

**BRIDGEWATER'S
15 ORIGINAL
SCHOOLS**



Juvenile delinquents created consternation over two hundred years ago in the Bridgewater schools. They are not a phenomena of the 1960's and 1970's according to the reports on the fifteen original schools in Bridgewater.

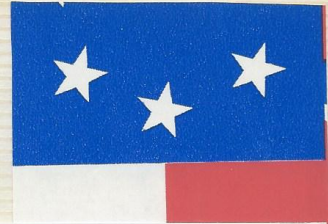
The annual report of the School Committee in 1847 said, "one of the first essentials of a good school is a suitable teacher, one that has all the natural and acquired qualifications and especially one that commands the respect and love of the pupils."

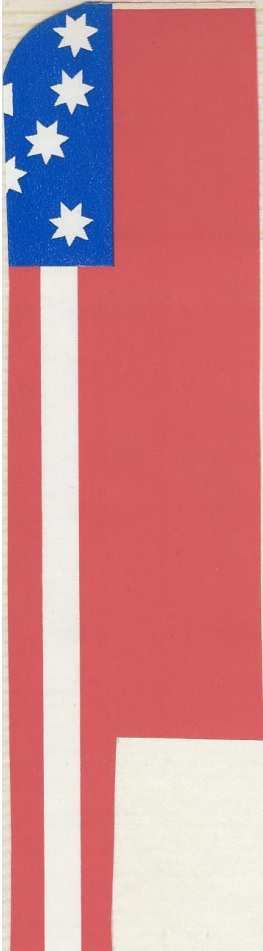
Teachers continued to be most important as cited in 1874 with reference to discipline, "it would be better that an opportunity for a thrashing should be lost than an excellent teacher should be set aside."

Speaking on the problems of delinquency in 1900 the School Committee had this to say, "We wish to say plainly to parents and guardians that the spirit of insubordination, irreverence and disrespect which is so rampant at the present day and of which we hear such loud complaints, originates with you. If you would have the evil corrected, you must do it at home. All insubordination in the school has its origin at home. A child well trained in the family makes no disturbance in school or out of school, the disorderly, their education and moral training has been neglected at home, and they very much do as they please."

In 1917 there was a shortage of coal and schools were almost closed but public opinion on the importance of education was expressed by Payson Smith, Commissioner of Education, "Education is a long time investment. Its purpose is to protect democracy through the right training of youth. Even temporary interference...may seriously impair the quality of our future citizenship."

With this heritage, let us look back into history. First, here is the Bridgewater Normal School, now Bridgewater State College, which provided most of the teachers for the district schools.






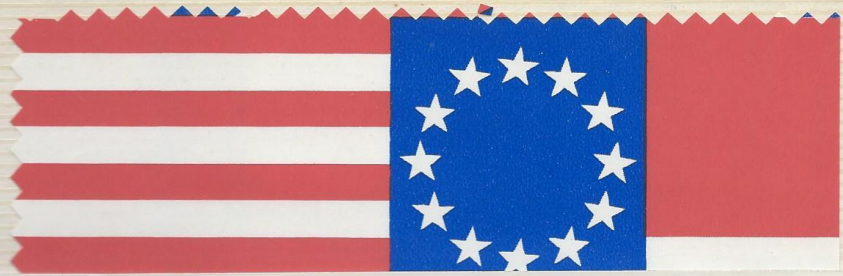
District No. 1 School which was named Centre School in 1888. Quoting from "A Wreath of Memories," by Flora T. Little, "Our Centre School stood on what is now lawn space front of the College Administration Bldg., where graduation guests sit during exercises. It was a large square, 4 classroom building of 2 floors. Earlier the High School occupied one room; this was the public high school, rival of the private Academy. By my day it had replaced the Academy, and moved into its fine building, which the town continued to hire until the South St. building(now Middle School) was erected.

So our first school building has now vanished. There were 3 grades in the primary room downstairs; upstairs, 2 grades in each room, making the 7 then required...The school committee 'hired and fired' and did what it could on our program...when a group of overgrown boys, still in grammar grades, 'ganged up' on a young male teacher and strapped him to a door and dismissed school, that was the end. Soon we had a joint superintendency with another town, and scholarship began to look up."

Many names of former teachers in the Centre School still remain on the lists of Bridgewater voters in 1976... Copeland, Crane, Keith, Pratt, Swift.

The school was disassembled in 1891 and moved to Central Square where it was rebuilt by a Mr. Elwell. It is now used for residences and shops.

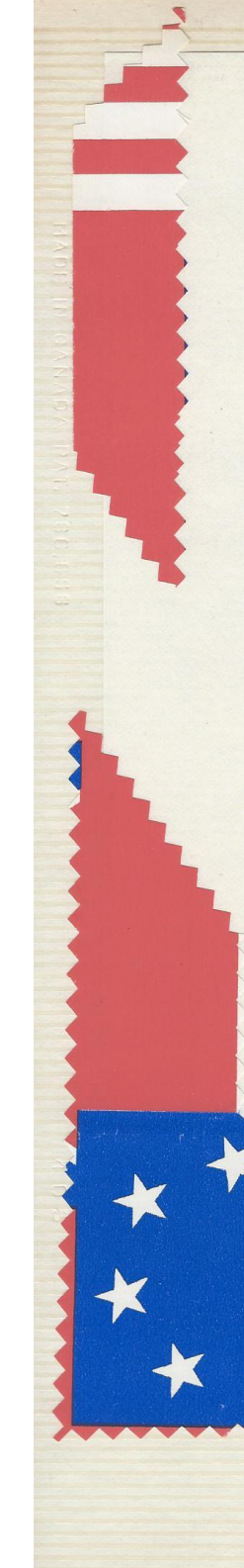




Formerly #1 Center School on Normal Quadrangle

Albert W

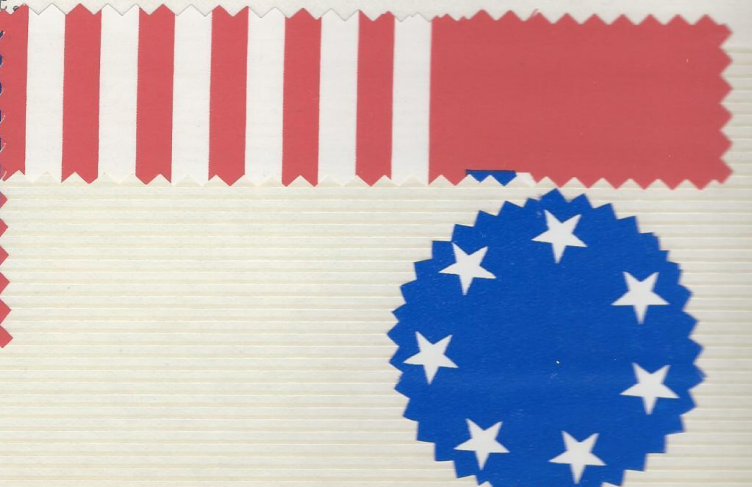


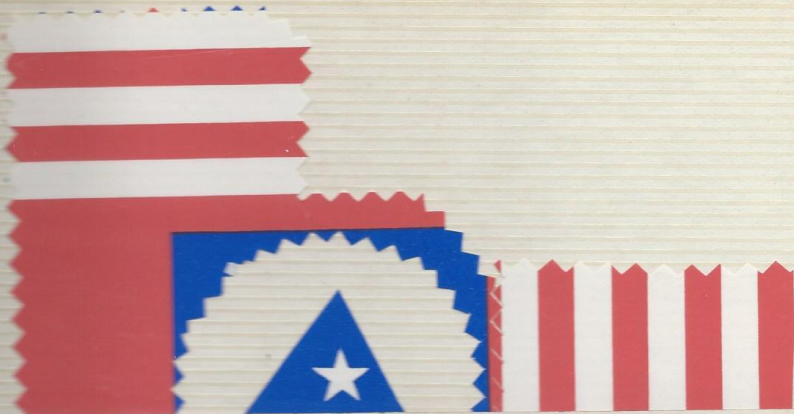


In April 1804 the town voted to establish District No. 2 School (later known as the Pratt School), in the North Precinct on Orange Street.

In 1847 the school was housed in a building about 23 by 16 feet. The small entry was used for wood and clothes. Inside, according to the report, the seats were badly arranged and could accommodate 48 scholars. However, records in 1855 show that a new and commodious house has been erected reflecting great credit upon the taste and liberality of the inhabitants of the district. In those days the people in the district built their own school and maintained interest in its administration by appointing a Prudential Officer. Among his duties were the election of the teachers and the spending of the money allotted to the district by the School Committee.

In 1934 parents petitioned to have the school closed. The petition was granted. Since 1936 the building has been used as a community center. The Prattown Community Club has been granted use of the building as long as ten members remain in the club. Also the club is responsible for the maintenance of the building. Currently there are 80 members in the club and the building is used by many civic groups. It has been painted red with a white trim instead of its original overall white and it is in its original location on Orange St.







Currently the old Sprague School is high on a hill on Route 18 on Broad Street. Originally it was District No. 3 School and in use by 1847.

At that time it was on the corner of High and Broad Streets on standpipe side. In the 1851 school report it was said, "House is inadequate, old and inconvenient with the measurements of seventeen and a half feet by seventeen and a half feet by seven feet. Into this hole are crammed 60 children. When we visit we have to throw open the door so we won't be asphyxiated."

Between 1852 and 1854 a new school was created and it was referred to as "too large to be pleasant and profitable."

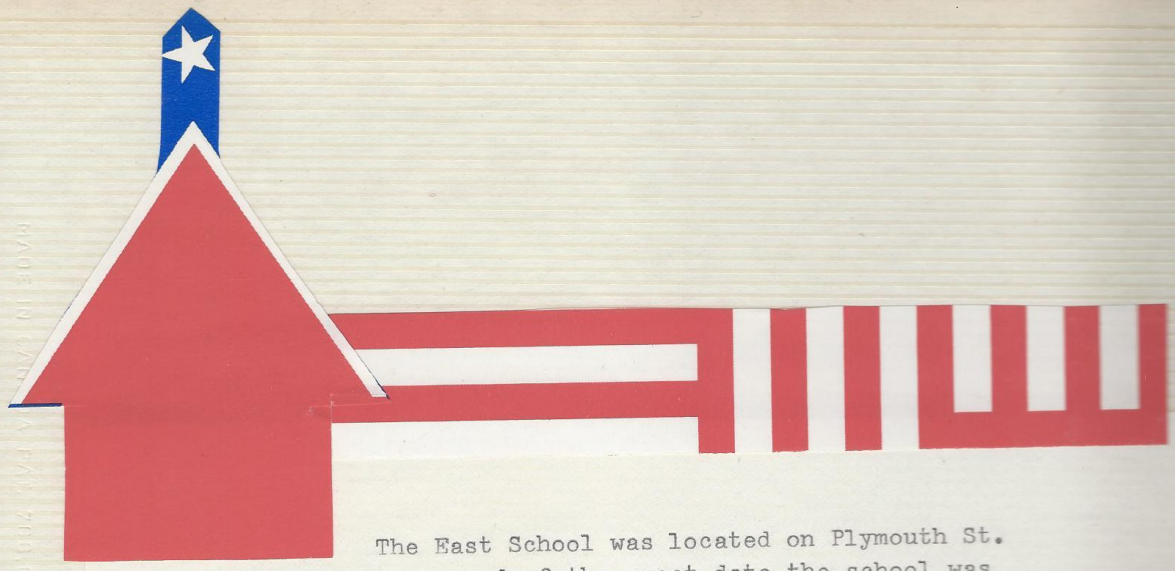
The enrollment kept growing until it was the largest school enrollment in town with irregular attendance in winter 70 and in summer 108. In 1865 there were 161 children attending.

The Sprague School was sold at auction in 1889 and used for storing hay by Mr. Smith but classes ended in June 1888 and the pupils were transferred to the Prospect School.

It is assumed that the school was moved to its present location by the Bigelow family. It is now a two family house and belongs to Mrs. Roy Kennedy.







MADE IN CANADA
A BELL & HOWELL
PUBLICATION

The East School was located on Plymouth St. There is no record of the exact date the school was built as District No. 4 School but in 1848 the enrollment was thirty scholars in the winter session and thirty-one scholars in the summer session. It was an ungraded school.

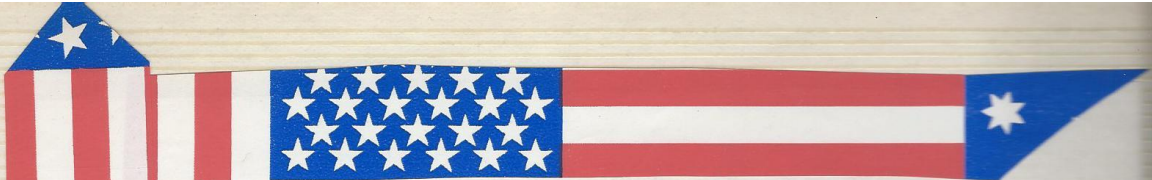
During the fifty-eight years it existed as a school there were one hundred and sixteen teachers employed and according to the records the average tenure was one year. In 1862 Mr. Lothrop, a School Board member, reported, "This small school is composed mainly of very intelligent scholars!"

In 1862 it cost \$3.51 to educate a child. Quoting from a school report in reference to schools in Districts 4, 5, 6, 11 and 12, "Are not people in these Districts as public spirited and refined as citizens in other parts of town? But we shall perhaps be told that these districts are not as populous and rich as some of our neighboring ones. Then let us unite and thus secure numbers and wealth sufficient for the purpose. Scholars too often feel as if such a place were not fit for them to be in. They must daily suffer a kind of crucifixion while endeavoring to learn."

The school was closed in 1906 and sixteen children carried to the Pratt School.

The address at this time is 1350 Plymouth St. (the original site of the school). It has been occupied for forty years by the Walter Krueger family.






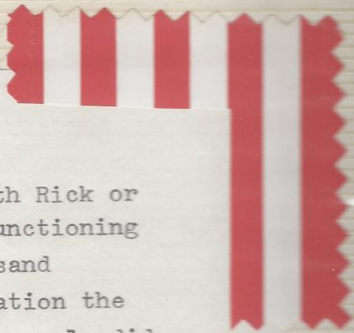
District No. 5 School, also known as the Auburn School was opened in 1848. At that time, according to reports the smaller scholars, ten years and under were well behaved; older ones were inattentive and too socialable for school hours. In 1849 the instruction in grammar and geography was "thorough and felicitous...in teaching arithmetic...he would have succeeded better if he had made more use of the blackboard."

In 1851 there were twenty five scholars and the teacher's wages were \$13.00 a month in the summer and \$25.50 in the winter, including board. In 1856 the school was described as a good school, scholars generally well behaved but there were large boys and girls who need a male teacher. In 1863 the school was described as well situated with regard to disturbance by passing on the street.

In 1867 a new schoolhouse was built to replace No. 5 for a total of \$2,076.59, this included land at \$80.00, school furniture at \$192.70 and a double privy for \$72.45. The town adopted the plan to build a schoolhouse to accomodate No. 5 and part of No. 6. The parents in the two districts in 1878 did not approve the consolidation and it resulted in the keeping of young children at home, "depriving them of advantages to which they are entitled."

Eventually the number of scholars in Districts 5, 6 and 7 was so small it was thought best to combine them. The teacher in No. 5 took charge of the united school in No. 6. In 1889 the Auburn School was re-opened for the winter term but it was finally closed in 1890 and sold at auction by the School Committee in 1897. After it was sold there was no record as to what became of it...a mystery school.





Sometime between 1746 and 1771 the 6th Rick or District School was established. It began functioning as a school in 1772. It cost under one thousand dollars to build. According to the investigation the name was changed to Flagg School because the people did not know what the number of the district meant and the name was easier to remember.

The Flagg School was located at the corner of Auburn and Summer Street; across from Flagg Street. It is at the same location today. However, in 1899 the school was remodeled and moved to the center of the lot. A cellar was placed beneath it and the hallways made into a room. The porch was covered and the outbuildings were separated. The girls' toilet was put in the cellar. At the same time a wood furnace was installed, as were slate blackboards. New desks were put in and the building painted inside and out. It was shingled and the floor was covered.

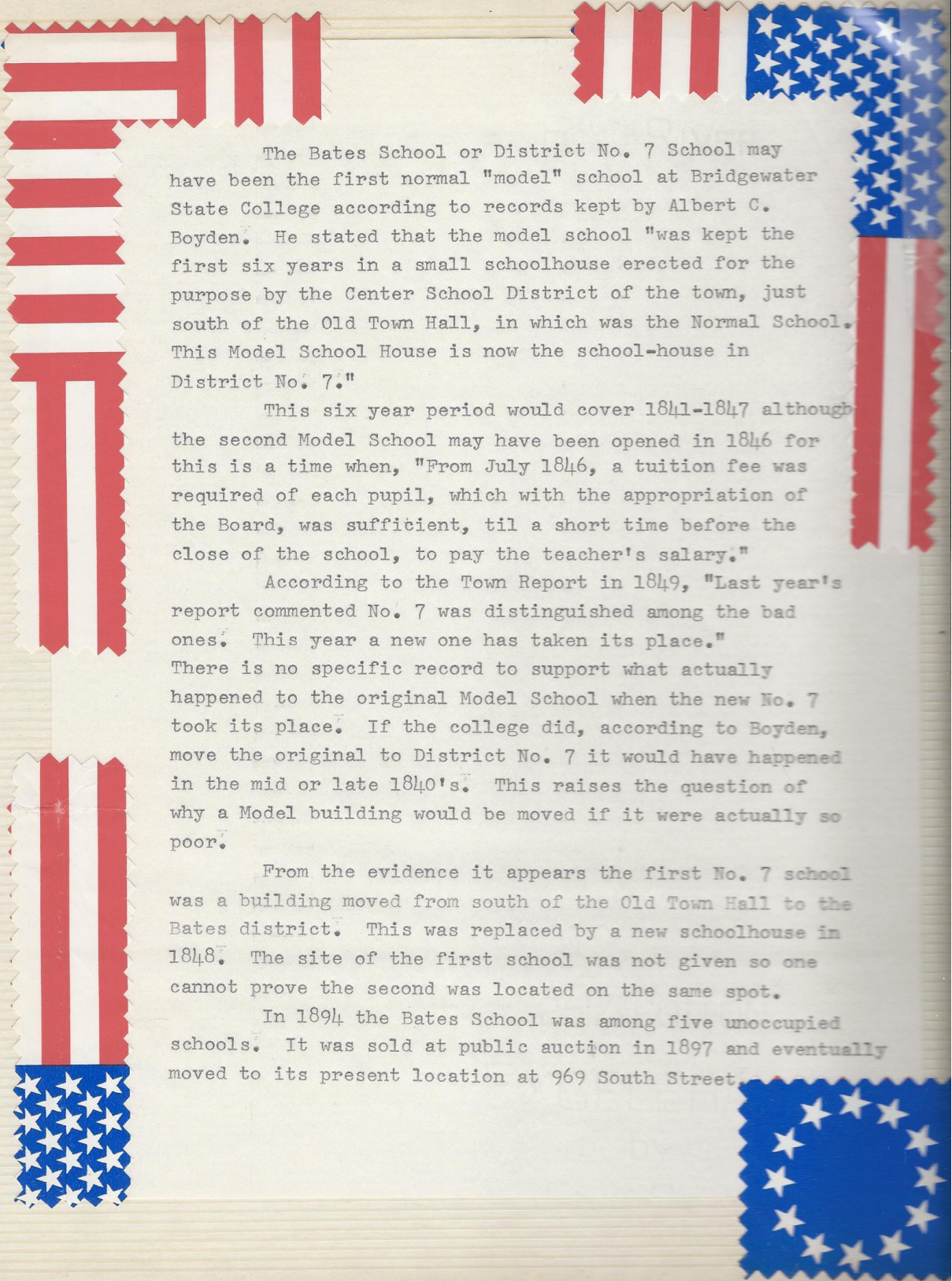
From time to time other repairs were done. In 1901 the lot was graded and trees were planted. In 1933 the school was painted inside and out for \$11.93. The cost was so low because WPA did much of the work. Two modern improvements were next in 1935, modern lighting and in 1936 inside toilets were installed.

The number of pupils in the school varied from 12 to 45.

Today it is the only one of the fifteen original schools still under the control of the School Department of Bridgewater. It is used for storing materials for the school maintenance department. It was closed, as a school, in 1948, the last of the fifteen to close.







The Bates School or District No. 7 School may have been the first normal "model" school at Bridgewater State College according to records kept by Albert C. Boyden. He stated that the model school "was kept the first six years in a small schoolhouse erected for the purpose by the Center School District of the town, just south of the Old Town Hall, in which was the Normal School. This Model School House is now the school-house in District No. 7."

This six year period would cover 1841-1847 although the second Model School may have been opened in 1846 for this is a time when, "From July 1846, a tuition fee was required of each pupil, which with the appropriation of the Board, was sufficient, til a short time before the close of the school, to pay the teacher's salary."

According to the Town Report in 1849, "Last year's report commented No. 7 was distinguished among the bad ones. This year a new one has taken its place." There is no specific record to support what actually happened to the original Model School when the new No. 7 took its place. If the college did, according to Boyden, move the original to District No. 7 it would have happened in the mid or late 1840's. This raises the question of why a Model building would be moved if it were actually so poor.

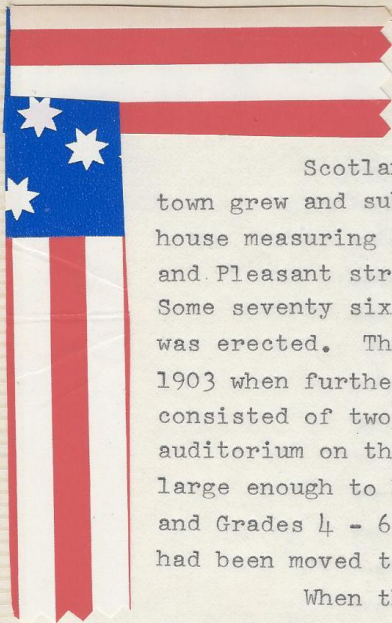
From the evidence it appears the first No. 7 school was a building moved from south of the Old Town Hall to the Bates district. This was replaced by a new schoolhouse in 1848. The site of the first school was not given so one cannot prove the second was located on the same spot.

In 1894 the Bates School was among five unoccupied schools. It was sold at public auction in 1897 and eventually moved to its present location at 969 South Street.



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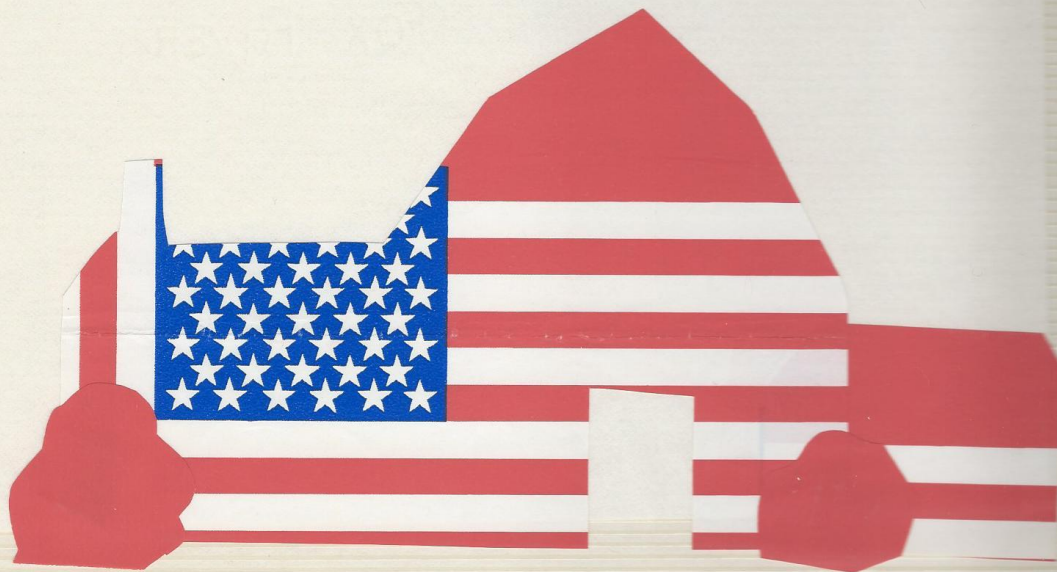
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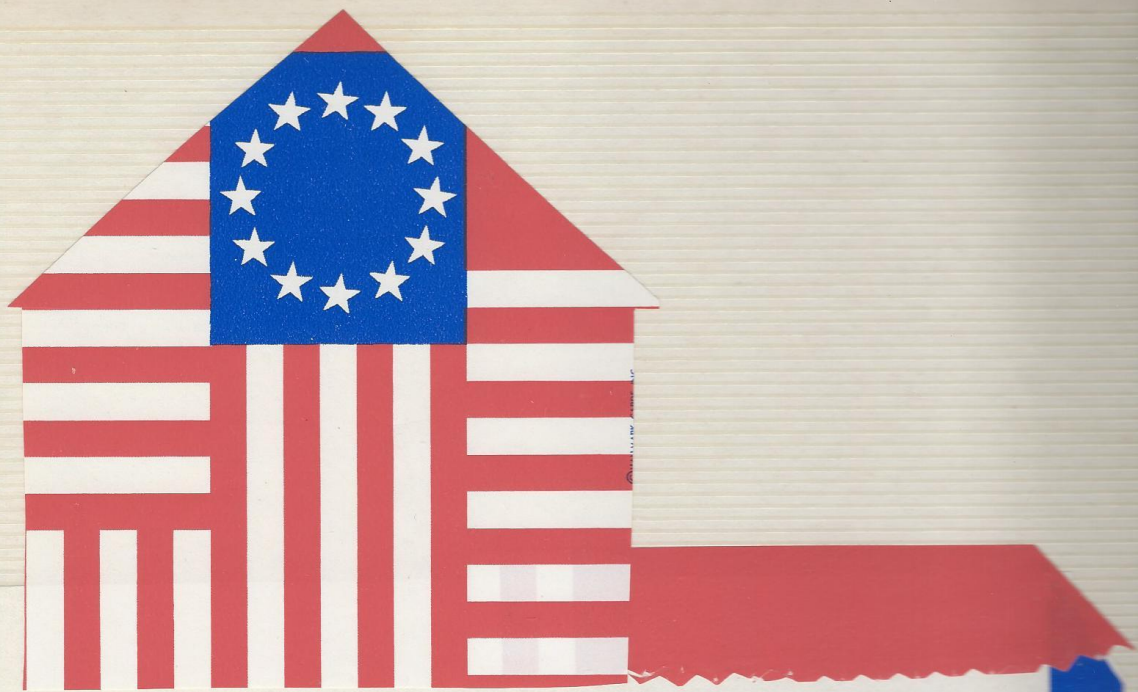
Scotland became District No. 8 in 1772. As the town grew and subdivision became necessary a one room school-house measuring $23\frac{1}{2}$ x $18\frac{1}{2}$ was built on the corner of Elm and Pleasant streets to house the 60 scholars registered. Some seventy six years later(1848) a new, larger school was erected. This served as District School No. 8 until 1903 when further enlargement was done and the new plan consisted of two classrooms on the ground floor with an auditorium on the second floor. By 1919 the school was large enough to house only Grades 1-3 on the first floor and Grades 4 - 6 on the second floor. The higher grades had been moved to the McElwain School.

When the number system was discontinued in 1888 the school became the Scotland School and was later named the Dyer School in memory of Daniel Dyer, a village resident who had bequeathed certain income from investments to the town to be used for school purposes.

The school was closed in 1940 and for many years the building played an important role in community life. It served as a center for school functions, social and church affairs, until it was demolished by fire on October 29, 1967.



MADE IN CANADA 1967 210 031



District School No. 9(Main Street School) was opened in 1849;with an enrollment of 71 scholars in 1854 the school was deemed "too big for just one teacher. It was badly constructed and inconvenient to be reached from the town center. The School Committee was distressed that the people in District No. 9 showed so little interest in their school."

In 1888 when the school was named the Main Street School water was also introduced and the stairs and floors renewed.

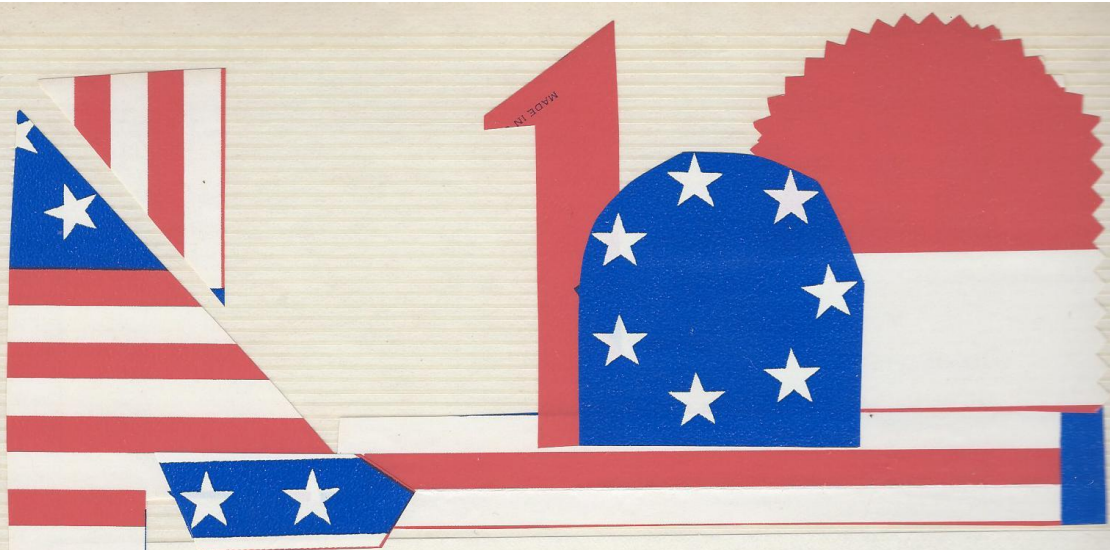
When Miss White resigned in 1903 because of illness the scholars were transferred to the Model School. The parents petitioned to have the school re-opened but it remained closed until September 1904 when crowded conditions at the Model School necessitated its reopening.

According to the school report in 1906 the school could not be kept warm with the present wood stove. The cellar should be excavated and a coal burning furnace should be installed. The floors need replacing and the cost of all improvements would be \$1,000.

Because of crowded conditions in the Main Street School redistricting was done and the scholars transferred to the McElwain and Prospect Street schools. In 1913 the school was closed permanently.







Built before 1848 District School No. 10 consisted of one room 15 feet by 27 feet with a six foot anteroom or cloakroom. At that time it was noted that Normal School education for teachers was recommended but not required.

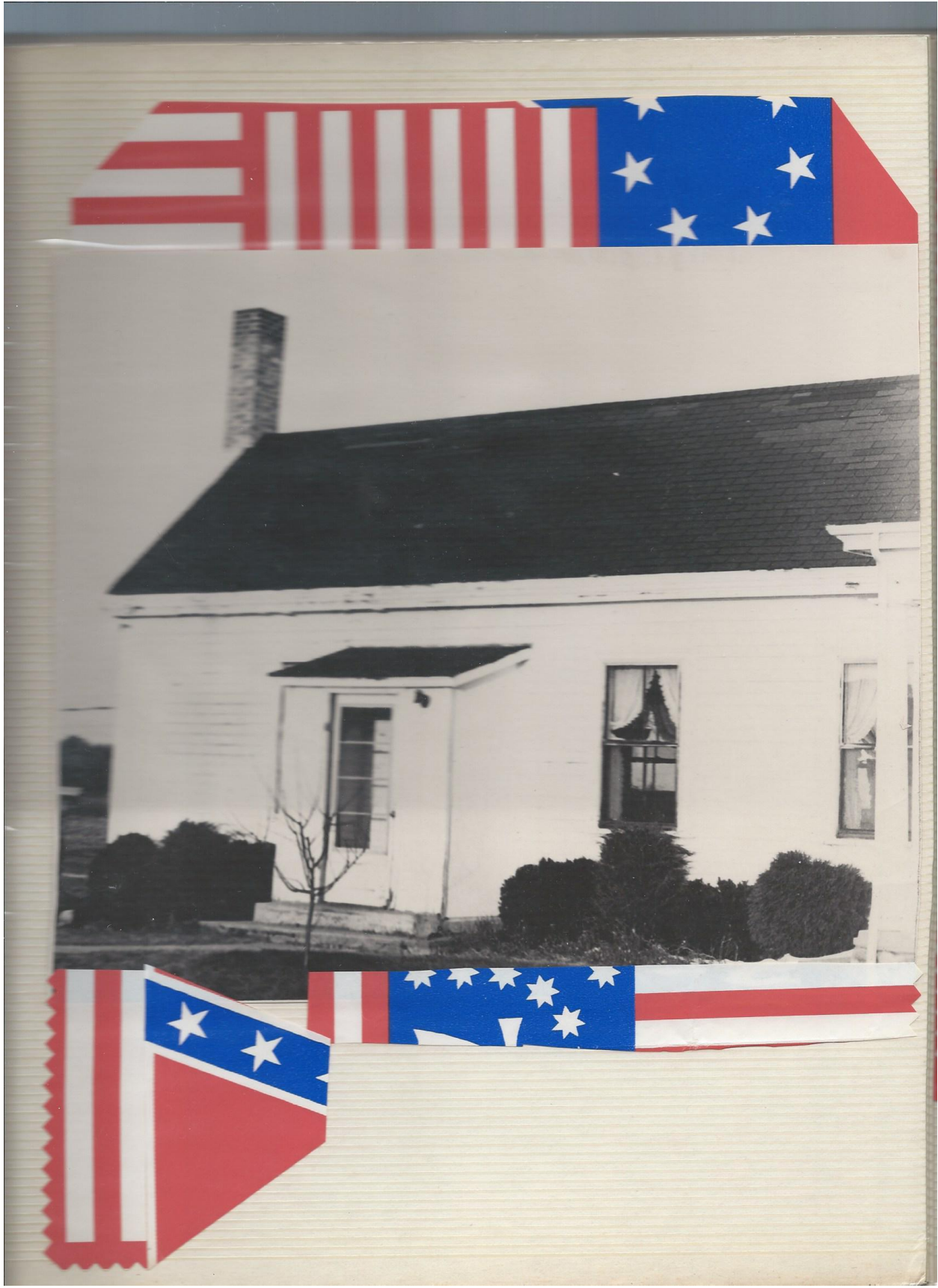
In 1849 parents were admonished for taking scholars out of school before the four o'clock dismissal, "early enough for the boy to do his chores and for the girl to help her mother in domestic affairs."


In 1863 the residents of District No. 10 were praised for their involvement in the caretaking of their school. "Last spring the people of this District removed, enlarged and thoroughly renovated the schoolhouse, which is now neat and attractive and surrounded with ample grounds for the use of the scholars."

"The community will do well to look in upon this quiet, busy scene, where thorough instruction is given in the most approved manner, though well removed from the centre of population and the rush of business."

The scholars were described as "industrious, docile and well behaved."

Although the school was closed in 1888, District School No. 10 was listed as the Wilbur School, this land having once been the site of the "Wilbur Homestead." The schoolhouse now serves as an ell on the Arthur Chaffee home.







The South School, first known as District School No. 11 was described in 1848 as "backward with lax discipline and industry. Reading, except in a few instances, was bad. By 1849 the report stated the school comparatively backward but the discipline and improvement under Miss Lynch gave hope for the future. Subsequent evaluations remarked, "Much remains to be done before the school takes the high standing it is capable of reaching."

The school visitor, J. A. Lothrop, in 1863 said the school presents an example of good order and industrious application to study with gratifying results." However, it was also reported that "The children are sent off to school where the parents are very careful never to visit, if they can help it." "Some of the teachers were so underpaid that they went back to work in the mills in Lowell and Lawrence."


In 1888 the town instructed the board to employ a Superintendent of Schools and appropriated \$600 for the purpose. It was understood that one would be employed with another town. An arrangement was made with Middleboro on May 1st and Mr. George H. Danforth was placed in charge. Mr. Danforth was also employed in Walpole. He resigned after a little more than a year's service.

Most of the scholars were sent to the Model School in 1907 and the South School was closed.

Records reveal the school was moved at least twice. On the 1832 map it was shown on the right hand side of South Street opposite and a little beyond Keith's Place. The map of Green Place in 1852 was called "Old Mr. Wilbur Place." On the map of 1879 the school shows up on the opposite side of the street.







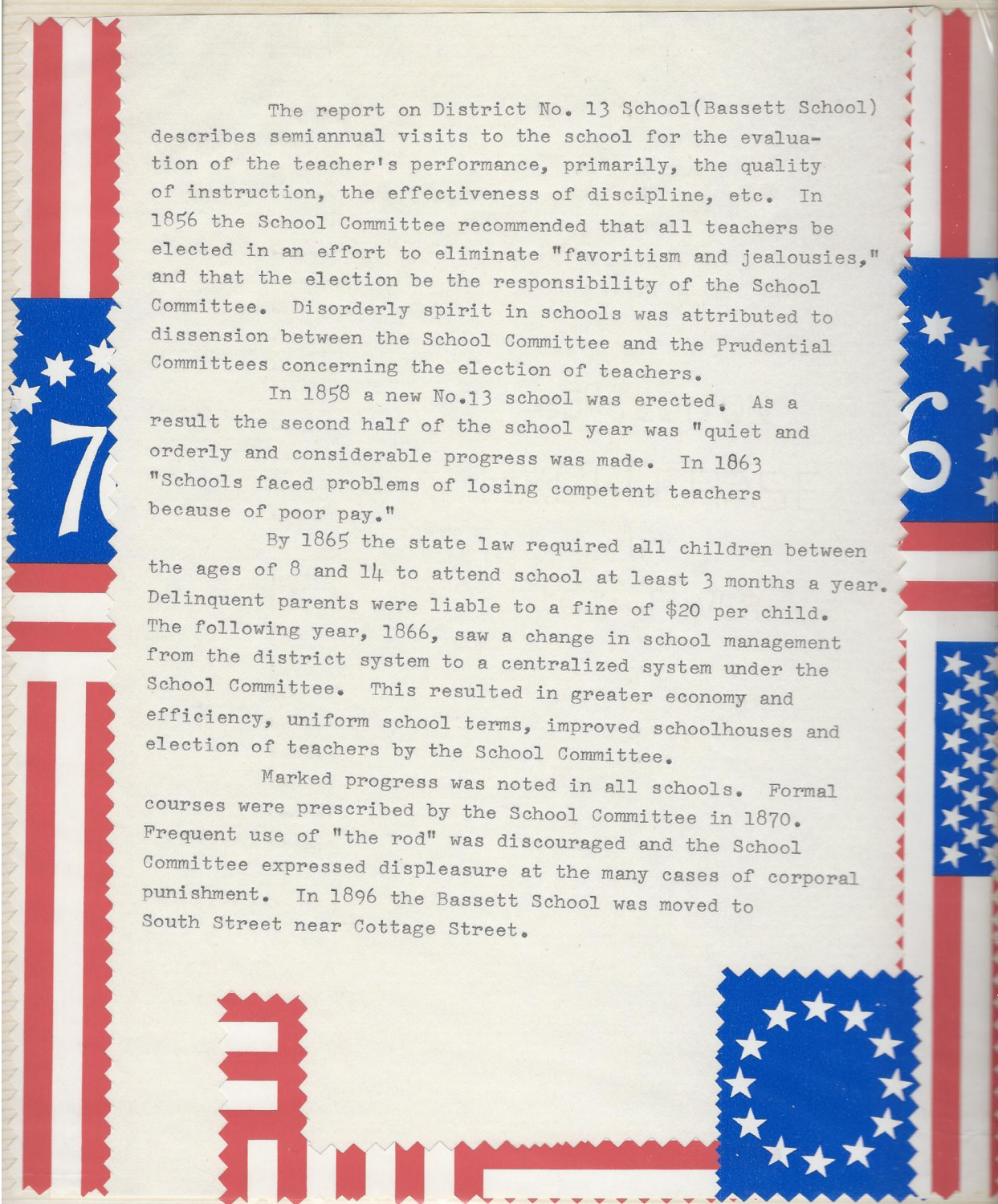
Built in 1876 on Titicut Street at the State Farm, District No. 12 School was first known as the Great Woods School. Later it was changed to the Blackstone School. The school population was small and within five years the school was closed and the scholars were transported to the North Middleboro School in 1882. By 1886 the population had increased so that it was necessary to reopen the school.

In 1895 the school was completely renovated; a wood furnace was installed; slate blackboards and the old double desks were replaced by single ones. "Mr. Blackstone without expense to the town moved the schoolhouse into a better position, put a cellar under the building, provided mason and all carpenter work in connection with the repairs. The money value of what Mr. Blackstone has done here much exceeds the outlay by the town. This school is now thoroughly and well equipped with all modern conveniences."

Increased enrollment necessitated expansion of the school in 1900. Residents held a fair to raise funds to supplement the monies from the town. By 1904 enrollment dropped to 39 scholars and they were placed in one room under one teacher. Mary E. Galvin, lower grade teacher in 1906, "was noted for keeping a rocking chair in the classroom and rocked small students when she thought it was needed." Enrollment continued to fluctuate and in June 1943 the school was closed. It was sold that year for \$3,650 and still stands on the original site. Having begun as a one room schoolhouse the building now houses four apartments.





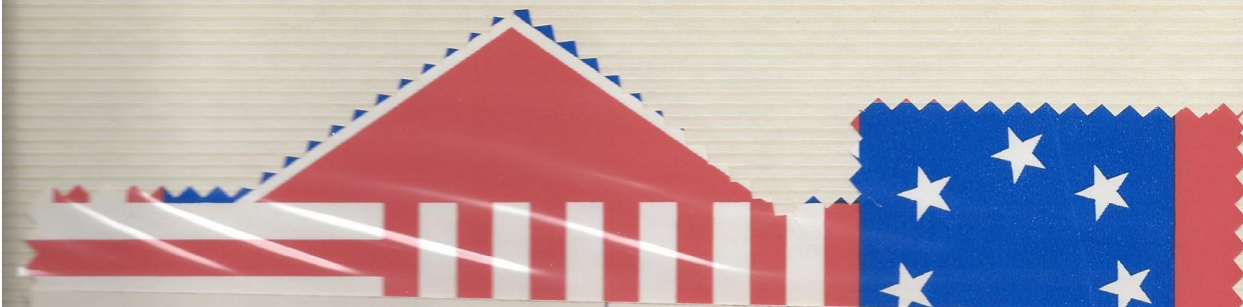


The report on District No. 13 School (Bassett School) describes semiannual visits to the school for the evaluation of the teacher's performance, primarily, the quality of instruction, the effectiveness of discipline, etc. In 1856 the School Committee recommended that all teachers be elected in an effort to eliminate "favoritism and jealousies," and that the election be the responsibility of the School Committee. Disorderly spirit in schools was attributed to dissension between the School Committee and the Prudential Committees concerning the election of teachers.

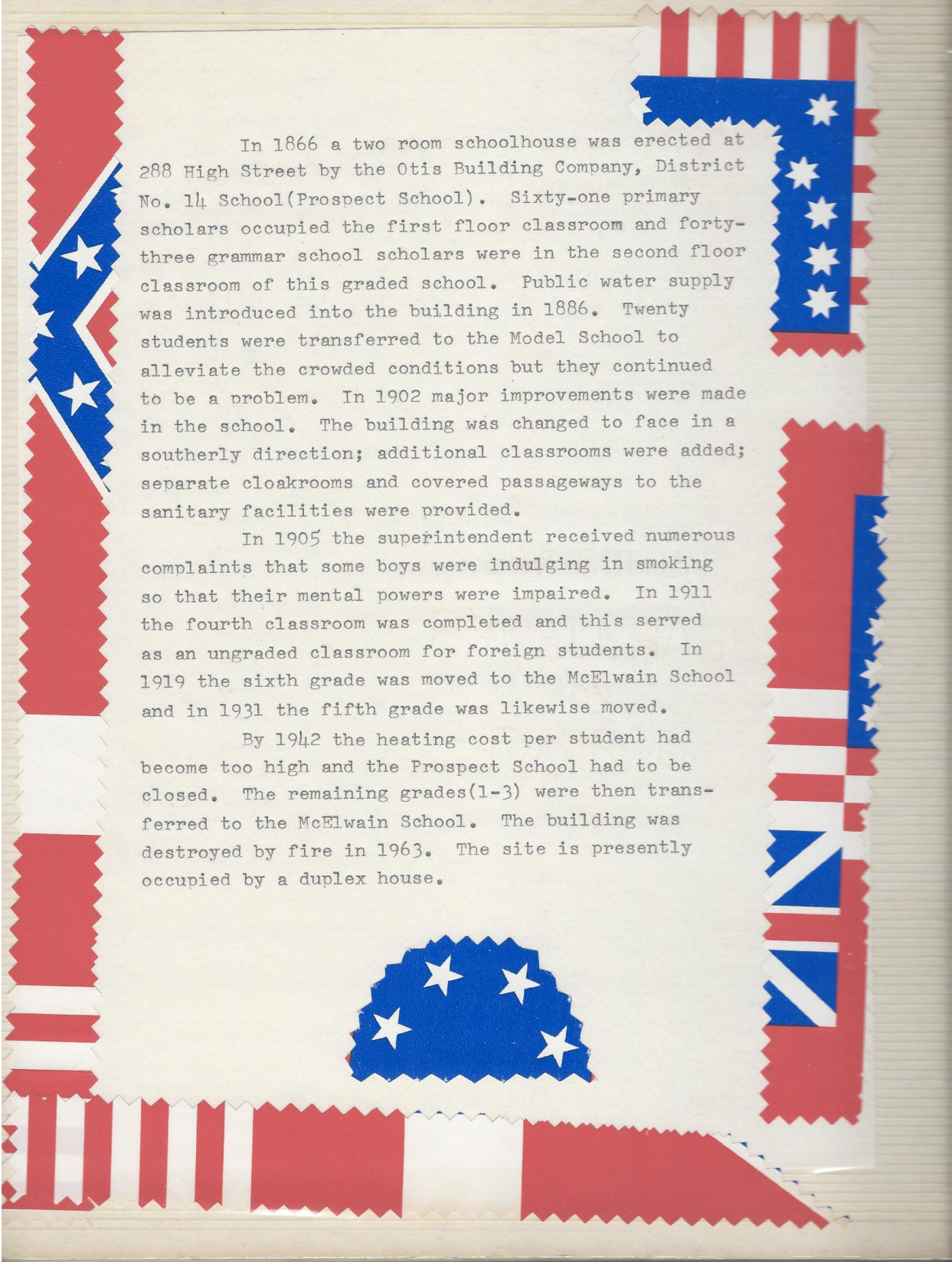
In 1858 a new No. 13 school was erected. As a result the second half of the school year was "quiet and orderly and considerable progress was made. In 1863 "Schools faced problems of losing competent teachers because of poor pay."

By 1865 the state law required all children between the ages of 8 and 14 to attend school at least 3 months a year. Delinquent parents were liable to a fine of \$20 per child. The following year, 1866, saw a change in school management from the district system to a centralized system under the School Committee. This resulted in greater economy and efficiency, uniform school terms, improved schoolhouses and election of teachers by the School Committee.

Marked progress was noted in all schools. Formal courses were prescribed by the School Committee in 1870. Frequent use of "the rod" was discouraged and the School Committee expressed displeasure at the many cases of corporal punishment. In 1896 the Bassett School was moved to South Street near Cottage Street.



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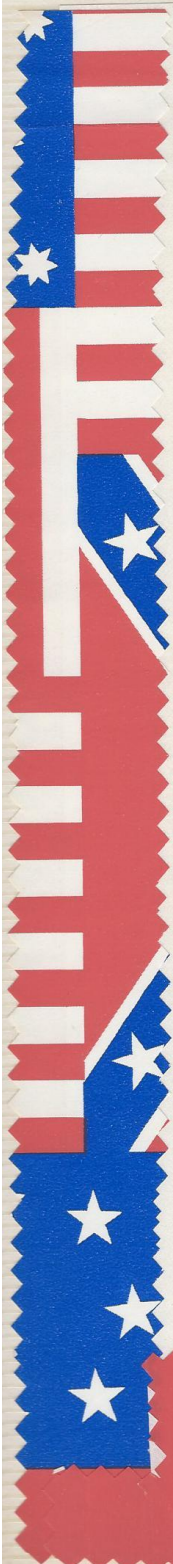
The page is framed by a decorative border made of cut-out paper with patterns from the American flag, including stars and stripes. The border is primarily red, white, and blue. At the top center, there is a semi-circular cutout with a blue background and white stars. At the bottom center, there is a rectangular cutout with a red background and white stars. The text is centered on the page.

In 1866 a two room schoolhouse was erected at 288 High Street by the Otis Building Company, District No. 14 School(Prospect School). Sixty-one primary scholars occupied the first floor classroom and forty-three grammar school scholars were in the second floor classroom of this graded school. Public water supply was introduced into the building in 1886. Twenty students were transferred to the Model School to alleviate the crowded conditions but they continued to be a problem. In 1902 major improvements were made in the school. The building was changed to face in a southerly direction; additional classrooms were added; separate cloakrooms and covered passageways to the sanitary facilities were provided.

In 1905 the superintendent received numerous complaints that some boys were indulging in smoking so that their mental powers were impaired. In 1911 the fourth classroom was completed and this served as an ungraded classroom for foreign students. In 1919 the sixth grade was moved to the McElwain School and in 1931 the fifth grade was likewise moved.

By 1942 the heating cost per student had become too high and the Prospect School had to be closed. The remaining grades(1-3) were then transferred to the McElwain School. The building was destroyed by fire in 1963. The site is presently occupied by a duplex house.






The Academy was created by an Act of Incorporation of the Legislature on February 26, 1799. Major Isaac Lazell donated the land for the building on the northeast portion of the Common. The plan of the Academy administration provided for the education of girls. Their subject matter was quite different from that of the boys. They had a teacher called a "Preceptress of the Female Department." It was however, rarely mentioned in the records.

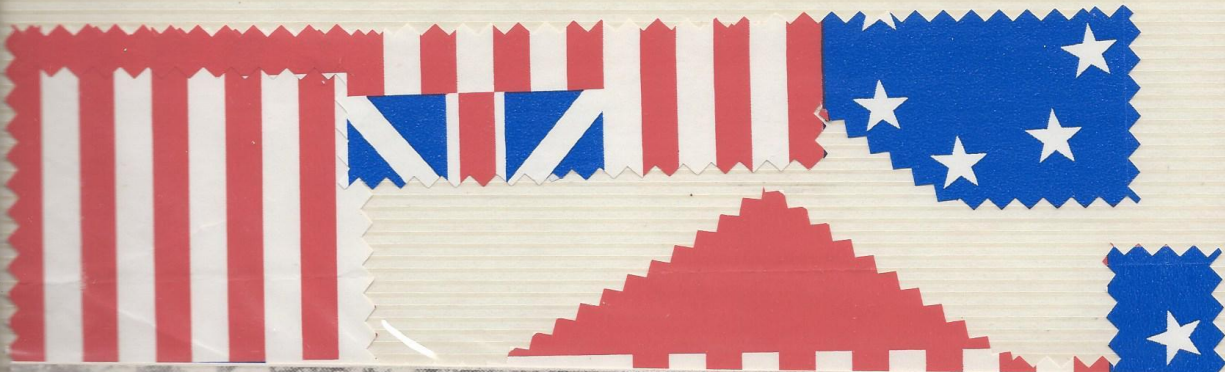
On February 22, 1822 the Academy was destroyed by fire and rebuilt at the other end of the Common. Prosperous years followed. Civil War years brought a demand to admit town students as high school students. Lacking voter approval the town established a high school in the Town Hall. Due to a demand for more space the Academy was torn down in 1869 and a large, new building was built.

Competition from developing high schools was so great that by 1876 it was closed as an Academy and leased to the town at \$400 per year for a high school (District No. 15 School).

The rental continued for many years with an ever increasing rate of \$1,200, \$1,600, \$2,000 and \$2,320.

In 1951 the Meredith Williams School became the town high school. The Academy closed its scholarly doors and the Trustees voted on October 10, 1952 to sell the Academy for the sum of one dollar. This included all land and buildings. The epoch ended. The private academy was over and done and the day of the large public school had arrived. But lest we forget the Academy did serve the Town of Bridgewater as the only high school from 1876 to 1952...seventy-six years. It should have a special salute. It was surely earned!





H SCHOOL BUILDING, BRIDGEWATER, MASS.
Printer, Bridgewater.



This scrapbook was prepared by the following:

Dr. Robert Daniel, photographer
Barbara Hewitson, art work
Eleanore MacCurdy, art work and script
Alice Wilkinson, script

for the Bicentennial Committee of the Friends of the
Bridgewater Public Library under the direction of
Dr. Robert D. MacCurcy, chairman, and presented to
the Board of Trustees on Thursday evening, April
29, 1976.

