

JUST ONE ROOM BUT MANY MEMORIES

The West School West Tewksbury, MA



Sketch by
Marie Watson
2003

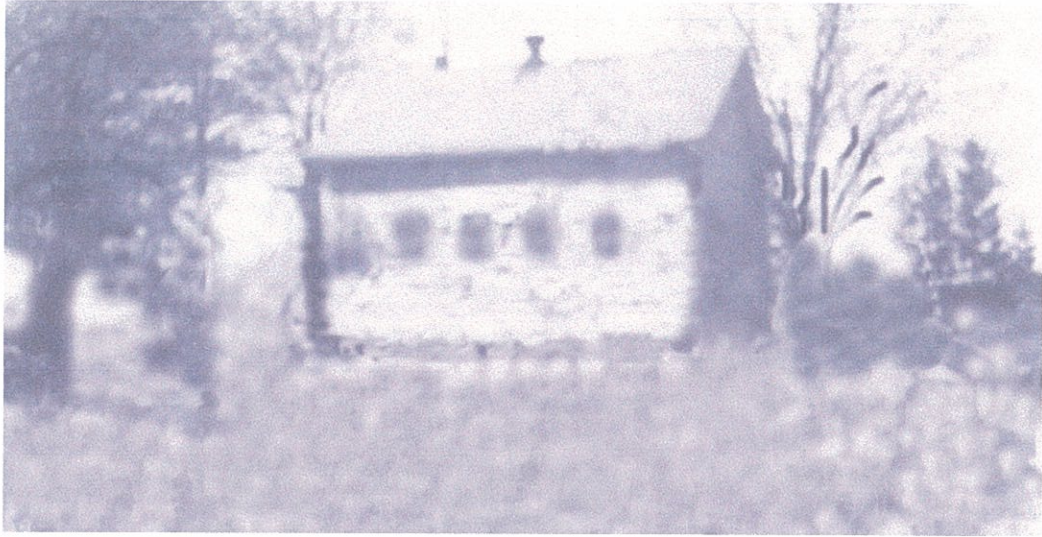
Recollections of former West School students and neighbors and a brief history of the one-room school, with rare photographs of the West Tewksbury area.

Marie Georgia Ruckledge

Just One Room
But
Many Memories

March 2004, 2nd. edition
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The West School ca. 1950. The photograph was reconstructed from a picture contributed by Helen Castor Smith.



West School
Photo by
Tony Anderson
ca. early 1950's.

(Courtesy of
Gordon and
Miriam Neville)

A collection of memories, photographs, and history of the West School and surrounding neighborhood. The West School was a one-room district school on the corner of Whipple Road and French Street in West Tewksbury, Massachusetts. This collection is an expanded version of the first preview edition.

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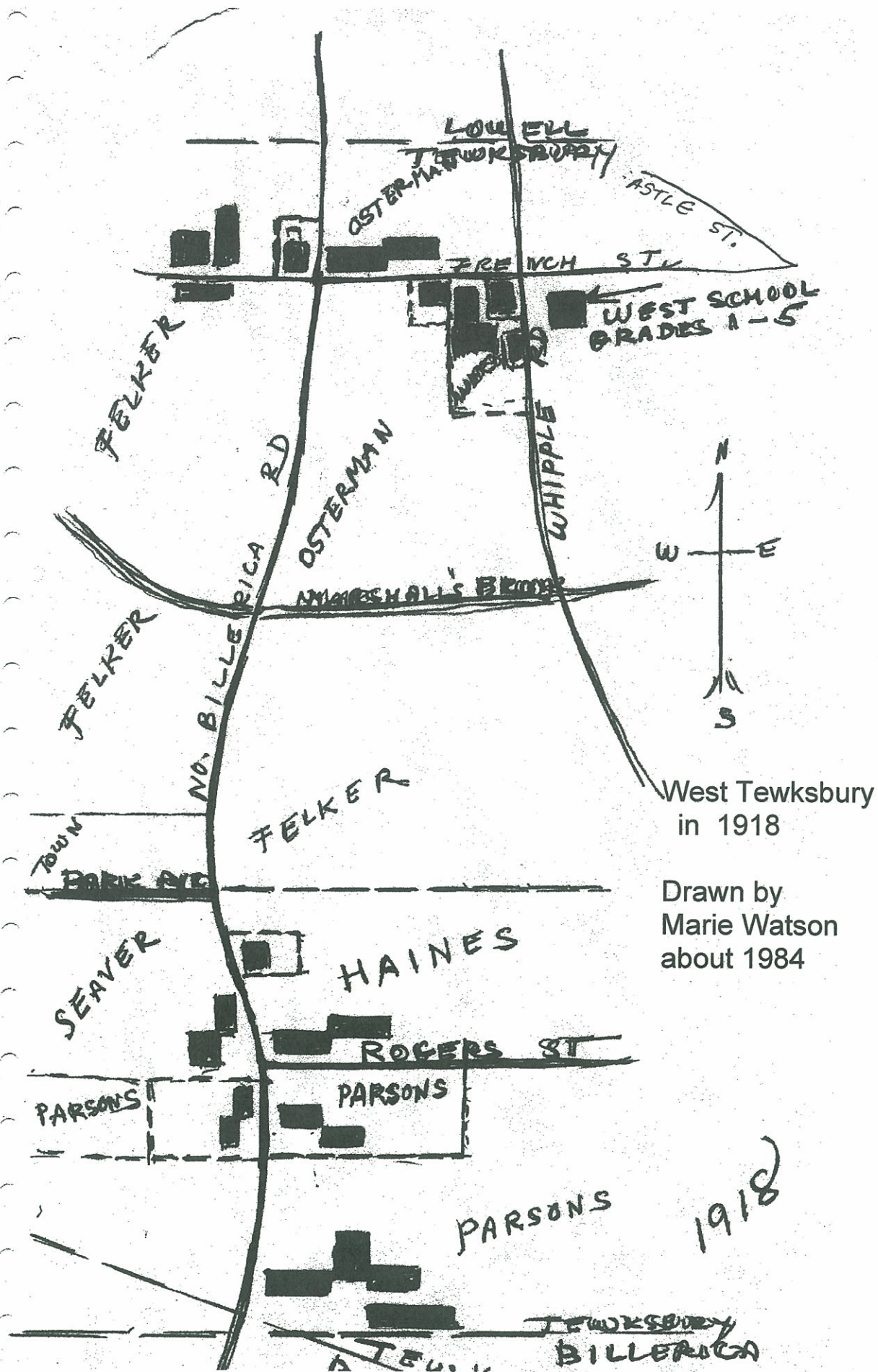
Map of 1876 - West Tewksbury Portion

Unmeasured Map of West Tewksbury in 1918

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Portion of 1876 Map of Tewksbury showing West Tewksbury and School No. 5 (West School) at the corner of Whipple Road and French Street. Tewksbury extended to the Concord River and the Lowell Cemetery on Lawrence Street. The Lawrence Street area was known as Wigginville and was annexed to Lowell in 1906.



INTRODUCTION

When I was growing up in West Tewksbury the West School was still sitting on the corner of Whipple and French beside the Castor's home. We never paid much attention to the school. It was just there, a landmark of sorts. My mother, Marie G. Parsons Watson, often spoke about going there and the fun they had. I passed by that school countless times - in the car, on a schoolbus, on a bicycle, and on horseback and never realized until now that the West School had meant so much to so many.

It was a conversation with Louise Gearty on the evening of Karl Heidenrich's funeral (June 11, 2003) that started me on this search for information and memories. Louise commented on the lack of information available about the West School. I responded that my mother had gone there and I would interview her.

We were not five minutes into the taping interview with my mother when I realized that some of our neighbors and other people I knew had gone to the school or had connections with it. That led to more interviews, in person and by telephone. Sylvia Starling, daughter of Hope Haines (Roberts), assisted by interviewing Alice Pulsifer (Gargan). She also participated in the interview with her aunt, Olive Haines (Roberts), and helped me contact Rita Sullivan (Secor).

The West School discussion with the Hannigans led to Phyllis Bolton (Robart) who with Eleanor Osterman (Caddell) and Alvin French were in the very last class that attended the school.

The result is a collection of memories that span the years from 1917 to 1935.

From Annual Reports of Town Officers of Tewksbury from 1881 to 1935, I gleaned information about the school and the times.

Those who attended the West School expressed a genuine interest in sharing the memories of the school and of life in West Tewksbury. This collection of memories, history, and photos contributed by neighbors is a start for preserving West Tewksbury's heritage.

Georgia Ruckledge

Gleanings - A Bit of History

The memories of former scholars who attended the West School go back to 1917 but the history of the school is intertwined with the town. Tewksbury schools date back to 1740. In 1774 district schools were established and School No. 5 was located in West Tewksbury. There were two earlier locations until its final placement at the corner of Whipple Road and French Street around 1865. Children from the West district and Wigginville attended the school.

Information gleaned from School Committee and School Superintendents Annual Reports from 1881 to 1917 demonstrates clearly the intent to provide a solid education with available resources. The following gives an overview of West School history.

1881-1885. Fannie L. Pillsbury taught. In 1885 Miss Hattie M. French took over. About 26 children attended but a total of 85 visitors were recorded. Most likely there were plays and programs.

1886-1887. There were 35 weeks of school. Hattie French was paid \$36 for each season (autumn, winter, spring) for teaching. There were no substitute teachers.

NUMBER FIVE.

Over No. 5, Miss Hattie M. French has presided the past year. The condition and progress of the school has continued as satisfactory as for several years. This is very gratifying, as Miss French succeeded an experienced teacher, beloved by all. The committee look for ever-improving work in this district. We regret that the illness of the teacher caused an intermission of two weeks.

From School
Committee Report

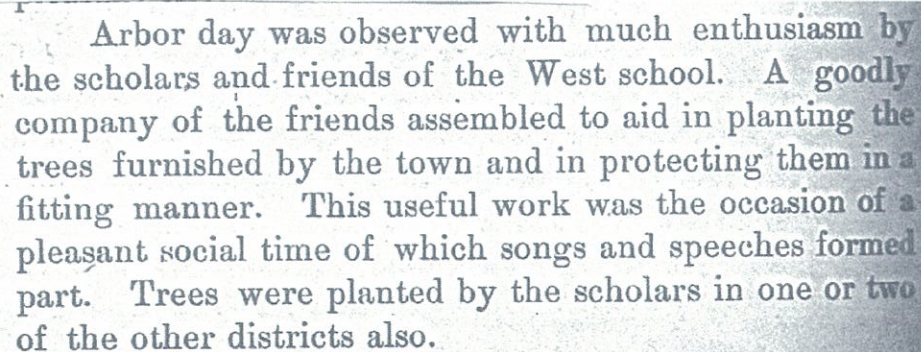
1886-1887. Irregular attendance was a problem in all the schools. Edward J. Pride, John L. Fleming, and Benjamin Spaulding of the School Committee sought parents' cooperation. They observed, "Where parents make it a point to keep their children regularly in school it is surprising how much can be accomplished...how seldom they will be absent. Then, no slight cold, no ordinary storm, no trivial duty at home will detain them. Then, if the walking is bad, the team is soon used to convey them to and from school."

Attendance in the West School had increased to an average of 33 in the spring, 38 in autumn, but dropped to 24 in winter.

Efforts were made to keep the school in good repair and reshingling was done "as the roof was too far gone to patch with profit... (The school) has also been repainted and put in excellent condition."

1887-1888. New maps were placed in all schools because the old ones were too small and out of date. "Believing that your town desires its children to enjoy the best, which is ever cheaper than the second rate, your Committee has put in each school part of the set - four out of the seven maps - of Stanford's School Series than which nothing better was found in the market. They were placed in cases which will accommodate the whole set." The committee planned to complete buying sets of textbooks for all schools in 1888.

Mr. J. C. Kittredge was thanked for his gift of seventeen pictures, framed and ready to hang in the schools, "which will be a permanent adornment for walls perhaps too bare." The Committee also commended the teachers and scholars in several of the schools for their efforts in improving the appearances of the schools.



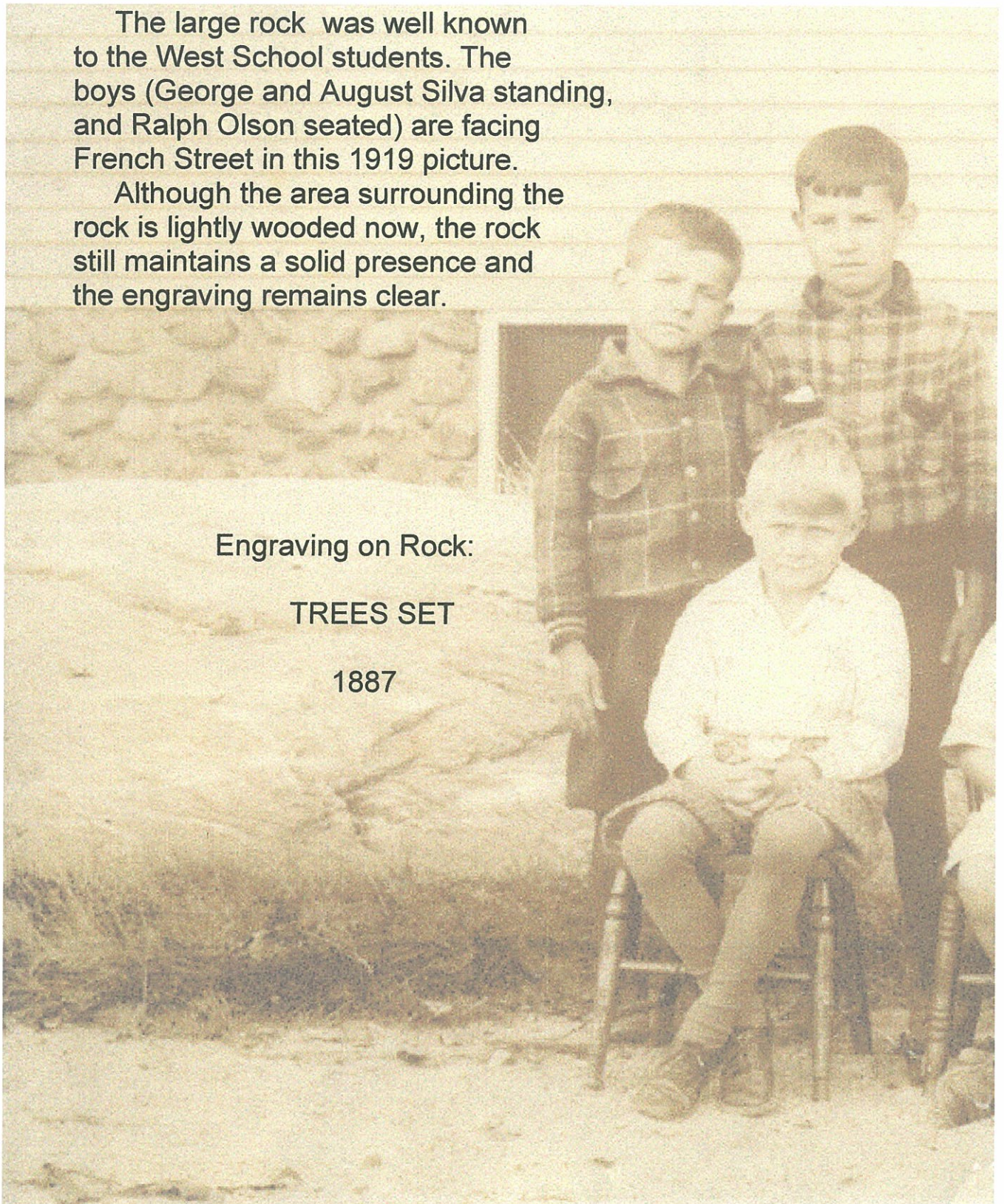
Arbor day was observed with much enthusiasm by the scholars and friends of the West school. A goodly company of the friends assembled to aid in planting the trees furnished by the town and in protecting them in a fitting manner. This useful work was the occasion of a pleasant social time of which songs and speeches formed part. Trees were planted by the scholars in one or two of the other districts also.

Carved on the ledge on the French Street side of the school are the words "TREES SET" and the date "1887". The planting of the trees around the school meant a great deal to someone who laboriously chiseled the inscription. David Marcus, President of the Tewksbury Historical Society, noted in his report on Schools of South Tewksbury, that the trees planted at the West School were sugar maples and two were set in front of the school and two on the side.

The rock beside the West School is still a landmark.

The large rock was well known to the West School students. The boys (George and August Silva standing, and Ralph Olson seated) are facing French Street in this 1919 picture.

Although the area surrounding the rock is lightly wooded now, the rock still maintains a solid presence and the engraving remains clear.



(Photograph - Courtesy of Frank Heidenrich)

ABOUT THE ROCK

The engraved rock on the French Street side of the West School was a welcome presence and well remembered.

Frank Heidenrich talked about "a large rock next to the school. It was nice. You'd run over it and walk over it. It broke up the day."

Alvin French remembered how the children would stand on the rock, and recalled sitting there eating lunch.

The rock was of interest to neighbors who hadn't gone to the school but recognized it was marking a location on the corner. Arthur Geddes and his wife Barbara have taken many long walks from their Lowell home that led them by the rock. The "rock" was a stop for them, and though the corner is now overgrown, they noted that the rock was quite visible from the street until a few years ago. Art and Barbara cleaned the engraving on the rock whenever they stopped there.

Helen Castor Smith remembered the rock well and that it had a date on it. The school had closed before she was born and the building and land ended up as part of the Castor's property, which abutted the school.

The rock can be viewed by walking in from French Street a few feet. It is surprisingly close to the road and it is on private property. The engraving is to the right, or somewhat facing Whipple Road. The trees are shading it and one has to look carefully. The side of the school, with its stone foundation, was right beside the rock.

From School Committee Report for 1887 to 1888

SCHOOL REGULATIONS.

1. The morning exercises of the school shall commence with the reading of the Bible: and it is recommended that the reading be followed with some devotional services.

2. Teachers shall inculcate good morals, good manners, and personal neatness, and prevent, as far as possible, any fighting, brawling, profanity or vulgarity among the scholars; or as specified in revised statutes, "exert their best endeavors to impress on the minds of children and youth committed to their charge and instruction, the principles of piety, justice, and a sacred regard for truth; love to their country, humanity, and universal benevolence; sobriety, industry and frugality; chastity, moderation and temperance, and those other virtues which are the ornament of human society, and a basis upon which a republican constitution is founded."

3. Teachers shall have the general charge of the school-room, and be responsible for its order and cleanliness. They shall also have a general supervision of the entire school premises, and are required to have particular care that no injury is done to the school furniture, buildings, or other property.

4. Proper attention must be given by each teacher to the ventilation and temperature of the school-room.

5. Any scholar who shall be guilty of injuring the school-houses or school furniture, or the out-houses or fences, shall be liable to pay in full for all damage he has done. The "General Statutes of Massachusetts" enact that all such willful and wanton damage shall be punished "by a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars, or by imprisonment in the jail not exceeding one year."

6. For gross insubordination, or flagrant misconduct of any kind, any teacher may suspend a pupil from school, provided that notice of such suspension shall be given immediately to the committee, together with the parent or guardian; and the committee shall determine whether the pupil shall be reinstated or expelled.

1889-1890. The School Committee reported that School No. 5 required improvements to the interior.

1890-1891. Patriotism was displayed by flag raisings. Scholars and friends contributed enough funds to buy flags for the West School and three other schools. The town furnished the means for flying them. Mr. J.C.Kittredge contributed an artistic calendar to each of the schools.

1891-1892. The West School was referred to as an "ungraded" school, and the average attendance was about 24.

1893-1894. The warrant for the March 1893 town meetings had an important Article 19 for the appropriation of \$200 for street lighting in the West Section and in Whippleville.

Hattie M. French was still teaching at the West and the enrollment had grown to 44 with average attendance of 27 in 1893 and 35 in 1894. Quite a workload for one person! Teachers' wages were \$10 a week.

Wigginville's population had grown as many new homes were built. The School Committee had to arrange for schooling and it appears that some school space may have been rented from Mr. Wiggin, the builder, but overcrowding became a problem. The School Committee reported that in 1893-1894 an additional room and teacher were hired in Wigginville for \$13 a month because of the increase of pupils.

About 1896. The Lowell and Suburban Street Railway started running electric cars from Rogers Street to Tewksbury Center.

1898. Hattie French, who had taught at the West School for 14 years, left her position and Isabel Christie took over.

The School Committee decided to build a fence around the school. Average attendance had dropped to 21. This was the period of the Spanish American War.

1900. Isabel Christie stayed for two years. Maude Jarvis was hired starting in September 1900. The attendance for the next few years was between 23 and 25.

1903. On July 29 about nine a.m. the U.S. Cartridge Company blew up and the repercussions were enormous. It was located in West Tewksbury and Lowell where the Raytheon Co. later was, not far from the Concord River. Twenty two died and at least seventy were injured by the explosion. The West School district felt the impact. Eleanor Caddell was told that the Osterman family home on North Billerica Road had the front door damaged and windows blown out. Her father told of being on a raft on nearby Castor's Pond (close to the West School) when the explosion blew him right off the raft.

1904. Teachers changed again at the West School. Edna A. Gault was followed by Maud Moody.

A new school house was voted to be built in Wigginville.

1906. "Outer Andover Street and Wigginville with a population of 1,491 became a part of the City of Lowell."

(Harold J. Patten, A History of the Town of Tewksbury, 1734-1964, p. 182)

1910-1911. Anna M. Wylie was the teacher. The School Committee report referred to the West School as a "Mixed School." The enrollment was about 20.

School Calendar for 1912-1913

Winter term ends March 22; 12 weeks
Spring term begins April 1, ends June 21; 12 weeks
Fall term begins Sept. 3, ends Dec. 20; 16 weeks
Winter term begins Dec. 30, 1912

Schools closed February 22, April 19, May 30, September 2, November 28 and 29.

School Sessions

Foster School, 8.45—12; 1—2.45
North School, 8.45—11.45; 1—3
West School, 9—12; 1—3

No-School Signal

One long blast followed by one short blast, repeated (11-11) from the whistle on the State Hospital at 7.45 A. M.

1915. The School Committee reported that "School buildings are all in good condition, with the exception of the West...At the West School we favor extensive improvement so as to place the building there in a more up-to-date condition."

The School Superintendent, Charles L. Randall, commented on the conditions. "The ventilation, heating and lighting at the West School are as poor as it is possible to have, windows on opposite sides of the rooms and a coal stove in one corner."

This is the only school in town and with three exceptions the only one in the district not provided with suitable heating and ventilating equipment. In a one-room school, when the town does not wish to provide a furnace in the basement, a jacketed stove, described in my report of last year, has been proved to work successfully. The light should of course come from one side of the room, or at least from the left and rear.

I again recommend that some improvement for preserving the health of the pupils be secured at this school.

(Charles Randall)

1916. Remodelling was completed and committee members for this project submitted their report:

Appropriation was \$2,100.00

Expenses were: \$20.50 to Clarence E. Foster for plans.

\$703.85 to Cyrus Barton, foundation and cementing.

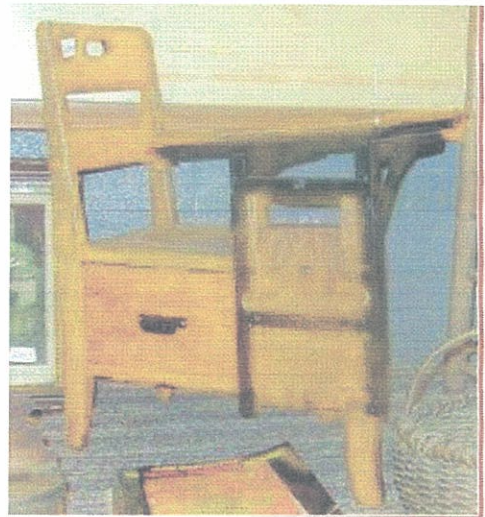
\$1,375.65 to James Blackstock, carpenter.

"The work of the committee for remodelling the West School has been carried out, and the school completed. A foundation has been dug and a cement basement put under the building. This basement contains a play room for the children, a new hot air furnace, and modern sanitary plumbing throughout. The building has been finished inside with a new hardwood floor and new windows on each side. Space has been taken from the other side of the room for the modern wardrobe.

New desks and chairs have been furnished, which can be removed at any time and the school room can be used for social purposes of the community. The building has been wired throughout for electricity and the committee hope soon to make arrangements for lights. By extending our water pipes to those of Aaron Osterman we have been able to solve the problem of good water, which before had been condemned by the State Board of Health."

Harry L. Shedd, May L. Larrabee, Herbert L. Trull (committee)

The improvements in the West School were made one year before Libby French started first grade in 1917. The School Committee in December 31, 1916 reported: "During the summer the West primary school has been remodelled into a modern building - sanitary, well lighted and heated, equipped with wardrobes, and the Moulthrop desks. I know of no better type of rural school building at present than the West School."



Example of Moulthrop desk with adjustable top.

Libby, and her brother Herbert and Marie Parsons who started there in 1918, would all have the new adjustable desks.

The Committee had added some of these desks to the Foster School and was recommending that all the old-type desks be changed for adjustable ones "as soon as possible."

1915 saw overcrowding in the schools and the School Committee's solution was to change the entrance age to six years, on or before November 1st. This didn't last long. In 1916 the Committee changed their ruling again and allowed children age 5-1/2 by school opening in September or the first week of school.

Expenses were listed for the West School for 1916. James Blackstock was paid \$4.00 for wood and coal. Mrs. M. Anderson was paid \$4.00 for cleaning. Aaron Osterman provided water for \$12 for the year.

1917. The School Committee was able to report that the West School was in good condition and electricity had been installed in the school for lighting purposes. Well-equipped emergency kits were placed in each school and teachers were given some first aid instruction.

The enrollment at the West had dropped to 17, with an average of 14 attending.

A music supervisor, Evelyn Waite, went from school to school. She resigned and was replaced by Ruth H. Nourse of Boston, a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music. Ruth Nourse stayed only one year and moved on to a higher paying job.

THE ROLL OF HONOR

Early annual reports of the School Committee included the Roll of Honor. This was a list of "Scholars neither absent nor tardy one or more terms." The Roll of Honor was recognition for attendance and had nothing to do with good marks.

The Roll represented only a small number of those who attended.

Rolls of Honor included the following names that might be recognized by West Tewksbury and Wigginvillle families.

1883 - Addie Castor

1884-1885 - Freddie Smith

1881-1882, and 1885-1886 - Leila Parsons

1886-1887:

SCHOOL NUMBER FIVE.

TWELVE TERMS.—Isabel H. Gulliland.

NINE TERMS.—Nettie S. Gulliland, Nelson D. Rogers.

SIX TERMS.—Leila M. Parsons, Oscar L. Pearson, Nellie J. Rice.

FIVE TERMS.—Elsie F. Stockwell, Gertie Sperry.

FOUR TERMS.—Willie H. Rice.

ONE TERM.—L. Mabel Stockwell, E. Josie Stockwell, Richard H. Hartley,
George A. Hartley.

1888-1889:

SCHOOL NUMBER FIVE.

FOURTEEN TERMS—Nelson D. Rogers.

TEN TERMS—Nettie S. Gulliland.

NINE TERMS—Oscar L. Pearson.

EIGHT TERMS—Nellie J. Rice.

SIX TERMS—Elsie F. Stockwell.

FOUR TERMS—George W. Foster.

THREE TERMS—Stella F. Ellenwood, L. Mabel Stockwell, Melvin G. Rogers,
Henry W. Leavitt.

TWO TERMS—Susanna Binns.

ONE TERM—Sadie J. Pike, Nettie W. Pike, Rachel L. Sprague, Arthur C.
Parsons, Blanche Walker, Lillian R. French, Willie D.
Ruckledge, Thomas England, Jennie B. Leavitt, A. Maud
Newsholme.

1890-1891 Roll of Honor

SCHOOL NUMBER FIVE.

Fifteen terms—Nelson D. Rogers.

Eleven terms—Oscar L. Sperry.

Ten terms—Gertrude F. Sperry.

Eight terms—George W. Foster.

Six terms—Lillian R. French.

Five terms—Melvin G. Rogers.

Four terms—Sadie J. P. Pike.

Three terms—James W. McCoy, Nettie W. Pike, Irving F. French, Olive M. Haines.

Two terms—Mabel M. Parsons, Rachel L. Sprague.

One term—Daisy E. French, Thomas Ruckledge, Lizzie A. McCoy, M. Ethel Seaver.

1891-1892. The Roll of Honor included Axel C. Castor, Willie C. Castor, and Olive M. Haines.

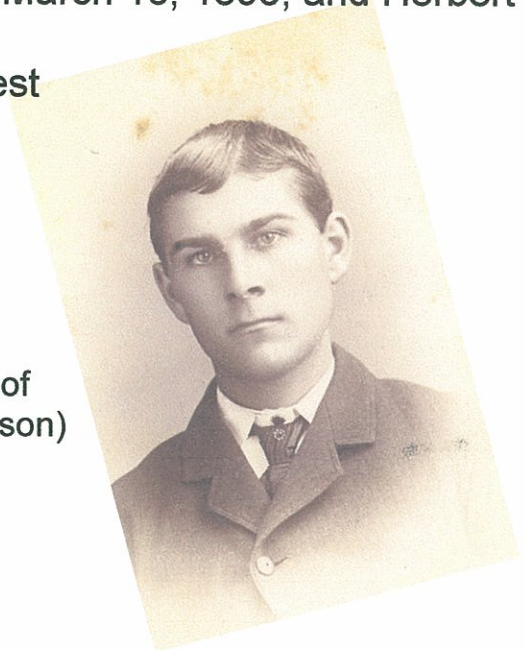
1893-1894. Among those listed with perfect attendance for one or more terms were: Mabel Parsons, Axel C. Castor, Willie W. Castor, Herbert L. French, Olive M. Haines, Irving F. French, Thomas J. Flood.

1894-1895. Among those added to the Roll of Honor were:
Herbert W. Parsons, A. Gertrude French, Lillian French.

There was a Pickering Prize Contest on March 16, 1895, and Herbert Parsons won second prize for the lower schools. It appears to have been a contest for all the schools and he would have represented the West.

Herbert
Parsons

(Courtesy of
Marie Watson)



INTERVIEWS

(Conducted between June and September 2003)

Former West School Scholars and
approximate years of attendance

Elizabeth "Libby" French (Bickel) - 1917 -1921
residing in Exeter, NH

Marie Georgia Parsons (Watson) - 1918-1922
North Billerica Road, Tewksbury

Hope Muriel Haines (Roberts) - 1923-1927
Rogers Street, Tewksbury

Olive Viola Haines (Roberts) - 1925 -1929
Life Care Center, Billerica

William "Bill" F. Hannigan - 1925 -1929
Marston Street, Tewksbury

Frank J. Heidenrich - 1926-1930
North Billerica Road, Tewksbury

Rita Sullivan (Secor) - 1926-1930
North Chelmsford

Alice Pulsifer (Gargan) - 1926-1930
Saunders Circle, Tewksbury

Eleanor Osterman (Caddell) - 1934-1935
North Billerica Road, Tewksbury

Phyllis Bolton (Robart) - 1934-1935
Lawrence Street, Lowell ("Wigginville")

Alvin T. French - 1934-1935
Whipple Road, Tewksbury

Neighbors with Memories of the West School

Mary Heidenrich
Heidenrich Drive, Tewksbury

Jane Heidenrich (Black)
Rogers Street, Tewksbury

Helen Castor (Smith) , Billerica

Arthur Geddes, Armand Ave., Lowell

Elsie Ruckledge Faria, Lawrence St., Lowell

REMINISCING

Elizabeth French (Bickel) remembered--

--- her teacher, Miss Wylie. Elizabeth commented that she "was very fond of the teacher." The teacher would take a grade to one side and work only with them. The grades that weren't being taught had their work to do. There were around 20 to 25 students.

Elizabeth skipped a grade, either 3rd or 4th, because she was the only one in that grade.

There was a period when her aunt from California was staying with her family and used to take Elizabeth and her brother to the West School by horse and sleigh. They wrapped up in a buffalo robe. When they went to the Foster School, they went to Wamesit to get a streetcar, but if it were snowy weather they were taken by sleigh.

To get to the West School in good weather, Elizabeth walked across two big meadows from the family farm on Astle Street.

One day a piglet got out of its pen on their farm, and Elizabeth's father hopped into his Ford and followed it. The piglet scrambled to the West School where it stopped to rest and her father caught it there.

She remembered that her uncle, Dr. McCausland, brought pictures (slides) of his travels to show the children at the West School.

She said she heard "they had a teacher who taught from a rocking chair long after I left."

Herbert E. French -

-- was Elizabeth's brother, a year younger, and in the same class with Marie Parsons (Watson) and Alice Garside (Bell).

He authored "My Yankee Mother", published in 1942.

In Chapter Nine, he wrote in his good-humored style about the West School: "Our formal education began in a small country branch schoolhouse of five or six grades in a single room, with one teacher for all of us.,,.. Thirty children sat in the same room, listening to the recitations of each other's classes, and learning the pleasant art of daydreaming and woolgathering out the window. I remember skipping one grade because there were no other students in it with me. The teacher boarded at our house part of the time, which gave my mother a feeling of being on the inside of the local educational system.."

My Yankee Mother



By HERBERT E. FRENCH

With illustrations by Peggy Bacon

"My Yankee Mother" contains Herbert French's memories of the West School. The book which sold for \$2.50 when it was published is now considered a collectible.

Other nonfiction written:

-My Yankee Paris
(published 1945)

-Of Rivers and the Sea
(published 1970)

-Love of Earth-The Beauty
and Wonder of the World
Around Us (published 1973)

This personal note was written in Marie Parsons Watson's copy of the book on one of Herbert French's occasional visits to Tewksbury.

June 30, 1970

To Marie G. Watson —
I hope it will give
you pleasure to go back
and revisit
"West Tewksbury 1920."
It still exists, you
know, in our hearts
and memories
Herbert French

Marie Parsons (Watson) recalled---the walk to school. When it was bad weather, they didn't plow like they do now. Her father, Judson Parsons, would walk ahead in the snow to make a path. He worked nights and farmed during the day so he was available to do this.

The walk from home at the corner of Rogers Street and North Billerica Road was about one mile and took about 20 minutes to get there if you went right along. Usually someone walked with her until she met up with others. Eddie and Bobby Pineau came from Woburn Street. When the Heidenrichs came in 1920, she had Tillie and Elsie to walk with. They were the only ones from that direction.

"My father would go out in the morning, look around, and say, 'You'd better take your umbrella.' I don't know how he knew, but he did. It would be raining in the afternoon. We bundled up to walk in the bad weather. If the weather turned very bad, my father would walk up to the school and ask the teacher to send the kids home."

Marie started school in 1918 at age six. There were five grades but she stayed at the West for four years, and skipped a grade (fourth, she thought) because she was the only one in that grade.

Also in the school with Marie were Alice Garside and her sister, Herbert and Elizabeth French from Astle Street, the Jewells from Rogers Street, Mary, Tony, Joe, Rita and Rose Furtado from Whipple Road, the Olsens who lived near the school.

Marie spoke of rainy day recesses when they would play on the porch, and problems with water in the basement. "All the lavatories were down in the basement and in the Spring the basement had about a foot of water in it, and there were benches you had to walk over to get to the lavatories. Somebody always fell off the benches and was sent home."

(A cement basement had been added in 1916 but this did not solve the water problems.)



Marie talked of the school day. "The day went fine in the school. First thing in the morning, we had prayer and saluted the flag. We had arithmetic, spelling, English, geography. We'd listen to the other children. You learned everything. You didn't really have to study because you heard it all. We had things to do, color, and when we learned to write we traced the letters and numbers."

"We didn't have the stuff like the kids have today. We used the chalkboard. There were no bulletin boards. The teacher would hang our papers on the walls. Pictures of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington were in the room.. There were charts on a stand. The teacher had storytime every day if the kids were good."

They did a lot of artwork. and Marie has painted for years.

Marie's older sister, Madeline, had attended the school a few years previously, and other family members had attended in the late 1800s. Madeline's daughter, Barbara St. John of Berlin, MA, remarked about how well-read her mother was and what a good start she must have had at the West School.

Marie recalled If a child became sick at school, the teacher would send someone across the street to Olsen's to call a parent to come. If no one could come, there was a little room behind the teacher's desk with a cot in it.

"We did not carry books back and forth. I think we probably learned better. I wonder how much the kids do when they take all this stuff home."

Although the School Committee reported to have bought new desks in 1916, she recalled the desks were "pretty well beat up." As for supplies, "We had plenty of books and didn't have to bring any supplies. We all had little flags on our desks. It was wartime."



Looking down North Billerica Road in 2003 from the old Parsons home frontage in the direction that leads to French Street. The road was unpaved when the Heidenrichs, Parsons, Haines, Pulsifers, and Pineaus walked to the West School. The corner of Rogers Street is visible after the utility pole.

The School Committee reported in 1918 that fire exits were added. At the West School, that may have meant the back door. A fuel shortage resulted in extending Christmas vacation to January 7 to conserve coal. Teacher shortages were a concern.

There was war work in the schools and every school joined the Junior Red Cross. Children that could knit made sweaters, afghans, scarves, socks, and some children sewed items.

Anna Wylie, a Lowell Normal graduate, had been teaching for ten years. The enrollment was 27 and the average attendance was 23.

Charles Randall, Superintendent of Schools, noted that influenza caused the school to be closed in late September and early October for four weeks. The school day was lengthened the rest of the year.

The exterior of the West School was painted in 1919. Elizabeth Bickel thought the paint color had a bluish tinge. The Annual Report for 1919 stated the school was in good condition "within and without".

Miss Helena McGowan, a graduate of Lowell Normal, took over. Marie Watson said she was well-dressed and usually wore suits. Her boyfriend picked her up in a big car after school.

Street lights were added to Rogers Street and Whipple Road in 1920. The School Committee again referred to the teacher shortage. Teachers were resigning in the country because of inadequate salaries. A full time school nurse position was created for the town.

In 1921, electric lights were installed on Astle Street at a cost of \$1447.57, and on North Billerica Road for \$2412.61.

Miss McGowan had left her teaching post, and was replaced by Miss Laura Byron, a recent graduate of Lowell Normal. She began teaching in September and soon left to teach in Rhode Island.

Miss Lucia Waite, an experienced teacher, was put in charge of the school. The teacher situation was called "serious". The enrollment was 22 and average attendance was 19 in 1921.

Marie Watson never forgot Miss Waite. Her comments - "She wasn't so nice. She threw a whole box of chalk at me once when I didn't answer a question right. She seemed very old to us. I would say at least 60. She was too old to be teaching anyway. The poor thing! She'd go right off the handle. She didn't like children at all. She rapped knuckles."

Miss Waite always wore black with a black apron, and on holidays she put on a white apron.

In "My Yankee Mother", Herbert French wrote of "the strangest teacher my mother ever encountered." He called her Miss Thwarte who never smiled and he wrote of the trouble she caused. "After spring vacation, Miss Thwarte formed a nasty new vigorous habit of slinging books at our heads, and the whole school became adept at dodging them." Marie considered "Thwarte" was a fictional name for the teacher they experienced.

Marie Parsons said if a parent came this teacher was as sweet and nice as can be, and the parents thought "we were making it up."

There were programs for parents at Christmas and in the spring, and Marie remembers they had costumes and recited poems. "I played Pocohontas once. We put on a play about the colonists and the Indians and a couple of the boys were a riot. Parents sat along the side. Mrs. Anderson, the janitor, came to these too."

For regular school clothing, Marie had two pleated skirts and a few middy blouses. Her Aunt Emma made whatever she needed.

Marie remembered, "We did writing projects, stories, poems."

"The teacher used the chalkboard a lot. We had a lot of handwriting lessons and had to memorize poems. I never liked reciting. That was the one part of school I did not like."

"We took turns reading aloud every day. Some of the boys were pretty bad - on purpose."

"There was a little room with books and things to do. If you were good, and had done your work, you could go there and get a book."

"You were lucky if you had a nickel. They didn't give you an allowance then." She recalled Chelmsford ginger ale was popular.

In describing the school, the walls were a buff color. There were windowshades, two small rooms in the front, one with books and supplies, the other with a cot. The desks had ink wells. Paste was passed around on paper. There was no telephone at the school and someone would go to Mrs. Anderson's house if they needed to phone.

Marie said as she got older sometimes she helped with the younger children. Her older sister Madeline spent time helping at the school before she was married.

Marie spoke of Saturday night dances at the West School for anyone who wanted to go. The Jack Fanning Band played there. The desks were moved to one side. She wasn't old enough to go but she said they all knew about the dances there.

She commented: "We had some good times there. I think kids miss a lot in these schools today that are so organized."

In 1971, Marie requested her early school records. The reply from John W. Wynn, Superintendent of Schools, indicated a large number of the early records had been destroyed.

Tewksbury Public Schools

John W. Wynn
Superintendent

Dr. Edward J. Farley
Assistant Superintendent

John F. Ryan
Assistant Superintendent
for Business

Tewksbury, Massachusetts 01876

1459 Andover Street
Tewksbury, Massachusetts
Telephone 851-7347

December 17, 1971

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to certify that Mrs. Marie Parsons Watson graduated from Grade 8 of the Foster School, Tewksbury, in June of 1925.

Mrs. Watson attended Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8 in the Foster School, having attended Grades 1 through 5 in the West School on Whipple Road in West Tewksbury. At that time children in various elementary schools in town attended the Foster School for Grades 6, 7, and 8.

I am very sorry that we have been unable to find school registers for this period for either the West School or Foster School. A large number of registers for elementary schools were burned by a custodian who did not realize their legal value. This included registers prior to 1920 and also through the 1920's.

While it may be possible to locate early students on graduation lists, it may be difficult to find the names of many who attended the West and Foster Schools previous to and through the 1920's. Census images can shed some light on families and children in the area but names may be missing, some may have died, or moved. Lists of births in the town records can also be a way to locate students by estimating school entrance age and checking the next ten year interval census.

Hope Haines (Roberts) recollected---that she never walked alone to school from her home on the corner of North Billerica Road and Rogers Street. Tillie Heidenrich walked with Hope her first year (1923). Sometimes her mother walked her to the corner of French Street. Then Karl Heidenrich started school the next year and they walked together. Hope said she "lucked out" her last year at the West School because Mr. Clark's chauffeur from Billerica took the Clark's daughter to



Rogers Hall School in Belvidere and they picked up Hope and her sister Olive, driving them to Osterman's corner.

Hope enjoyed the West School very much but during her first year she "had an awful time." Her teacher was Miss Loupret. "I wrote left-handed and they didn't approve of that one single bit. She had an eraser she used to throw at me or she would hit me on the hand. I eventually swapped over to the right hand but I was a little indignant with the teacher and didn't do it then. The next teacher (Miss Faye?) stayed with the Mullens', was nice, and she eventually got me over to writing with my right hand."

"In the wintertime we always brought hot chocolate to drink (in a glass jar) and we'd put it on top of the boiler. Once in a while a jar would pop. "

"To use the bathroom, you walked over benches. It was all iced up down there."

"We helped clean up the leaves so Mrs. Livingston didn't have to do that. Underneath the porch we'd make a little house with windows by stacking leaves."

"In the morning, you had something to do, and the teacher would start with another class until she had all classes going. Then when one was through, perhaps with their math, something else would start. Rita Furtado was a good reader so she would read a story to the 1st or 2nd grade for a while. Madeline Parsons or Ruth Fletcher would come and help sometimes. It was kind of hard to take four grades at once. It wasn't as routine as you might think. With different things going on, a group would be put on the steps going down cellar. You couldn't put them down cellar because there was water there."

Hope said, "They would have special programs for an excuse, like - Mrs. Livingston perhaps would have a birthday. Different people did the janitor work. Mrs. Anderson, Mrs. Livingston. Whoever could get out of bed in time. They had some awful times, particularly with the water situation. That basement would fill up with water. The big rock outside, water would come in by that. It was a wet situation."

In its December 21, 1923 annual report, the School Committee addressed the water problem at the West School.

The West School has been very unsanitary every year in the spring and fall on account of surface water collecting in the basement, and it has been very hard for the janitor to maintain a fire. A drain has been put in and we hope it will take care of the trouble. The committee wish to thank Mr. Castor for allowing us to drain it on the adjoining land at no expense to the Town.

The Committee continued to be concerned with staffing in all schools.

We are trying to keep with us the teachers who have proven themselves capable by paying them a salary, sufficiently attractive so that our neighboring small towns will not draw them from us.

Hope thought the school land had belonged to the Livingstons. They owned a lot of land in the western section of town and lived across the street from the West School.

"The roads were dirt then and there was no traffic to worry about."

"My father (Percy Haines) plowed a lot of the roads around here. He used some of Karl Heidenrich's horses to plow. He plowed over to the Foster School too. They did more shoveling! He took men with him - had quite a few - they had to keep getting off to shovel. Those wooden plows just wouldn't plow. Rogers Street was so hard to plow they found it easier to come down Heidenrich's field to get onto North Billerica Road. My last year my father had a truck to plow. Sheep's lining in our boots was a lifesaver for walking to school."

The town Treasurer's report for 1926 refers to payments for "Breaking Roads": Karl Heidenrich with team \$50

Irving French, shoveling snow \$37.25

C.H, Haines, shoveling snow \$36

Haines and Son, with team \$109.50

The School Committee contemplated closing the West School in 1925.

West School. This district differs from others, here we have a modern, well equipped building, but with a small number of pupils. Last summer it was voted to discontinue this school and transport the pupils to the Foster, as it was believed that there would be but fourteen pupils attending in September. Upon request of many of the parents a hearing was granted by the committee and the vote to close the school was rescinded. You will notice from the Table of Statistics that the total enrollment this year is eighteen, the present enrollment is seventeen. The saving in school expenditure would have been considerable had it seemed best to close this school.

(School Committee Report - December 31, 1925)

For 1926, the town paid Mrs. M. Anderson, West School janitor, \$430. However, there were memories of Mrs. Livingston doing this work also. Perhaps she helped out and was paid by Mrs. Anderson. That same year, Asahel Jewell of Rogers Street was paid \$975 for driving the "barge" as it was called to the Foster School. His son Henry, of North Andover, called it a "horse and wagon schoolbus."

Barge Routes. A larger barge is run from West district this year, thereby carrying all the pupils who are more than a mile from school.

(from School Committee Report - 1925)

Marie Watson remembered riding on the barge with Tillie Heidenrich to the Foster School. It was their first school bus and they had to walk down Rogers Street to the corner of Whipple to get it. There were hardly any houses along the way but she said nobody thought anything of it then. Mr. Jewel's barge was a horse and wagon, with grain bags on the sides. When they got to any little incline, they all had to get out to walk. She laughed about one time when they were stopped and Mr. Heidenrich came by. He said, "What are you doing?" and Tillie popped her head out between the grain bags and said, "Oh, hi, Pa," and Mr. Heidenrich almost ran off the road when he saw what kind of a school bus "we had." It took almost an hour to get to school and was not a pleasant ride.

Hope Roberts didn't ride in that barge. It was gone by the time she went to the Foster School. The children were then walking from their homes to the end of Pike Street to get the electric car.



Hope Roberts used the silver monogrammed button hook and lacing tool for the high-buttoned shoes she wore to the West School. They were handed down from her mother as was the pin with violets and gold edging that she wore on some school dresses. Her mother was Mildred Palmer (Haines).

Neither Hope nor Marie could recall having substitute teachers at the West School. The teachers were never out. Hope noted that Miss Faye and Miss Loupret lived nearby and walked to school.

It was common practice for the farm families in West Tewksbury to have big breakfasts. The children carried lunches to school.

About money, Hope said, "It wasn't anything to make an issue of. You either had it or you didn't, and it didn't matter. Today kids have to have money for this and money for that. It just didn't matter then. It didn't bother you. You didn't go shopping. Everything came from catalogs - Sears, Montgomery Wards. "

"My Aunt Edith got a lot of stuff for Olive, Norma, and me. She had a car early. Then Mr. Parsons got one, and then the Mullins got one. Those were treasures. I remember Grampa coming down Park Avenue in the winter. He missed the corner, and went over the stone wall. The Ostermans had to get him out."

At the West School "we had an art teacher who started with the first little leaf, and we had to bring a particular leaf in and reproduce it. There was a music teacher, the same one for a long time. She was pretty old and her voice wasn't much better than mine. She was a character."

The School Committee reported that Anna Sullivan was hired as a teacher for the West School. She began there in 1926. Hope was in fourth grade. Miss Sullivan had prepared at Lowell Normal School. All those interviewed who had Anna Sullivan for a teacher had the highest regard for her. Her good-natured personality was outstanding and she taught with dedication.

Hope Roberts believed going to a one-room neighborhood school was an advantage. "Definitely. It set you for life!"

Karl L. Heidenrich, Jr.-

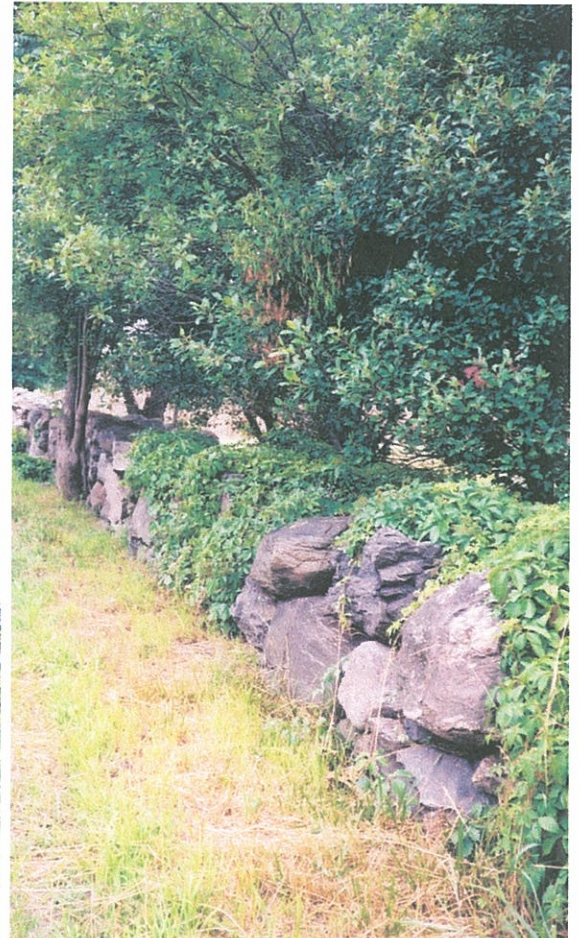
--- told his daughter, Jane Heidenrich (Black) stories about walking the stone walls in winter to get to school because the roads would fill in with snow.

Hope Roberts spoke of being "the small one. I'd get stuck in the snow and Karl would have to pull me out."

The stone walls they walked still exist on North Billerica Road and some on Rogers and French Streets.



Old stone walls on North Billerica Road



Stone Wall on French Street

(Photos taken July 2003
by G. Ruckledge)

Jane related that Karl sang songs to her when she was very little, songs which he had learned as a small child at the West School. One of them was about a little bug walking the stone wall. At Karl's funeral on June 11, 2003, the Twenty-Third Psalm was recited for Karl had learned it as a child at the West School. He began first grade in 1924.

Mary Heidenrich wrote of the first time Karl brought her to Tewksbury and showed her the West Tewksbury area:

"When Karl first brought me to Tewksbury, the very first place that he wanted to show me was the West School where he attended for four years. He spoke of it with such pride and affection and remembered all his classmates' names.

He learned the Lord Is My Shepherd there and it was his favorite prayer."

(Mary Heidenrich - September 2003)



The Heidenrich family - June 9, 1928 - Sophie's wedding day.

Sophie sometimes played the piano at the West School.

On the left is Karl, Sophie, Tillie who played Santa Claus at the West, and Karl Heidenrich, Sr., dairy farm owner.

In front is Mrs. Heidenrich (Tillie), and Frank.

(Photograph - Courtesy of Mary Heidenrich and Jane Black)

Olive Haines (Roberts) remembered-
--- a teacher dressed like a "schoolmarm"
when she started first grade in 1925.

Anna Sullivan became her teacher in
1926 and Olive thought her wonderful.

Although Olive, wrapped in a white fur
coat, had the company of her sister Hope,
and Karl Heidenrich, she said she hated
the walk to school. The weather " didn't
matter - you walked."



Olive did not particularly like the West School but spoke of
having a lot of fun on the playground, and playing on the school
porch on rainy days. "The only good thing about that school was
recess."

About behavior in school, she said they were told, "There is no
talking in this room when classes are going on. That was a no-no.
It was a difficult time - five classes - I thought it was terrible."

"There was a piano in the West School. When they couldn't get
anybody else, I played it."

On May Day there was a May Pole and Sophie Heidenrich
played the piano. Olive went on to say that she did like school a lot
better at the Foster and she played the piano there for school
performances. Her piano teacher was Mrs. Dawson.

Her impression of the West School was that it was "falling down.
If it had a coat of paint on it every ten years that would be something."
She did say the desks with the attached seats were beautiful, and
they were given plenty of paper, pencils, and crayons to use. Her
enjoyment in reading grew from the early lessons at the school.

Olive said she had not thought about the school for a long time.
She remembered the teacher writing questions on the blackboard
and that there was homework. There were after school snacks made
by her mother and baseball games with the Pulsifers. She observed
that her sister Hope preferred to work in the field after school.

William Hannigan - attended
---between 1925 and 1929 and he
recalled walking on the stone walls
from Astle Street to the West School
when the snow was deep on the roads.
Frank Abreu, also from Astle Street,
walked with him.

He described the school as having
a peaked roof on the porch and a
double door at the entrance.

There was a hot air furnace with
one pipe. Both wood and sometimes coal were used for fuel. Mrs.
Livingston was the janitor and took care of the heating.

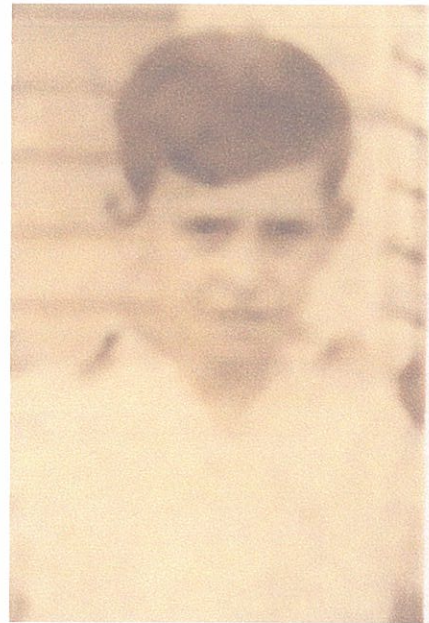
There were 25 or 30 in all four grades when he was there. The
teacher, Anna Sullivan, had to be strict because of having different
classes. The second grade sat next to the first and could hear the
lessons. Bill Hannigan thought you learned better that way because
you were listening to the others while doing your own work. He
spoke of liking the school.

They had a full hour for lunch and he walked home, quite often
taking Karl Heidenrich with him. Karl loved Mrs. Hannigan's beef
vegetable soup.

Bill noted that during the early 1960's a race car from the Dracut
Speedway was stored in the cellar of the school.

In 1926 Bill Hannigan was in the West School and the following
former West School students were in different classes at Lowell
High School:

Doris Blake of Astle Street - later a Foster School teacher
Beatrice and Mildred Bolton
Ethel and Ruth Fletcher
Mary Furtado
Olive Haines
Marie Parsons
Edward Pineau
Catherine Sullivan, Anna Sullivan's sister





Left to right

Back row: Mrs. Silva, August Silva, Arthur Olson, Arlene Olsen, Warren Ostermann,
William Hanningan, Frank Heidenrich, Teacher Amy Sullivan, Donald Bolton,
Virginia Danon, Mae Malanson, & Donald French.

Front row: Ralph Olsen, Joe Mullin, Norma Haines, Joseph Silva, Ruth Bolton,
James McNulty, Arthur Pineau, & Peter Sullivan.

Year 1929 * West School, W. Tewksbury

WHIPPLE RD
* FRENCH ST

WEST SCHOOL - 1929
(Courtesy of Frank Heidenrich)

Frank Heidenrich never forgot -

---"the worst thing was when I walked down by Parsons' house and Desjardins who lived across the street had a bad dog. The dog bit me on the backside, and I went to school and sat there all day. When I came home my mother made me sit in creolin and hot water for three hours."

"Karl was in the third grade when I started the first in 1926. You had to take a lunch and Mrs. Anderson brought some milk over. The school was nice inside. We had to pull down the blackboards and at the end of the day pushed them up and our coats were there." Like others who had Anna Sullivan, he thought she was a wonderful teacher.



"In the first grade I spoke a little German. The teacher called home and asked my parents to speak English at the table, and they were good about that and did it. My grandfather had a livery stable and inn in Austria and my father worked there first. He announced he was going to brewer's college and did well. He had to go into the cavalry in Austria for a year, and after that worked in the brewery. Every year he had to go into the army for a month, and had to pay someone to do his job. He didn't want to do that all his life so he came here and worked at the Harvard Brewery. The crossing took 21 days. My mother had been to gourmet school in Alsace-Lorraine for two years, and she came over to work for the Searles family who had a castle in Windham.. They paid her well. She saved her money and she and my father married. When Prohibition came, my father lost his job. They decided to buy the farm in Tewksbury from Walter Parsons . I was born the day my father paid \$15,000 for the farm. My father said to Walter, 'Do you want to see my new son?' and Walter Parsons took a look, and went up to the barn and hanged himself. That was May 25, 1920."

Anna Sullivan would "give you assignments. She'd take one class and then the next. She did well; she was strict. You have to be. You paid attention. If you didn't pay attention and do what you were told, you'd be in trouble. You heard everything going on in the higher classes."

Frank said the front porch of the school had six inch square posts. There was a coal stove in the cellar that Mrs. Anderson took care of. In the classroom there was a victrola used for playing music. He said later on, in high school, Olive Haines played the piano every recess and noon time during winter in the gym and some of the kids would dance.

Pegge, Frank's wife, remembered him telling about walking Norma Haines. "I walked down to Rogers Street on North Billerica Road, and I had to pick up Norma Haines. Mrs. Haines said, 'Frank, you have to take care of Norma and walk with her and don't leave her.' I met Arthur Pineau coming from Park Avenue and he said, 'Frank, let's not walk with Norma...', and I said 'I have to walk her. Mrs. Haines told me to, gave me strict orders.' "

ElsieHeidenrich



Norma
Haines



Frank talked about his sister Elsie who was friendly with Marie Parsons and walked to school with her. When Elsie was seven, their house got on fire and she pulled the children out of the house, saving them. Frank was two. Sadly, Elsie died when she was only thirteen.

Both Frank and Karl worked on the farm after school. Frank spoke of milking ten cows when he was ten years old.



Karl and Frank Heidenrich working in the field next to Marie Parsons' home. They and their sisters walked past this field on their way to school.

(Courtesy of Marie Watson)

Rita Sullivan (Secor) described -

---the West School building. "It was very solid, painted light gray. The janitor-ess was Mrs. Anderson from the dairy. She unlocked the school in the morning and locked it at the end of the day. She swept and took care of the heating."

"The front door opened into a vestibule. There was a little room behind the teacher's desk. To the right were a stairway and another small room near the stairs, used for storage. Reading books were kept there."



"The windows to the right were large and it was a bright school. Swings were outside to the right, facing the back. The back door was not used often, but was used for fire drills."

"Blackboards were opposite the windows. They rolled up for coat closets and there were hooks for coats and places for lunchboxes. On the back wall there were maps and things for education."

"The school never felt crowded." She recalled there were always between 20 and 30 there.

Frank Heidenrich was in Anna's first class and Rita spoke of three Silva boys and the Hannigans attending. In fourth grade with her were Arlene Olson, Warren Osterman, Virginia Damon (who moved after that), and Arthur Olson.

There were four grades in the school at that time. The fifth graders went to the Foster. Rita noted the Superintendent, Mr. Bean, was in the school quite often and talked to the children. He was Superintendent of both Wilmington and Tewksbury.

Remembering Tillie Heidenrich who played Santa Claus every Christmas, Rita said, "When I was in fourth grade, I remember I went by the front door. I saw Tillie's car outside and knew who was Santa."

Rita Sullivan's family lived on Pike Street. The children walked to school along Astle Street and at the curve where Astle met French, they walked by a small brick building, set back on French Street, called The Powder House.

Anna Sullivan, Rita's sister, was her teacher and Rita talked about Anna's preparation at Lowell Normal School. She remarked that quite often the girls from Lowell Normal would be given one room schools. Anna had a system for keeping everyone busy. Sometimes an upper grade child would help a lower grade. A reading period for fourth grade would be followed by testing or summarizing, and that was when Anna would work with another grade. Rita said that when Marie Parsons finished high school, she would help Anna.

The children put on plays...
"we'd be in costume and act out the nursery rhymes (ex. Bo-Peep). We made hats out of paper."

Anna sewed items for the school when she was teaching there. Rita recalled clearly that Anna sewed half curtains for the windows with unbleached cotton and she stenciled ducks on them. "Anna loved the school."

Rita Sullivan's perception of the West School was that "it was much more than a school for the section of the town..."



Anna Sullivan

Elsie Ruckledge Faria remembered Anna Sullivan as being very soft-spoken. Although Elsie went to the Riverside School in Wigginville, for some reason she spent an overnight with Virginia Damon and went to school with her at the West the next day (about 1928). She remembered thinking, "The school was so much different from the Riverside, and so much cleaner."

There was no problem about children who were visiting friends or relatives spending a day as a guest in a classroom. They were greeted, seated, and participated in the day's lessons.

Alice Pulsifer (Gargan) talked about -

---her memories of the West School and how the children sat by rows for grades. She spoke with great admiration and love for her teacher, Anna Sullivan. At Christmas, Anna brought her cards and presents and she remembered how kind Anna was to her. She said she cried when she had to leave the school. By her fifth grade, Alice's family moved to Lincoln Street in Lowell so Alice did not continue on to the Foster School as her two older sisters had. Alice walked to the West School with her cousin, as her mother brought him up.

She carried her lunches, and when she forgot her lunch her mother would walk to school and deliver it, and Anna Sullivan would make her mother sit and then take her mother home.

Alice wore low tie shoes and long dresses to school. Her hair was styled in a Dutch Clip with bangs. She mentioned the old-fashioned desks they had.

She thought of Norma Haines and how much fun they had playing together after school in the barns on the Haines farm. The Pulsifers' home was next to the Haines' on North Billerica Road. Alice remembered John Sullivan. John would push the playground swing high and the teacher (Anna Sullivan, his sister) would have to come out and make him stop. (John was three years younger than Alice.)

About the building, she believed the teacher had a small wood stove in her room around the corner. The windows opened from the top and kept it cool on warm days.

Alice is still an avid reader and her teacher made a long lasting memory. About Anna Sullivan, Alice said, "She was caring and informative, and for those days and having six classes, instilled a remarkable reminder to all who attended that school was an important factor in forging ahead in life."

In June 1934, Anna Sullivan had to give up her position at the West School as she was to marry Miles Finnegan. In his annual report of January 11, 1935, Stephen Bean, Superintendent of Schools, wrote:

The wedding of Miss Anna Sullivan, teacher of the West School, automatically terminated her service as a teacher. She had also taught for us most successfully for a number of years. Miss Mildred Rollo of Lowell, another graduate of Lowell Teachers' College succeeds her.

The School Committee's annual report for December 31, 1934 had the following information about the West School.

Grade 1 - 6 scholars	Grade 1 - 3 scholars
Grade 3 - 4 scholars	Grade 4 - none
Grade 5 - 5 scholars	Total - 18
Mrs. M. Anderson, janitor	Mildred Rollo, teacher

There was an important statement by Chairman Mary L. Larrabee: "It is proposed to close the Spaulding and West Schools and this should make a material savings for the town."

The 1934-1935 school year was to be the last for the West School. Tewksbury was building a new high school on Pleasant Street and it would have to be staffed and maintained. The town would have increased expenses.

Three of the first graders from that last year were interviewed: Phyllis Bolton Robart, Eleanor Osterman Caddell, and Alvin French. In addition to their West School memories, there was conversation about their subsequent teachers. For second grade through eighth, they were driven to the Foster School on Tony Furtado's bus. At the Foster, their 2nd grade teacher was Miss Cunningham, 3rd grade was Mrs. Colbath, 4th grade was Miss Blake, 5th grade Miss Piper, 6th grade Miss Flynn, 7th grade Mrs. Lyons. Miss Howard was the 8th grade teaching principal. The music teacher was Mrs. Sturtevant.

In 1934 the roads were still gravelled and oiled. Aaron Osterman continued to supply water to the West School.

Phyllis Bolton (Robart) mentioned -

---the mailboxes in front of the West school. "There was a whole row of mail boxes (9 or 10)...and we had to cross the field to get our mail."

"We walked (from Astle Street) across the field in good weather. There was a roadway part way and I walked with Dick Bolton." (The Bolton home was previously the French's home and Phyllis was taking the same paths that Libby and Herbert French had walked earlier.)

Phyllis thought the school was great. She recalled two rows of first grade and their desks faced Whipple Road. Miss Rollo read to them. Penmanship was stressed. They were taught to "hold the pen just so and arm flat and do OOOOOOOO's across lines and they had to be perfect."

At recess they played Relievo. The trees around the school were evenly spaced. "You ran from one tree to the next and if they tagged you, you were out!"

One day stood out for Phyllis. It was recess time on June 12 when Mrs. Jennie Olsen, from across the street, called Phyllis over and said, "Phyllis, you have a new baby brother." That brother was Cliffie. The school had no telephone and Mrs. Olsen's phone was nearby.



Clifford Bolton

He became a police officer and detective for Tewksbury, and was well-known for his kind manner.

(Courtesy of Phyllis Robart)

Phyllis Robart talked about some incidents at the Foster School. "I remember in the second grade that the teacher kept me and I missed the bus. I had to walk all the way home alone and I can still remember being so scared because I wasn't sure of the way."

"We had to go to the third floor for music and there was the time when someone shoved in the line. Keith Fadden was at the head and bumped Mrs.____, the music teacher, and she turned around and smashed him in the face."

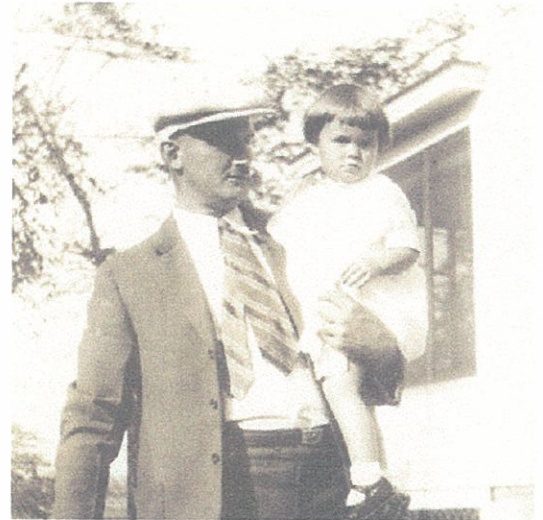
These incidents did not affect Phyllis' liking for school. She said Miss Howard read the Psalms and "I loved it."

Phyllis did not recall any school buses going to the West School and thought everyone walked. There wasn't a bus until she went to the Foster.

Eleanor Osterman (Caddell) traveled -
---around West Tewksbury on her tricycle. As a pre-schooler, she pedaled quietly without permission after her brothers, Warren and Alan, past the West School, down Whipple Road to Jesse French's once when the boys were going to play ball. Another time, determined not to be left behind, she followed them into Lowell, but instead of turning down Lawrence Street as they had, she headed over Boylston Street. Naturally, her mother caught up with her and took the matter in hand.

Like Mrs. Heidenrich, Eleanor's mother was extremely busy in the house. A farm made many demands and there was a tremendous amount of cooking and chores to be done. Eleanor had her wheels and was adventurous.

The photo of Eleanor and her Dad was taken when the family lived on French Street, very near the school. They moved to the farmhouse on North Billerica Road in 1935, the year Eleanor was in first grade at the West School.



Eleanor - age 3 or 4 - with her father Edwin W. Osterman
(Courtesy of Eleanor O. Caddell)

Eleanor remarked how her father arose very early every morning to milk the cows on his dairy farm. There were 125 head of cattle to take care of and workers arrived early. After Ed Osterman finished his early morning chores, he walked over to the West School to start the boiler, sweep the floors and wash the blackboards. He got everything ready early before the school day started and he did this on top of working all day into the dark on the farm. Eleanor said he received \$18 a year for these tasks. (While the town reports only show Mrs. Anderson receiving payment for taking care of the school, there must have been an arrangement between her and Mrs. Livingston and Ed Osterman. She may have needed help.) In winter, Ed Osterman used four Canadian work horses to pull wooden sleighs to deliver milk.

Not to be outdone by her brothers, Warren and Alan, Eleanor took herself to school well before she was in the first grade. She would drop in when she pleased. Anna Sullivan must have enjoyed her; she had set aside a small desk/chair for Eleanor on the side near the 5th grade, complete with a tin box of crayons and coloring paper. Eleanor would color for a while and then walk back home whenever she wanted.

Eleanor named the first graders who were with her in 1934-1935: Alvin French, Edward Collins, Phyllis Bolton, Celestina Silva, and Marjorie Coburn. Her cousin, Victor Cluff, was in the second grade. Her brother Alan was in the 5th. Miss Rollo was the teacher.

In the school room, "Miss Rollo had a big chart, and we learned parts of words first."

Eleanor's memory of the building was "gray with a stone foundation and the porch had a cement floor. Often there was water in the basement of the school. The pull-chain toilets were raised and big long benches were placed across the basement floor from the steps. Children had to walk across them."

Like Phyllis Robart, Eleanor remembered walking to the West School for mail because all the mailboxes for the area were located there.



Leather fur-trimmed mittens were worn by Eleanor Osterman at ages 4 and 5 when she was making frequent "visits" to the West School.

Eleanor made this knit and purl washcloth at age 5. She was taught to knit by her grandmother, Bina Osterman, who lived two doors from the West School on French Street.



Alvin French observed -

---"There have been a lot of changes since the West School days."

Although there were only six first graders when he attended that last year the school was open, he remembered the seating arrangement. There were two rows of first grade and one row for each of the other grades, and one teacher. He thought it was likely that he didn't walk to school but may have gone on Furtado's bus, which was driven by either Tony or Joe Furtado.

The closing of the West School in June 1935 signaled a change. The little neighborhood school had become outdated and children were sent to a centralized school, the Foster. The School Committee did not report that there were any requests by families in the neighborhood to keep the school open as there were when closing was first brought up in 1925. There was no talk of enlarging the school. The water problems in the basement were significant. The school did not have its own source of water or telephone service. The building, though warm and friendly, was not up to progressing standards.

The Annual Report of the School Committee, dated December 31, 1935 contained the final reports for the West School: "The closing of the Spaulding and the West Schools has proved an economy. The savings here has helped balance the cost of fuel and janitor service in the high school."

Mrs. Mary L. Larrabee, School Committee chairman, wrote: "The Spaulding and the West Schools have been closed and the pupils taken care of at the Foster School. The West School was closed permanently and the Spaulding was closed until such time as the Foster is overcrowded."



The West School is behind the Castor children and their neighbors. Whipple Road is to the left in front of the school. (Courtesy of Helen Castor Smith)

Helen Castor (Smith) recalled -

---that the school most likely was taken down in the early 1960's. She was born four years after the school closed and by that time the land and building had ended up with her parents, whose home was beside the school.

She did remember that the school was used as a chicken coop. It was taken down several years after her father passed away (which was in 1956).

The Castor family had lived on Castor Street in Wigginville before moving to Tewksbury. Helen said that their house on Whipple Road (beside the school) was the Lawrence Street train station, which was moved to Whipple Road. In the late 1800's, Castor family members attended the West School, and their names were recorded on Rolls of Honor.



The Castor children and neighbors about 1950. They are standing on the land between the Castor's house and the West School. The front porch roof seems to be missing on the school but that may be some of the porch railing that is visible. The two trees in the front appear to be the maples that were planted in 1887. Part of this area would have been the playground for the school.

(Photograph-Courtesy of Helen Castor Smith)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It was a pleasure hearing the stories and memories of the people who had connections to the West School. There was much emphasis in their recollections about their journeys to school throughout the West Tewksbury neighborhood.

My thanks go to all of the former scholars and neighbors who supplied information so enthusiastically. The conversations with Marie Watson, Hope Roberts, Olive Roberts, and Frank Heidenrich were taped. Telephone interviews were conducted with Libby French, Bill Hannigan, Rita Sullivan, Alvin French, Helen Castor, and Arthur Geddes. Discussions with Eleanor Caddell, Phyllis Bolton, Jane Black, Mary Heidenrich, and Elsie Faria were both by telephone and in person. Alice Gargan was interviewed by Sylvia Starling. Chas Bickel in San Francisco paved the way for me to contact his mother, Libby, in Exeter, NH. Libby Bickel's years at the West School formed the starting point for the memories of those interviewed. The many photos contributed made it possible to preserve a little bit of West Tewksbury.

Louise Gearty unintentionally provided the incentive for this book and I am grateful for the opportunities that have come about to explore a portion of West Tewksbury's history.

RESOURCES

- Herbert E., French, "My Yankee Mother", Vanguard Press, 1942
- Annual Reports of School Committees and Superintendents of Schools Reports, History Room, Tewksbury Public Library
- Harold Patten, "Ask Now of the Days That Are Past," A History of the Town of Tewksbury, Massachusetts 1734-1964
- Ye Towne Book, Two Hundredth Anniversary, 1934
- Tapes and Notes from Interviews
- Photos contributed are credited throughout the book.
- Frederick W. Coburn, History of Lowell and Its People, Vol. I, Lewis Historical Pub. Co., 1920
- Ancestry.com - United States census images

FOR THE RECORD

One way or another, the people interviewed have kept in touch. There have been letters , phone calls ,and exchanges of information, sometimes frequent, sometimes not, but the connections have been kept. Until a few years ago, Libby Bickel, Mary Furtado, and Marie Watson attended reunions of their Lowell High School classes.

Anna Sullivan Finnegan had further connections with the Tewksbury School System. She worked as a Remedial Reading Teacher after her children were grown. The year she decided to retire, she stopped at my house to tell me of the job opening. I applied and took her place, although I doubt anyone could really have "taken her place." I worked with Mrs. Millie West, head of Remedial Reading in town. She had been the Millie Rollo who taught the last class at the West School. Louise Gearty and I had Miss Rollo as our first grade teacher at the Spaulding School.

Rita Sullivan Secor taught English at Tewksbury High School and those of us who were in her classes were fortunate.

Doris Blake, who went to the West School as a child, taught 4th grade at the Foster when Louise and I went there.

Arthur Geddes of Lowell talked about stopping to play around the West School with his brother Stanley and friends on their way to Mud Pond to swim in the summer about 1932. Although Long Pond is the actual name, local residents have always referred to the pond at the intersection of Whipple Road and Pleasant Street as Mud Pond.

Going back in time on Astle Street in the last quarter of the 1800's, Griffin Pump Works was listed in Harold Patten's History. Josiah Griffin was a carpenter pumpmaker who made wooden pumps and pipe.

In the section of Tewksbury from Lawrence Street to the Concord River, also toward the later 1800's, two men (Gilman and Wiggin) built numerous homes. First called Gilmanville, the section became better known as Wigginville. In 1888, Tewksbury voted to build a school in Gilmanville.



Rita Sullivan -
1952 yearbook

Whipple Road derived its name from Oliver Whipple and Astle Street derived its from Dr. A. Astle who once lived at the corner of Pike and Astle Streets.

Oliver Whipple, an early industrialist, was discussed in Coburn's History of Lowell (pgs. 123-4). Born in Vermont in 1794, he came to the Lowell area and built up a business in gunpowder. The powder mills were near the Concord River and there was a demand for the gunpowder in the Far East. The method of transporting the gunpowder was interesting.

"In order to have a suitable storage house at tide water, Mr. Whipple bought Spectacle Island in Boston harbor, which was sufficiently protected to make explosions unlikely. Transportation of gunpowder in large quantities was then, as now, extremely dangerous. The manufacturer constructed a road from his factory to connect with the old Boston road over which, in the dead of night, were sent cart loads of powder. "The hoofs of the horses," writes Mrs. Griffin, in her interesting reminiscences of "Old Homes and Byways," "were muffled in bagging and cotton pads so that their iron shoes should strike no sparks from the stones in the roads and thus ignite the powder. Slowly and steadily the great horses marched down the unfrequented by-ways, as far as possible, until they reached Boston, from which point the gun powder was taken, a boat load at a time, to the island in the harbor."

It was in the Moore Street area of Lowell, across the Concord River from Tewksbury, that Oliver Whipple encouraged building of homes.

In 1934, Ye Towne Book listed town officers and these West Tewksbury neighbors were among them: Irving French was chairman of the Board of Selectman and also served on the Board of Health; Albion Felker was an Assessor; Austin French was on the School Committee; Asahel Jewell was a Police Officer, Road Commissioner, Inspector of Animals and Inspector of Meats and Provisions; Karl Heidenrich was on the Finance Committee. Many West Tewksbury residents and former West School scholars participated in the 200th Anniversary program. and are named in Ye Towne Book.

It was a bonus for me to find Ruckledge names connected with the West School. William and Thomas Ruckledge lived on Juniper Street in Wigginvile. Thomas died in September 1891, having drowned in the Concord River. He was twelve and had been on the Roll of Honor for the West School that year. His older brother William died seven years later in Cuba during the Spanish-American War.

Georgia Ruckledge



Neighbors
Visiting



Horses at Lee's Greenhouses

(Photos from Evelyn Lee Whitehead's
collection - courtesy of Joan McCool)

PICTORIAL of the West School Neighborhood



Hilda and Tony Furtado with
Evelyn Lee Whitehead (right) on a
Girl Scout trip to Benson's in
1948. Tony was the bus driver.
Both Tony and Evelyn went
to the West School.

(G. Ruckledge)

45

West Tewksbury horses





West School Photo by Tony Anderson
ca. early 1950's

(Courtesy of Gordon and Miriam Neville)

The large rock to the left of the school appears through melted snow. This is the rock that has an inscription referring to the trees that were planted in 1877. The trees on the property were well spaced and the surrounding lot was clear. The school entrance faces Whipple Road.

The photo shows two mailboxes remaining. Into the 1930's all the mailboxes for that immediate neighborhood were lined up in front of the West School.

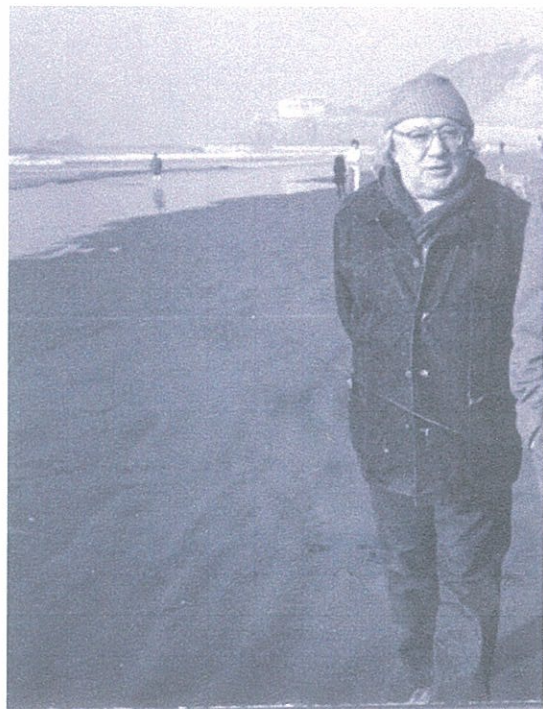


Early 1940's. Herbert French, author, with his mother, Elizabeth, who undoubtedly was "My Yankee Mother."

Herbert French
in San Francisco.

He passed away there
in 1991.

(Photos - Courtesy of
Chas Bickel)



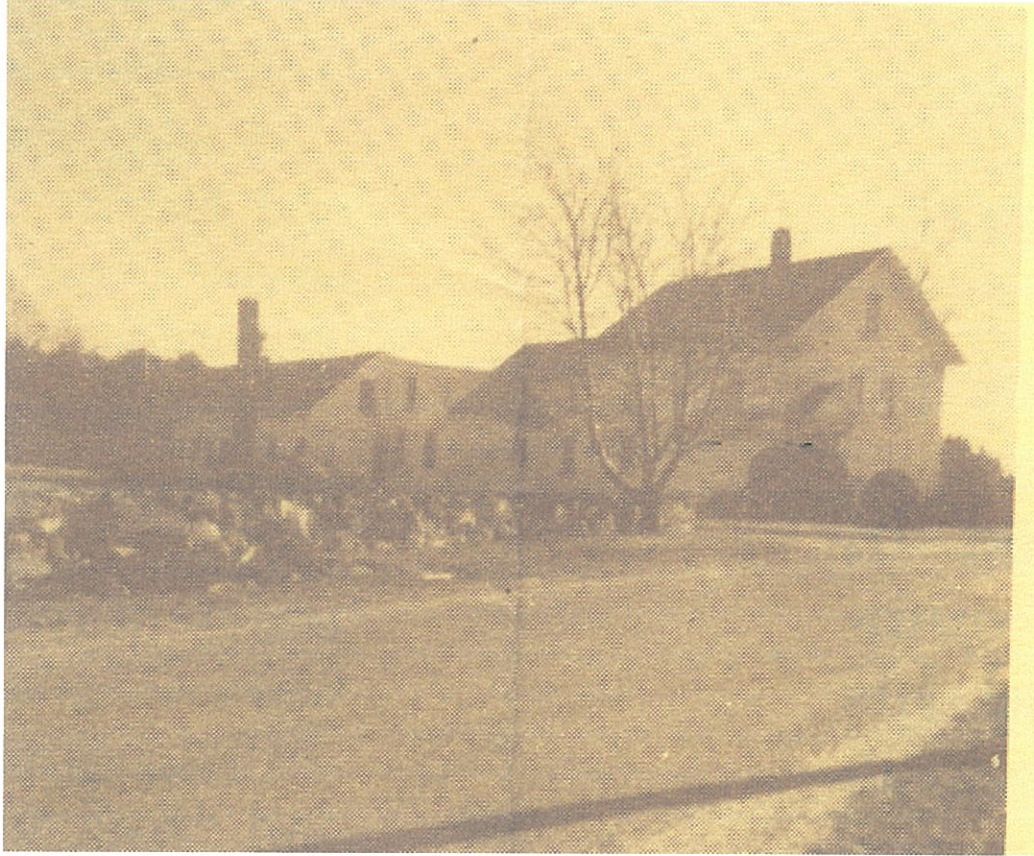


Bolton Farm at 309 Astle Street ca. late 1920's
(Courtesy of Ann Clayton)

Previous to the Boltons, this farm was owned by Joshua and Ellen French, whose son Elliott was the father of author Herbert E. French.

In "My Yankee Mother" Herbert French wrote about his mother's efforts to make "things more comfortable. Now all I want is a sun parlor."

"A screened porch will do just as well," my father said, "and not cost so much to build or to heat." After a year of contention and uncertainty, they added a mammoth extension the length of the front of our old farmhouse, two stories high - with a sun parlor upstairs for my mother and a screened porch downstairs for my father. "Now we both have just what we want," my father said, relieved, "and it won't be necessary to do any more building-on as long as we live." But the next year my mother raised the roof and finished off new rooms in the attic. "All I want to do," my mother said honestly, whenever she laid her latest plans before my father, "is to make the place more comfortable and convenient..." (My Yankee Mother, pg. 57)



Osterman's Dairy Farm, 98 North Billerica Road
at the corner of French Street.

This dairy business was started in 1872. Harold Patten wrote that the Osterman Milk Farm was the oldest in town history. (1)

The house was originally the French House, built in 1800. (2)

(Photo is from the Tewksbury brochure of 1976)

(1) Harold J. Patten's History of Tewksbury, 1964, pg. 250.

(2) *ibid*, pg. 205.



Anderson Farm on French Street



(Courtesy of Gordon
and Miriam Anderson Neville)



Hanna Pihl Anderson with son, Tony. ca. 1901. Hanna was the janitor for the West School which was across the street from the Anderson farm. Her children attended the school and she took on the additional responsibility of caring for the school.

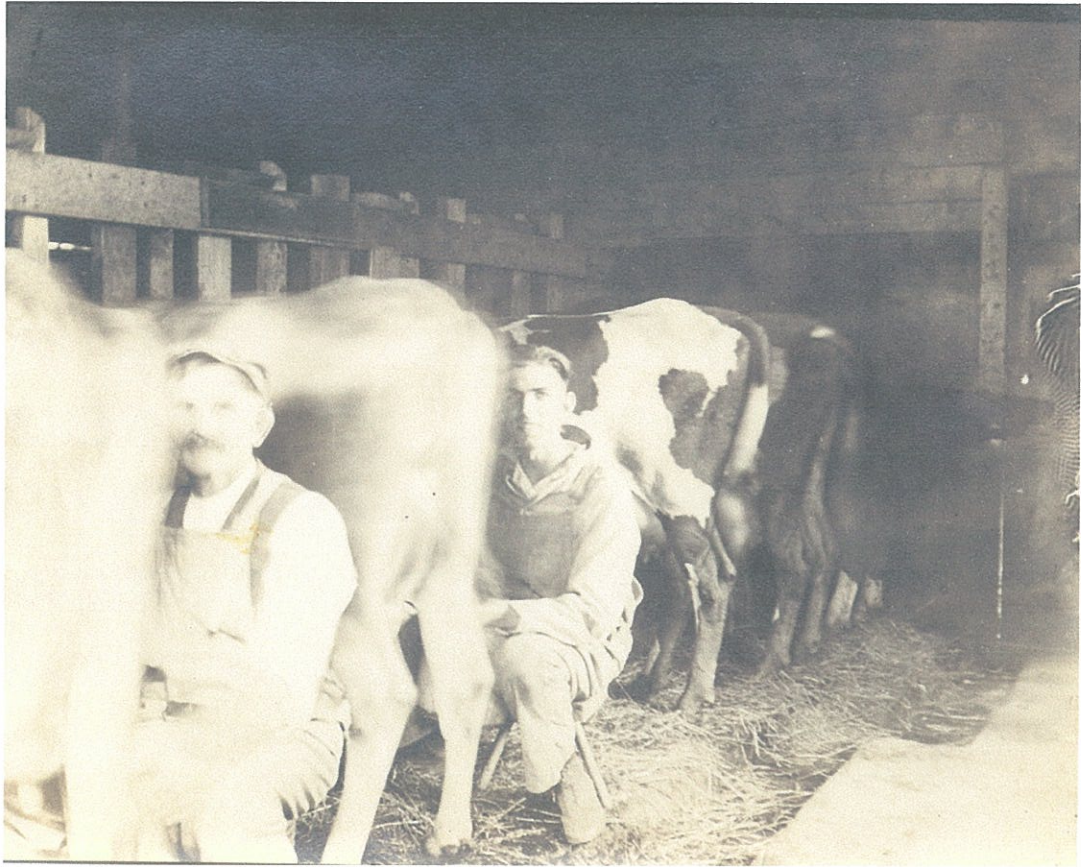
Nils Martin Anderson



Nils Martin Anderson of French Street (Hanna's husband) was born in 1864 on a farm in southwest Sweden. When he was twelve, he signed on as a cabin boy on a sailing ship, captained by an uncle, and sailed the Norwegian, North, and Baltic Seas. Then at age 19 he emigrated to Lowell where another uncle was doing well. These relatives, the Monsons, gave him a home and he worked for a time at the Stirling and other mills.

When he was 35, he married Hanna who had also been born in Sweden. They bought land and a house in West Tewksbury and founded a poultry, eggs, and orchard business. They had two sons and a daughter and it was their sons Anthony and Ralph who further developed the farm, added a herd of cows, and formed Anderson's Dairy.

(Courtesy of Gordon and Miriam Neville)



Nels Martin Anderson with Tony (abt. age 17) ca.1917
in the Anderson farm cow barn on French Street.



The signs mark the corner of Whipple Road and French Street.
Whipple Road is in the foreground. The West School was across
the street from the house that is partially showing on the left.

ca. 1925

(Courtesy of Gordon and Miriam Anderson Neville)

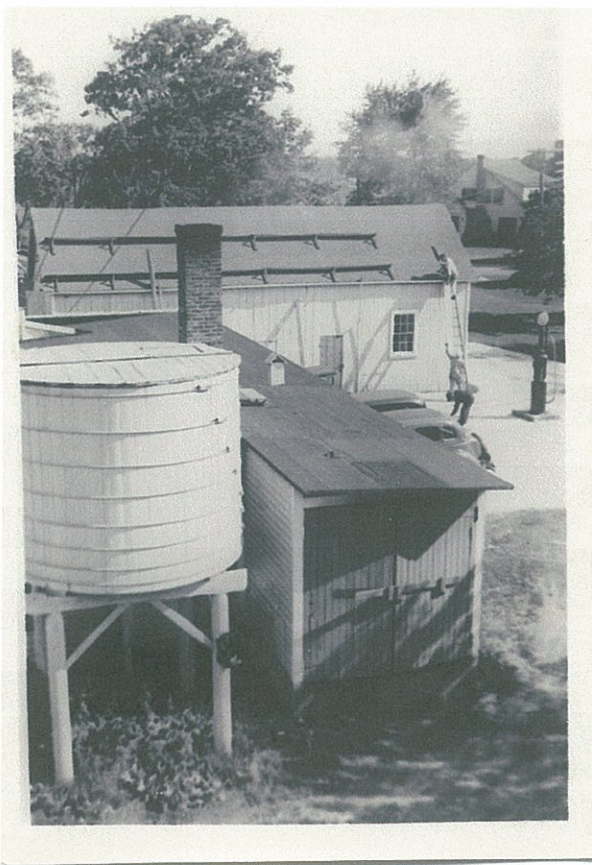


Tony Anderson driving the early truck and plow with Ralph in the back, and Tony's dog, Kimmie. The pens in the back of the truck were for the pheasants they raised for the Lowell Sportsman's Club.

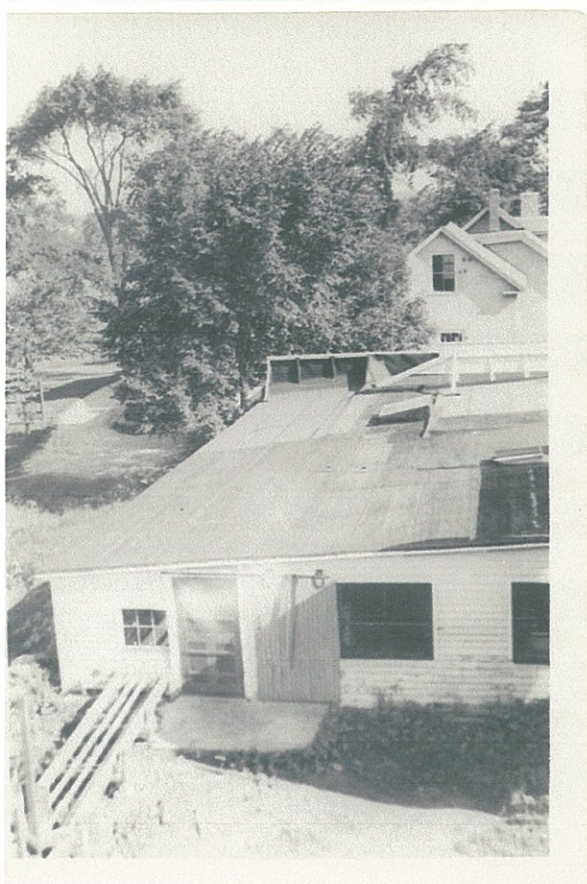


Tony Anderson at his West Tewksbury farm.

(Courtesy of Gordon and Miriam Anderson Neville)



Water tower behind barns at Anderson Farm on French Street.



Ice was obtained from Mud (Long) Pond and stored in an old barn. The heavy blocks were sent down the run (shown in the lower left of the photo) to the milkroom.

(Courtesy of
Gordon and
Miriam Neville)



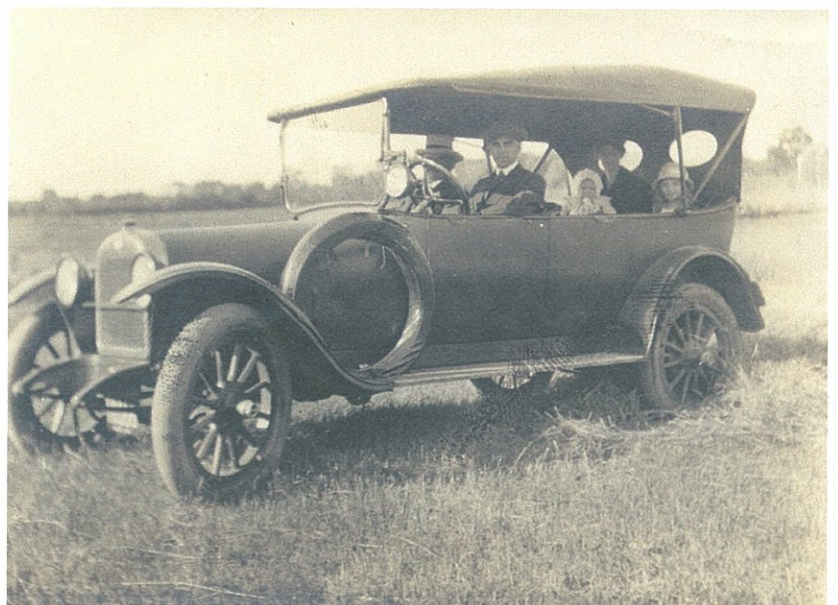
Ruth Anderson (wife of Tony Anderson) served on the Tewksbury School Committee.

Tony and Ruth Anderson built their home at 78 Whipple Road in 1927.



Tony Anderson at age 3 in 1903

Tony Anderson driving the family



(Courtesy of Gordon and Miriam Anderson Neville)



Irving and Martha French, Florists, ran the greenhouse pictured along the side of their home and barns at 8 Whipple Road. The home was built about 1890. The photo was taken by Tony Anderson in the late 1920's from his back yard at the corner of French and Whipple. The French's had a clear view of the West School.

In Ye Towne Book of 1934, Irving French advertised as a market gardener in West Tewksbury, with both flower and vegetable plants in season.

(Courtesy of Gordon and Miriam Neville)



Blue Family Farm

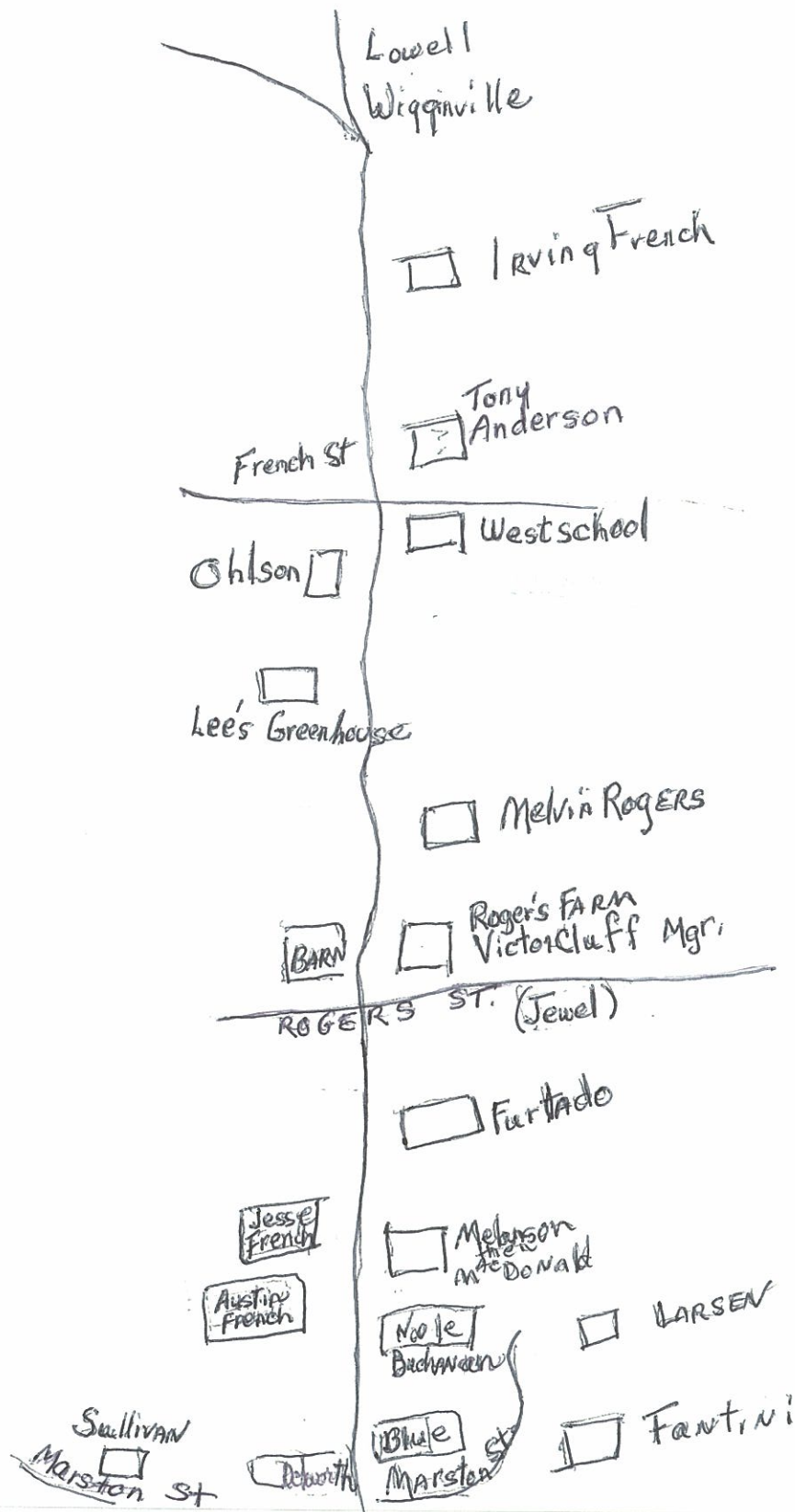
(Courtesy of the Blue family)

The eighteen acre farm located at 626 Whipple Road (corner of Whipple and Marston Streets) was purchased by Gilbert and Blanche Blue in 1932. Blue family members no longer live in Tewksbury but Bill Blue recalled "the previous occupants of our property were named Chamberlain. The barn had room for about 20 cows and had a storage room for milk so it probably was operated as a small dairy. Over time we had a cow or two for our own use as well as chickens, and planted gardens, but never relied on the place for income.

It was true that a man hung himself in the barn - probably the head of the previous occupants' family." Marie Parsons Watson and Elsie Ruckledge Faria also knew about that previous family's tragedy.

Isabel Blue Libby, now of Buxton, Maine, and Dorothy Blue McKay of Gloucester, spoke of how their father kept a few cows and chickens, hayed the fields, and maintained vegetable gardens and an apple orchard for the family. Gilbert Blue's main occupation was with the railroad, but the family home must have brought great satisfaction.

Rough Sketch of Whipple Road - 1932





Rogers' Farm, West Tewksbury - ca. 1925

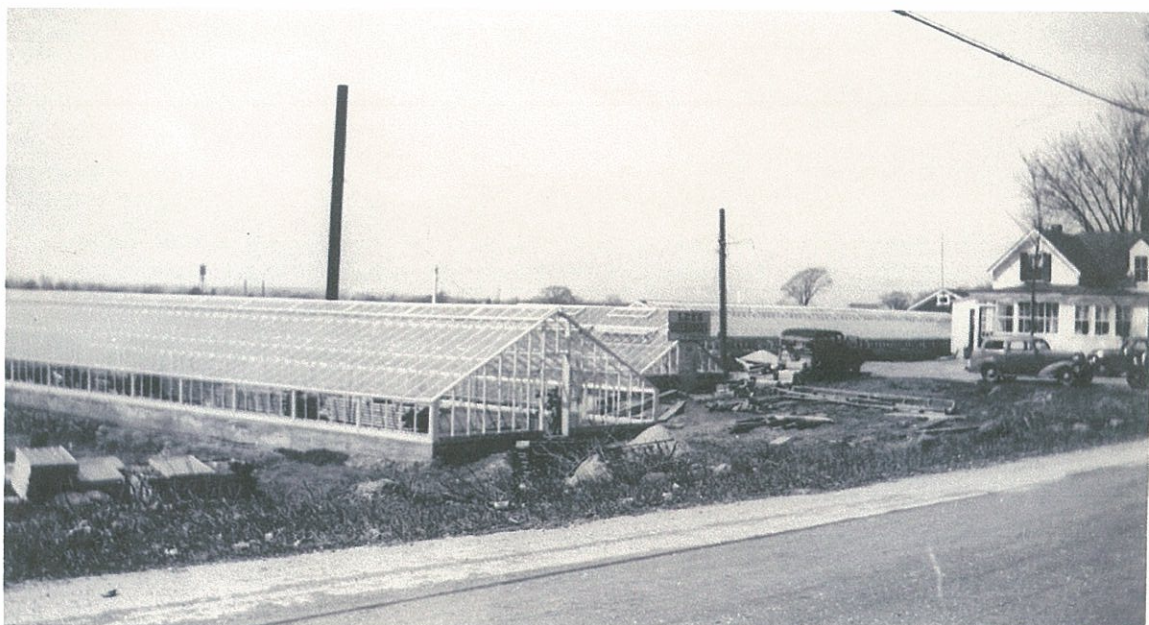
(Courtesy of Donald and Karen Ramsay)

The Timothy Rogers Homestead was built in 1744 at the corner of Whipple Road and Rogers Street. Melvin Rogers, a well known Tewksbury resident, lived here in his youth. The long cow barn was attached to the main barn and Whipple Road separated the house and barn. Rogers Street crossed Whipple Road in front of the house.

Harold Patten's 1964 History of Tewksbury (page 129) noted that Melvin G. Rogers was born in this homestead. "Educated in the little old schoolhouse in West Tewksbury, graduating at the age of 10, he then graduated from the Tewksbury High School at the age of 14." He then went to Lowell High School for two years before entering the University of Pennsylvania where he graduated from law school..."and practiced law in Lowell until his death" (in 1964).

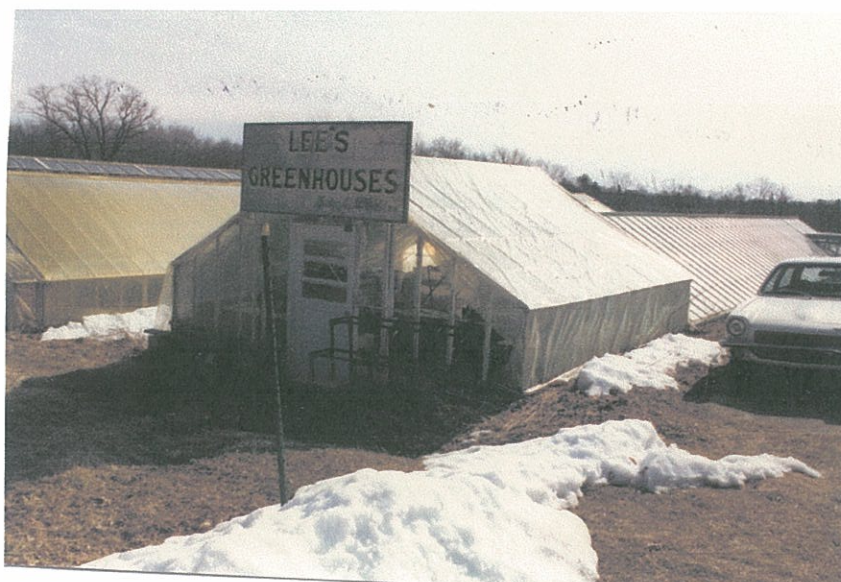
"...In Tewksbury, as Town Moderator for forty years. At the last Town Meeting he served, he requested the people to remain so that he could come down to the floor and greet them and say good-bye to his many friends."

Lee's Greenhouses at 227 Whipple Road.



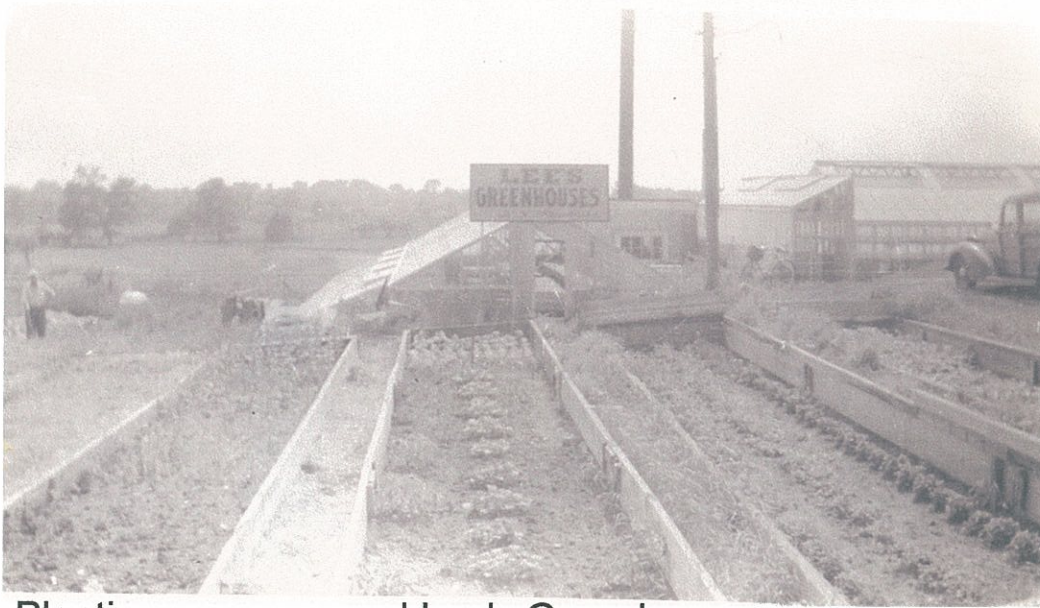
Elizabeth M. Lee ran the business before her daughter, Evelyn Lee Whitehead, took over. Elizabeth was a florist who, along with floral designs, sold cut flowers and potted plants. Evelyn and her husband Ralph expanded the business and added the large 28 ft. by 104 ft. greenhouse on the left in 1948.

Evelyn's father, Arthur Lee, worked as a loomfixer in a cotton mill in Lowell while Elizabeth was developing her florist business. On the 1920 census, they were living here.

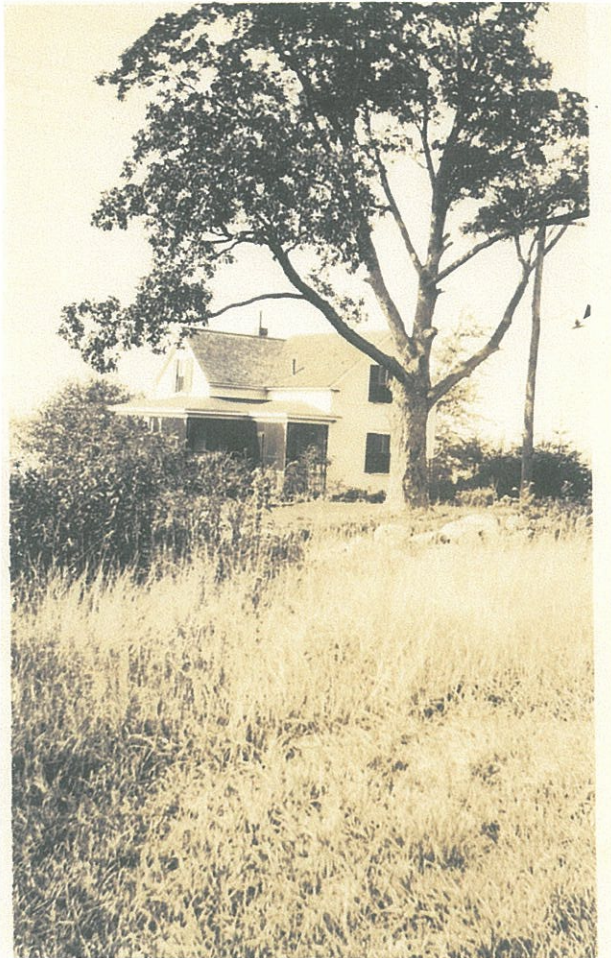


The greenhouses were later run by Joan McCool and this photo from 1984 shows they were still a viable presence on Whipple Road.

(Photos - Courtesy of Joan McCool)



Planting areas around Lee's Greenhouses



The home of Arthur and Elizabeth Lee in the 1920's. Whipple Road was a narrow dirt road in front of the house. The stone wall bordered the land across the street from the Lees.



Evelyn Lee Whitehead was also the leader of Tewksbury Girl Scout Troop 33

(Photos - Courtesy of Joan McCool)

Summertime at the Felker Farm ca. 1902



(Courtesy of Gary and Susan Geddes Southard)

Although the people in the photograph are unidentified, there is a strong possibility that the farmer was Albion Felker holding his small son, Onestus, on the horse...and the woman seated would have been his wife, Gertrude. These folks were posed facing North Billerica Road , and even the horses' ears were perked forward attentively. A moment in time was captured forever.



The Felker Farm in winter (Courtesy of Gary and Susan Geddes Southard)

*May wisdom direct,
May fortune attend
May you ever remember,
Your affectionate friend*

Addie F. Felker

Tewksbury Dec. 7. 1878.

Felker's Farm

West Tewksbury

Three generations of the Felker Family
have owned and carried on this
farm since 1830.

VEGETABLES and MILK

(From Ye Towne Book - 1934)

*May you ever remember
your friend*

Autographs of
daughters of Leonard
and Mary Felker.

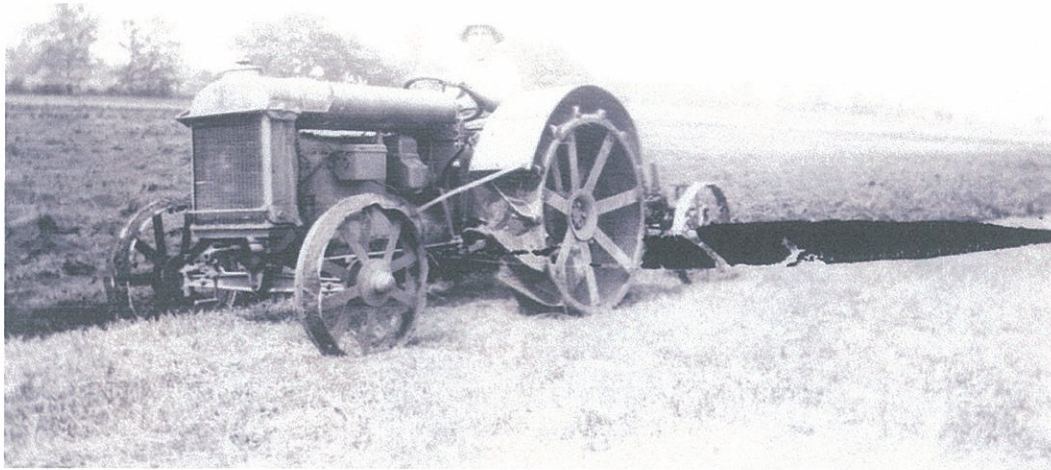
Jennie A. Felker.

Tewksbury, Dec. 14 1878

from autograph book of Ede (Seaver) Parsons

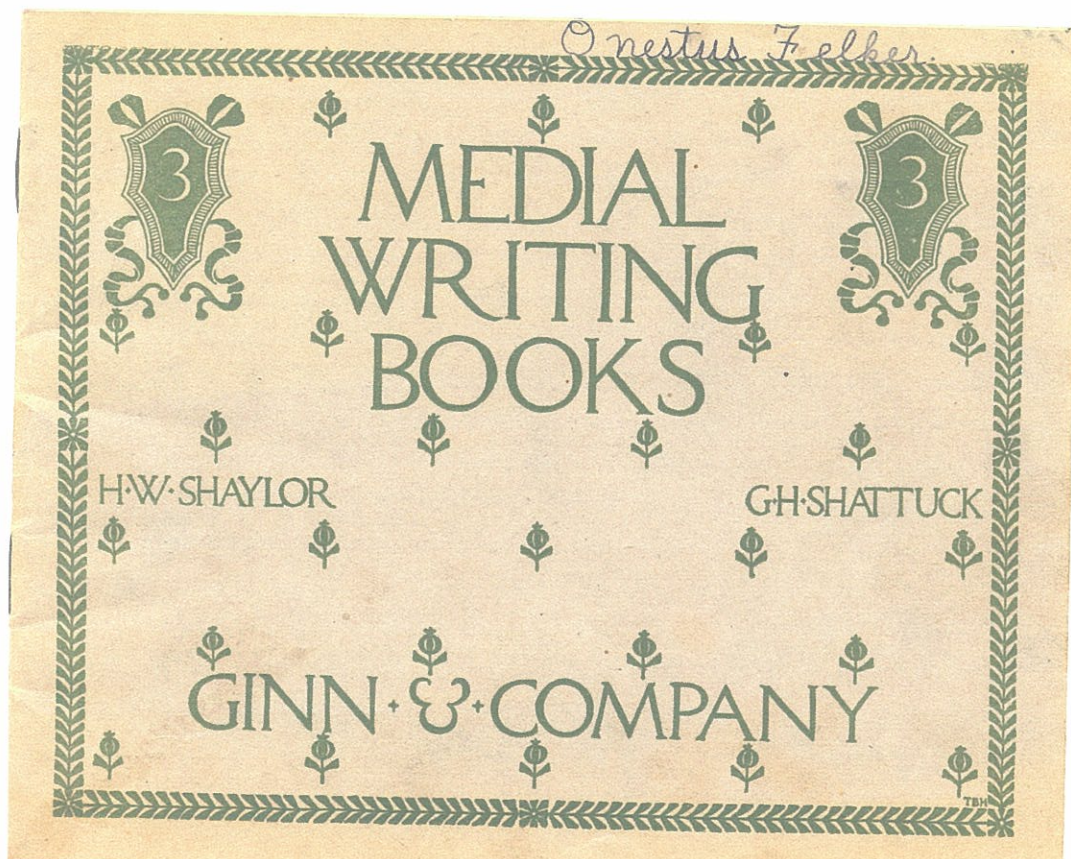
Ede grew up on North Billerica Road about one half mile from the Felkers. In 1878, Ede was 17, Addie Felker was 15, and Jennie was 18. Their younger brother was Albion Felker who continued to farm this property, followed by his son, Onestus.

Onestus Felker working his fields on North Billerica Road.



(Courtesy of Gary and Susan Geddes Southard)

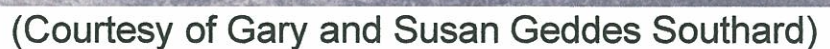
As a child, Onestus had a short walk across French Street to the West School. He saved his handwriting book, published by Ginn & Co. in 1901. It appears to be a third grade book and he probably worked in this about 1906 when he would have been nine. He kept the book in excellent condition.



(Courtesy of Stanley Geddes)

(Courtesy of Stanley Geddes)

West School scholars - ca. 1905 Location appears to be the stone wall on French Street. This photo belonged to Onnie Felker and he is probably there but no names were recorded.





Antique Portable Typewriter by Simplex was kept in its original box by the Felkers. This rare item is in the care of Stanley Geddes.

The Glenwood stove that was in the Felker home had a warming oven , storage space and shelf space as well as the regular ovens.

(Courtesy of Gary and Susan Geddes Southard)



Felker Barn in West Tewksbury



Astle Street Home - ca. 1885

93 Astle Street was at one time the home of Stuart and Elizabeth Murphy and their family, followed by the Larsen family. Carol (Murphy) Mackey recalled that the earlier owner was LeBoeuf.

(Courtesy of Carol Murphy Mackey
and the Murphy family)



Heidenrich Guernsey Farm on North Billerica Road, West Tewksbury in 1939.
(Courtesy of Frank Heidenrich)



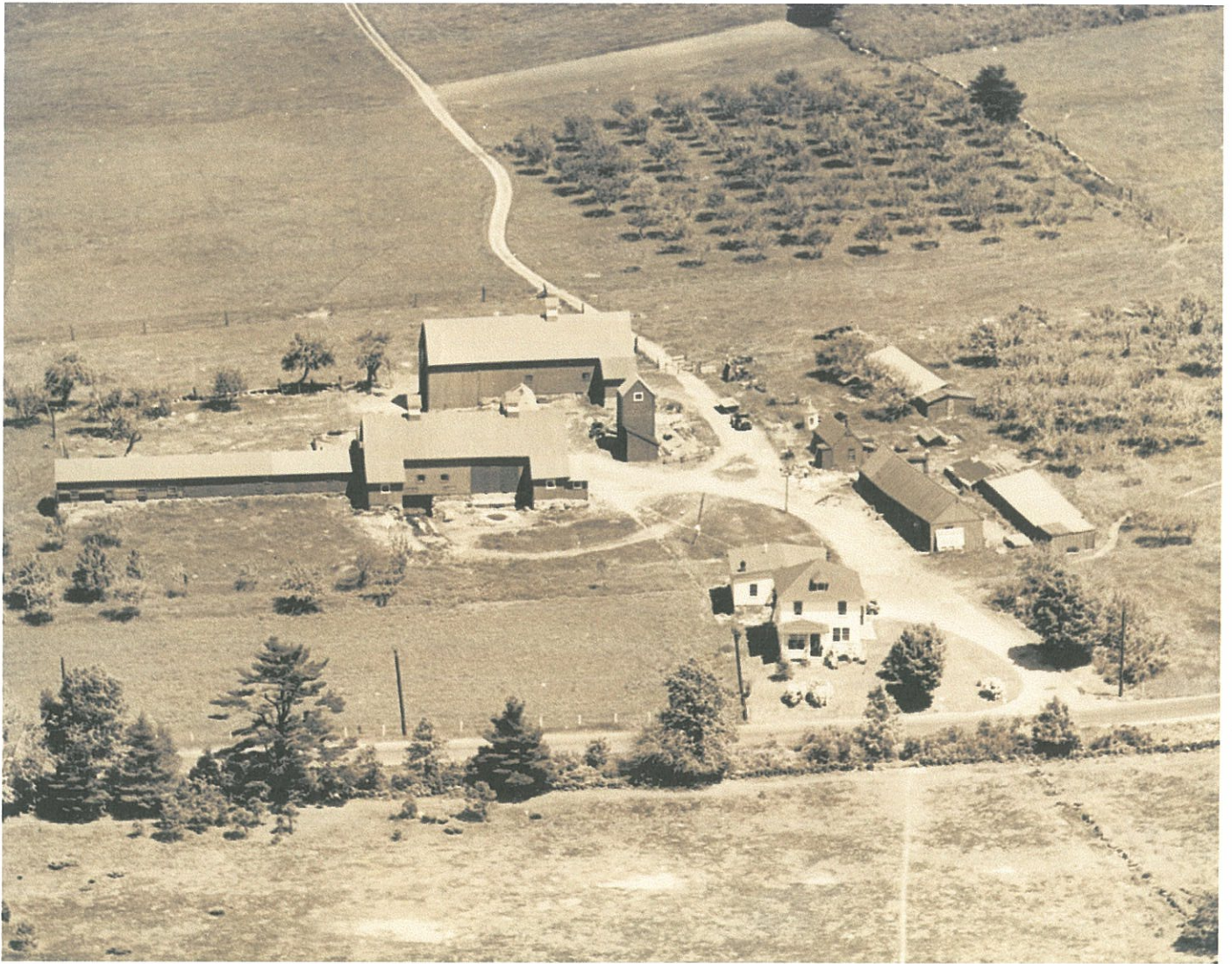
1935

Tillie
Heidenrich

Anna Sullivan Finnegan with Maureen, 2 months old, and Marie Parsons Watson with Georgia, 13 months old. Tillie Heidenrich took this picture in front of the Heidenrich's home. The Finnegans lived on Mt. Pleasant Street in North Billerica.



(Courtesy of Marie Watson)

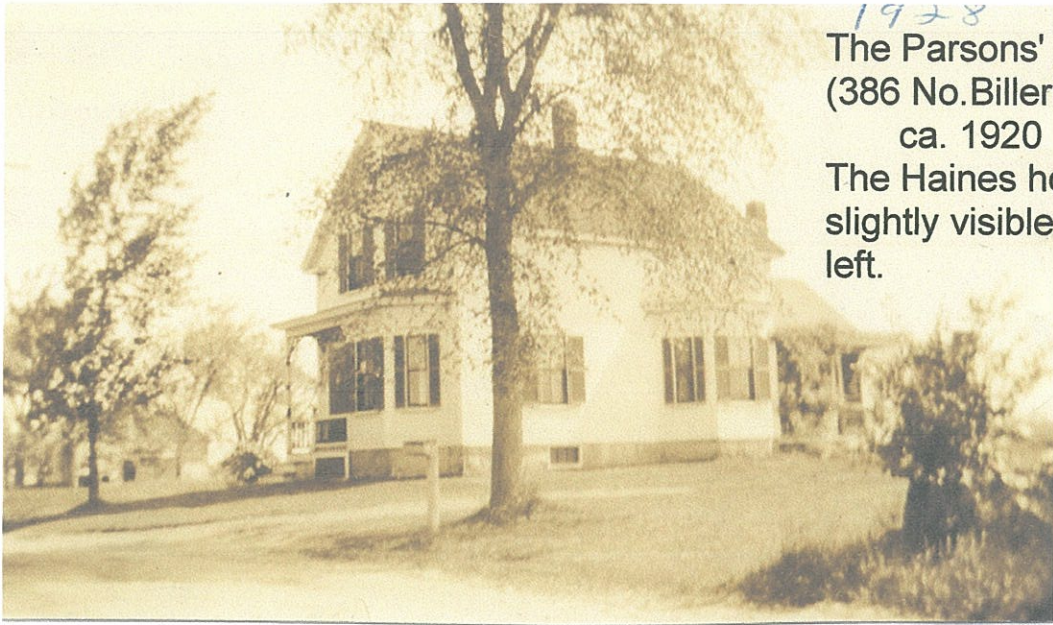


Aerial View of the Heidenrich Farm on North Billerica Road in the 1930's.

The dirt road that runs through the farm was used to go back and forth to the fields. There was an orchard on the right. The long barn was the cow barn, and the taller barn behind that was for the workhorses and storage of hay. The milk room was just behind the family home.



Cow barn and silo in the 1960's.



1928
The Parsons' Home
(386 No. Billerica Rd.)
ca. 1920
The Haines home is
slightly visible on the
left.

Madeline Parsons - ca. 1910
About age 8 - the picture appears
to have been taken inside the West
School. Blackboards are in back.
Madeline was taught elocution
at school.



Marie Parsons - ca. 1919. Rogers Street
was a dirt road between the Parsons
field and the Haines barn and sheds. They
did not walk across fields to the West
School, but the school was about one
mile behind where Marie was standing.





Leila Parsons attended the West School about 1881-1886



Libby French Bickel visiting Marie Watson in November 2003.

Reunion Class of 1929 ca. 1970- left to right -
Mary Furtado, Dorothy Davis Shaw, Dr. John Mahoney, Thelma Small Whitehouse,
and Marie Parsons Watson (Courtesy of Marie Watson)





Pastel by Marie Watson of the Haines Homestead, built ca. 1845 on the corner of North Billerica Road and Rogers Street.

(Courtesy of Sylvia Starling)



The Haines sisters who attended the West School - Hope (left) and Olive, Norma in front. Marie Watson remembered taking this photo when the girls were walking past her house. North Billerica Road is behind them as it appeared in 1928.

Percy L. Haines, about
age 26 ca. 1920
West Tewksbury farmer,
married to Mildred Palmer,
father of Hope, Olive,
and Norma Haines.



Haines home on the right,
and on the left, slightly
visible, across No. Billerica
Road, is the Old Seaver
Place, later the home of
Furtados, and then Roberts.



(Courtesy of
Sylvia Roberts
Starling)

The original Seaver home at 357 North Billerica Road
as it was about to be demolished in May 2000. The Seavers
were living here before 1840.





Pictured in the photograph are Mrs. Castor with Evelyn and Helen in front of their Whipple Road home. The back of the West School is behind Evelyn. French Street was beyond the field behind them. ca. 1944

(Courtesy of Helen Castor Smith)

The fields on Whipple Road behind Lee's Greenhouses stretched to North Billerica Road in this 1968 photo of Evelyn Lee Whitehead's.

(Courtesy of Joan McCool)





Wigginville Train Station - 1910

(Courtesy of Elsie Faria and Phyllis Robart)

When this station was built, Wigginville was part of West Tewksbury. This is the building that was said to have been moved to 106 Whipple Road sometime in the early 1920's and became the Castors' home (beside the West School). The gabled roof was removed. The station was on the Tewksbury side of the Concord River near the Lowell Cemetery.

Harold Patten's Tewksbury History (1964) addressed transportation on page 133: "In 1895 the Lowell & Suburban Street Railway extended the electric car lines from Rogers Street in Lowell to Tewksbury Center. ...At Wamesit the line passed through pasture land and entered Astle Street near the Eliot French Homestead, thence into Wigginville and then Lowell."

This transportation could very well have been used by teachers traveling to the West School.



Foster School - Grade 6 or 7 - ca. 1913 Tony Anderson's Class

(Courtesy of Gordon and Miriam Anderson Neville)



Grade Seven Girls at the Foster School, 1924. Front row: Marion Guyer, Rachel Linsky, Marie Parsons, Thelma Small, Mary Furtado, Anna Haas, __? __, Helen Flint, Louise Kelly, Dorothy Davies. Back row: Helen Pupkis, __? __, Ruth Fletcher, Eileen Carmody. Marie Parsons, Mary Furtado, and Ruth Fletcher had attended the West School first. Thelma Small, later Thelma Whitehouse, became a secretary to the Superintendent of Schools in Tewksbury. (Courtesy of Marie Watson)



9th Grade, Foster School 1934

Among these students are some who attended the West School from Grades 1 to 5. They include Frank Heidenrich, Henry Jewell whose father was one of the first school bus drivers, Marion Rogers, William Blue, William Hannigan, Norma Haines.

(Courtesy of Frank Heidenrich -
his list of names for the picture follows)

Front Row Sitting

Theresa M Ray, Frank Zedenrich, Sophie Sgurka, Jenny Withkova,
Paul Houlihan, _____, Rita Cote, Olive Donighi
Jean Pike, Ruth Bean,

2nd Row (from front)

Sophie Liegakis, Rosalie Lepomi, _____
_____, Celia Fantini, Constance Perivolotos,
Rita Manning, Marion Rogers, _____
Barbara Allen, Agnes Otto, Rosemond Mann,
Frances French, Marion Bruneau

Third Row

William Blue, Fred Record, Wilmer Garlick,
Fred Thompson, ~~Jeannette Blain~~, Irene Roper,
Loretta Mac Lellan, Jeannette Blain, Helen Maguire (teacher)
~~Rena Mills~~, Gene Farwell, Rena Mills (teacher)
Natalie Patten, Thomas Berube, George Bowden
Walter Cogan, Francis Baxter, Harry ~~Blair~~ Blair,
Leonard Keough

Fourth Row

Francis Stanton, William Hannigan,
Chester Heald, Leonard Fry, Stanley Jop,
Mike Katherina, Edward Kehoe, William Davies
Joseph Nevesha, Frank Guyer, Alexander Ives,
William _____

From the autograph album of
Ede Seaver who married Judson
Parsons. The Seavers lived on
North Billerica Road, opposite the
Haines farm. Ede grew up in
West Tewksbury.



This message was the final one in Ede's album.

*Though oceans wide between us roll
And distance be our lot
Though we may never meet again
Dear friend forget me not.*

*That the perusal of these lines may
awaken in your memory pleasing resolutions
of the past is the wish of your friend.*

Frank Smith

Tewksbury April 20th 1878

May the memories of the West School
awaken
pleasing
recollections.....

