

## OLD SCHOOLHOUSE THAT ONCE STOOD ON BARTLET MALL TO BECOME WAYSIDE STAND

Newburyport Daily News, October 25, 1941

Newbury, Oct 25 - The old Ridge district school house located on the northeasterly side of the High Road on Hay Street is being moved to a new location. The building was sold last year by Joseph D. Rolfe to Arthur Fuller of Newburyport, who also purchased a piece of land north of the building. Mr. Fuller is now moving the old schoolhouse to his own property and plans to convert it into a roadside fruit and vegetable stand for use next year.

This school building originally stood on the Bartlet Mall in Newburyport. It is a very old building and two others were located on the Mall at the time. The Mall was then Newbury property as all land on westerly side of High Street to the Merrimac River was Newbury property until 1851. The building was purchased by the school district and moved to its location on the High Road probably in the early 1840's but the actual date is uncertain. The land was given to the town by Nicholas Adams, great grandfather of Town Clerk Joseph D. Rolfe, with the understanding that it was to be used for a school location as long as a school was kept there and when the school was given up the land was to revert to the estate. At first, the entrance to the building was at the rear and later renovations were made and a front door put in.

The building was used as a school until the Woodbridge school was built in 1899. On March 16, 1901, the building was sold at auction to John Rolfe for the sum of \$80 by Auctioneer Arthur W. Moody, who once attended the school as a pupil. In those days, no books were furnished by the town and the pupils were obliged to purchase their own. There was no paper or pencils as slates were used and each child was supposed to have a bottle of water to wash off his slate. The town furnished chalk. Teachers were paid \$28 a month and received their pay every three months. Some of the teachers in this school were Mary Nichols, Helen Rolfe, Abbie Lizzie Frost, Helen Titcomb, Miss Burnham, Addie Hale, Miss Greeley, Rebecca Perkins, John Rolfe and Fred Ambrose.

While gathering historical information on the Ridge school, other old district school houses were recalled by the persons interviewed. The "Rope Walk" district school, so named because of its structure which was long and narrow, was located on Hay Street in a corner of the Heber Little estate (now occupied by Mrs. And Mrs. William Hodgkins) near the driveway entrance to the house. This building was sold and a portion of it was moved to the George Frank Little (now Sunshine) farm to be used as a carriage house and barn. The other half was bought by Austin Lunt and eventually when the building was no longer of use, it was dismantled, and today one door of the "Rope Walk" school house is in use at the Jackman-Willet Historical house on the High road. The door is covered with carved initials and names of pupils who attended that school. The only source of heat in the school was an open fire place. This school stood prior to the Ridge school. One teacher at that school was Rebecca Bartlett, grandmother of Arthur W. Moody.

Another district school stood at the north end of the Upper Green. This was a one-room brick building. A soldiers' monument stands on the location today. Heated with an old-fashioned pot-bellied stove, pupils in all grades up to the High School were taught by one teacher. Henry Bailey Little recalls that while he attended this school there was the largest enrollment of any one time, a total of 48 pupils. Teachers in this school included Rhoda Tilton, Master Phillip Adams, Luther Dame and Charles Dame, Miss Sara Adams recalls. The schoolhouse stood there until 1872 or 73 when it was found to be in such a state of disrepair that it was torn down. For a short time, the pupils were taught in Parker Hall. Then the school district purchased a school building which the city of Newburyport had abandoned, and it was moved to a location on the Upper Green nearly

opposite the residence of Rev. Harold G. Leland. Lizzie Ireland and Rhoda Tilton were among the teachers in this school and at times they hired a girl assistant. This building was moved to the property of Stuart L. Little where it now stands. This was in use until the Woodbridge School was built.

Another district school was located on the Lower Green where it still stands to be used by the town as a storage place. Teachers in this school included Edith Stamford, May McDonough, Ellen Carleton, Margaret Ilsley, Nell Goodwin, Miss Whitney, Miss Thompson, Mary Anna Woodbury and Ada Newman.

When the Woodbridge School was built in 1899, it contained only two rooms to accommodate all the former district school children. The front of the building toward the High Road was the same as at present, but there was a side entrance on the Graham Avenue side of the same type that still stands on the south side. About 1908 or 9, this building was doubled in size, with two rooms added. The large door which now faces on Graham Avenue was put in then. During the renovations, the school was divided, and a portion of the pupils went to the old district school house on the Lower Green and the rest studied in Parker Hall.

There was also the Farm District school located on Middle Street, which was sold at auction to Charles A. Lunt for \$65 and it was moved away and a district school located near the Fatherland Farm was sold for \$285 the same day, March 16, 1901.

Submitted by Susan Gagnon, Registrar