

# EDUCATIONAL

## THE FIRST SCHOOL

The settlers at Mattanawcook gave early and intelligent attention to the education of their children. This is emphasized by the fact that in 1824, when the colony was scarcely two years old, a school-house was built and a school organized. This school-house was just over the line in number four (Winn), and very near Joseph Snow's house. We do not know the design of the house, but it was no doubt made of rough logs like the other houses in the place at the time. Jeremy Nelson, the hardy and industrious pioneer, whose home was more than four miles distant, after striking lusty blows in the clearing of his farm, devoted two winters to teaching in this section, which was not even a "deestric" but only a camp in the wilderness. The school consisted, probably, of about fifteen pupils who came from three townships, number three, number four and number one (Chester). This was in the winters of 1824-5 and 1825-6. The families living in number three were those of Aaron Woodbury, Alfred Gates, Benjamin Chesley and John Carpenter. Those in number four were Joseph Snow, Samuel Briggs, Ephraim Kyle and Elijah Brackett. Chester had two families, Moses Babcock and John Weston. Whether or not those living at what is now Lincoln Center tramped the four miles through the snow of the woods roads we do not know. At the completion of these two terms, one of the pupils of the Nelson School was deemed competent to teach. This was a daughter of Joseph Snow, probably Alice, as her sister Elizabeth had died 6 Sept., 1825, aged 20 years, the first death in the colony.

## OTHER EARLY SCHOOLS

As there were no records previous to the incorporation of the town, 30 Jan., 1829, we know but little of the history

of education, or of other affairs, till the year just mentioned. We have, however, some reliable tradition so that we may safely assume that the interest in education which was shown in the earliest years was not allowed to wane, and that schools were conducted in private houses in different parts of the settlement during these four years from 1825 to 1829. We do know, though, that a school-house was erected in Lincoln village previous to 1829, and a certain peculiar interest attaches to this first school-house in the village, especially on account of the changes it has undergone, and the fact that it is still standing. This house stood on the "hay-scales lot," opposite the Plumly store. It was built of sawed lumber, was one story high, eighteen by twenty-two feet on the ground, and fairly well lighted by windows of seven-by-nine glass. We have information that this house was built by Israel Heald, Ira Fish, Capt. Henry Buzzell, Aaron W. Huntress and Deacon William T. Roberts. By whose initiative we do not know but it appears that these five men did the work on their own responsibility and with their own hands. Mr. Fish, we may suppose, furnished the lumber. Mr. Huntress was a mason and could do the brick and plaster work, Mr. Roberts was a blacksmith and could make the nails and hardware, while all were carpenters and builders of the class required for such work. This house was completed and used for schools two or three years before the incorporation of the town. These men had fifteen pupils at the time, and there were others in the village, enough to make a very respectable school. Confirmation is given to some features of this account by the fact that the town bought this house in 1830 and used it many years as a school-house and for town meetings. One hundred and forty-two dollars was paid for the house, and nine dollars for "necessary articles" and the district was assessed for the amount.

About 1845 after other school accommodations had been provided, this old house—it was called an old house in 1837—was sold by the town to J. Milton Jewell, who moved it to the west side of Lee Street near his house, and two or three



FIRST SCHOOL-HOUSE IN LINCOLN

years later it was again moved across the street and placed in Jewell's garden, where it was used as a carpenter's shop, as it had been previously. Still later, Mr. Jewell moved the building to the north side of his house for a kitchen, and there it stood many years. It has recently been moved again, a little farther down the street. If this old house could tell the story of the hundred years, what it has seen and heard and known of the life of Lincoln, it would be a wonderful story.

It may be of interest to give a list of the tax payers of this district at this early date, with the amount of tax paid by each. The poll tax was sixty-eight cents which was paid by thirty-seven persons, and twenty-eight paid property tax.

Tax assessed on the inhabitants of district number three in Lincoln, 6 February, 1830, for purchasing, repairing and furnishing a school-house:

|                   |        |                 |        |
|-------------------|--------|-----------------|--------|
| Adams, Erastus    |        | Briggs, Elisha  |        |
| Adams, Roswell F. | \$1.82 | Barnes, William | \$1.98 |

|                     |        |                       |        |
|---------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| Buzzell, Henry      | \$3.32 | Kneeland, Abram       | \$3.06 |
| Chamberlain, Pennel |        | Kneeland, Asa         | 1.06   |
| Chesley, Benjamin   | 1.95   | Kneeland, Eben        |        |
| Chesley, Edward     | 1.97   | Kneeland, Ezra        |        |
| Emery, Nehemiah     | 3.58   | Kneeland, Nehemiah    | 3.06   |
| Fish, Ira           | 6.56   | Leighton, John        | 3.12   |
| Same for Amos       |        | Nelson, Jeremy        | 3.22   |
| Patten              | 49.86  | Osborn, Benjamin      | 3.04   |
| Forbes, Daniel      | .91    | Richman, Israel       |        |
| Frost, David        | 2.47   | Roberts, William T.   | 1.82   |
| Frost, Henry        | 2.66   | Scribner, Aaron       | .07    |
| Hall, Thomas F.     | .07    | Scribner, Daniel      | .07    |
| Hayes, Chesley      | 5.09   | Stinchfield, Jacob W. | 2.10   |
| Heald, Israel       | 11.98  | Whitehouse, Daniel    | 1.30   |
| Hopkins, Lewis      | 1.37   | Wiggin, Samuel        |        |
| Huntress, Aaron W.  |        | Willey, Hiram         | 1.84   |
| Huntress, James     |        | Willey, William       |        |

The next school-house was erected at Lincoln Center. It was located on the west side of the Military Road adjoining the Peasley farm and at the point where the Maine Central Railroad crosses the road. This was built in 1833, the assessment having been made on the 23 May of this year, of two hundred and sixty dollars for the purpose. No doubt schools were established before this date, and we can only suppose that they were kept in private houses.

We find, in 1835, an assessment made for a school-house in district number five (Transalpine). The tax payers in this district were only fifteen but they built a house costing two hundred and ninety-seven dollars.

District number seven, the Hersey district, seems to have been the next to have an assessment made for a school-house. At this time we find at least half a dozen communities whose people had made progress in the development of their farms and buildings, and who had families growing up, so that they felt the necessity for school-houses. It may be noted that

the work of building these houses was done almost entirely by the people of the community, one engaging to put up the frame, another to do the shingling, still another to build the fence, and thus the money that had been paid as taxes was returned to those who had paid it, and this plan served a good purpose, as money, in those days, was scarce.

At East Lincoln in 1838, and at Lombard's Mills in 1841, school-houses were erected, and at about the same time they seem to have been provided at Royal Weymouth's and at Taylor Goodwin's.

In 1856 the house at Lincoln Center seems to have been entirely rebuilt, and its location was changed from that previously described to a point nearly one-fourth of a mile farther south on the opposite side of the road. More than nine hundred dollars was expended here at this time; and the same or the following year three hundred and sixty-two dollars was expended on the school buildings at Trans-alpine.

There appears no record of a school building at Half Township until this time when one was built at a cost of two hundred dollars. The early history of school buildings at South Lincoln is obscure.

It seems to be difficult to determine just when the school-house on the Common at Lincoln was built, but it was probably in 1839. The writer remembers distinctly that this was an old house when he first attended school in 1854, and that the desks bore the knife-marks of former pupils who had passed from its doors to the activities of life, or to higher institutions of learning. This house, as originally constructed, had three rooms. The room on the second floor accommodated the primary class, and was also used for town meetings. The long seats in this room were movable, of dressed boards, unpainted. In the lower rooms for the second and third grades, the floors sloped strongly from the rear to the open space in front of the teacher's desk. At the north end of this space was a large fire-place, and at the opposite end a large stove near the door. The fire-place with

its flame roaring up the chimney made a grand show, but the stove gave the heat, and around that we gathered on the winter mornings. The front seats were used for recitations.

An incident occurs to the writer which is, perhaps, so unusual as to be worth relating. It was a winter in the early sixties. A teacher had been engaged to teach the highest grade of the village school, and not long after the opening of the school some dissatisfaction arose, and one day, as the teacher came up the aisle, one of the older boys seized him around the waist, carried him out through the door which had been opened by an accomplice and threw him into a large snow-drift in front of the school-house steps. This naturally closed the school. The teacher, not very long afterwards, enlisted in the Union army, became a commissioned officer of cavalry, a noble soldier, and died in the service. His assailant also enlisted and died in the army, and the accomplice who opened the door entered the army and died in a Southern prison.

This school-house, after having been repaired and remodeled two or three times, served its purpose till 1903; later it was moved to a lot near the shore of Mattanawcook Pond and is used as a fire-engine house. In this same year the fine building located on the opposite side of the Common was completed and opened with appropriate ceremonies, including an address by Hon. W. W. Stetson, State Superintendent of Schools, on the 10 Sept., 1903. The newest and the largest school building in Lincoln is that on Ballard Hill. This was authorized 17 March, 1919, and specifications were accepted at an adjourned meeting 7 April, 1919.

## SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The new State preserved the school district system inherited from Massachusetts, and one of the early affairs attended to by the State of Maine was the formation of school districts. The first attempt seems to have been indefinite and unsatisfactory, and at a town meeting held 26 July, 1834, a committee was chosen for the purpose of establishing

the lines of the several districts in the town; this committee 8 Sept., 1834, giving in detail the boundaries of the six districts into which the town had been divided. These districts were briefly, No. 1—The north part of the town. No. 2—Lincoln Center. No. 3—Lincoln village. No. 4—Enfield road. No. 5—Transalpine. No. 6—South Lincoln. No. 7 was formed soon after this by dividing No. 1, and at short intervals six others were formed, so that as early as 1842 we find thirteen school districts, and this number remained until the districts were abolished. Almost immediately, however, a series of changes began by which some were made larger and some were made smaller. Certain definite areas were changed from one to another, and one or more families were "set off" from one district to another, but the districts maintained their relations fairly well until the system was finally abolished. In 1870 began a series of enactments which radically changed the management of the schools. In the year just mentioned a law was enacted permitting towns to abolish the district, and providing ways for the town to own all school property, and manage all public schools. Another act authorized the Supervisor or School Committee to employ all teachers, and another empowered towns to purchase school books and loan them to pupils, or sell them at cost. In 1885 we find an act to facilitate the abolition of school districts, and at the annual meeting in March, 1888, the town voted to adopt the town system of schools, and at this meeting also, a Supervisor of Schools was elected. In 1889 free text-books were made compulsory, and in this same year towns were authorized to contract with High School or Academy to receive pupils from the town schools, the former to continue to receive State aid. In 1893 was passed the act abolishing the school district system. More than 150 towns had already acted under the law of 1870 and had placed all public schools under the management of the town. In 1895 a law was passed requiring the election of a superintendent of schools, either by one town or by a union of towns, and the superintendent may or may not be a member of the school

committee. In 1897 it was provided that any school failing to maintain an average of eight pupils for the year shall be discontinued unless the town shall vote to continue said school. In 1898 the School Improvement Leagues were authorized and recommended, and soon after this the principal schools of Lincoln formed Leagues. These gave names to the schools and purchased various useful articles for the schools and school-houses.

### NAMES OF SCHOOLS

The former number of district, location and name of school are given below:

| District. | Location.                   | Name of School. |
|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1         | North Lincoln               | Longfellow      |
| 2         | Lincoln Center              | Stetson         |
| 3         | Lincoln Village             |                 |
|           | Grammar                     | Dewey           |
|           | Intermediate                | Jefferson       |
|           | 2d Primary                  | Holmes          |
| 4         | Enfield Road                | Emerson         |
| 5         | Transalpine                 | Washington      |
| 6         | South Lincoln               | Grant           |
| 7         | Hersey Neighborhood         | Whittier        |
| 8         | East Lincoln                | Abraham Lincoln |
| 9         | Bagley Mountain             |                 |
| 10        | Taylor Goodwin Neighborhood |                 |
| 11        | Half Township               |                 |
| 12        | Lombard's Mills             |                 |
| 13        | Royal Weymouth Neighborhood |                 |

The above names were adopted by the School Leagues of the various schools about 1901.

### SCHOOL MONEY

Almost the first subject to engage the attention of the voters of Lincoln at their first meeting on the 6 April, 1829, was that of education, and they promptly voted \$150 for the



support of schools. It will be remembered that a school-house was built in the village two or three years before, and that schools had been conducted in this house, as well as in other parts of the town. We have seen, also, that the town bought this house a year later. At the annual meeting in 1830, \$125 was voted for schools, and two years later \$200. Five years later (1837) the amount was doubled, and the number of pupils, in the meantime, had increased from 140 in 1829 to 374 in 1837. The amount required by law at this time was forty cents for each inhabitant. This was raised in 1853 to fifty cents and in 1854 to sixty cents. In 1859, as school money from the Bank tax continued to decrease, it was placed at seventy-five cents and this continued till 1868 when it was raised to one dollar, and more recently the amount was reduced to eighty cents which is the requirement at the present time. The amount of school money voted by the town, as well as the number of pupils, increased rather steadily, with a few irregularities, till 1860, when the amount was \$850, and from this time the increase was more rapid, reaching \$1,650 in 1870.

From this time much more was received from the State and the town voted a smaller amount, that is, from 1,200 to 1,400 dollars, to about the year 1900. Superintendent reported in 1902 that fully one-third of the school money for towns comes from the State, and the proportion has probably been considerably larger in later years. The State money was derived from various sources. In earlier years it was the Bank tax and interest on the school and ministerial fund, and later the three and one-third mill tax on the property of the State, the equalization fund, and various other funds. For amount of school money, which has necessarily largely increased in later years, see School Reports.

### SCHOOL AND MINISTERIAL FUND

This fund accumulated from the sale of certain lots or parcels of land which, in accordance with acts of the Legislature, had been reserved for the first settled minister and

for primary schools. In 1832 the Legislature provided that such portions of the land as had not had the title otherwise invested should be sold, the proceeds to form a permanent fund to be held by the State, the interest to be distributed to the towns and plantations of the State for the support of schools. It was provided that the Selectmen, Treasurer and Clerk should constitute a Board of Trustees to receive this fund, unless a special Board of Trustees should be elected by the town for the purpose. This fund reached several thousand dollars, and it was, at various times, loaned to the town. A lot described as the Hersey lot near the town farm is mentioned in 1878 as the only lot of land now held by the trustees of this fund.

On petition of the town of Lincoln in 1841 the District Court at Bangor appointed as a committee to locate the three lots on Half Township reserved for the first settled minister, for the ministry and for the schools, 160 acres each. The committee appointed consisted of Isaac Hacker, James Sanders, Jr., and James Butterfield. They attended to their duty, 21 June, 1842, and reported, and their report, giving the boundaries of the three lots, may be found on file in the archives of the town of Lincoln.

Trustees of this fund were elected in 1833, as follows:

Jeremy Nelson.  
Benjamin Chesley.  
Daniel Whitehouse.  
Abraham B. Adams.  
Chesley Hayes.

In 1841 the town elected:

Richmond Hayward.  
Samuel Tobie.  
Roswell F. Adams.  
James C. Merrill.  
Timothy Fuller.