

*The following contains 143 years of Shirley school history.*

Annual Report  
of the  
School Committee  
And  
Superintendent of schools  
Of the  
Town of Shirley  
For  
Year 1900-1901

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Between 7 and 14 years for the year ending Sept 1, 1900	199
Over 15 years for the year ending Sept 1, 1900	5
Aggregate number of weeks for the year ending Sept 1, 1900	221
Number of schools for the year ending Sept 1, 1900	6
Cost of Superintendent, Shirley's share	\$71.43

As it is the closing year of the nineteenth century, it seems to me appropriate to present some extracts from the town's records, showing the development of our public schools "from the beginning." This I shall do with little comment leaving the reader to draw his own inferences from the statements made, or suggestions, which a single word will often give. All abbreviations are my own; sums of money and numbers in the records are usually expressed in words.

By an act of General Court, January, 1753, upon petition of John Whitney and thirty-two others, a tract of territory, west of the Nashua and Squannacook rivers, was set off from Groton, of which it was a part, and incorporated as a district; it received the name Shirley, in honor of William Shirley, who was then Governor of Massachusetts Colony. In 1765, the south line of Shirley was extended to Lancaster by the annexation of that part of Shirley which was extended to Lancaster by the annexation of that part of "Stowleg" west of the Nashua, a strip of land about 200 rods wide that extended from Stow, between the old towns of Groton and Lancaster, to Lunenburg. In 1798, three farms east of the Nashua, in "Mitchellville," were annexed to Shirley, but went to help form Ayer in 1871.

The first town meeting was held March 1, 1752, at the house of John Whitney; the room, in which it is said to be held, still remains as a part of the house owned by Mr. Joseph P. Thompson.

Rev. Seth Chandler, in his history of the town, says that while Shirley remained an "angle" of Groton territory no school was established within its bounds, and it was not till 1757 that any word appears as to public instruction. "Hence, a large part of an entire generation never enjoyed the privilege of passing a day within a public school-room," says Mr. Chandler.

1757, May 30, "voted to hire three months' schooling in the...

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...district and to begin about the last of August, or the beginning of September next & Mr. Jonas Longley, Mr. William Simonds & Mr. John Keley was chosen a committee and empowered to agree with some person or persons to keep said School and to assign places for the same." Presumably it was a "moving school" to be kept one month in each of three parts of the town. The first school in Shirley "was convened in an apartment of the dwelling-house of Mr. Jonas Longley" (Chandler) on the farm now owned by Mr. Herbert Holden.

"And it was also voted to provide a pair of Stocks"

'58 "Voted to raise £13 6s 8d to defray the charges which hath or shall arise in the District.'"59. There was to be 3 months schooling; the Com. To provide it was "Mr. William Little, Ensign Longley, Ensign Walker, Ensign Bennet & Capt. Harris"; "voted that the two first months be a woman School (summer) and the last month a writing or man School." "Voted to have the whole of said Schooling completed by the last of Dec. and to leave it with the Com. to appoint such places as they shall think proper."

'60. 3 months, one-half to be kept by sch. master, and "one half by school dame," Selectmen "to appoint places and provide schooling."

'61. "Voted to have 12 weeks schooling, and to be writing school"; Sept. 8, "voted that 8 weeks of the Sch. that is already voted be reading or woman School." Dex. 7, "voted to allow Mr. Amos Holden Sixteen Shillings for boarding Mr. Isaac Farnsworth whilst he was keeping School in this District"; -- Shirley's first known school teacher.

'63. "Voted to have 6 weeks schooling \*\*\* this Spring of Summer insuing (sic)"; July 5, "voted 3 months Sch'g the present year, to begin the middle of August, \*\*\* the first month shall be a writing Sch. and the other two months a reading Sch. Voted to have the writing Sch. in the Middle of the Dist. And the other two months, one month a t the South end and the other month at the North end of said Dist." Dec. 8, the first use of the "dollars" appears in the records, but it was not generally used till many years later; no separate appropriation for schools was made, and the expense must have been included...

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...in the general grant "for town charges"; "voted (Dec. 9) to hire two months Sch'g (sic) the winter ensuing, one month a writing Sch. to be kept at ye Middle of said Dist." There was always a committee appointed to carry these votes into effect this time it was "Mr. Nehemiah Holden, Mr. Richard Harrington & Obediah Sawtelle."

'64. Jonas Longley was paid "for the boarding of the Sch. Master, Mr. Isaac Farnsworth"; "3 months schooling at each end of the Dist." "Voted that the swine go at large under the restrictions of the law." Nov. 26, "voted two months sch'g (sic) the winter ensuing."

'65. They had a 3 months writing sch. for the winter, and Mar. 10, '66, the town voted 2 months writing Sch. for the winter.

'67. "Voted 6 months wimmins Sch.'g (sic)". Dec. 17, "voted to raise four pounds to be laid out in Sch'g (sic) in this Dist. The ensuing year at the discretion of the Com. (a common way of leaving votes for several years) hereafter named, viz.: Asa Holden, Elijah Wilds and Amos Doe, Com. for said purpose with Hugh (?) Smiley Capt Harris and Obediah Sawtell Com. to recon with Lieut Walker Treasurer."

'68. Dec. 29, "4 pounds; Leiut Henry Haskell (who lived at one time near the "Brick Tavern") Capt. Harris and William Little, the Com. "with discretionary power." In '69 there was a "10 weeks writing Sch." '70 the Selectmen were to provide "3 months reading Sch." Dec. 31, "voted 6 pounds to be laid out in a writing Sch." '71. "voted not to have any Schooling ye present year." '72, "voted 4 months writing Schooling," and Mr. William Little was chosen a Com. to provide it with the usual "discretionary power" as to when, where, and by whom the school shall be kept. '73, voted six months schooling to be reading School in this District the summer ensuing." In the winter they had "3 months writing Sch." '74, Mar. 7, "voted to have 3 mos. Women School" during the summer. (This gave 4 weeks in the North, Centre, and South parts of the town). Mar. 24, "voted to have 3 months writing Sch." No boys of age to work went to summer schools, and no young...

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...children of either sex attended the short winter school. Probably as to other towns—the same "marster" taught in different parts of the town.

1775. "Voted that the District be Divided into four separate Districts or Quarters and that Each Dist. Or Quarter have ye Disposal of the money assessed on them for Schooling and then Chose a Com. of five viz Capt Henry Haskell, Capt Asa Holden Capt Samuel Walker Capt Ira Harris and Mr. William Little to Divide the District as a fore said then voted to Rais (sic) Six Pounds to be Disposed of to the use of Schooling in this Dist. the Summer ensuing."

'76. Jan 1, "Voted not to have any schooling in said Town the present winter." Mar. 4, "Voted to Rais (sic) £6 for summer sch. to be disposed in the Same manner as the school money was the last year." (Nobody knows how that was).

'77. £15 for summer sch. Nov. 17, "Voted to have 3 months writing school the Winter ensuing. Voted to have the said sch. kept in Deferant (sic) places." Capt Sam' Walker John Peirce Benj Woodbury a Com. for the purpose; "Voted to Impower (sic) the above Com. to provide a Master or Masters for Said School."

The following copies of "orders" show some interesting points: "May 8, 1777 Gave Mr. Ebenazer Gowen an order fore (sic) Jonas Langley for £1-10 as a part of the School money for the year 1776." "Dec 1 1777 Gave Phileman Holdin an order for £4:5 for Mrs Nutting keeping School." Mr. Chandler says that Dame Nutting taught for many seasons in the first sch h. of the town, which was at the center near the present residence (1900) of Mr. E. B Fairchild. "It was about 20 feet square, singly covered with rough boards, without inside ceiling, but was furnished with a cellar, to which access was gained by a trap-door in the centre of the room. In one corner stood a huge fireplace, built of rough stones with chimney of the same material. The room was furnished with a few seats of rough planks, and with writing benches constructed of boards over which a plane never passed. It was customary to rent the building to some *pedagogue* or *school-marm* as a tenement, in payment for service in "teaching the young..."

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...idea how to shoot.” “This famous school-dame” is said to have been so fleshy that she could not move about readily, and so kept a very long stick—some six feet in length – with which she reduced her urchin crew to a state of due subordination while seated.: She was truly a “Madame of the Chair.”

“Jan. 9 1778 Gave Capt Sam Hazen an Order for £4-3 for Rebekah Little keeping School.”

“March 8 1779 Gave Elizabeth Wason order for £5:6:8 for keeping School.”

“March ye 23: 1779 Gave an order to Mr Thomas Warren for keeping two months for £31-0-0; to Mr Wallis Little for keeping school for one month £16-0 0.”

’78. “Voted to Raise £20 for the purpos (sic) of Schooling the Summer Ensuing.” Oct. 8, “Voted to have three months Sch.’g (sic). Ensign John Hale Capt Samuel Hazen Mr Phinehas Page a Com. to provide and apportion said School.”

’79. Art. 5, “To see if the Town will buy or Hire the Sch. h. that is near the Meeting House,” was passed over. What does this mean? The meeting house (the second one, built in 1773,) stood on or very near the spot where the soldiers’ monument is; the first meeting house stood nearly opposite the present Centre Schoolhouse. It was built in 1753 and ’54; the schoolhouse always stood near the meeting house, and it seems probable that Shirley’s first schoolhouse, if built before 1774 stood near the first meeting house. It is known that two schoolhouses have stood in the present school yard, a little south of the present building. Isn’t it very likely that the schoolhouse which the town refused to buy or hire was the private property of Dame Nutting or someone else, or that if it had ever belonged to the town, it may have been sold?

Art. 8 (Mar. ’79), “To see if the town will have any Schooling the Summer Ensuing” was also “passed over.” Nov. 6, “Voted three months Sch. to be kept in three different places in ye Town and then made choise (sic) of Mr. Nath Kezar Leut Joshua Longley and Leut Hezekia Patterson as a Com. to provide said Schooling in the Best manner they Can.”

“March ye 30 1780 Gave Mr. Amos Holdin an order for his...

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...wife keeping School eight weeks in Shirley £48-0-0” (This was in depreciated currency).

’80. Jan 13, “Voted to have 8 month Womens Schooling to be kept in four Partes (sic) of this Town ye Present Summer and fall.” Dec. 25, it was voted to have 3 months in 3 different parts of the town.

’81. Mar. 5, “Voted to Raise Twelve Hundred Silver Dollars of the value thereof in other money equil (sic) to the Same to be Imedately (sic) assessed for paying the Soldiers &c.” This is the real beginning of the word “dollars” which came into use with “specie” money. June 28, “Voted to have Sum Schooling ye present summer and that Said School be kept as above Said. Then made choyce (sic) of Capt Samuel Hazen Mr James Parker Mr. John Whiteear and Mr. Nath Kezar as a Com. to hire Saed (sic) Schooling.”

Nov. 20, 4<sup>th</sup> Art. “To see if the town will build a sch. House or Houses in this Town,” did not pass. This indicates that there was not yet a public school house in the town. The usual three months winter school, to be kept in 3 different places was voted.

’82. May 8, “Voted 6 months schooling to be kept by Women;” Com. Capt. Samuel Walker, Capt Asa Holdin, Capt Samuel Hazen, Lt. Thomas Burkner; Nov. 21, after voting not to have nay winter

schooling, "Recnd'd and voted 4 months, and chose a Comitee (sic) to Provide Said School and Perpotion (sic) it in the Several Partes (sic) of said Town at there (sic) Discresson (sic)."

'83 Had its 6 months reading school, and 3 months winter.

'84. Apr. 8, "Voted to chose (sic) a Com. to Divide the Town into Classes for Districts fit for Schooling. Lt. Wallice Little Capt Asa Holdin Capt Samuel Hazen Jeremiere Chapin Capt Samuel Walker and Capt John Egerton was Chusen (sic) for the Purpos (sic)." No record of this report exists. This year there was 6 months reading school "and eighteen weeks Righting (sic) School" kept in three parts of the town.

'85. July 7, Voted to have 12 months schooling in the summer...

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...or fall or winter, but "the descresson (sic)" of the Committee seems to have been not to have any, for "Art 8ly" (sic) in the warrant of March 6.

'86. "To See if the Town will have Sum parte (sic) of the 12 months Schooling formerly voted in this Town to be a writing Sch. Kept (sic) by a man or men now to be kept by a woman or women ye Sumer (sic) ensuing Voted that one month of the 12 months Sch'g which was voted in July Last to be a writing Sch. to be kept by men in Each Quarter as a woman Sch. In the Town." June 20, "Voted that this Town be Divided into three Classes; and also into foar (sic) Classes; Sutable (sic) for schools also voted that the assessors be a Com. to make Said Divisions and make Returns of their Doings at the next Meeting." The article under which they were acting was, "To see if this Town Will pass a vote to be Devided (sic) Into Propper Destrets (sic) Convenient for Schooling and Build a Sch. H. in Each of said Destreets (sic)." Oct. 17, "Voted six months wrighting Sch'g (sic) the winter ensuing; voted to accept of the Devisions (sic) of three winter ensuing; voted to accept of the Devisions (sic) of three Classes for schools as devided (sic) by the Committee."

This year by an act of Legislature, whereby all districts which had been incorporated previous to the year 1777 were made towns, Shirley became a town, although the word had already been used in "the records" instead of "district" for several years.

The school house in the South class stood on the lot now occupied by Mr. Wm. Cram; it was afterwards moved to the east part of the village and converted into a dwelling house, now owned by Mrs. Abel Farnsworth, and occupied by Mr. Joseph Provost. Dec. 3, after voting to have "Six months Wrighting (sic) Sch.," voted "To maek (sic) an alteration Respecting the Division of the Towns for schools and building of sch. housen (sic) from what was formerly agreed on by the Town and Voted to accept of four Classes as the Town was Divided (sic) and Voted to have fore sch. hn (sic). In Lew (sic) of Three and then Chose a comitee (sic) To build the forth sch. h. Lt. John Kelsey Ebenzer Pratt Capt. Samuell Walker was Chosen Committee for the above Purpose." Two months schooling "was added to the above six months" –doubtless for the school in the fourth...

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...class. From subsequent votes it would seem that this district was the present East.

Evidently the school houses above mentioned were the first built and owned by the town; the schools up to this time had probably been kept in private houses.

'87. May 14, after voting to have "a woman sch." for six months, "voted to build Three sch. hs. And to Raise Ninety Pounds for To Build said sch. hs. Capt Asa Holdin Capt John Egerton and Joshua

Longley Chosen a Com. To se (sic) the building of Said School Housen (sic) and voted That Each Destrict (sic) agree on a plan for those house.;" "The schoolhouse in the Centre class was located as before stated. The schoolhouse of the North class occupied the site of the present one till 1844, when it was removed and used for the blacksmith's shop; it is still standing, and is owned by Mr. Charles Holden.

'88. May 15, "Voted to have six months woman's Sch'g. the sumer (sic) ensuing and to leave it discretionary with the Com. to hire sch. Dames." Under Art. 6, "Voted that the East part be set of as a deestrict (sic) by themselves as many as choses(sic) To be set of and build a sch. h. for themselves and Draw their propotnable (sic) part of the Sch'g as Sch. money and they are To pay thair (sic) part Tords (sic) the sch. h. in the middle of the Town." Dec. 18, voted "not to have any moer Sch'g (sic) the present winter," but Jan. 29 decided to have the usual "6 months writing sch." (two months in each 3 parts of the town ?)

'89. The 6 months "woman's sch'g was voted, with "John Ivory Esqar Joshua Longley and Ensign John Heald "to provide it." There was a winter school of 6 months.

'90. Apr. 5, "voted to confine Each Destrict (sic) for Sch;'g to their own sch. as divided by the Town; to raise Twenty five Pounds for Sch'g;" (May 13) "to lay out one-third of it for a Womans (sic) sch. and the Remainder in a wrighting (sic) school next Winter; that the East part of the town have thair protinable (sic) part of the £25."

'90. Lt. James Parker bought "at Vendue" the old Continental money "at 1-10-9 per thousand Dollars."

'92. No recorded action was taken (Feb 15) "To See if the Town will cum (sic) into Sum Meethod (sic) for the futer (sic) To provide...

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...wood for the sch. in this Town," but April 2 voted "that the Com. Let out the giting (sic) the wood for the yuse (sic) of said schools To them that would git (sic) it cheapest and it be taken out of the sch. money." £50 for schools, 15 of which were for the summer.

'94. £60, one-third for woman's and two-thirds for "Righting" (sic) Schooling.

'95. "Voted to chus (sic) a Com. Respecting Classing the Town a Nau for schools." No report of the Com. appointed exists.

'96. \$200 appropriated for schools, 1-3 for summer, 2-3 for winter.

'98. \$200 for the use of "scools," divided as before and the Committee "to provide the woman's school was Samuel Hazen, Jr. Josh. Longley Esqar, Jesse Farnsworth & Oliver Page," one each from the four districts respectively—South, Centre, North, and East. "Voted that the Committee man in Each Class shall Notify the Class to meet togeather (sic) before the Righting (sic) sch. is provided."

'98, Apr. 1, after voting \$20 to the East Class towards finishing their sch. h., rescinded and dismissed the article. "Voted that Each Class shall lay out thair (sic) money as thay (sic) shall agree among themselves and for that last years (sic) committee man in Each Class to call a Meeting of their Class before thair (sic) is any of the schooling provided." This was the starting of school districts with their "prudential" committees.

1800, March 3. Population 713 Town officers elected:

Moderator, Capt Thomas Whitney  
Town Clerk, Capt. Thomas Whitney  
Selectmen, Joshua Longley, Capt John Egerton, Nathaniel C Holdin; the latter declining to serve chose Daniel Livermore  
Treasurer, Dea. Joseph Brown

Collector of Taxes, Samuel Davis, "who would do it cheapest and furnish bonds, etc." 1 penny 1 farthing on the pound, and he was chosen constable.

Surveyors of Highways, Israel Longley, Stephen Longley, Capt. Thomas Whitney, Samuel Davis, William Going, Reuben Kendall.

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Fence Viewers, John Egerton, Reuben Hartwell.  
Tythingmen, Soloman Russel, Scripture Frost.  
Surveyors of Lumber, Wm. Connant, Calvin Longley.  
Field Drivers, Leonard Egerton, James Parker.  
Sealer of Leather, Capt. Asa Holdin  
Packer of Beef, John Phelps.  
Sealer of Waits (sic) and Measures, Dea. Joseph Brown.  
Fish Reeves, Simon Holden, Amasa Hartwell, Hezekiah Patterson and Scripture Frost.  
Hog Reeves, Levi Farnsworth, & John Robbins

Apr. 7, \$150 for schools; each class to lay their share out as they think proper. \$500 for all town charges.

1801. \$200 1807. \$300

1808. Chose The Rev. Mr. Whitney (Phinehas), Wallis Little, Esq., Mr. Abel Moore, Mr. Daniel Livermore, Capt Samuel Hazen, Jr., Capt John Egerton, Mr. Nath'l Holdin, a committee to examine the school in each district. First committee of the kind in Shirley. Nov. 14, "Voted to Raise \$30 to hire a Singing Master one month."

1809. The examining committee was made three—Rev. Phineas Whitney, Dea. Brown, Mr. Joel Willard.

'10, "Voted that the people Called Shakers Should Draw their proportion of the Sch. Money in proportion to the number of Scholars (sic) they have to teach in futer (sic)."

'12. A Com appointed Nov. 2, "to see if there can be any alterations made in any of the Sch. hs. And Sch. Dists. Reported May 4, "that it is our opinion that it is necessary that one sch. h. be built near the widow McLeods(?) barn another \*\*\* near the Guide board near Capt. Staples Bridge (Mitchellville) \*\* another near the Bridge by the widow Pratts\*\* another near the old Pound place (so called) \*\* another near where the Turnpike crosses the road that leads from the M.H. to Stephens Barretts \*\* and the middle Sch. h., the South sch. h. and the East sch. h. be sold or removed and your Com. Recommend \*\* to Raise money for that purpose."

This report was accepted Mar. 1, '13, but voted "not to raise any money to Build Sch. Houses."

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Apr. 6 (1812), "Voted that it be the duty of the Com. man or men in each district to Notefy (sic) the Com. Chosen to examine the Schools when they wish them to examine the schools."

'13. An Article "To see if the Town will vote to raise and assess \$200 and give it to the East part of the Town if they will Build themselves two Sch. Hs. without any further expense to the Town," has no record as to its disposition, but from subsequent action we infer, "passed in the negative."

'14. Wallis Little, Esq., Lt. Thomas Hazen, Mr. Silvanus Holden, Majr. Longley, Mr. Nath'l Holden, Lt. Phinehas Fairbanks and Capt. Staples were chosen a committee to class the Town and to appoint places where sch. hs. May be set. The following is the report as recorded:

"A record of the District of the Town into Sch. Dists., which passed the Town meeting on Monday, May 2, 1814.

North District	
John Dwight	Mary Smith
Francis Dwight	James Cartr
Amos Day	Jonathan Nutting
John Williams	Aaron Woodbury
David Atherton	Samuel Woodbury
Eleazor C Andrews	Hezekiah Spaulding
Reuben Hartwell	John Heald
Peter Tarbell	Jesse Farnsworth
Wm. Alexamder	Nathaniel Holdin
Nathaniel Bachelor	Thomas Hassard
East North District (East).	
Oliver Laton	Widow Pratt
Simon Page Jr.	William Williams
Amasa Hartwell	Jonas Baker
Isaac Hall	Nathaniel Day
Simon Holdin	Jeremiah Stewart
Oliver Page	Widow Hartwell
Phinehas Fairbank	Joel Page
John Fairbank	
South District (Village)	
Seth Davis	Abijah Learnard
David Parker	Rices (?) Family
Widow Hazen	Benjamin Rugg
Thomas Hazen	Widow Longley
Benj* Hastings	Thomas T Hunt
John Henry	Israel Longley
Nath'l Farnsworth	Phineas Ames
Widow Vinting	Samuel Serjant
Luther Longley	Aaron Lyon
Joseph Egerton	John Egerton
Lemuel Willard	Matthew Clark
Peter Washburn	Thomas Orr

The Middle North School (Centre)	
Moses Tucker	Rev. Phinehas Whitney
Joseph Tucker	Capt Harrad
Ezra Clapp	David Livermore
Stephen Barrett	Thomas Whitney
Nathan Smith	James Parker
David Sawtell	Elisha Dodge
Jonas Page	Esqr. Longley
David Jenkins	Wm McIntosh
Moses Kezar	Roderick McKenzy
Moses Jinnerson	Deacon Brown
Daniel Dodge	Mr. Johnson
Wallis Little	Stephen Longley
Moses Chaplin	Amos Day
Thomas Jinnerson	Edward Bolton
Jesse Chaplin	Jonas Livermore
East South District (Mitchelville)	
Moody Chase	Widow Joseph Longley
March Chase	Jeremiah Richardson
Aaron Davis	Israel Willard
John Crouch	Daniel Livermore
Ira Washbourn	William Gleason
Phinehas Holdin	Thomas Peabody
Capt. Staples	James Dickinson
Nathaniel Parker	Francis Balch
Hezekiah Patterson	John Walker
Middle South District (Pound Hill)	
Doctr. Hartwell	John Kelsey
John Davis	Daniel Kelsey
Silvanus Holdin	Nath'l Livermore
Joel Richardson	Capt. Hazen
Levi Farnsworth	Artemas Longley
Dennis Page	William Conant
Capt. Parker	Abel Longley
John Kelsey Jr.	

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We a Com. \*\*\* have attended to this service and report a schedule hereunto annexed as the result of our labors; and give it as our opinion upon that if any wishes a shift to any other Dist. That if he done in Town meeting by their desire, all which is submitted by your Committee, Shirley, April 7, 1814.

This division did not include the Shakers. All the above named Com. signed the report, only "Thomas Hammond for Capt. Staples" appears.

Sept. 22, "Voted that the Two middle districts Should have Middle Sch. H. (at the Centre) and that the South district have the South Sch. H. and the North district, the North Sch. H. to dispose of as they please and that the Two East Dists. Receive \$25 each from the Town Treasurer Towards Building each of them a Sch. H."

'15. \$13 Shaker proportion of School money last year."

This second set of sch. h. were of wood, and stood, in the North, East North, South, Middle North, on the same lots, as are now occupied; the East South stood north of the F.R.R. (about 15 feet from it) and west of the highway, nearly opposite the Harris barn; the Middle South (Pound Hill, so named because the town's first "pound" was there), stood about one-third of it in the highway opposite the present brick sch. h., now around by Mr. John Holden; when the latter was built, Dr. Parker bought the old one and putting it upon "snow shoes", with two long string of oxen ("16 pairs on a side" one man says) drew it across the fields to the rear of his house (now owned and occupied by Chas. K. Bolton) where it stood until very recently. In its day it was a veritable "Little Red Schoolhouse;" it faced the south; in one end was the entry and wood room; the teacher's desk stood by the dividing partition; the great fireplace was in the middle of the north side, and across the south side were four (perhaps only three) tiers of seats in two rows made "plump against the walls," with a narrow aisle up the centre; the boys sat on one side and the girls on the other; the seats were 8 feet or more long designed to accommodate 5, 6, or 7 pupils, and were placed upon platforms rising by one step each from the front; the seat of the back tier was made against the wall of the house and extended the length of the room. Pictures of this house – "A ragged beggar sunning," and part of one of the old seats can be seen in A.E. Brown's *Beside Old Hearth-Stones*; this book, which is very readable and contains an account of Shirley's part in Revolution, and his other historical book "Beneath Old Shade-Trees," are in our library.

Our local historian, Mr. John E. L. Hazen, has the remains of one of these seats in his "collection". The second Sch. h. at the village is remembered as being square, with "hip roof" and seats on three sides placed on inclined floors. When the present brick house was built, the old one was sold to Mr. Samuel Hazen, who moved it to the south of the present residence of Mr. Thomas L. Hazen, where it stood for many years. Only the door stone now remains.

'16. Examining Com. "was Maj. Joseph Egerton, Mr. Artemas Longley, Capt. Staples, David Livermore, Mr. Oliver Loughton, Mr. Peter Tarbell, and Mr. Asa Brattlebank. The first census of school children was taken May 1<sup>st</sup> and probably as in other towns took all between the ages of 4 and 21.

Voted that after deducting \$17 for the Shakers the rest of the Sch. money be divided equally among the 6 schools.

'18. No Examining Committee chosen.

'19. \$400. "Voted that the Selectmen be a Com. to examine the Schools the year ensuing." May 3, "Voted to Divide the Sch. money the present year according to the number of scholars." "Voted to excuse Nath'l Holdin Esqr, from serving as a Com, man for Numbering the Scholars. Chose Mr. Amos Day in his Std."

'21. Examining (sic) Com. Capt. Wm McIntosh, Capt. James Parker, Capt. Stephen Shepley, Mr. Oliver Houghton, Thomas Whitney, Mr. Peter Tarbell and Dea. Nathan Willard – one from each district including the Shakers. May 7, "Voted to divide Sch money according to the number of scholars under 21 years of age."

'25. Com. to Inspect Schools contains same new names – Maj. Edgerton, MR. Summer Hopkins, Mr. Levi Dodge.

'27. \$450, \$400 to be divided according to number of scholars; of the \$50, the North East, South East, South Middle had \$12 each, the North \$10, and Shaker Dist. \$4. Conforming “to the late law of the Commonwealth” “chose a Com. of 5 to have the Superintendence and Management of all the public schools in this Town the year ensuing. Majr. Joseph Edgerton, Doct. Augustus G. Parker, Mr. David Livermore, Mr. James P. Whitney, Mr. Summer Hopkins.

'28. “Voted that a Prudential Com. be chosen in each of the Sch. Dists, in such a manner as said Dists. May decide.

'30. \$600, \$550 divided as to number of scholars; \$16 to N. E.; \$13 to N.; \$14 to South Middle; \$7 to Shaker.

'31. “Com. of superintendence and management, Rev. Russell Streeter, Rev. Hope Brown, Doc. A.G. Parker, Col. Thomas Whitney, Jr., Capt. Henry Fowle, Jr.”

'35. \$800 for schools; Dr. Parker and 6 others made a Com. “to say how it shall be divided.” The Examining Com. was Rev. Hope Brown, Rev. Seth Chandler (his first of many years service), Col. Thomas Whitney, Maj. Isaac Longley, and Mr. Jonas Nutting.

Looking over the old “Order book” of the town’s treasurer, I selected the following as showing the names of some teachers at this time, their wages, etc. “Sept. 3, 1827 gave Capt. James Parker an order for \$11 for expenses for sumer (sic) school for South Middle Dist.” “Feb. 16, 1822 gave Capt. Wm McIntosh and order for \$4410 being his due for paing (sic) the same to Jonathan C. Whitcomb for teaching school and to others for Boarding and wood in the South District the preasant (sic) winter.” “Thomas Harknes taught in the south Middle School” the same winter, and Aaron Mason in the North Middle. The Shakers’ proportion given to Dea. Nathan Willard was \$31.60. 1824, Mr. Jas Estabrook in the North East Dist. Was paid \$1.84 per cord for wood. In '38 it was worth \$3.25 per cord. This year Relief Tarbell received \$22.50 for teaching and board at the North for summer school, and Harriett Dodge received \$15 for teaching and board in the South East. Chas. P. Salsbury, Wm. G. Tuttle, Cyrus Kilburn, and J.A. Stephens were some of the male teachers in the winter of '38-9. About 1831, Miss Mary F. Gibson of Lunenburg was engaged to teach the South School. She taught 19 weeks for \$19 and her board, but meantime seems to have yeielded (sic) “her heart and hand” to Mr. Stephen M. Longley, whom she married Aug. 11, 1832; the youngest son of their eight children is Mr. Melvin W. Longley, our esteemed representative to the General Court, and member of the present School Board.

Shirley’s most distinguished school teacher – a man who had achieved even more than a national reputation, is Hon. George S. Boutwell of Groton, an ex-governor of the State, and an ex-Secretary of the Treasury of the United States. “The young man from Lunenburg” was hired by Joseph Hazen for the “Pound Hill” School; he taught from December 1834 to February 1835 – 10 weeks (?) at \$16 per month and his board; he was boarded at Dr. J.C. Parker’s; during the term Mr. Boutwell passed his seventeenth birthday. This was his first and only experience in teaching. Mrs. Cynthia A. (Longley) Edgerton, Mr. Seth Holden and Mr. John Holden, still living in town, were pupils of the school that winter.

'37. \$700, \$650 to be divided according to the number of scholars, “\$50 to be given to the smaller district as the Selectmen shall think best and proper.”

'39. The general Sch. Com. made 3 instead of 5, and "voted that the Prudential Com. in the several Districts be authorized to procure the teachers the subsequent year." This was agreed to intown meeting every year till 1875. \$800 to be divided equally among the districts after \$63 had been allowed to the Shakers. It took the following committee (one from each class) to make the division: Jonas Nutting, Sherman Willard, Edmund Longley, Thomas H. Clark, Jabez Harlow, David Livermore, and Nath'l Holden, Jr. This committee was directed "to designate the several Sch. Dists. by numbers – an act required by State law. Their report made and accepted April 1, says: "The North Middle District to be No. 1; South Middle, No. 2; South, No. 3; South East, No. 4; North East, No. 5; North, No. 6; Shakers, No. 7"

'40. \$600. "Voted not to let Peter Tarbell draw his proportion of the Sch. money to expend in the Town of Groton."

The first school report of the town filed at the State House for the year ending March 1, 1840, gives some interesting items. Population 967; valuation \$220,772; number public schools 7; scholars of all ages in the summer schools 247, Av. Att. 187; in winter 283, Av. Att. 211; children in town between 4 and 16, 297; under 4 attending school 30, over 16, 23; aggregate length of summer schools 20 months, 14 days; winter 20 months 9 days; female teachers in summer 7, in winter 1 female and 6 males; wages per month, including board (\$8.13) \$26.84 for males; for females \$10.73 (board at \$5.15). Cost of schools \$781.56.

Books used: - Speller, Emerson's; Readers, Pierpont's Series, Popular Lessons and New Testament; Grammar, Smith's Inductive; Geography, Smith's Olney's, Peter Parley's (for beginners); Arithmetic, Emerson's, Colburn's (mental, and still in use), Adams; History, Goodrich, U. States and Parley's; Comstock's Chemistry; Blake's Philosophy (sic).

The Com. (A. Brown, S. Chandler, J.O. Parker) note the poor attendance, and advise that the schools be supplied with reference and class books "to prevent borrowing". "The Reading books have had their day, though the best in their time;" they design adopting the New National Spelling Book, and say that the "Failures (of schools) are due to inattention and improvidence of parents as well as to incompetency of teachers."

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Teachers	No. Weeks	Wages per week	Board per week	No. Pupils	Av. attendance	Wood	Incidentals	Total Cost
No. 1 - Summer								
Miss Elizabeth Gibson	11	\$1.50	\$1.23	43	31			
No. 1 - Winter								
G.E. Martin	11	\$5.25	\$1.97	43	33	\$15.17	\$2.00	\$126.54

No. 2 - Summer								
Miss M. Livermore	12	\$1.25	\$1.25	27	17			
No. 2 - Winter								
Mr. Cyrus Kilburn	10	\$5.00	\$1.75	34	23	\$10.35	\$25	\$121.60
No. 3 - Summer								
Miss Farewell	12	\$1.50	\$1.50	42	36			
No. 3 - Winter								
Mr. Cyrus Kilburn	10	\$5.00	\$2.00	57	45	\$17.50	\$3.48	\$126.98
No. 4 - Summer								
Miss Susan Bennett	18	\$1.54	\$1.25	28	24			
No. 4 - Winter								
Geo. W. Little	11	\$5.00	\$2.00	40	28	\$16.00	\$7.00	\$126.25
No. 5 - Summer								
Miss A. Boutwell	14	\$1.00	\$1.33	45	34			
No. 5 - Winter								
Miss Susan Jones	17	\$2.50	\$2.00	52	38	\$15.70	\$2.65	\$127.43
No. 6 - Summer								
Miss Harriet Dodge	10	\$1.50	\$1.25	42	30			

No. 6 - Winter								
Mr. H. Davis	11 ½	\$5.00	\$2.25	37	28	\$11.00	\$3.25	\$125.22
No. 7 - Summer								
Miss A. Godfrey	10	\$1.50	\$1.25	30	15			
No. 7 - Winter								
Mr. W.M. Monteith	8 ½	\$5.00	\$1.75	20	19	\$10.50		\$95.37

Average attendance, Summer 76 per cent. Winter 75 per cent.

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'41. \$750. "To be divided as last year, except the Shakers, and that they receive in the same proportion as last year, provided they conform to the law so as to be entitled to the same, and in case they do not, then their proportion to be equally divided among the other districts." The Com.'s report says "The Shaker District, No. 7, refused to comply with the laws in relation to the management of the school" so the whole sum \$795.23 (\$47.23 from the State Sch. Fund) was divided equally among the other six schools. The schools cost \$819.33.

'42. The state offered an appropriation to any Sch. Dist. Raising an equal amount by a town tax or by individual subscription, for the purchase of the "School Library," published under the direction of the School Bd. of Education; five of these libraries came to Shirley; the movement was a step to our public libraries, now found in almost every town of the State.

'43. \$600 and \$25 additional for No.3. The districts were "divided anew and limits defined" in a long report, but the numbers and general location remained as before. The Sch. H. in No. 5 (East) was destroyed by fire, and the town refused to help build a new one. Nov. 13, "voted that the Sch. hs. be appraised by a Com. of one for each Dist. And that each district build and keep in repair all the Sch. hs." The Com. was Stephen M. Longley, Stillman D. Benjamin, Thomas Hazen, Eli Page, Harvey A. Woods, Peter Andrews, Jonas Nutting. "Voted that the above Com. be directed to build a Sch. h. in Dist. No. 5 and that the same be built of brick. Voted that the Sch. hs. in all the other Dists. be built of brick when it shall become necessary to build new ones." Frequent articles in the Warrant "To see if a kiln of brick be burnt at the town-farm" (sic) (now owned and operated by Mr. J.P. Thompson) indicates that the town made the brick of which the Sch. hs. were built.

"44. \$700 and \$25 of it for No. 3, the balance divided into 6 parts. Sch. h. is No. 1 appraised at \$300; No. 2, \$145; No. 3, \$170; No. 4, \$50; No. 6, \$50. "Voted to raise \$715 for buying the old Sch-hs. and that the Assessors apportioning...

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...the taxes shall deduct from each person's tax his proportion or share of the Sch-h. in the Dist. To which he belongs according to the appraisal of the Com. &c." The care of the Sch-hs. was left to the Selectmen;

the town treasurer was authorized to take deeds of Sch-h. sites; \$385 granted for No. 5 Sch-h. Oct 19, authorized the Selectmen to furnish stoves and necessary; out-buildings for the several Sch-hs. Dec. 23, "Voted not to build a new Sch-h. in No. 4, or repair the old one." Jabez Harlow, Nathan Holden, Francis Dwight, Henry A. Waters, Tythingmen, the last chosen, tho (sic) an article "To chose (sic) Tythingmen" appeared in the annual town warrant till 1861.

'45. "Voted to build a new sch.h. in No. 6, "and the Com. "to let out and superintend the same, Capt. Jonas Holden, Nath'l Holden, Stephen M. Longley." Nov 10, the same Com. was authorized to build a new house in No. 4.

About '35 to '40 the towns in this section of the State began to print the Selectmen's reports. They were on paper sheets about 11x16 inches. Mr. H.O. Peasley has one for the year ending Feb. 23, 1846, from which it appears that Nos, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 each drew \$120.16 of school money, and No. 3, \$145.16; paid the Sch Com. for services for '44 – Rev. H. Brown, \$7.75, Rev. S. Chandler, \$7.25, Dr. J.H. Streeter, \$7.25, Dr. E.P. Hills, \$7.30; paid John Taylor for building sch. h. in Dist. No. 6, \$477; E.C. Andrews for land for same \$10; A.K. Going for stoves and pipe for Sch.hs, \$68.25

'48. General Com. Rev. Seth Chandler, Rev. Josiah A. Coolidge, Rev. Joseph M.R. Eaton.

A committee of the Selectmen, John R. Going and S.D. Benjamin, to see about building a new school house in No. 3 (Shirley Village), reported May 20, that the people think the district ought to be divided, a new schoolhouse built on the north side of the Catecoonamaug, and the house on the south side of this stream repaired. It was voted to divide the district, calling that per north of the brook District No. 8; also to build a new house and have it ready by Nov. 1, granting \$600 for it. The Town House was built, the town having received towards it \$500 by will of James P. Whitney.

'49. \$800. Town House reported as actually costing...

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...\$2876.30 including "seats and desks in the school room,: which was a room at the north end of the lower floor, 25 ft. 6 in. x 34 ft. 6 in. x 9 ft.

'50. Jan. 1, "Voted to furnish a Chair to the several sch. hs. in town for the use of the Teachers in the respective Dists. Examining Committee, E. Dana Bancroft, Rev. Benton Smith, Rev. Seth Chandler. Apr. 1, "Voted to raise and assess \$10 to be awarded by the Sch. Com. at their discretion, in a map, globe, or other useful articles, to one or two of the Dist. Schs. As a token of commendation for the best constancy and punctuality in attendance of the schools during the ensuing year. Such token of commendation to be kept at the sch. h. of such district for the use and benefit of the school." From "The Minutes of the School Committee," begun in 1838, and which contain a great many interesting facts, I make the following extracts for this semi-centennial year, mainly in the words of record:

March 27, Mr. E.D. Bancroft, the first appointed member of the Sch. Com. for the current year, called a meeting at his house \*\*\* for the annual organization. Rev. Benton Smith was chosen ch. And Seth Chandler sec. \*\*\* April 15 \*\*\* attended to the examination of Miss Nancy P. Dodge of Littleton, and being satisfied with her moral and literary qualifications, approbated her as teacher of the school in Dist. No. one for the ensuing summer term. \*\*\* May 11, at No. 8, examined Mrs. Martha A. Hazen, Shirley; Cordelia A. Brown, Groton; Maria Bolls, Littleton, and Julia A. Sprague, Boston/ Misses Bolls and Brown were suspended for a time on some branches, but were subsequently fully approved and placed in their schools. Miss Sarah H. Longley and Miss Eliza A. Boynton were approved for schools in Nos. 3 and 4.

No. of scholars between 5 and 15: No. 1, 43; No. 2, 11; No. 3, 29; No. 4, 27; No. 5, 25; No. 6, 40; No. 7, 10; No. 8, 28; total, 213. Oct. 12 Decided to adopt Webster's Dictionary, and furnish them for each school except No. 7 – the Shaker School. The teachers approved for the winter terms were (Nov. 1) Miss Caroline Barrett for No. 8 (Nov. 30),...

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...Alpheus A. Adams, Charles Jacobs, Theodore A. Gardner, J. Wheelock Hatch, Geo. A. Nutting, Geo. W. Davis, for No. 3. About this time "The Com. met at the sch. h. in Dist. No. 0 (sic), to consider a complaint against the teacher, preferred by Mr. A-B- (sic), and concerning the treatment of his daughter. After a full and patient hearing of the parties in the case, it was unanimously decided that the matter of complaint is not sustained by facts, and that the school be allowed to proceed, the teacher having done nothing but her duty. The charge against Miss --- by Mr. B--- was that she had prejudiced the other scholars against his daughter by requiring them to vote that they would have no social intercourse with her."

'51. Receipts of the town for the year ending Mar. 1, 1851, \$3758.03; Expenses \$3422.23. An Article "to unite Nos. 1 and 2" – the first move towards consolidation was "dismissed". Nov. 10, the Com. on No. 3 Sch-h. appointed Apr. 2, '57, was discharged; to build in No. 3, to unite Nos. 1 and 2, 3 and 8, "passed over". It was, however, voted to paint No. 3 Sch-h.

'52. \$900 for Schools. 300 copies of the Sch. Com.'s report voted to be printed; heretofore they had been read intown meeting and "placed on file".

'53. \$1200, and \$100 of it applied to the Shaker Dist. (the Shakers evidently "conforming to the law") and the balance divided equally among the other 7 Dists. The Phoenix Manf. Co. "South of Cattaconamung (sic) and south of the road leading to the Shakers" annexed to No. 8.

'55. "Voted that Dists. Nos. 3 and 8 be authorized to united provided they shall consent, and that the Town build a Sch-h. suitable for the convenience of the Dist. To have graded schools, and that the Selectmen be a Com. to build and locate the same; Voted to build a new Sch-h. in Dist. No. 1 and that the Superintending Sch.-Com." and Jeremiah C. Hartwell be a Com. to do it; the Sch-Com. and Dr. James O. Parker were authorized to build a new Sch-h. in No. 2. May 5, voted not to build NO. 3, and appropriated \$600 for No. 2. Aug. 4, the town accepted the bequest of Hon. Leonard M. Parker, late of Shirley, deceased, made in his will May 25, 1854, and probated Sept 19, of the same year. "I give and bequeath to the inhabitants of...

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... the town of Shirley, the sum of four thousand dollars to constitute a fund for the endowment and support of a High School for the benefit of all the youth of the town, &c. \*\*\* It is my further plan the school shall be established in the Centre of the town, as near as may be, being the most convenient point for general accommodation, besides combining quietness, health and pleasantness of location, with much beauty of natural scenery. \*\*\* Intellectual and moral culture, - minds richly stored with knowledge, wisdom and virtue: - these are the best legacies which children can receive from their parents. These are the life-preserving powers of our republican government. The design of this school is to furnish means for thus cultivating and thus enriching the minds of the young through coming generations. It is not to take the place of the common schools of the towns, but to come in aid of them, to be an addition to them, and of a higher grade; so that all, at a suitable age, may come from these Schools and here be carried forward in all the departments of learning essential to a thorough English education." In a codicil dated June 28, Mr. Parker bequeathed a further sum of \$500 for the purchase of

about two acres of land, known as Parker Grove, where he hoped might be erected a building for the accommodation of the School. The increase of the Parker Fund, has during late years been added to the "School Assets;" the principal comprising the fund remains intact and now amounts to \$5040.57. The "Centre of population" has long since moved from Dist. No. 1, and there is no probability that a High School will ever be built where Mr. Parker wished it.

'56. \$1300; \$100 to the Shakers, \$100 to Nos. 3 and 8 in equal amounts, and the balance divided into 7 equal parts; "Voted to build No. 3 with two apartments suitable for graded schools, (one apartment to be occupied jointly by Nos. 3 and 8), on same spot or within 50 ft. of where the old one stands"; the Selectmen, Geo. W. Sanderson, Wm. M. Edgerton, Israel Longley, Esq, and M.T. Gardner were the building Com. No. 1 Sch-h. was voted to be built, and \$5000 appropriated to defray the necessary expenses of the Town for the ensuing year."

'57. It was voted as usual that the Prudential Com.'s be...

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...authorized to contract with teachers, "Except the high school in Shirley Village, which is to be under the direction of the Sch. Com. and to be supplied by them with a teacher." The Exg. Com. call this school the "Intermediate" and sometimes "the Upper" department.

'58. Conforming to the legislation of '57, Rev. Seth Chandler was elected a number (sic) of Sch. Com. for 3 years; E. Dana Bancroft, Esq. for 2 years; S.W. Shattuck for 1 year.

'59. Sch-hs. insured (?)

The school report for '59-'60, the oldest of those in the library, gives the following items:

Teachers, summer, No. 1, Mary M. Longley, Shirley; No. 2, Frances A. Bennett, Groton; No. 3-8, primary, Ellen N. Foster, Shirley; No. 3-8, intermediate, Lucy J. Bennet, Groton; NO. 4, Mrs. Anna B.C. Roberts; No 5, Louisa E. Stone, Groton; No. 6, Fannie E. Kilburn, Holden; No. 7, Roxlana L. Grosvenor. The school year was gradually lengthening, and there were fall terms in Nos. 3, 8, and 4, with the same teachers.

The winter terms were taught by Samuel N. Bartlett, Townsend, No. 1; John L. Hildreth, New Ipswich, No. 2; Ellen N. Foster, primary, Mary M. Longley, Middle, Stephen M. Longley, upper departments, Nos. 3-8; (these three teachers were all of Shirley); Fannie E. Kilburn, No. 4; Miss M. C. King, No. 5; Charles McClintock, Hillsboro', N.H., No. 6; Thomas M. Upham, No. 7. The summer term was 12 weeks; the fall 10, the winter 8 to 14; school kept 22 days per month – 6 days every other week; wages of female teachers, including board, was from \$12 to \$18 per month in summer, \$18 to \$22 in fall, \$20 to \$26.40 in winter; male teachers \$14.06 to \$37 winter; cost of fuel, \$119.04; costs of care of sch.hs., \$23; in town between 5 and 15, 275; pupils of all ages 523; per cent. of attendance, 80; tardiness, 1429; No. half days absence 14,204; pupils, summer, No. 1 31, No. 2, 13; No. 3-8 primary, 56; intermediate, 39; No. 4, 20; No. 5, 27; No. 6, 21; No. 7, 11; fall, No. 3-8, 49, Av. Att. 45: No. 4, 17; winter No. 1, 40; No. 2, 22; Nos. 3-8, 26, 29, 29, 37; No. 4, 23; No. 5, 30; No. 6, 31, No. 7, 7. (sic)

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The Com. say, "Those scholars under teachers who have well, faithfully and efficiently discharged their duties, have shown, at the final examinations, much progress and advancement in their studies. \*\*\* Other schools have been brought prematurely to a close. \*\*\* The Common Schools are the Institutions in which the great mass of the people are educated. Our Free Schools are our pride and

boast. May not some of the difficulties we have had in the Winter Schools in this town have had their origin, or have been aggravated by a dissatisfaction with the law and its exercise by the Com.? (the law of '59 abolishing the districts and giving the Supt'g Com. power to hire the teachers). Nearly every man in a district expects, in turn, to be 'clothed with a little brief authority.' \*\*\* The teacher must be thoroughly conversant with all the branches taught. He must have a taste for the vocation; \*\* devote all his energies to the task; \*\* have a ready and happy manner of explanation \*\* and of communication of his own knowledge. Above all, he must possess a *tact* for the business. 'Talent is something; tact is everything.' \*\* The co-ordinate (sic) powers must unite with the teacher. Parents and guardians must come to the labor. (The increase of subject matter in papers and books have drawn discussions away from the teacher somewhat, judging from what is recorded 50 years ago). Should the teacher be a stranger, every parent and scholar must have his biography; learn where his is from; what his business is; what his age; what is to be his future course of life. His personal appearance, his dress, his every manner, the very cut of his hair are fit subjects of remark. Public rooms are crowded, of evenings, by a company eager to discuss the merits, or more anxiously the demerits, if any can be found, of every teacher in town. \*\*\* A school is a harp of many strings; if one be discordant the harmony of the whole is destroyed. One vicious scholar may be a nucleus around which will gather a force which will produce an irrepressible conflict. \*\*\* Our citizens have done well and much for educational purposes. They have been liberal in the appropriations of money for support of schools. \*\*\* Will they, when the law...

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...requires every town to raise money sufficient to enable every scholar to attend school not less than six months a year, appropriate only enough for 18 or 20 weeks? Will they drop down several hundred dollars from their former amount? Tell it not. Let not such a fact go upon the record and rest in the archives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

"We have sch. hs. probably not surpassed by a country town in the State; the extent of territory, population and wealth being considered. We have 7 houses exclusive of the Shakers; all of brick, and built within a comparatively recent period; fitted for 8 schools; and at a cost of nearly \$11,000. Most of them fitted and furnished in modern style. IN comparison with houses of the past, they may be termed truly elegant." \*\* James O. Parker, Seth Chandler, Samuel W. Shattuck, Sch. Com.

'60. \$1000; "Voted to delegate the power to the several Sch. Dists, to choose their own prudential Com's; "The Sch. Com. consisted of nine: - Charles Brown, William Boynton for 3 years; Sam. W. Shattuck, Henry Edgarton (his first year of long but continuous service in the Sch. board) for 2 years; O. N. Wing, James Gerrish for 1 year were added. Mr. Chandler, resigning, Mr. T.W. Upham was appointed. "Voted that the Sch. Com. appoint a Superintendent to do all the business required of said Com. and that he be allowed for the service fifty dollars."

May 10, the Com. of nine voted "that a Com. of 3 be chosen who shall make, in chief, the examinations of the teachers, and have charge of the schools and make all legal visits, in such manner as they shall agree, and the compensation for such service shall agree, and the compensation for such service shall be \$75; as that Com. Parker, Shattuck and Brown were elected."

Dec. 1, "Voted that the Devotional exercises in the schools consist of the daily reading of some portion of the Bible or New Testament, and the repeating of the Lord's prayer in concert on Monday mornings, and the repeating Decalogue at the close of the week's exercises." This order was frequently changed by subsequent committees.

Shirley had a "select school" in the Town House from 1848...

...to 1860, or later; it was maintained by tuition and private subscription (?); the town, as a town, had nothing to do with it, tho (sic) by some arrangement it was supervised by the general Sch. Com. It was a fall school, of 12 weeks. This is a copy of one of its announcements:

SHIRLEY HIGH SCHOOL

The Fall Term of this School will commence at the School Room in the Town House in Shirley Centre, September 10, 1855, at 9 o'clock A. M., under the charge of

J.G. Scott, Principal.

First grade of Instruction,	\$3 50
Second " "	\$3 00
Third " "	\$2 50

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE.

J.P. Longley, T.W. Wellington,  
Stephen Roberts.

VISITING COMMITTEE.

Rev. S. Chandler, Rev. E.W. Coffin,  
E.D. Bancroft, Oliver Howe,  
S.W. Shattuck.

Charles A. Goodrich, now living at Lunenburg, was its last teacher in '58, '59, '60. A feature of this school was its closing "Exhibitions" in which every member had a part; from the program printed by Henry L. Brown, Groton Junction, for "Wednesday Eve., Nov. 28, 1860, To commence at precisely 6 1/2 o'clock (sic)." The following list of the pupils is obtained:

Thomas Hazen,	Hattie Wright,
Susan Buss,	Anna Dodge,
Fanny Reed,	Granville Fairbanks, <sup>1</sup>
Alphonzo Blood,	George Buss,
Charles Chandler,	David Kilburn,
Thomas O'Connor,	Charles Page,
Melvin Longley,	Georgie Patterson, <sup>2</sup>
Kate Spaulding,	Eldora Blood,
Julia Page,	Lucy Kilburn,

Lizzie Chandler,	Ellen Buss,
Josie Barrett,	Susan Hartwell,
Almeda Dyke,	Minna Brownson,

Savillion Longley,	Jacob Hazen,
Samuel Hazen,	James Parker,
Augustine Jenkins,	Samuel Barrett,
Mary Page,	Lizzie Hartwell,
Lizzie Ramsdell, <sup>1</sup>	Charles Reed,
Stillman Holden,	John Ramsdell,
John Chandler,	Walter Page,
George Kittridge,	Henry Heath, <sup>1</sup>
Henry Walker, <sup>1</sup>	Alonzo Blood,
Josie Page,	Herman Hazen,
Ellen Reed,	Mary Neat,
Clara Blood,	Josie Barrett,
Maria Chandler,	Lizzie Roberts,
Florence Roberts,	Charles Robbins,
Arabela Robbins,	Maria Chandler.

<sup>1</sup> Lunenburg. <sup>2</sup> Pepperell

The teachers in this school were Mr. Farnsworth, '48' Mr. Powers; Wm. A. Wild, '52' Mr. Holland, '54' Mr. Scott, '55; Mr. Sanderson, '56; Mr. Graves, '57' Mr. Chas. A. Goodrich, '58, '59, '60.

'61. Sch. Com. reduced to 3; Frederick W. Pope elected for 3 years.

"Voted that the thanks of the town be presented to Rev. Seth Chandler for his useful Service during 25 years as Sch. Com." Mr. Chandler served several years after this on the Sch. Com. and held other town offices. "Voted that the Supt. of Schools appointed by the Sch. Com. be paid \$1.50 per day for his actual service and nor more, and that the other Com. receive no compensation for their services."

\$1300; \$100 to Shakers; \$162 to No. 1; \$438 to Nos. 3 and 8; \$150 to each of the other Dists. 3 3/8 of the state money to go to Nos. 3 & 8 and the rest to each Dist. According to number of scholars. It is said that at the March meetings for many years, no matter consumed so much time in discussion, as how the school money should be divided.

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Mar. 27. The Sch. Com.'s record is "Chose J.O. Parker, M.D. Supt. of public schools, (Shirley's first superintendent); Dr. Parker then Resigned as Sec of the Board, and W.B. Boynton was chosen to his office."

'62. The Sch. Com. are to have \$1.50 per day "for all necessary duty they have to perform for said schools."

Apr. 23. The Sch. Com. elected A.J. Clough, Esq. (a member of the Board), superintendent; Nov. 29, "Resolved that in as much as Mr. Clough has not attended to his duties, as superintendent during the Autumn term, his office be and is hereby declared vacant;" Rev. D.H. Babcock was then elected "on first ballot." After this year Shirley had no superintendent of schools, till 1893.

'63. Rev Seth Chandler, member or Sch. Com. for 3 years; voted *not* to abolish the Sch. Dists.; passed over the article as to Supt. of Schools.

'65. \$1800 for schools.

'66. Rev. Seth Chandler elected for another 3 years; \$1400: \$100 to Shakers \$1200 divided as in '64, and the balance including state money according to the number of scholars.

Nov. 17. Jacob P. Hazen "was approbated" for No. 5, where he taught several winters in succession. The following year, Herman S. Hazen began his many winters of teaching in Shirley schools at No. 4.

'57 (sic). \$1700; \$100 to Shakers, \$125 to each of the other Dists., and balance according to scholars. Henry Edgerton, 3 years. Mary M. (Goss) Nickless taught this year in No. 3, supper department.

'69. \$2000; Dr. J.O. Parker for three years, Rev. A.J. Dutton.

'70. School appropriation "to be expended by Town's Com as they think best."

'71. Herman S. Hazen elected for 3 years. \$500 voted to Mr. Chandler upon the publication of History of Shirley. It came out in 1883.

'73. \$2500 for schools; Jacob P. Hazen elected for 3 years.

'74. \$3000, to be divided at discretion of Sch.Com. Dec. 7 H.S. Hazen for No. 1, Melvin W. Longley for No. 2, J.P. ...

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...Hazen for No. 6, Hattie C. Longley for No. 4 were approved as teachers.

'75. Voted "to abolish the Sch. Dists." and "the year in and year out" articles respecting the "prudential com's," and "to see if they will authorize the Prud. Com's. to contract with teachers" appear no more in the annual warrant. While the town had clung to these forms, fearful lest "they lose a right they possessed," with few exceptions for several years back, the Prud. Com.'s did little but "provide wood and care for the sch.hs." The organization of the sch. com. was Dr. Parker ch., J. P. Hazen, sec.; Herman S. Hazen was the other member. They voted not to have a school in NO. 4. The teachers "examined and approved" for the summer schools were Mr. H.L. Morse, Sherborn, for Grammar Sch; Miss Anna Bancroft, Primary; Mrs. T.H. Putnam, Intermediate; Miss M.F. Longley, No. 5; Miss Mary E. Adams, No. 6; Miss M.K. Morse, No. 7; Mr. G.P. Rich, No. 1. The new teachers for winter were H.S. Hazen, No. 5; Miss Addie Jones, No. 3; J.H. Warren, No. 6. Wages had advanced since 1860. In '76 the Com. offered Mr. L.H. Morse \$600 for 36 weeks; Miss Jones, \$300 for 33 weeks; Miss Bancroft \$38 per month; Miss Nellie Park \$323, No. 1; Miss Lizzie Longley \$28, NO. 6; in '77 Miss Clara Bancroft \$40, Centre Sch.; these sums probably did not include board. The schools cost '75-6, \$2,642.30, repairs on sch. hs., \$275.52.

'76. \$2500, and \$100 for conveying such pupils as the Com. deem expedient, the town having voted "to rescind the vote to have school kept in every district."

'77. \$1800; \$400 to repair No. 8. The houses in Nos. 8, 6, 5, and 4, were built about alike, and as No. 6 now remains with small, high windows; No. 5 was removed or torn down when Mitchellville was attached to Ayer, and Nos. 5 & 8 remodelled (sic), windows cut down, and about this time all the schools were furnished with modern furniture – "patent desks".

Mr. Chandler says (writing about this time), "within the last 20 years more than \$20,000 have been expended on school buildings, the amount raised for the support of schools nearly trebled, while the increase of population has been comparative..."

...small. The public finances, for several years, have been sufficient to sustain each school for 24 weeks during the year; and for the future the time will be lengthened to 30 weeks, divided into 3 terms of 10 weeks each."

'78. \$2,000, and \$100 for conveying pupils.

'79. \$1800, and \$100.

April 5. The Sch Com. "appointed Frank F. Murdock for the Grammar School for the Summer term at \$40 per month." Mr. Murdock was paid \$75 per month for the fall term, and \$200 for the winter term. Mr. Murdock was afterwards a teacher in the Bridgewater Normal School, and was made principal of the North Adams Normal School, at its opening in Feb. 1897, a position which he now holds.

'80. \$2,000, and \$100.

'81. The Sch. Com. consisted of Sam'l Longley, 3 years; Melvin W. Longley, 2 years, Sec.; J.P. Hazen, 1 year, Ch., completing his second term of 3 years.

'82. \$1900, and \$100; Mr. Jonas Longley for 3 years; he served in all 6 years.

Care of sch. hs. cost 35c., excepting Union, which is 75c. per week, winter term.

Truant officers are appointed for the first time – Albert Adams, Samuel B. Scott.

'83. \$1800, and \$100; Mrs. Martha J. Conant, elected for 3 years, - the first woman on the Shirley Board of Education; Mrs. Conant was secretary and Mr. Samuel Longley ch. Of the Board in its organization. Mr. Frank L. Keith of Bridgewater was engaged for No. 3, \$75 per month, spring term. The teachers were now all females, excepting in the Grammar school. Nov. 14, Mrs. Conant resigned and Mr. C.A. Kilburn was appointed to the vacancy. Mr. Jonas Longley became Sec. Miss Mirande Steele taught the Grammar Sch. – the first female teacher this school had in the winter term, \$75 per month.

'84. \$2,000 and \$100. Mr. John Whitely, the new member, 2 years. Geo. C. Boutwell for 3 years. Mr. Jonas Longley was chosen chairman and also secretary.

The Sch. Com. "were authorized to provide additional school...

...room in Shirley Village if they deem it necessary." The free text-book law was made compulsory.

'85. The matter of giving \$100 to the Shaker Dist. Was left to the Sch. Com., who decided to give the Dist. \$200. Mr. James Longley was the first supply agent of the town, having "charge of purchasing and distributing books for the ensuing year," the expense of which was \$519.10.

'86. \$2,200, \$100 out of this for transportation. The Sch. Com. voted to grant No. 7 \$125, and to give teachers' certificates for more than one term.

'87. \$2,000, and \$100 for transportation. There was no Intermediate school in the spring. The name of Miss Mary M. Longley, for so many years a teacher in the town schools, appears for the last time in Dist. No. 5.

'88. \$2,000. Mrs. N.J. Rowell began her service as member of Sch. Com., that continues 9 years, during which time she was its Sec.; Mr. J.P. Hazen was Ch.; the other member was Geo. C. Boutwell,

Com. on Supplies. The study of music began in the primary school, winter term, using a Normal Music Chart.

'89. The primary school had 66 pupils, and Miss Ruth K. Burrage was employed as an assistant, for the year, using the present supply room, as a recitation room. Shaker Dist. Had a Normal teacher. Carrie M. Bunce, 11 weeks, the last school in No. 7, 7 pupils.

'90. \$2300. Mrs. Mary M. Nickless, 3 years.

Dec. 20. The Sch. Com. adopted a course of study prepared by Mrs. Nickless and Mrs. Rowell, which was ordered printed in pamphlet form and to be put into operation the next spring term. "Ventilation for No. 3 Sch. h." put in at cost of \$684.61. Total receipts for school purposed \$2662.39; total expenses, not including "ventilation," \$2557.86. Mr. Albert S. Colburn was employed to introduce music in all the schools, \$100 of the sch. appropriation having been allowed for this purpose.

"The salary of individual members of the Sch. Bd. was made \$50.00 for the present year."

It was this year that the generous legacy of the late Mrs. Sarah P. Longley, for the benefit of the Village schools, was...

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...received. The fund is held in trust by the Town of Shirley, which "shall annually pay the income or interest of \$4000 of said sum towards the support of the Union or High School that shall be kept in that part of Shirley now called Shirley Village, and that the income or interest of \$2000 shall be paid. \*\* towards the support of the Intermediate and Primary schools \*\*" The bequeathment (sic) is to be known as the "Israel Longley School Fund."

'91. \$150 additional for sch. supplies.

'92. \$2550 for all sch. purposes, which contains \$200 for a superintendent, the town meeting to adopt district superintendency (sic). Mr. Henry Edgerton began another 3 years of service, which has been lengthened to the present time. The Sch. Com. finding it impossible to enter a union with any surrounding town, (Aug. 7) "secured the services of Mrs. Susan M. Barker of Ayer as Superintendent."

'93. \$1900 for general expenses; \$75 for Sch. supplies; \$50 for transportation; \$200 for Supt. of Schools. Voted to sell the sch. h. and land in No. 2 at auction.

'94. \$2650, and special appropriation (\$50 this year) began to be made for "repairing sch. hs." The lower room in the Union building, divided into two, and an "upper" primary school established.

'95. \$2600 in all; this included \$200 for the purpose of forming a District Union with other towns under a general superintendent. In April, a union was formed with Bolton, Boylston, and Harvard, and Chas. L. Clay, of Littleton, N.H. was elected superintendent, entering upon his duties July 1. Mr. Frank L. Keith was elected for the unexpired term of Sav. H. Longley – 1 year.

'96. \$2750. The town voted to build a two-room sch. h. which was located near No. 8 building, and granted \$5000 for the purpose. It was built under the supervision of Henry Edgerton, G.M. Ballou, and Jacob P. Hazen.

'97. \$3150; this includes \$150 for paying tuition of pupils attending high school out of town according to State law; \$500 for furnishing the new sch. h.

'98. \$3370, total.

'99. \$3450, including \$150 for and evening school. Mr. W. H. Wilbur, Sec. of the present Sch. Com. elected for 3 years.

Private schools, 20 to 40 years ago, were often kept in town when the public ones were not in session, and often the public schools were lengthened out by private subscriptions. Luther S. Bancroft used to keep a good private school; about 15 years ago there was a kindergarten for a time, taught by Miss Walker.

Before making a more special report for the year now closing, I wish to record my pleasure in being able to present even this meagre account of an important interest of the town, and in which so many present residents took part.

"The Country School" by Clifton Johnson, (which is or ought to be in the library), will recall "the happy school days" of the older people, and give "the young folks" a good idea of "deestric skule" (sic) in their grandparents' time. An excellent picture of the Olden School, when the master mended the quillpens (sic), is found in Feb. No. of Ladies Home Journal, 1901.

1900. The year closes March 1, 1901, and has been one of more progress, and less "friction" than usual. I wish to call especially attention to the table of School Statistics, which shows the marked increase in many ways; it seems that the town has received more for it money (school appropriations) than ever before. The only change in teachers occurred in the grammar school. At the Centre the school has been unusually full, the only 6 pupils have come from the North, and 8 from the East Dists.

The schools at the village are all full, and the grammar room with 42 pupils in 4 grades is more than any teacher can care for to best advantage to the scholars attending. The employment of an assistant for half the day, to be in the building at the noon hour and to assist in preparing and looking over work, gives only very partial relief. More pupils are remaining in the upper grades, and attending high schools than heretofore.

In my first report ('95-6), your superintendent recommended "The erection of a new building of three rooms and the enlargement of the Intermediate building (No. 8) to one of four rooms. We should then, in either case, have one room in reserve, to be finished and furnished when required for use." ...

...Realized conditions prove the wisdom of the recommendation. As it is, a room for temporary purposes might be provided "in the roof" of the new building, in which could be put the IX grammar, the X and XI grades of the high school (first two years). The expense of a teacher for this room would not be so large as at first appears, for the town would save paying the tuition of pupils attending at Ayer and Fitchburg for two years. We have had several such pupils this year and there are 9 more expecting to go this fall, whose tuition (if all attended out own high school) would go well towards the salary of another teacher. Such a school would have a tendency to increase the value of our lower schools and tend to keep more pupils in the schools till they had completed the full course; then there is an individual expense and a moral danger in sending children of 13 to 16 years, especially girls, away to school on the cars. Shirley has wealth and population enough to maintain, as its own, one of "The People's Colleges." I respectfully commend the earnest consideration of this matter to the voters at the coming meeting.

In April the Superintendent presented a course of study for the elementary schools of the district, to the Joint Committee, which was adopted.

The legislature passed a law making supervision compulsory after 1902.

It is with much satisfaction that I am able to acknowledge the continuance of the pleasant relations of all my co-laborers, pupils, teachers, committee, parents and other patrons of the public schools.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charles L. Clay

March 1, 1901.

The foregoing report of the Superintendent was accepted by the School Committee and adopted as their report for the year.

W.H. Wilbur, Sec. of Com.

Shirley, March 2, 1901.