1889

Report of the Superintending School Committee of the Town of Westbrook for the Year Ending with February 1889

Westbrook, (Me.)

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REPORT
OF THE
SUPERINTENDING SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF THE
TOWN OF WESTBROOK
FOR THE
YEAR ENDING WITH FEBRUARY, 1889.

SACCARAPPA
MARCUS WATSON PRINTER
1889
REPORT OF S. S. COMMITTEE.

TO THE CITIZENS OF WESTBROOK:

The statutes of our state require that the S. S. Committee shall make a written report to the Annual Town Meeting "of the schools for the past year, the proficiency of the pupils and the success attending the mode of instruction and government thereof."

In compliance thereof we submit the following report:

Population of the Town.....................................................6570
Number of French population...........................................1610
" " children between the ages of 4 and 21.............2200
" " school houses................................................... 12
" " teachers............................................................. 33
" " schools.............................................................. 27
" " female teachers ................................................ 30
" " male teachers................................................... 3
" " weeks schooling............................................... 36
Whole attendance...............................................................1106
Average "................................................................. 928
High school appropriation...............................................$2250
Received from state.................................................. $250

The schools commenced April 9. The school year is divided into three terms, twelve weeks in each term.

Duck Pond. This school has been in charge of Miss Nellie Jones during the past year. The teacher in charge has proved herself competent and a good disciplinarian, a quality that has been deficient in some of her predecessors. The school has made good progress; the present condition of the school is satisfactory.

Miss Shenault, who acted as assistant here in former terms, has been transferred to the Primary at Pride's Corner. She has been succeeded by Miss Hardy.

Pride's Corner. The upper school has been in charge of Miss M. J. Small the past year. The attendance is small, yet there are
many classes in addition to the studies required by law. There have been classes in Latin, Algebra, Botany, Geometry, Rhetoric, Philosophy and Natural History; thus it will be seen that the school demands good attainments in the teacher. The lower, or primary department, in the spring was in care of Miss Alice Cobb, who resigned in the fall and was succeeded by Miss II. Shenault.

North School. As will be seen in the tabulated statement, this school keeps up in numbers. Miss Libby, who taught here several terms with good success, was transferred in the fall term to the First Primary in the High school building. The school receives its accessions mainly from the vicinity of Scotch Hill. The pupils display an aptness to learn quite up to the average of any of our primary department. Miss Cora McRae is now in charge.

Rocky Hill. This is one of the most pleasantly situated school buildings in town. Several of our most successful teachers have learned the rudiments here. The school is too remote from others to be graded, hence it is continued as a mixed grade. As a rule many of the larger scholars in this vicinity attend the Grammar and High school grades at Saccarappa. Miss J. A. Small still continues in charge.

Bridge Street Grammar Grade. This is a large school, numbering the present winter term seventy-five; too many from a sanitary point of view to be confined in one room no larger than the one occupied, but this is the best arrangement that could be arrived at.

This school has been in charge of G. W. Norton for several years until his resignation a few days previous to the commencement of the fall term. Mr. N. was a successful teacher and gained the affection and respect of his pupils to a remarkable degree.

The time allowed the S. S. Committee to procure a permanent teacher was too short to make a desirable selection. Miss Dora Bailey took charge until a permanent instructor could be secured. Mr. Gage, of New Hampshire, was with us two weeks and then retired.

O. S. Norton was then engaged for the remainder of the school year. Mr. N. has had a long acquaintance with school work and is a graduate of Farmington Normal School.

The experience of the school during the early weeks of the term somewhat retarded its progress, hence the condition of the school when it came into the hands of the present teacher was somewhat discouraging, but good discipline soon resulted in restoring good order. The large number of scholars present at the fall and winter terms made it quite apparent that it was too much to expect of one teacher to recover lost ground; an assistant was evidently needed and Miss Bertha Pennell was secured for the position and the ante room of the intermediate school was utilized as a recitation room. This arrangement has proved very beneficial, and, if continued, we see no reason why a recovery of lost ground may not be achieved.
SECOND PRIMARY. This school has been taught the past year by Miss L. M. Griggs, a teacher of long experience, who has labored faithfully and with the best results.

INTERMEDIATE. Miss J. F. Pennell still continues in charge. A pleasant and agreeable sphere always pervades this school, which is to be commended for the good deportment and studious habits of its pupils.

FIRST PRIMARY. This school is in charge of Miss Helen Murch. It is at the present time, and has always been, too much crowded. The register shows sixty-four (64) scholars. Sanitary considerations suggest a reduction in numbers if possible.

The school contains a large per cent. of French children, many of whom come into school with no knowledge of the English language, thus calling for much patient labor on the part of the teacher with slow returns. A serious drawback to the school has been the practice of parents of allowing or requiring their children to leave this school temporarily to attend the French school for a time and then return, and repeat this practice term after term to the great detriment of the children and the school generally.

SACO STREET. The First Primary has been taught the last three years by Miss W. Griggs. Until the last term the school has been over-crowded; at the commencement of the winter term the A class was transferred to the upper room, leaving forty-eight below, which we believe is as large a number as should be put in one ordinary school room.

This school has not only kept up to the “plan of work,” but acquired a good degree of knowledge concerning elementary history, in which exercise the children manifest a lively interest.

The upper, a Second Primary, is under the instruction of Miss Addie Gowen, who has had charge for several successive terms. The condition of the school is a recommendation to the teacher.

VALENTINE STREET. It was a wise movement locating the old High school building on the present site. Both rooms are occupied; the lower, a First Primary, is under the instruction of Miss Minnie Hodson, a graduate from our High school, and has proved herself faithful and efficient in this grade. The school reflects credit upon her efforts.

The upper room is occupied as a school for the instruction of young persons, who come out of the mills and manufacturing establishments, in conformity with the law of '87.

It is difficult (even if there were more in our other schools) to classify this class of scholars, as their school life is brief; the most of them are only found in the school room because the law compels them; as soon as the period is passed, they are back to the mills again. The practice pursued is to give them the most practical instruction possible.
There can be no plan of work by which to hold the teacher; but leave it to her judgement to adopt her methods to the varied conditions and needs of the pupil.

Miss M. L. Cobb has been in charge since its organization and seems to be well adapted to the position she occupies.

High School Building. First Primary, Miss E. Murch, retired from her position after the beginning of the fall term, a position she has filled very acceptably.

Miss Josie Libby was transferred from the North school to become the successor of Miss M. The school, from its first organization, has been too large to obtain the best results, yet good success attended the labors of the former teacher, which it is to be hoped will be continued in the future.

Second Primary. This is under the care of Miss Lottie Woodman, a member of the first graduating class from our High school in '88. Miss W. has the faculty of keeping the pupils wide awake and interested, and evidently uses her best efforts for the promotion of the school.

Intermediate. At the organization of this school Miss Mary Allen was placed in charge and maintains that position to the present time. The school itself is the best recommendation of the teacher; good results have followed faithful, conscientious work. Owing to the size of the school at the fall term, it was deemed advisable to give Miss A. an assistant. Miss A. M. Quimby was placed in that position; with her aid the school is progressing finely.

Warren. Since the completion of the new wing, the schools in this building have been reorganized; no room is overcrowded as formerly.

The First Primary, from Cumberland Mills, has been transferred to this building, and three schools have been formed from two and placed in charge of the Misses Adams, Shenault and Lamb. Miss Adams gives promise of becoming a successful teacher, good results thus far have attended her labors. Miss Shenault is also doing satisfactory work. The two schools last mentioned were formed at the commencement of the winter term.

Second Primary is under the instruction of Mrs. Jackson, who is a teacher of long experience and amply qualified to instruct higher grades of school, yet still continues to bestow upon this grade the benefit of extended acquaintance with school work.

Main Street, Cumberland Mills. Grammar Grade—Mr. H. L. Berry. This school is fortunate in securing the services of one who evidently loves the work of teaching and seems to spare no effort to awaken enthusiasm in the minds of his pupils. It is gratifying to know that the school responds to the efforts of the teacher. There are many points that might be referred to in connection with this school,
that call for favorable comment; we will allude to but one, that is reading. The advance, or rather the proficiency, made in this exercise certainly reflects credit upon teacher and pupils. We look for good returns in the future.

The lower room is in charge of Miss Hallowell. This is an intermediate grade. This school has been much improved in discipline by being placed where the influence of the principal of the Grammar school could be felt when needed.

When the present teacher took charge of the school, things were a little crooked, but they have been straightening out gradually under present management. Miss H. brings to her work the best qualifications and no doubt the end of the school year will exhibit good progress on the part of the school.

Brown Street. There are three departments here under the charge of Miss Haddock, Miss Webb and Miss Doyle. All three teachers have passed through our own schools, also have had more or less experience at the Normal School, Gorham, and are doing satisfactory work.

The school on Spruce street was continued two terms. No school has been kept there the past winter. The children are quite small. The register shows but five pupils for the fall term. Miss Matty Jones has had charge of the school four terms.

On the whole the school year thus far has been a successful one. The buildings are in good repair; steam heating apparatus has been added to the Bridge street house, also to Warren school house.

We believe the Grammar grade should be raised still higher, leaving the High school time for more advanced work. Two more terms should, if possible, be added to the Intermediate and Grammar grades.

If the proposition to remove the Intermediate, now in High school building, to the Bridge street, should be carried out, no doubt it would be of great advantage, as it would result in making all three schools but different classes of the Grammar grade.

Provision should be made for another Primary school, which can be done by repairing the North school house and finishing the lower room. The underpinning of that building has been reset this fall, the timbers examined and pronounced sound. One school is already occupying the upper room. The census shows an increase in that vicinity. There are more children in the First Primary department of the Bridge street than can be properly cared for in one room. This seems the most economical way to provide for our present wants. We hope the time will soon come when a certificate of graduation from some Normal school will be required of every applicant for a position as teacher in our schools. The town on its part should encourage a full and complete preparation by paying such a salary as will be an inducement for our best instructors to remain with us. There are few vocations that
tax the physical system as severely as close and continued application in the school room. It should be remembered that a teacher must spend time and money to become properly equipped for the work and something more than a bare living they have a right to expect.

During the past school year no extensive form of disease has prevailed to interrupt any school in town; no case of expulsion and but two or three cases of temporary suspension.

There has not only been a positive increase in the school attendance, but a relative gain of ten per cent., which no doubt is largely due to the compulsory education law.

H. K. GRIGGS, } S. S. Committee
O. A. COBB, } of Westbrook.
T. M. LEWIS. }

II. K. GHIGGS, )
() A. COBB, > S. S. Committee
T. M. LEWIS. ) of Westbrook.
REPORT OF MR. T. S. BURNS.

WESTBROOK, Feb. 18, 1889.

To The Superintending School Committee:

GENTLEMEN:—In accordance with your request I hereby submit the following report of the High school.

During the past year one hundred and two pupils have been registered. The number admitted from other schools being forty-two, the number of graduates seven.

An attempt was made at the beginning of the school year to return to the two session plan, but so much opposition being manifested, it was deemed advisable to continue with one session, which plan will doubtless be permanently adopted.

Changes in position of the desks, also in ventilation, have been made since the last report was submitted.

The former now face north instead of west, making the light much better for pupils and teachers.

Small ventilators have been inserted in the windows, by which the ventilation is now much improved.

Some criticisms have been made regarding the reading and writing of pupils who leave this school. While admitting that there is chance for improvement in both these branches, we find our pupils can read and write equally as well, or even better, than those whom we receive from High schools of other towns and cities in the state. After an eight or ten years' course in the Primary and Grammar schools, pupils should enter the High school good readers and writers. With the amount of other work to be done we find but limited time to devote to these subjects, although if deemed advisable the course can be so changed as to give more attention to these and less to other branches.

I wish to repeat some suggestions made by me in former reports, viz:—That a portion of the school money, now appropriated, can be very profitably expended by employing teachers who make a specialty of teaching elocution, penmanship, and I may add music, to give instruction once or twice per week in our High and Grammar schools. And here may I mention the value of a school library and a piano, which I trust the generosity of some individual or the town may sometime grant?

While the amount of work done in our Grammar schools is improving, at least one more year's work should be done before entering the High School and greater care be exercised that classes in the fitting schools should work more uniformly, enabling them to do better work after entering this school.
The attendance of the pupils and the work done have been quite satisfactory, although more regularity in attendance would prove very beneficial.

I take this opportunity to suggest that parents and friends visit the school oftener, become more familiar with its workings and offer to the teachers their advice and criticisms.

Respectfully,

T. S. Burns.
PROGRAMME OF GRADUATING CLASS OF 1888.

Music.

PRAYER.

Music.

SALUTATORY, - - - - - - HARRY D. BROOKS.
RECITAL—Marguerite of France, - - - - - - MAY S. HADLOCK.

Music.

CLASS HISTORY, - - - - - - ADDIE M. QUINBY.
CLASS PROPHECY, - - - - - - DANETTA M. LOWE.

Music.

ORATION—The Children’s Crusade, - - - - - - WILL I. HACKER.
POEM—The Dream Angel, - - - - - - LILLIAN B. QUINBY.
RECITAL—Selected, - - - - - - DANETTA M. LOWE.

Music.

VALEDICTORY—Old Things Have Passed Away, ISABEL PRIDE.

Conferring Diplomas.

CLASS SONG, - - - - Words by LILLIAN B. QUINBY.
Music by PROF. GEO. A. QUINBY.

Music.
CLASS SONG OF 1888 WESTBROOK HIGH SCHOOL.

I

Days that have passed beyond recall,
Sever we now each clasping tie;
Dear Teachers, Schoolmates, Friends, to all
We bid a fond and last good-bye.
We “aim to excel” in all things true,
And to give to God all praise;
And though we be absent far from you,
We will not forget school-days.

Chorus.

Over each soul there creepeth
The sorrow that partings cast;
And each of us, in his heart, keepeth
The memory of the past.

II

Though time our mates from us may part,
We will cherish their friendship yet;
And journey, with a willing heart,
Through the path our motto set.
Our love hath places for each true friend,
God knoweth how deep they lie;
We say, though knowing it is the end,
Good-bye, we bid all good-bye.
MUSIC.

It has been the custom of Superintending School Committees for many years to speak in their annual report of any changes that have been made in the regular school work, not only those changes produced by the addition of new books and other school helps, but the introduction of new branches of education.

Your Committee were well aware that any attempt on their part to get out of the old beaten track would be met by the same opposition that has attended improvements in all ages. Especially does the history of our public school system show this tendency to oppose improvement. We read that at first the ignorant were opposed to educating their children, fearing that book learning would unfit them for the duties of life, and this feeling was shared, we are sorry to say, by those who should have known better. Then, after it had become established, any branch other than the three R's—Readin', 'Ritin' and 'Rithmetic—were deemed superfluous and a needless waste of the public money. Grammar, Geography, History, Philosophy, Chemistry, Algebra, and that host of useful branches now taught in our public schools and at the public expense, and which have come to stay, met with the same opposition.

In view of the facts presented to us in the history of our schools, the question may be asked, why Superintending School Committees ever introduce any new branches of education into the school. If the public are satisfied with the old why force upon them the new; in other words, why not let well enough alone? There are several answers to these queries, the two seemingly most weighty ones are, first, that the School Committee are bound by their oaths to perform their duties to the best of their ability; and, secondly, they are upheld in their discharge of these duties by the intelligent majority of the community.

Your Committee, after considering all these circumstances, decided to introduce the study of Music into our primary schools and for that purpose engaged the services of a competent instructor, and while we do not consider it necessary to make an explanation for so doing we deem it a privilege to do so. We lay no claim to the introduction of music, as that has been practiced for many years. Certainly, many of us remember it forty years ago in our schools, and, as then practised, few serious-
ly opposed it, we presume because but few inquired about it or knew of its being practised. It may be asked in reference to this as to other branches before mentioned why the Committee made a specialty of this and why it was not well enough as it was. In answer we would say that in grading schools we place many small pupils together in one room and we found that rest and recreation were necessary, and in no better way could they be obtained than by occasional singing, and as very many of our teachers were unable to conduct the exercise and as we believed that as many as possible should share the benefits, we directed the teacher to give one lesson each week to each of the twenty schools in the two villages. In this way eight hundred pupils receive one lesson each week at a cost of eight dollars, in other words one cent for each pupil. The question is not for us to decide whether any pupil will, by this means, become a professional singer, or whether he will here receive an impetus that will lead in that direction. The after life of the pupil is not in the hands of the School Committee, and in directing the general course of instruction we simply pave the way to any honorable employment, but the question is with us whether we are receiving any present good. We believe the benefits are for the present as well as for the future. We believe that, in addition to the rest for the tired brain, it has a civilizing and humanizing effect; that where the pupils are encouraged to sing they are more obedient and less refractory, and are capable of performing more and better work. We have abundant testimony of this, especially among the teachers, even those who at first were opposed to the plan, and of the parents who are directly interested, but space forbids the publication of it. In view of all these facts your Committee believe that the money expended in this direction is giving a greater amount of good results than that expended in any other way.

S. S. COMMITTEE.
### Tabular View of the Schools

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* Taught fall term by Miss Doyle.
* Taught winter term by Miss Hadlock.