had a four period course at this location until Rutland High School offered vocational courses to students from outlying towns. After that, the building was used for shop courses for grades 7-10, and the upper classmen were transported to Rutland. Commercial classes were added gradually. At first they were carried on in the senior hall with a part time teacher, then as an integral part of the school program with a full time commercial teacher.

Programs and services for both elementary and high school students have been improved and enlarged over the years. The first public kindergarten in the town opened in the fall of 1967. By that time the school bus was a familiar sight, and transportation for students living too far from the school to walk was taken for granted. This represented a big change from the early years, when students entering high school from the rural schools found their own transportation or lived with families in the village, sometimes working for their board and room.

The Federal Hot Lunch project began in 1945, when the Home Economics Department began serving a meal just during the winter months. One hot dish, dark bread, fruit, and milk were served for 10 cents or the equivalent in commodities. The 1953 Town Report noted that a more satisfactory program could be offered in the new elementary school building. Hot lunches continue to be served, all during the school year, and the regular price now is 35 cents.

The elementary school library, and the combined high school and town library, were important additions to the reading program and resources for all branches of the curriculum. Just recently, a special reading teacher has been added to the elementary staff, to work with youngsters whose reading is below their grade level. The use of audio-visual aids has increased in all areas, and more field trips are taken. Health checkups have been arranged and subsidized through a P.T.A. committee. Physical Education has been available to all students, in addition to regular sports activities including, in recent years, skiing. Driver training was offered in the High School from 1948 on.

Art, and arts and crafts programs, have been added from time to time. Music, including instruction, band, and choirs, has become an important part of the curriculum, with a full-time teacher; parent groups subsidized the early years with part-time vocal and instrumental teachers, and bought uniforms and some instruments. In 1971, Mrs. Kenneth Anderson became the music instructor; she was particularly successful with the band. Almost 100 high school and elementary students participated, and the band took part in a number of parades.

Although Wallingford has been one of the small schools in the state, with limited facilities and curriculum offerings, its students have been able to compete successfully with those of larger schools. They had one state championship in Debate, and twice were entered in the New England finals in Drama; competition in these areas is among all schools in the state regardless of size. Then, in Class C or M competitions, W.H.S. was state champion in basketball five times and in baseball once.

Over the years students have continued their education and graduated from various colleges, including the University of Vermont, Harvard, M.I.T., Middlebury, the Air Force Academy, and Dartmouth. Others have received degrees in nursing from U.V.M., Mary Hitchcock Hospital in

Hanover, the Deaconess Hospital in Boston, and others. Still other alumni have graduated from state colleges, technical schools, business colleges, and various special schools.

Wallingford had the first high school weekly newspaper in the state, which provided a link between the school, the townspeople, and the alumni. Some of the news articles were contributed by elementary students from the village school, and from the rural schools while they were in existence.

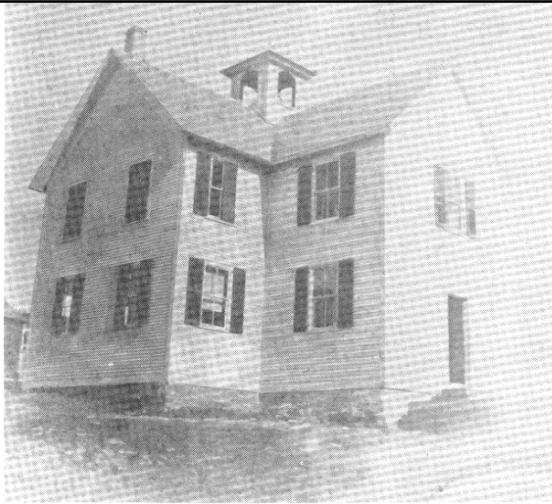
The early school districts were largely self-governing, although town records indicate that school matters were often referred to the selectmen, for instance if a family wished to be "set off" from one district to another. After 1853, a superintendent for all schools was appointed by a committee elected at town meeting. With a change in the state law in 1892, the districts lost their autonomy and all school matters were governed by the town School Board, including the appointment of the superintendent. In 1908, Wallingford joined with the towns of Clarendon, Middletown Springs, Shrewsbury, and Tinmouth to form a supervisory district, of which Carroll H. Drown was the first superintendent. Except for a time in the 20's and 30's when there was a supervising principal for all the Wallingford schools, the town has continued in one or another supervisory union.

When the number of school districts was large, it was impossible for the superintendent to cover them adequately. For many years, consolidation was urged, and the number of districts decreased gradually. In 1967, the last step to consolidation was taken when the East Wallingford school was closed and its pupils too were transported to the elementary school in Wallingford village.

For almost 30 years there was study and consultation on the formation of a union high school district, and several votes were taken. All of these were supported in Wallingford but defeated in one of the other towns involved. Finally, in 1974, Clarendon, Shrewsbury, and Wallingford voted to form Union 40, and to build a high school for those three towns. The school, built in Clarendon and named Mill River Union High School, opened in September of 1975 for students of grades 7-12. Demolition of the old Wallingford High School started June 14, 1975, and the Alma Mater of many Wallingford students is no more.

In that year (1975), the three towns withdrew from their supervisory districts, and Rutland South Supervisory Union was formed, comprising Clarendon, Shrewsbury, Wallingford and Union 40. The first superintendent is Henry Burnham, a Wallingford native and a graduate of Wallingford High School.

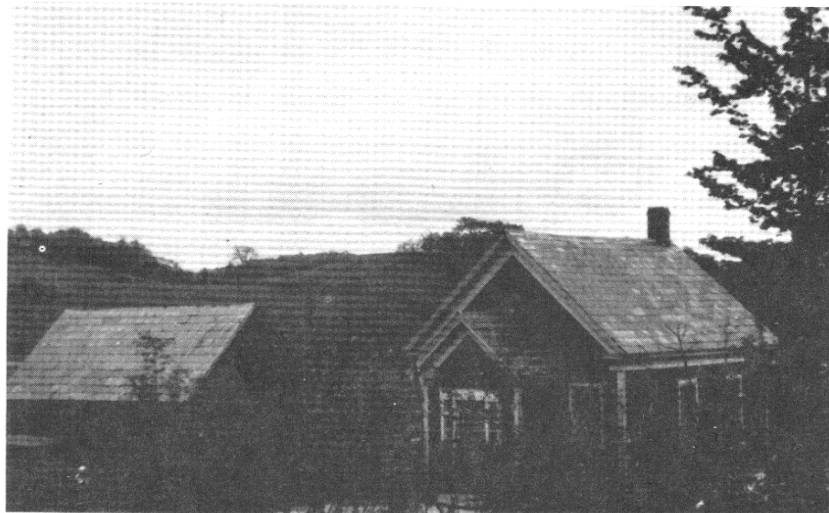
Now, in 1975, the Wallingford educational system has completed a cycle in its history. Fourteen single schools have been gradually consolidated into one, housed in a modern, well-equipped building, with a full-time principal. The programs at the elementary school and the new union high school are under the direction of the same superintendent. Responsibility for the entire school program is entrusted by citizens and parents to elect School Board members.



The South Wallingford School
built in 1836 - second story was
added when it was consolidated -
after the closing of Aldrichville
School, when the sawmill was
moved to its new site. (1898)



Teacher Harriet Dawson at door of
SPRAGUE SCHOOL
SUGAR HILL



WEST HILL SCHOOL

Sprague School is now part of a house at 2918 Sugar Hill Road. West Hill School is part of a house at 2753 West Hill Road.

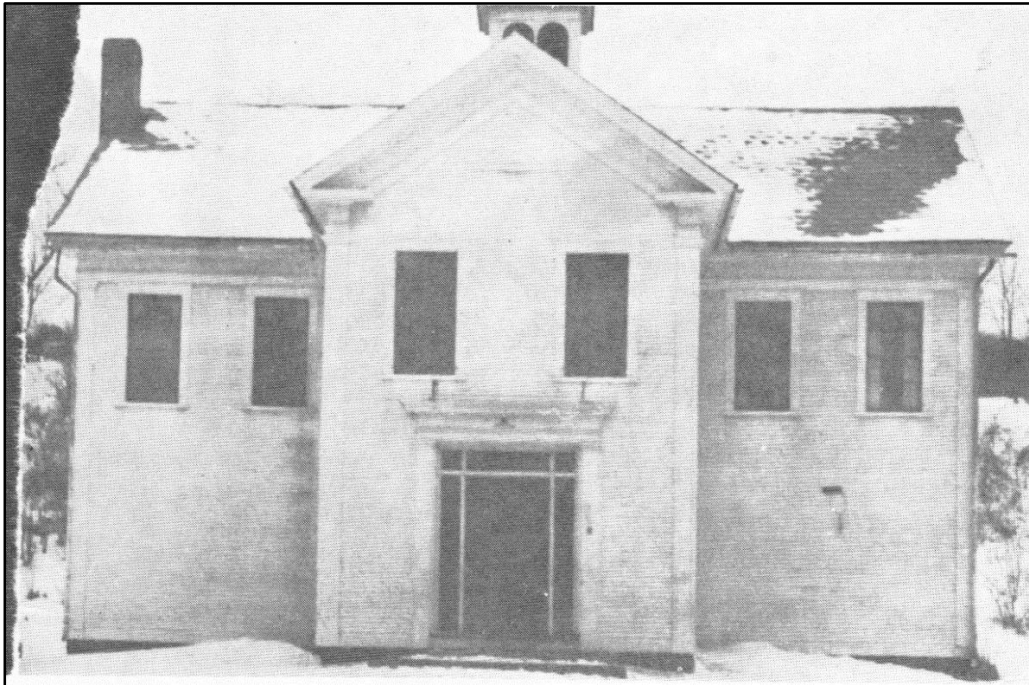


MUNSON SCHOOL

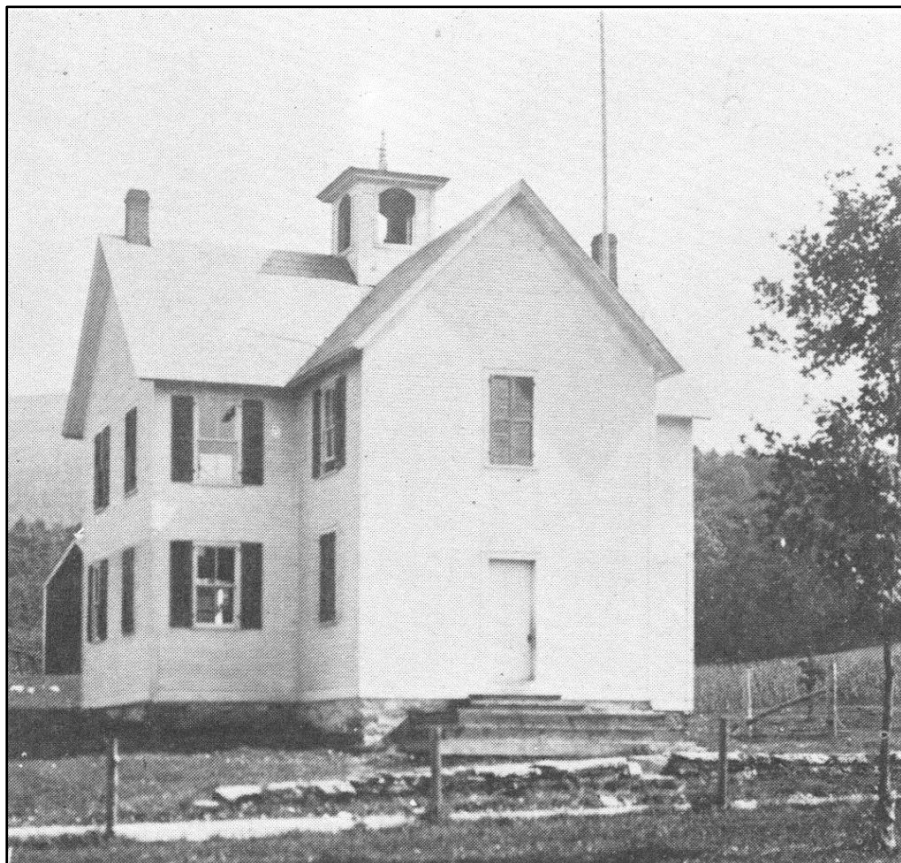
White, Clarence Dawson, Myron Roberts, Aldace Newton, Dewees
 Dawson, Fred Cook, Ned Healey, Arthur Dawson, Fannie Cook, Madge
 Healey, Eva Case, Jane White, Kate Healey, Ina Case, Grace Childs,
 Teacher - Anna (Newton) Howard 1885



Munson School is now just a mound on the east side of Route 7 about 0.1 mile south of the north end of Hartsboro Road.



East Wallingford School at 108 Village Street.



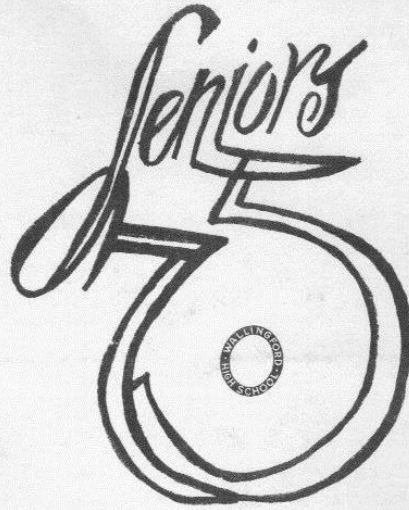
South Wallingford School replaced by the Little Red Schoolhouse at 90 Homer Stone Road.



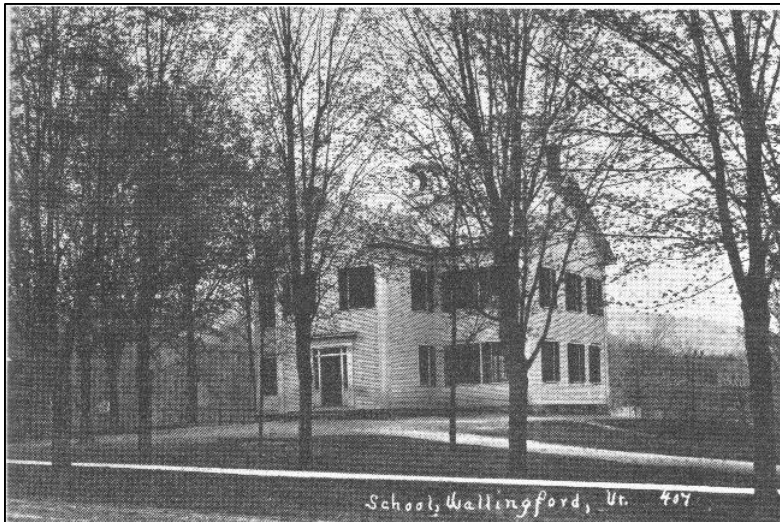
Little Red Schoolhouse.



The Rotary Building served as a school. The founder of Rotary, Paul Harris, received his early education within these walls.



The Class of 1975
Wallingford High School
announces the
Last Graduation
Thursday evening, June nineteenth
eight o'clock
Auditorium



Built
1865

CARPE DIEM.

The Graduating Exercises

OF THE

Wallingford High School, Friday Evening, June 14, 1895.

MUSIC BY ORCHESTRA.

The Development of our Country,

GEORGE WILLIAM MASON.

Educational Progress in the United States,

ALDACE WALKER NEWTON.

MUSIC BY ORCHESTRA.

Dangers of Immigration,

FRED NICHOLAS COOK.

"The Legend of the Organ Builder,"

CLARENCE HIRAM MANDIGO.

MUSIC BY ORCHESTRA.

Electricity,

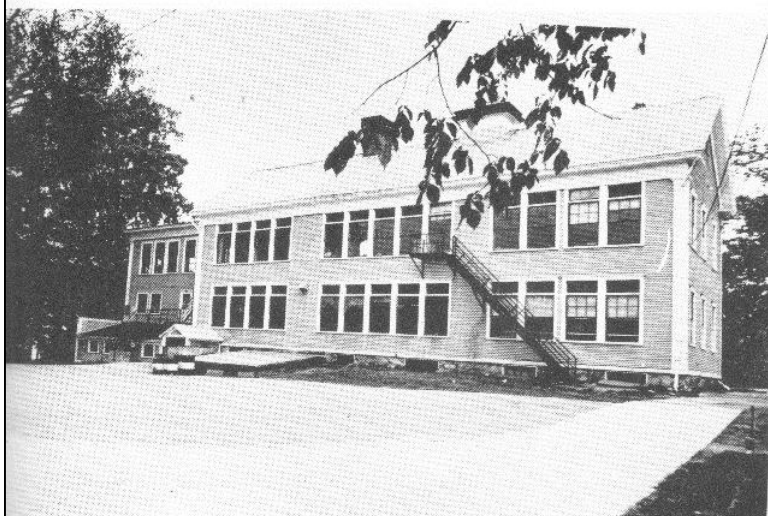
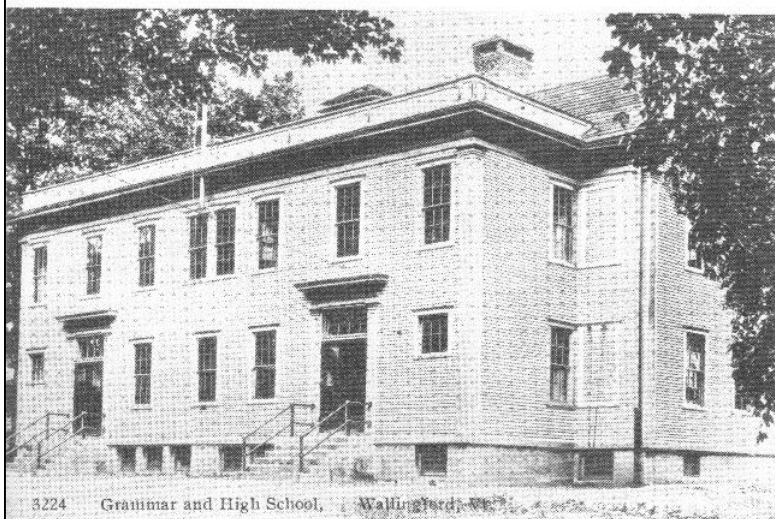
JOEL CHARLES AINSWORTH,

The Higher Education of Women,

MARGARET MARY HEALEY.

PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMAS.

MUSIC BY ORCHESTRA.



WITH
FOND
MEMORIES