

Returns of the society show the following names upon its roll:

Timothy Reed  
Thomas Prentis  
Orvis Jones  
Joseph Comstock Prentis  
Lloyd Wells  
Samuel Long  
John Sloan  
Joseph Palmer  
David Skinner  
Hiram C. Skinner  
F. M. Taylor  
G. N. Griffin  
James C. Dow  
Samuel P. Ellis  
Harry Hawley  
Otis Wallis  
Aaron Palmer  
Dewitt C. Strow  
Moses Dow

Daniel Shepherd  
Almon Joslin  
Cornelius Emerson Joslin  
Henry Orlando Skinner  
Elisha Benton Richardson  
Ithamar Smith  
Cyren Joslin  
John Waterman  
Julian Dumas  
Gorham Matthews  
Wm. H. Pike  
Jennison Joslin  
Chandler Taylor  
Patrick Moriarty  
Ezra Osgood Joslin  
William J. Skinner  
Andrew Long  
Joseph Wallis  
Lyman Prindle

D. Jackson Gale

#### *Waitsfield Unity Society.*

On July 28, 1888, a religious association was formed under the name of "The Waitsfield Unity Society," the formal agreement therefor being recorded four days later. This society was organized through the efforts of Miss Helen G. Putnam for the purpose of "maintaining a religion of Liberty, Holiness and Love," and the motto "Not in the Creed but in the Deed" was adopted. Milo Albert Bushnell was clerk, and several who had been previously interested in the Universalist Society were found upon its rolls. Preaching was maintained through the summer of 1888, Miss Putnam occupying the pulpit most of the time; but after the annual meeting on December 27, 1888, no further activity was manifested.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### EDUCATION.

Samuel Williams, in his History of Vermont (1794) says "one of the first things the new settlers attend to is to procure a school-master to instruct their children in the arts of reading, writing and arithmetic, and where they are not able to procure or hire an instructor the parents attend to it themselves."

The first constitution of the state, adopted in 1777, provided that a school should be established in every town, and in the charter of Waitsfield a share of land was reserved for such schools. Indeed the town has never parted with the title to this land, but has leased it "so long as grass grows and water runs," and to this day the annual rental is applied for the support of schools.

Prior to 1797 the education of the children seems to have been wholly in the hands of their parents, for it was not until September 5 of that year that Jared Skinner, Salma Rider, Benjamin Wait, Francis Dana and Aaron Minor were chosen a committee to make a division of the town into school districts. At the meeting held on the second Tuesday in October, 1797, this committee reported:

"That they have divided the town into districts up to the mountain, the first district beginning at Moretown line on the river.

1. All the land the west side and one range of lots the east side of the river up to Mr. Marsh's, (lot 129) taking in Abel Spaulding's (lot 113).

2nd. Thence the same range of lots up the river to the Warren line.

3rd. Thence taking one range of lots to the road from the River District south of the road that leads by Mr. Joiner's (lot 103) up to Mr. Hamilton's, (lot 56) and north up to the mountain and Moretown line.

4thly. Thence the same range of lots last mentioned south to the Warren line."

The report was accepted, and at the same meeting the town voted to erect a building 36 feet by 18 feet in size on or

near the Common in conjunction with the Northeast District, which should be used for a meeting-house and a school-house, the town to bear two-thirds of the expense. The frame of this building was erected, but owing, probably, to dissension as to the proper location for the meeting-house it was never completed, and the frame was finally removed, as we have already seen.

The people of the Northwest District, long known as the "Old North District," have always been peculiarly alive to the necessity of maintaining schools of high standard, and it is not surprising that this district was the first to organize, under the following call of the selectmen:

*Notification.*

"This is to warn the Inhabitants of the Northwest School District in Waitsfield to meet at the Dwelling House of Phineas Rider in sd District at 2 O'Clock in the Afternoon of the Second Day of November next, to act on the following Articles, viz:

- 1st. To Choose a Moderator to Govern sd Meeting.
- 2nd. To Choose a District Clerk.
- 3rd. To Choose a District Collector.
- 4th. To Choose a Committee to take Care of the Prudential Affairs of sd District.

Given under our hands at Waitsfield, this 20th day of October, 1797.

Jared Skinner,  
Stephen Pierce, } Selectmen."  
Benjamin Wait, jr., }

At this meeting Stephen Pierce was chosen moderator and district clerk; James Heaton, collector; and Phineas Rider, John Barnard and Abram Marsh, prudential committee. Two weeks later the district voted to build a school-house 24 ft. x 18 ft. in size, with 9-foot posts, to defray the expense of which it appropriated the sum of \$16.66 in cash and \$30 in lumber. A committee was also chosen to select a site, and provision was made for a school during the ensuing winter, the expense of which was to be defrayed by an assessment on the district list, but "Those who send to school this ensuing Winter shall provide the Wood according to their Number of Schollars."

On December 22, 1797, a meeting was held to make definite provision for this school, and it was "put to vote to see if the district would hire Mr. S. (Salah) Smith to keep School and engage him 10 Bushels of Wheat, and passed in the Negative."

Mr. Smith had evidently presumed too far. Other good men and true stood ready to fill the breach, and it was therefore "voted to hire Mr. S. Smith to keep school if he can be obtained without engaging him Grain, otherwise to hire Stephen Pierce." So far as can be ascertained Mr. Smith "kept" the school, and this was without doubt the first regularly constituted school in the town.

For several years the winter school was held in private houses, and probably had no permanent headquarters. We know that Dea. Moses Fisk's best bedroom did duty as the district schoolroom, and others doubtless served in the same way. As was universal in those days, the location of the school-house was fixed by the geographical centre of the district, unless as the meeting voted "said Centre should fall where the Land may be unsuitable for building upon; in such Case the prudential Committee to put it in the place nearest to such Centre as in their Judgment is most Suitable." As a matter of fact the building was constructed on the ledges near the top of the hill south of the location of the present school-house. Apparently some work was done during the summer and fall of 1798, but it was not until May, 1799, that the building was in condition to permit holding the district meetings in it. It would appear that there was no way of warming the building as the chimney was not completed until 1803, and not until December of that year do we find the district making any provision for fuel. This is corroborated, by the fact that Ithamar Smith, who taught the school in the winter of 1803, used an unfinished room in Dea. Moses Fisk's house, so it is probable that the summer school of 1801 was the first session conducted in the school-house. Indeed it was not until 1809 or 1810 that the interior walls of the building received their final finish.

The flimsy structure erected at a total cost of \$73.56 soon fell into a state of disrepair, and in September, 1815, we find the district voting "to repair the school-house previous to the commencement of next winter's school, to plaister the room overhead, lay the chamber floor and nail the same, supply the deficiency of glass, provide outside door-handles, latch, etc., and repair the hearth," the job being let out to the lowest bidder at a total expense of \$11.75. It is doubtful whether this work was actually done, for in December, 1817, the building was no longer tenantable, and the district chose Asaph

Burdick, Levi Wilder and Ithamar Smith to report a plan for a new building. Capt. Phineas Rider gave the ground where the school building now stands, and the district voted to build a school-house of brick 36 ft. x 22 ft. in size, with a chimney at each end of the room. This vote was reconsidered a year later, and it was not until the summer of 1821 that a wooden building was erected by Ithamar Smith and the old school-house sold at auction to Dr. Frederick T. Minor, for the sum of \$10.75.

In the new building was installed the first stove ever erected in a Waitsfield school-house, and this was done only after lengthy discussion and appointment of numerous committees to procure that article. A tax of \$390 was voted by the district to defray the expense of this school-house, and procure stove-pipe therefor.

The Southwest School District was organized at a meeting held at the dwelling-house of Isaac Trask, March 20, 1798, at which Benjamin Wait, Henry Dana, and Elijah Sperry were elected as prudential committee. This was soon followed by the Northeast District, which was organized September 16, 1798, at the home of Salma Rider—Moses Chase, William Wheeler and Nathaniel Bartlett being chosen committee.

In the same year, also, the Southeast District was organized, and the return of pupils for the year 1799 showed 60 between the ages of four and eighteen years in the Northwest District; 41 in the Southwest District, and 24 in the Southeast District. The return for the Northeast District cannot be found, but from the division of the public money it would seem that there were about 40 school children within its limits.

In 1802 we find the first general action of the town relative to its schools; Samuel Barnard, Benjamin Wait, Aaron Minor and Ezra Jones were elected trustees of schools, and Rev. William Salisbury, Stephen Pierce and Amasa Skinner were chosen a committee to inspect the several schools in town. In this year the return of pupils for the various districts shows the following:

Southeast District—29.	Southwest District—52.
Northwest District—63.	Northeast District—57.

It appears that the committee of inspection was not a lasting institution as there is no further mention of it. In 1823 we find the town electing "visitors of schools." This board was elected annually until 1833 and Rev. Amariah Chandler served continuously as its chairman until 1829.

The location of the school-house of the Northeast District which was placed well to the east side in the northerly part of lot 78, proved rather inconvenient for pupils living near the Common, and at a meeting held on June 3, 1806, the inhabitants presented a petition requesting a division of the district. In the following September a committee consisting of Aaron Minor, Moses Fisk and Jared Skinner reported that a new district, to be known as the Centre District, should be created, and it was voted that the Northeast District should consist of the following territory: "Beginning at the northwest corner of Lot 108, running east to the northeast corner of Lot 107, thence south on the same lot to the northeast corner, thence east on the line of the lots to the mountain; the Centre District to consist of the remainder of the former Northeast District, together with Lot No. 108, the lot Ezra Jones lives on (106) and the lot Nathaniel Bartlett lives on (104) with William Chase, the Southwest District to consist of the remaining territory formerly belonging to it."

The new Centre District was organized at the house of Samuel Stow Savage on November 26, 1806, and in the following month the farm occupied by Matthias Stone Jones was set off from the Southeast District and made a part of the Centre District.

The school population continued to grow to such an extent that in 1812 the returns for the five districts showed the following number of children between four and eighteen years of age:

Northeast District—40.	Northwest District—58.
Southwest District—63.	Southeast District—44.
Centre District—64.	

The school-house in the Southwest District had been located not far from the foot of the Dugway in the valley of Mill Brook, and while near the geographical centre of the district, it was quite inconvenient for the growing population in the northerly portion of this district. In 1813 the question of dividing the district came up, and John Burdick, Bissell Phelps and Jennison Jones, who served as a committee on the matter, reported that a division should be made, and that the southerly line of the land of Jeduthan Wait and Lewis Holden, and the south line of the public lands, that is, the south line of lots 136, 135 and 102, should become the southerly line of the new district, to be known as District No. 6, the other districts to remain as they then were.

The new district was later known as the Village District, and was organized at General Wait's house on April 26, 1813, Benjamin Wait, jr., Ralph Turner and Edmund Rice being elected as prudential committee. In 1815 it was enlarged by setting off to it from the Northwest District the farms of Gaius Hitchcock and Amasa Russ, in lots 129 and 130.

The first school-house in this district also was long in building. An attempt was made to raise funds by subscription sufficient for the purpose, but, this failing, the district voted that a tax should be levied on the grand list, and that a school-house should be located "on the road between General Wait's barn and Stephen Durkee's house." The building was, in fact, so built, and stood directly at the northeasterly end of the big ledge that has been elsewhere referred to. So far as can be ascertained, the building was not completed until 1816, and was apparently burned early in the year 1817, as in February of that year a meeting was held at the home of James Baldwin, and a committee, consisting of Aaron Phelps, Edmund Rice and Joseph Wait, chosen to report a plan for a new school-house, which committee reported in the following words: "the house to be built of wood, and set on the old foundation, to be 20 x 24 ft. square, to be well lathed and plastered, with a ceiling to the bottom of the windows, to be constructed in the same manner of the old house, with the same number of windows, to be built of good materials, and done in a good, workmanlike manner, the chimney to be built with stone to the mantle-tree, the remainder of brick of the same size at the bottom to the chamber floor, the whole to be laid in lime, to be finished by the first day of November next, the person who builds to have all the materials of the old house, and to give bond for the faithful performance of his contract." The job was bid in by Wells Hitchcock for the sum of \$189.

The district voted also at this meeting to procure a sheet-iron to place before the fireplace to secure the house against fire.

About 1820 (the exact date does not appear from the records) the school district known as No. 7 was erected on the east side of the mountain. This district seems to have been large geographically, but small in population, the return for 1820 showing only 24 pupils within its limits.

The nomenclature which had been adopted for the districts proved somewhat clumsy, and on December 20, 1820, we

find the town voting "to alter the names of the districts as follows:

"The district formerly called Northwest to be No. 1, and that called Northeast No. 2, and that called Centre to be No. 3, and that called Southeast to be No. 4, and that called Southwest to be No. 5, and that formerly called No. 6 to remain the same, and the south part of District No. 7 running with the north line of Sewell Davis' lot that he lives on and with that to the Northfield line east and to the top of the mountain west to remain No. 7, and all that part of the town on the east side of the mountain north of District No. 7 to be a school district by the name of No. 8."

The last return of school children previous to setting off the easterly portion of the town to Northfield is found under date of March 18, 1822, and shows the following:

District No. 1—46.  
" No. 2—43.  
" No. 3—53.  
" No. 4—64.

District No. 5—39.  
" No. 6—43.  
" No. 7—28.

The annexation to Northfield just referred to of course eliminated Districts No. 7 and 8, but the general tendency of the time to seek mere geographical convenience without reference to efficiency or economy in the management of schools persisted, and in 1825 still another district was created in the extreme southwesterly portion of the town—the vote to modify the school districts being as follows: "To set off from District No. 4 30 acres of John Leach's land on which Henry Dana now lives, and off from No. 5 the following lands, viz: John Poland's, a small lot of land on which the furnace now stands owned by Edmund Rice, Esq., Jesse Mix's, Ashbell Stoddard's, Hezekiah Stoddard's, Samuel Dana's, Francis Dana's, Foster Dana's, and David Wheeler's, and a second division lot belonging to John Wait and sisters, and to call said District No. 7."

The return of the next year shows that there were only 12 pupils in this new district, but still another was created in 1827 from a portion of the old No. 5 District, the new district being known as No. 8, and taking in a part of Dana Hill.

About 1830 the number of scholars in District No. 7 had become so small that it was clearly inexpedient to continue the territory as a separate district, and it was annexed to and became a part of District No. 5, District No. 8 being re-christened as No. 7.

On May 3, 1838, District No. 6 was divided, that portion lying east of Mad River and south of the northerly line of Daniel Thayer's land being designated as School District No. 8, and a few months later the farms of Josiah Campbell and James Joslin, jr., in District No. 4 and the farm of James Joslin, sr., in District No. 3, were transferred to the new district.

It is also interesting to note that until 1848 a portion of the town of Fayston lying near Green's Mills had been incorporated as a part of District No. 5 in Waitsfield, as many as 25 pupils from Fayston attending in that district in some years.

No further change in school districts appears until March, 1851, when Districts No. 5 and 7 were consolidated, and about the same time a new district, No. 9, which seems to have been a re-creation of the older District No. 7 in the southwest corner of the town, was set up, but with the dropping out of No. 7, Districts No. 8 and No. 9 became Nos. 7 and 8. This was the final division until, some years later, Districts 6 and 7 consolidated to form the village school and District No. 8 was again consolidated with District No. 5.

The number of separate school districts was thus reduced to six, and so continued until the "town system" of schools, so-called, was adopted, March 7, 1871, under the provisions of Chapter 22 of the Statutes as amended November 22, 1870.

The early school-houses were of the type then common in New England, small, low-posted, ill-ventilated, standing, as we have noted, as near to the geographical centre of the district as possible, without other reference to the suitability of the land.

At one end of the single room was built the huge fireplace, supplied usually with green wood just hauled from the nearby forest. In fact this question of wood for school-houses was a vexed one in nearly every district. From the beginning other expenses of the district were assessed upon its tax list, but wood and board for the teacher were supplied by the various families in proportion to the number of pupils that each sent to the school. Of course many were dilatory, and oftentimes the school-house went unwarmed, and occasionally upon the records one finds a vote to the effect that "no schollar shall be admitted into school until his parents or master has delivered at the school-house one-third of a cord of wood, and in case the wood is not delivered before the schollar enters the house his parents or master shall pay unto the committee of the

district at the rate of one dollar per cord, to be recovered of him or them by an action of debt." In general the allowance of wood seems to have varied from one-third to one-half a cord for each pupil. This method of doing business was extremely unsatisfactory, and soon after 1815 nearly all the districts raised a tax for providing fuel, the price of which for a number of years varied from 30 cents to 50 cents per cord for two-foot wood.

It was also everybody's job to see that the school-house was kept clean and fires properly builded. The girls attended to the sweeping, and dusting, the boys looked after the fires. Indeed it was not until January, 1821, that we find the first record of a district hiring some one person to care for the school-house. At that time the Northwest District put up the job at auction, and Phineas Rider bid it off for \$1.50.

Benches for the pupils ran around three sides of the room, and at the end nearest the fireplace stood the master's desk. The benches next the wall were for the larger pupils. In front of these there ran a rude desk, then another row of benches for the tots, although in some school-houses there was a double row of desks and three rows of benches. This type of school-house prevailed throughout Vermont until about 1850, when considerable agitation on the part of state and county superintendents of schools brought about an improvement in many quarters.

In 1850 the Northwest District appointed a committee to remodel its school-house, and the building was entirely reconstructed on broader and better lines, but upon the old location. This is the building now used for school purposes in that section of the town, although like all our other school buildings it has been furnished with modern furniture.

In the Village District (No. 6), also, it was found necessary to provide other quarters for the schools. The old building evidently fell into a bad state of repair at an early day. In 1836 we find that it was in such condition that it could not be used, and the district voted that school for the ensuing winter should be held in "A. Rider's shoop," and at the same meeting James Chipman, Ziba Rice and Roderick Richardson were elected a committee to see about building a school-house and to provide a location. Nothing could be agreed upon, however, and in 1840 the district voted "To repair the old school-house in a cheap and convenient manner for the present winter."

In fact this matter of a new school-house in the Village District was not settled for nearly ten years. Committees were appointed nearly every year, and each committee reported favorably some location for a school-house, but each time the district refused to accept the report and placed it on the table. Finally, however, on February 4, 1847, it was voted to build a new school-house, and "Locate the same on the east side of the road south of Horatio Fullerton's adjoining to the road or path that leads to the Burying-ground," and Roderick Richardson, George D. Rice and Charles Newcomb were appointed a committee to erect the building. Two days later the present school-house lot was purchased of Dan Richardson.

The district also voted to construct the building of brick, provided the brick could be obtained for \$3.00 a thousand, but the brick-maker evidently was not in the market at this price, for the building erected in that year was a two-story wooden structure, with a belfry, well remembered by those of the present generation who attended school there. One room of the building was occupied for the first time in the winter of 1847-48, but not until 1850 was the building finally completed. Numerous pupils from other districts attended this school for more advanced work, the district having voted "to divide the school so as to have the more advanced scholars occupy the upper room in the school-house."

Those whose school experience begins earlier than 1880 will remember the condition of the desk tops in this building. The names of former occupants were elaborately engraved thereon, and channels down which shot and other substances were rolled in school time were plentiful. This work seems to have begun at an early day, for in October, 1852, we find the district voting "that the committee of the district be instructed to call the attention of the teacher of the High School to the injury to the desks and the writing about the front doors, and that the teachers now and hereafter be held responsible for all damages done to the premises and for the necessary expense of keeping said school well washed."

Such regulations seem not to have been uncommon, as witness the following adopted by the District No. 2 upon the completion of a new school-house in 1867:

"Whereas we—legal voters in School district No. 2, in Waitsfield, deeming it desirable that the school house in said district

should be kept and preserved in as perfect order and condition as possible—Therefore we hereby adopt the following rules and regulations

1st Any scholar who shall wilfully or intentionally break, mar, or injure in any manner said house shall be subject to be publicly reprimanded at the discretion of the Teacher, and shall pay a fine for each and every offense of not less than twenty five cents, and not exceeding five dollars, said fine to be assessed by Prudential Committee or, punished otherwise as the law may direct at the discretion of Committee

2nd Any scholar carelessly or accidentally breaking or injuring said house, shall make the injury good by repairing the same, or paying the damage done to said house

3d No scholar can select and appropriate to their own use a seat of higher grade, to the exclusion of an older Scholar—but the School shall be seated with reference to height of desk and age and size of Scholar

4th It shall be the duty of the Prudential Committee to see that the house is kept securely locked at all hours except when in actual use for School, or public purposes—It shall be his duty in connection with the Teachers to see that the foregoing regulations are faithfully executed and carried out

5th It shall be the duty of the Clerk in said district to furnish a copy of the foregoing regulations to the Teachers at the commencement of each succeeding term of school, the same to be read before the school

Lucius D. Savage

Dist. Clerk

To Miss Jones Teaching winter term of 1868 and 1869

L. D. Savage

Dist. Clerk"

For some years no schools were attempted except in winter, a man being employed to teach for three months during the cold weather. It was the custom to have this winter school begin about Thanksgiving. In fact, the general custom is well shown by vote of 1800 to the effect that "a school shall be begun as soon as may be after Thanksgiving, and continued till the money raised be expended."

Not until 1800 do we find any mention of a summer school, generally called in the records a "woman's school" because of the fact that a female teacher was employed. These summer schools usually continued from May to September, and were attended by the small children and the girls.



The expense of summer schools was slight as compared with that of the winter schools, although neither would be deemed expensive at the present time. For example, the summer school of the year 1800 in the Northwest District cost \$10 and the winter school in the same district the sum of \$30. The funds for summer schools seem to have been raised for a considerable time by an assessment in proportion to the number of children sent, and not in proportion to the grand list, showing clearly that it was then considered as an extra. After a time an effort was made to have the cost apportioned on the list, but in several instances the full step could not be taken at once, and a compromise was made under which a portion of the expense was levied on the list and a part in proportion to the number of children sent.

For many years the general scale of expenses for district schools did not vary greatly, except that the more populous and wealthy districts were accustomed to expend a somewhat larger sum of money than did the smaller ones. Here is a treasurer's statement of the Waitsfield District No. 1 for the year 1838, of interest for purposes of comparison with modern standards of expense:

L. Durant—for washing schoolhouse	\$ 1.50
Eliza Jones—for teaching summer school	15.00
Interest	.06
Postage of three letters	.30
12 lights of glass	.42
Repairing windows	.58
One broom	.25
C. Matthews for wood	4.00
Mr. Taylor, for teaching school	57.00
J. S. Wilder for building fires	1.34
J. S. Wilder for banking schoolhouse	.50
	<hr/>
	\$80.95

A total expenditure for the year of \$80.95 covering the cost of a year's schooling for more than fifty pupils.

A few years before this time the surplus revenue of the national government had been divided, and the share of the town of Waitsfield was invested, and proceeds used for the benefit of schools. This district received in the year in question \$16.59 as its share of income from that source. It received in cash from the selectmen—presumably on account of revenue

from leased lands and other similar sources, \$34.66. It received on account of collection of a note due the district, \$5.84, and cash for the sale of its old stove, \$5.60, leaving as a balance to be raised by the district the sum of \$18.66, on account of which a tax of 1½ cents on a dollar of the grand list was levied. In 1841 the tax in District No. 2 was but six cents on the list. Indeed small taxes for school purposes were common until the development of state supervision led to larger expenditure to secure greater efficiency.

Of course the teacher boarded around, as was the custom at that time, although after a few years we find a growing tendency to have the teacher boarded at some one place, the privilege being put up at auction and struck off to the lowest bidder. For example, in the year 1848 the board of the teacher for sixteen weeks in the summer was bid off at 66½ cents a week, and board for the male teacher in the winter at 73 cents a week.

The curriculum was a simple one. Under the early statutes a mastery of the first principles of the "three R's" was all that was demanded, but as time went on grammar, geography and history were added, and in a few of the districts logic, algebra, and the elementary principles of natural philosophy and chemistry were occasionally taken up and at rare intervals a student made a beginning in Latin. In September, 1812, we find one of the Waitsfield districts voting, "to have three months' school the ensuing winter, and that the committee be instructed to procure a teacher capable of teaching reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar and geography, provided such a one can be procured for any other pay than money."

One of the chief drawbacks to progress in the schools, was the great diversity in text books. The report of the Commissioners for town schools submitted to the legislature of Vermont in 1828 deals especially with this, and recommends a list for use in the common schools of the state as follows:

"For Young Pupils,—Franklin Primer, Worcester's Primer:—Spelling Books—Marshall's Spelling Book, Hazen's do. Emerson's National do:—Reading Books—Leavitt's Easy Lessons, Boston Reading Lessons, Pierpont's National Reader, Murray's English Reader, New Testament, without note or comment:—Geography—Goodrich's Outlines of Modern Geography, Woodbridge's Geography:—English Grammar—Murray's Grammar, Nutting's Grammar, Greenleaf's Grammar Simplified:—History—Goodrich's History of the United States,

Hale's do. Whepley's Compend, Tytler's Elements of History, Worcester's do.—Arithmetic—Smith's Practical and Mental Arithmetic, Adams' New Arithmetic, Thompson's New Arithmetic."

Waitsfield had not waited for this action, however, as we find a vote recorded in 1827 to the effect that the Visitors of Schools "be requested to make a selection of school books such as they would recommend for the use of the schools and post up a catalogue of the same seasonably, in different parts of the town."

In spite of the wide publication of these recommendations, little progress was made. The first superintendent of common schools in Vermont in his report for the year 1846 laid especial stress upon the unfortunate situation in regard to text books. More than fifty different books are specified as being in use in the schools of a single county, and others besides these are said to have been used more or less in the same schools. Indeed, as he says, "the caprice of successive teachers, the convenience or profit of book-sellers" were the only guides to choice.

In consequence, the number of classes was extremely large, the time given to each extremely small, and it was not until a system of state supervision of schools, with state, county and town superintendents, had been long in force that a reasonable efficiency along these lines was obtained. This system was organized in 1845, and in 1846 Waitsfield elected her first town superintendent, James T. Phelps, who served two years. After him came James M. Richardson, 1848; Joel Foster, 1849; Rev. Charles M. Duren, 1850-51 and 53-54; Rev. Andrew J. Copeland, 1852; Richardson James Gleason, 1855; George N. Dale, 1856; Rev. C. C. Thornton, 1857-58; Rev. Nathan W. Scott, 1859; A. V. Spaulding, 1860; H. F. Thomas, 1861; Rev. Alfred B. Dascomb, 1862-66; Hiram Carleton, 1867-71. Beginning in 1871 the town has had a board of six school directors, serving three year terms. The members of the first board were Hiram Carleton, Edward Anson Fisk, Cornelius Emerson Joslin, Jacob Boyce, Ira Richardson and R. Rush Leach. The chairman of this board served as superintendent, and as such Hiram Carleton continued from 1871 to 1875. After him came Walter Alonzo Jones, 1876-1886; Clarence Jean Allen, 1886-89; Henry Newton Bushnell, 1887-1891; George L. Walbridge, 1891-1892;

Henry Newton Bushnell, 1892-1895; John W. Gregory, 1895-1899; Henry Newton Bushnell, 1899-1901; Mrs. Lucia Joslin Bisbee, 1901—.

During the "forties," and especially after the construction of the two-room school building in the village, select classes were conducted in some of the higher and more polite branches of learning. In fact, we find occasional reference during the "fifties," and early "sixties" to the upper room in the village school as the High School. Gradually, however, these select schools disappeared, and the two rooms in the school-house were utilized merely for a division of the grammar grades, although occasionally the presence of an older class of students would result in a class in Latin or other more advanced studies. In general the Waitsfield schools have for many years maintained a high standard of efficiency in the subjects generally found in the more advanced schools of that grade, and beginning with the year 1906 the town has maintained a High School providing for the first two years of college preparatory course in accordance with the provisions of Vermont Statutes.

The standard of efficiency among the teachers employed in the town has been at all times high, although the compensation awarded in early years was very small. Ten dollars a month to a male teacher for three months' work in the winter was at first deemed ample, while the woman who conducted the summer school received less than \$1.00 a week.

Nor was there much advance in the standard of compensation for teachers for many years. In 1850 the average pay for male teachers throughout the state was only \$13.55 a month, and for female teachers, \$5.63 a month, although Waitsfield took very high rank among the towns in the state in respect to compensation thus paid, her average payment for male teachers being \$15.91, and for female teachers, \$7.20 per month.

During the winter some of the districts attempted to supply their schools with students from Middlebury College or the University of Vermont but for the most part teachers were drawn from the bright young people of the neighborhood. They were very young, and a great drawback was that few of them saw long continued service. Indeed Horace Eaton, the first Superintendent of Schools for the state, exclaims in his report for the year 1846, "few, if not evil, are the days of teachers in Vermont," and the report of the Commissioners of 1828 refers



to the great necessity for skilled teachers in the following language:

"That an experienced, is better than an inexperienced, teacher, is a proposition to which no man will refuse his assent. And yet how frequently does it occur, that, in procuring a person to take charge of a school, this distinction is wholly disregarded, and he who is not qualified by experience or study, is preferred to one who enjoys the advantages of both, solely because he will undertake to teach for some \$8 or \$10 per month!"

This advice was sadly needed, for until 1846, when a state system was adopted, the employment and examination of teachers as to their fitness was wholly in the hands of the Prudential Committee for each district.

The teachers' desk in the old North District school-house had a hinged lid, and it is said that the first teacher duly inscribed his name upon the under side of this cover, and his successors followed suit. In course of time this desk top fell into such a state of decrepitude that Mr. Ithamar Smith, at the request of one of his daughters, replaced it with a new one, and took the old one to his home, where it was preserved for many years on account of the autographs which it contained. That would be an interesting relic if it could be found today, and it would be yet more interesting if we could know something of the personality of each of the men and women who have labored in our schools since their inception; but there is now no way of gathering up the list. The memory of our oldest people cannot go back to the beginning, and the records of the various districts are either wholly lost, or very defective, and any record that can now be made is at best fragmentary.

Of the first teacher in Waitsfield we have already spoken. Mr. Salah Smith was born in Deerfield, Mass., and received such education as the schools of that town afforded. He was throughout his life a leader in church and town affairs. His penmanship was beautiful, and the records kept by him as town clerk might almost be mistaken for old copper plate engraving.

His son Ithamar began teaching in 1804 at the age of seventeen, and took an active part in educational matters for many years. His advantages were limited, but he was a man of ability and scholarly attainments. Cicero and Virgil were

mastered by him in middle life without assistance. He was also an advanced thinker along religious lines, and was the original anti-slavery man of the town. In his teaching he was thorough, and in his demonstrations practical. It is said that he studied a long time to find some way to bring home to his pupils in a convincing way the proof of the proposition that the area of a circle is equal to that of a parallelogram the length of which is one-half the circumference and the width one-half the diameter, and finally hit upon the following: taking a pie to school for his dinner, and cutting it into very small pieces, he laid them together "crust to point," thus building up before his pupils' eyes a parallelogram that fulfilled the terms of the rule—at least to their reasonable satisfaction.

Another very early teacher was Luther Leland, who taught a few terms, during his course at Middlebury College, from which institution he graduated in 1806. After serving for a few years as preceptor of the Essex County (Vt.) Grammar School, he was ordained to the Congregational ministry and preached at Derby, Vt., from 1809 until his death, November 9, 1822.

Rev. Harvey D. Kitchell, a graduate of Middlebury in 1835, and president of the college from 1866 to 1873, was a teacher in the "North" district in the early "thirties." In fact, for many years this district levied heavy tribute upon Middlebury students to teach the winter school. Among them may be noted:

John L. Burnap, Middlebury, 1819, a native of Windham, Vt., who for some years after his graduation served as a home missionary; John Spaulding, of Mason, N. H., Middlebury, 1825, Andover Theological Seminary, 1828, who became secretary of the Western Educational Society, 1833-7, and secretary of the American Seaman's Friend Society, 1841-57; Charles Whipple, of Hardwick, Vt., Middlebury, 1827, who after teaching in the East for some years finally settled in Menasha, Wis.; John Stocker, of Danville, Vt., Middlebury, 1830, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1831-2, who became a minister and had charges in various towns in New York, Indiana and Iowa, the last in Muscatine, Iowa, where he died March 17, 1848; Bela Fancher, of Verona, N. Y., Middlebury, 1831, Andover, 1835; a teacher and preacher in Ohio, New York and Michigan, residing in Homer, Mich., after 1855 (he found his wife among the girls of the district, and is elsewhere spoken of); Clarendon F. Muzzey, of Dublin, N. H., Middlebury, 1833, Andover, 1836,

who went as a missionary of the American Board to India, 1836-1857, and subsequently preached in various towns in Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania and Connecticut. He died at Amherst, Mass., 1878.

Enoch Cobb Wines taught for some time in the Northeast District, and was a frequent visitor at other schools in town. He is remembered by one or two now living as a fine orator, and an acceptable teacher. In later life he became a noted philanthropist, engaging especially in prison work, in connection with which he became founder of the National Prison Association and first president of the International Prison Association.

Rev. Amariah Chandler taught for several winters in the Northeast District during the "twenties," and brought to the work the qualities that made him a leader in the ministry.

John Chandler Wilder, of Burlington, a student in the University, was another early teacher. He was a grandson of Daniel Witherbee Wilder, and later entered the ministry.

Cyren Burdick was a local man who turned his hand to teaching in the winter when the duties of his farm did not claim his time so closely.

Among other Waitsfield men who figured in our schools are Charles Smith Carpenter, who, after graduating from the University of Vermont in 1838, made teaching his profession with marked success, until his death in 1846; Horace Skinner Jones, in later life a prominent man in Orleans County; Cornelius Emerson Joslin, oftentimes a teacher in the Centre District; John Nelson Phelps; Lucius Stearns Shaw, who entered upon the practise of law at Lawrence, Kan., but lost his life during the Civil War; Ira Bushnell, a graduate of the University of Vermont in 1856; Hiram C. Skinner; Edwin Alonzo Jones, who became a successful physician but died before reaching the age of thirty; Cyrus Skinner, merchant and town clerk during the "forties" and early "fifties"; Norman Durant, a brilliant young lawyer, who died at an early age.

Matthew Hale Carpenter, then a law student in the office of the elder Paul Dillingham at Waterbury, and later United States Senator from Wisconsin, served a brief apprenticeship in the Northwest District during the winter of 1846-7, and it is said of him that while he made the bullies toe the mark in all things with true West Point precision, the school was

finally broken up because so many left in preference to yielding to his discipline.

Henry Ballard, well-known as a successful practitioner of the law, a graduate of the University of Vermont in 1861, taught for a time, during his college course, in the little red school-house of District No. 7.

Rollin Warner and his sister Susan kept a select school in the village in 1848, and Colonel Andrew C. Brown, now of Montpelier, with his sister Mary, were the teachers of a similar school in 1849 and 1850, as was B. W. Bartholomew in 1858; Jennie F. Quimby and Mary R. Carpenter in 1860; and C. A. Bunker, for many years principal of Peacham Academy, in 1862.

Among other teachers of these and later years may be named Dr. Gershom N. Brigham, A. W. Barry, F. D. Hemenway, William Skinner, Harvey S. Clapp, Thomas Slade of Northfield, C. J. Guernsey, C. C. Bliss, L. M. Tuttle, H. W. Fuller, Justin P. West, O. R. Leonard, Ezra Jones of Claremont, N. H., A. O. Edson, Edson J. More, and Alfred Wheeler.

In later years there have been fewer male teachers, and from the first many noble women have labored in our schools. No attempt can here be made to even name them all, but among them may be mentioned Lucinda Washburn, of Montpelier, who later went as a missionary among the Cherokee Indians; Joanna Barnard, who became the wife of Anson Fisk; Esther Jones, daughter of Ezra Jones; Olive W. Skinner; Sarah A. E. Walton; Julia Skinner and her sisters Celia M. and M. Jane, daughters of Col. Orson Skinner; Betsey M. Clapp; Abigail H. Smith, daughter of Ithamar Smith, and later Mrs. Charles Caverno of Lombard, Ill.; Mary E. Holden (Mrs. Orcas C. Wilder); Mary A. Jones (Mrs. Orville M. Tinkham); Julia A. Richardson, daughter of Dan. Richardson (Mrs. Nelson A. Taylor); Susan McAulay; Fanny Joslin; Susan Griggs; Marion Childs, daughter of Rufus Childs; Mary A. Brown, sister of Col. Andrew C. Brown; Mary J. Folsom, who began teaching in our schools as early as 1852, and now rests after practically half a century spent in the schools of this and other towns; Harriet F. Chapman; Deborah Mayo; Rhoda Griggs; Zilpha B. Dewey, who became the wife of David Martin Phelps; Lovina Richardson (Mrs. Carlos E. Richardson); Mary E. Prentis (Mrs. Alden Ladd); Lydia A. Bigelow, and her older sister,

Harriet (Mrs. Perrin B. Fiske); Eva O. Joslin (Mrs. Clarence J. Allen), and her sister Lucia R. (Mrs. Burton D. Bisbee), who has in later years become an efficient superintendent of schools; Ella Van Deusen (Mrs. Leslie Reed), Mary E. Joslin, Alice M. Bushnell, Laura A. Jones, and many others whose names might well be mentioned.

This chapter cannot be closed, however, without reference to the little woman, who for many years presided over the primary school in Waitsfield village. Sarah M. Thompson was born in Fayston, June 10, 1845, of Scotch-Irish parents. Her early education was obtained in the common schools and in Montpelier Seminary. She showed an especial aptitude for teaching and from the age of fifteen nearly her entire life was devoted to the work. For many years she taught in Fayston, Gaysville, Cambridge and Northfield, Vt., and in Marshalltown, Ia., but in 1882 she came to the primary room in the village and with the exception of a few years spent in the schools of a neighboring town, she stayed here until her death in 1905. Her devotion to her aged parents was exceeded only by her devotion to her beloved profession and to her pupils. Her methods were her own, and within her little realm she was a very autocrat, but no child who came beneath her sway ever failed to build a solid foundation for the later education that she always urged him to acquire. She was the embodiment of the spirit that has fought and conquered in acquiring a sound, sane education with the scanty implements of the country school.

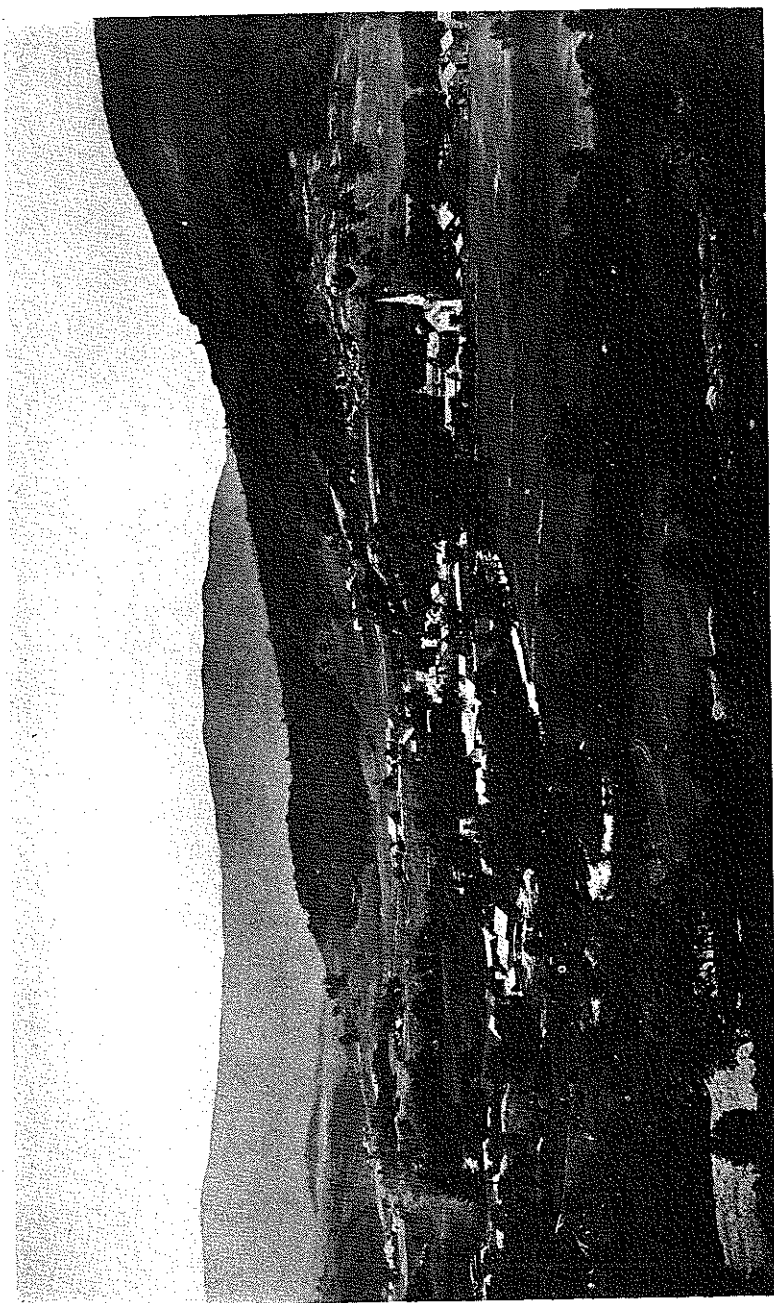
## CHAPTER XIV.

### COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION.

Until the Act of February, 1784, Vermont enjoyed no official postal facilities. That Act created post-offices at Bennington, Rutland, Brattleborough, Windsor and Newbury, and gave to the post riders a monopoly on their respective routes. In addition to postage collected, a subsidy of two pence per mile from the state (increased to three pence per mile on the Bennington-Brattleborough route) was provided, and post riders were required to keep an account of their "profits and emoluments" and exhibit the same to the Governor and Council when requested. Indeed, not until October 13, 1790, was the subsidy withdrawn. By the Act of March 9, 1787, the offices were to be conducted "under such regulations as are established for the government of post-offices in the United States," and provision was made for an additional post route from Rutland into Addison County.

These were the postal facilities of Vermont when Waitsfield was settled, nor were they much improved upon the admission of the state into the Union. For nearly thirty years the town had no postal facilities of its own, and residents on the east side of the mountain were accustomed to receive their mail at Randolph while the larger number on the west side found no post-office nearer than Montpelier. A weekly stage running from Windsor to Burlington *via* the towns named afforded transportation for mail and passengers, and connected at Windsor with the stage lines for Boston. By 1811 the proposals for carrying mail on this route, which followed the valley of the White and Winooski rivers, called for two trips a week, the stage leaving Windsor on Tuesday and Saturday at one P. M., and arriving at Burlington on Wednesday and Sunday at six P. M., thus making the distance in 29 hours.

On January 1, 1818, a post-office was established in Waitsfield, and on July 15 of that year the Department invited proposals for carrying mail, beginning November 16, 1818, on a new route from Montpelier by Middlesex, Moretown, Waitsfield,



WAITSFIELD VILLAGE LOOKING WEST TO LINCOLN MOUNTAIN.

# HISTORY

OF THE

## TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT

1782 - 1908

WITH FAMILY GENEALOGIES

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BY  
MATT BUSHNELL JONES

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