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An educational history of the public schools of Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

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AN EDUCATIONAL HISTORY
OF THE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OF FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS

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AN EDUCATIONAL HISTORY
OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OF
FITCHEBURG, MASSACHUSETTS

By
Umberto Catalini

A problem submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Master of
Science Degree
University of Massachusetts
1956

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CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWN

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DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWN

Geographical Location -- Fitchburg, located in the valley of the Nashua River, is on the famous Mohawk Trail, 48 miles west and somewhat north of Boston. Next to Worcester it is the largest city in Worcester County. It is pleasantly situated among hills and valleys, and is about twenty-four miles north of its sister city. The township is of average size, being about six and a half miles from north to south, and about four and a half miles from east to west. A small stream, the north branch of the Nashua River, formed by the confluence of several brooks in the southwesterly part of the town, curves to the north and emerges near the southeast corner; and along its course most of the population and all the business interests of the city are located.

The thickly populated and business center - the city proper - lies a little southeast of the center of the township. West and south of the city proper are the villages of West Fitchburg, Rockville and Crookerville, and east and south are Traskville, East Fitchburg and South Fitchburg. The outlying portions of the township are but sparsely inhabited, being mainly utilized for farming purposes, though considerable areas are covered with woods or used simply for pasturage. The township is bounded on the north by Ashby, on the east by Lunenburg and Loominster, on the south by Loominster and Westminster, and on the west by Westminster and a small part of Ashburnham.

The City Itself -- Fitchburg is pre-eminently a busy and thriving city and for its size it can boast of a great diversity of industries. The little stream running through the town was a source of great annoyance to the early settlers. The spring floods carried away their bridges and the river was considered a nuisance and probable bar to the growth of

the town. But coming years showed the folly of these fears. Dams were constructed, the water controlled, and manufacturers on a small scale began to locate on the banks of the formerly detested stream. This was a seeming curse turned into an evident blessing, for from these few mills have sprung the present great manufacturing concerns located here. Now the stream, whether swollen by the floods of spring, or diminished to a mere rivulet by the drought of summer, is allowed to pursue its way for the most part unobscured by the busy manufacturer.

There are many pleasant drives in and about the city. The suburban roads are, for the most part, well made and kept in good condition, though the hilly character of the entire surface of the township renders very considerable washouts inevitable during the spring months, and causes more or less expensive annual repairs. The soil is generally quite fertile, and there are many valuable farms in the town. Woods are abundant in many parts of the town and consist of all varieties of trees indigenous to this section. Fruit-trees flourish and there are many fine orchards in and around Fitchburg. Small fruits and garden produce are raised in great abundance with ordinary care. Although Fitchburg is not given very much to agricultural pursuits, she makes a very respectable showing in that line.

Early History -- Fitchburg was originally a part of Lunenburg, and its history prior to 1764 is identical with that of Lunenburg, and may be found in the history of that town. Previous to 1764 several attempts had been made by the people living in the westerly part of Lunenburg to be set off as a separate town, but were unsuccessful. On January 25, 1764, another attempt was made and the consent of Lunenburg obtained, the town voting "to let the people go." The request was granted on condition that

"the inhabitants should pay their minister's tax, as heretofore they had done, until they should be formed into a district." As soon as the consent of Lunenburg was obtained, a committee consisting of John Fitch, Amos Kimball, Samuel Hunt, Ephraim Whitney and Jonathan Wood, was chosen to procure an act of incorporation. So zealously did this committee work that in just nine days after the granting of the request the act passed the General Court and was signed by the Governor. The history of Fitchburg began therefore on the 3rd day of February, 1764.¹

Educational Beginnings -- The early settlers of this town paid little concern and less money to the fostering of public education. The earliest mention in the town records of any public action respecting the establishment of schools in town occurs in the report of a town-meeting September 12, 1764, and is as follows:

Voted, that there be two scools in s^d town and that mr. John Fitch and Kindal Boutwell and their neighbors shall have the benefit of their scoole money in order to provide scooling among themselves.

Voted, that eight pounds be raised in order to provide a scool-master in s^d town.

Voted, Amos Kimball, Eph^m Whitney and Thos. Dutton be a scoole comite.²

(1) Torrey, Rufus C., History of the Town of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, pp. 1-11.

(2) The Old Records of the Town of Fitchburg, 1764-1789, p. 7.

The amount of money appropriated was very small, being equivalent to only a trifle over twenty-six dollars.

The "two scools" appear to have kept, however, during the winter of 1764-65, - one in William Chadwick's corn-barn, near the present Pearl School-house, and the other in Samuel Hunt's tavern, - but who the "scool-master" was is not stated.

November 21, 1765, it was voted in town-meeting "to have 2 scools in s'd town and Mr. Foole and Mr. John Fitch with their neighbors have the benefit of their scoole money in order to provide among themselves."

Voted, that three pounds be raised for scooling. Thomas Cowdin, Kindal Boutel and Jon^d Wood Com.

So the town had only about ten dollars to expend for education in the winter of 1765-766.

The next fall, however, the people returned to their first appropriation of eight pounds, and voted "that two-thirds be laid out in the middle of the town, and the rest by the Com. as they shall think proper on the outsides of town."

During the following years a like sum was annually appropriated, and equitably distributed.

January 11, 1770, the town, for some reason unknown, voted "not to have any scoole this winter, but reserve their money till next fall."

October 19, 1772 twenty pounds were raised; and it was also voted to build four school-houses in the town, "each quarter of the town to build their own school-house at their own expense, free from any town tax, only that each quarter have their proportion of the Town's Boards and Nails left after finishing the Meeting-house." A committee of five was chosen to fix the location of the school-houses.

October 4, 1774, the following votes are recorded, showing that a sharp lookout was maintained with regard to the expenditure of the school money:

Voted, that all the quarters of the town that don't see that their part of the scool money that is not scooled out within the year be returned into the Town Stoke. (This vote is rather blindly recorded, but one can catch the idea.)

Voted, to add what scool money remains not yet laid out that was raised the last year to the twenty pounds now raised to be laid out in providing a scool or scools.³

In 1777 the appropriation was raised to thirty pounds. The effect of the depreciation in the currency is seen in the amounts raised for school purposes during the next three years, which were two hundred pounds in 1778, five hundred pounds in 1779, and two thousand pounds in 1780.

In 1781 the town raised "sixty pounds, hard money, to hire school Master, Masters or Mistresses." The same was raised in 1782, but the appropriation for each of the two following years were reduced to forty pounds.

In 1785 it was voted "to hire a Grammar School Master for the town; the said Grammar School to be kept four months and each quarter to have their month, the said Grammar School to begin in town before December next." The appropriation for this year was forty-five pounds, and remained at that until 1790, when it was increased to fifty pounds.

Early beginnings of public school education in the town of Fitchburg

(3) The Old Records of the Town of Fitchburg, 1764 - 1789, p. 102.

were extremely meager ones. The trend in these first twenty five years of public education was one of public indifference plus extreme conservatism in matters of school buildings, personnel, and length of school year.

CHAPTER II

COMMON OR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

CHAPTER II

COMMON OR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Districting The Town -- In 1790 the town was districted for school purposes into several parts. Acts of 1789, Chapter 19. Under the state law one committee-man was chosen to represent each district and to be under the direction of the district to which he belonged. It was voted to raise fifty pounds to support the several schools and that the "several schools in said town shall be free schools for ye use of the town."¹

At a later meeting the report of the committee to re-district the town was rejected, and it was not until 1798 that a report on this matter was accepted. The town was then divided into eleven districts. The schools were designated as shown in Table I with six of them being built.²

TABLE I

Division of Town into Eleven Districts and School Designation

District Number	School Designation
1.	Centre
2.	South Fitchburg
3.	Whitcomb's
4.	Turnpike
5.	Downe's
6.	Baldwinville
7.	William's
8.	Deane's
9.	Page's
10.	Phelps's
11.	Pearl Hill

(1) The Old Records of the Town of Fitchburg, Volume II, p. 45.

(2) Ibid, Volume IV, pp. 143 - 152.

In March, 1796, one hundred pounds was raised for schools. This was the first year that the annual appropriation was voted at the March meeting.

It was necessary to build school-houses for the new districts, and at a town-meeting, June 21, 1798, a committee was appointed "to estimate the bigness of the school-houses." The committee reported at the same meeting, and their report was accepted, - "that the houses be twenty-four feet by twenty feet, and finished with Gallery seats; lathed and plastered overhead, to be glassed with six windows, 12 squares of 7 by 9 glass in each, and to be finished outside and in, all except the clapboarding." The report further provided that the old school-houses be appraised, and their value refunded to the proprietors, and that the building of the new houses be let out to the lowest bidder. A committee of three was chosen to let out and inspect the building of the new school-houses.

In 1799 one hundred and fifty pounds was raised for schools, and the committeemen were directed "to agree with the teachers that they are not to be allowed anything for keeping schools Saturdays in the afternoon." The selectmen were authorized to provide locks and keys and window-shutters for the several school-houses.

In 1800 one hundred and fifty pounds was raised, and in each of the three following years, five hundred dollars. From 1804 to 1808, six hundred dollars was the sum appropriated; and in the latter forty dollars was added "to be distributed among those school districts the selectmen shall think most need it." A committee of eleven was also chosen in 1808 to examine schools, and it was voted "that the committee be requested to attend the schools at their commencement and close, and it be the duty of the school committee to inform the examiners when the school begins." It was also voted that the School Committee furnish the selectmen, during the last

week in August, an exact return of the number of scholars in their respective districts, so that the school money could be equitably divided.

In 1809 six hundred and forty dollars was raised "to be laid out as last year," and chose a committee consisting of Rev. Mr. Barton, Rev. Mr. Dascom, Dr. Peter Snow, Leonard Burbank and Joseph Simonds, to inspect the schools.

In 1810 seven hundred dollars was appropriated for schools, and in 1811 six hundred and forty dollars; and in the latter year, a committee of seven was chosen, "to consider the expediency of any alteration in the Middle School District (District No. I). At an adjourned meeting April 1, 1811, this committee reported "that the district should be divided and a new district formed." This new district, as outlined by the committee, corresponded to that portion afterwards called the "Old City."

The report was accepted, and in the following July it was voted to divide District No. 1, in accordance with the report of the committee, and call the new district No. 12. Also voted to give the new district ninety dollars toward building a school-house. This vote was reconsidered, and it was then voted to pay the sum of ninety dollars for this purpose in March, 1815.

By 1812 the school district boundaries were more accurately defined by a committee chosen for that purpose. The school appropriation that year was seven hundred dollars.

First Half-Century Of Elementary Schools -- Herein are the more important actions and trends of the town in regard to public elementary instruction during its first half-century of existence.

During the early years of this period the town furnished very meagre facilities for the education of the children; and, as a matter of fact,

the larger part of the instruction given in those days was furnished by private teachers.

For the first few years there were no school houses even, the schools being kept in vacant rooms of private houses, or taverns. Fuel was gratuitously supplied by the neighborhood, and the teachers "boarded round." The first school-houses were probably built in 1773, -- one in the middle of the town and the other three in the west, north and south parts of the town respectively.

In 1798 there appear to have been five school-houses in town, according to the appraisal report previously cited, and the frame of a sixth in process of erection.

In 1880 the school-house in the "Center District," or No. 1, stood on what is now Main Street, a few rods west of the present junction of Circle and Main Streets. It was a low, unpainted wooden building, standing with its end to the road. The other ten were in locations probably closely corresponding to those now occupied by our present long-established suburban school-houses.

In 1812, the year after District No. 1 was divided, a brick school-house was built in the new district, No. 12, and still remains there, forming a portion of a dwelling-house at the upper corner of Crescent and Blossom Streets.

In 1815, by vote of the town, a new school-house was built in District No. 1. It was a wooden building, painted yellow, and containing two rooms. It stood at the present junction of Main and Mechanic Streets, on the site now occupied by D. H. Merriam's house.

The early School Committees seem to have been chosen for prudential purposes only, until 1808, when an additional committee of eleven (reduced

to five the next year) was appointed to examine and inspect the schools. After 1826, in accordance with legislative enactment, School Committees were chosen to exercise substantially the same powers and functions as at present.

Besides the School Committee, which was chosen annually in Town Meeting to look after the district schools, we read in 1804 that there was an Examining Committee also chosen in town meeting. This Examining Committee consisted of the selectmen and clergymen, or of the clergy and others, who were expected to visit the various schools at the beginning and close of the term and examine the pupils. The members of the committee had, however, no actual power until 1826 when this committee began to be called the Inspecting Committee and was given power to examine teachers and accept or reject applicants whose names had been suggested by the School Committee, now called the Prudential Committee.³

In 1828 it was voted that the Prudential Committee be chosen by the School districts. It was the duty of this committee to take care of the school houses, provide fuel for the same, and procure teachers.⁴ When the districts failed to appoint a Prudential Committee the duties of such fell upon the committee chosen at town meeting, formerly called the Examining or Inspecting Committee and now called the School Committee.⁵

(3) The Old Records of the Town of Fitchburg, Volume V, p. 321.

(4) Ibid, Volume IX, p. 640.

(5) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1846, p. 4.

This law was passed in 1826, and at an adjourned town-meeting in that year it was voted "that the Selectmen be a committee for the superintendence and regulation of schools agreeably to an act of the General Court passed in 1826." Later at the same meeting it was voted to add the clergymen of the town to the committee. The first School Committee actually chosen by the town under this law was in 1827, and consisted of Rev. Calvin Lincoln, Rev. Rufus A. Putnam, Dr. Jonas A. Marshall and Messrs. Ebenezer Torrey, David Brigham, Ivers Jewett and Abel Fox.

Second-Half Century of Elementary Schools -- During the second half-century of the town's existence considerable progress was made in educational matters. Fitchburg grew rapidly, and increased accommodations and more teachers were necessary and the people seem to have been willing to appropriate money to meet the increasing needs.

In 1830 the appropriation was eleven hundred dollars, and in 1840 had risen to fifteen hundred dollars.

In 1819 the custom of enumerating the school-children in town May 1st was adopted.

In April, 1831, a committee of one from each school district was chosen "to examine into the evils of our schools and point out remedies." The report of this committee was read June 11, 1831, and "accepted very unan-
imously," and it was voted to print and distribute four hundred and fifty copies of it.

In 1835 the number of children attending the district schools in Fitchburg was 560 -- 239 girls and 271 boys -- and the teachers employed numbered 25, of whom 14 were ladies. The average wages per month were, in winter, \$16.67; in summer it was \$4.30.

The district schools had a summer and winter term each term consisting

of about three months.⁶ The winter term was attended by more pupils than the summer term, and had some "large scholars" whom the school committee thought would be better taken care of by men teachers than women so that we find men teachers in demand for the winter term. In the summer schools there were some very young scholars. In 1845 the committee reported upwards of fifty scholars who were under the age of four years."

In some of the district schools there were several "Departments" conducted. This was so in District No. 1 and 12 in 1845, the first representing the "Centre" of the town and the other "the Old City" what is now the "Upper Common part." The "branches of learning and instruction" as listed in 1845 covered: Orthography (correct spelling), reading, grammar with an emphasis placed on "parsing," composition, writing, geography, arithmetic, recitations with emphasis placed on learning to reply to questions in a neat, precise and finished form." "Good Behavior" was also listed as well as "Good Morals" as branches in education.⁷

The District System -- In the District system each district was as law unto itself. It chose a prudential committeeman who had charge of the school property and the selection and employment of the teacher. The duty of the superintending school committee was to examine and certify persons selected as teachers by the agent of the district, to visit school twice a term reporting upon the condition of the various schools and at times to consider cases of discipline. The length of the term depending on the amount of the appropriation to the district and on the salary of the teacher. If a teacher was employed at a lower salary the school term

(6) Torrey, Rufus C., History of Fitchburg, p. 21.

(7) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1846, pp. 7-24.

could be lengthened. In the school report of 1847 the summer school kept in one district for 11 weeks, in another for 13 weeks; the winter term was kept in one district for 9 weeks, in another for 11 weeks, and in another for 13 weeks.⁹

In 1835 an attempt was made to have the higher branches of learning taught in the district schools, but the town refused to sanction any such proceeding.

In 1840 the need of a new school-house in District No. 1 became very evident. The "yellow schoolhouse," built in 1815, was filled to overflowing, and the pupils were soon all transferred to a new brick school-house -- the pride of the town -- erected on what is now School Street, near Main Street. This house is still standing, and is occupied by schools of the primary grade. During the summer of 1888 an extensive addition was built, reaching nearly to Main Street.

In 1845 the brick house in District No. 12 was abandoned and the pupils transferred to a new and commodious brick school-house on Day Street.

First Printed School Reports -- The first printed school report of the town of Fitchburg was for the year ending April 3, 1843. It was not printed by vote of the town, but by the subscriptions of public-spirited citizens, and is an eight-page pamphlet in large, heavy type bearing the imprint of "W. J. Merriam, Printer, Fitchburg, Mass."

It contains no tabulated statistics, but deals chiefly with the defects in the school system of that day. Some of the "causes unfavorable

(8) *Ibid*, 1905, pp. 46 - 49.

and, in some cases, almost ruinous to our schools, which neither good teachers nor faithful committees can obviate" are enumerated as follows:

First. Bad School Houses. -- Under this head it is stated that a few of the school-houses in town are good ones, pleasantly located, in good repair and provided with suitable grounds, etc., while the rest are very bad in all these respects.

Second. Many of our Schools suffer from Inadequate Tuition. The committee recommended as remedies for this evil larger appropriations and a reduction in the number of school-districts.

The irregular attendance of pupils is spoken of as a third serious drawback to the prosperity of the schools, and also the non-attendance of "young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one," of whom there were said to be over two hundred in town, "only eighty of whom attend our public schools at all." The report closes with an earnest exhortation that parents and guardians exert their utmost influence to have the young persons under their care attend school.

The report for the year ending March, 1845, was printed by vote of the town. It is a pamphlet of twenty-eight pages, closely printed and containing in addition six tables of attendance, &c. It was prepared by Charles Mason, Esquire, chairman of the School Committee, and is an exhaustive document containing much valuable information regarding the conduct and condition of the schools and useful suggestions in the way of their improvement.

New Districting of Town for Schools -- The year 1845 was a lively one in the school affairs of Fitchburg. At the annual town-meeting, March 3, 1845, sundry articles in the warrant relating to the establishment

of a town school, new districting, &c. were referred to a committee composed of one chosen from each district.

This committee met March 13th and thoroughly discussed the subject and adjourned to the morning of April 7th, when a report, prepared by the chairman, Mr. Mason, was read in committee and unanimously agreed to. In the afternoon of the same day this report was presented in town-meeting and the measures therein recommended were adopted. Of these measures the following were a part:

"That the present division of the town into school districts be discontinued, such discontinuance to take effect on the 15th day of May next, from and after which day the existing school districts of the town, including No. 12 1/2, shall be abolished; and that the town purchase of the several districts, at a fair and just appraisal, their respective school houses, and their right and interest in the land on which the same stand, and that henceforth the town provide, at the common expense of the town, school houses for the several school districts that shall be formed within its limits."

It was the portion of the above relating to school districts that produced contention. No objections were made to the purchase of the school houses by the town, though it was an unusual proceeding in those days.

At this meeting, April 7th, a committee was chosen to appraise the school houses and report their value to the assessors, to be by them credited to the taxpayers in the several districts toward payment of their taxes. This was attended to and the transfer duly made to the town.

A committee was also chosen at this meeting to divide the town into suitable school districts. This committee performed their duty and pre-

presented a report at a town-meeting held May 5, 1845. The report was accepted and referred, together with the whole subject matter, to a special committee for revision.

There resulted from the labors of this committee two reports, -- a majority report -- recommending the division of the town into eight school districts, to be wholly under the supervision of the School Committee; and a -- minority report -- recommending the division of the town into ten school districts, each district to have entire control of its own school, and the School Committee to serve only for the purpose of examining teachers and occasionally visiting the schools.

In the majority report was a table of the school districts as then existing and as shown in Table II.

These two reports were read in town-meeting, March 2, 1846, and were both accepted and laid on the table. It was then voted "to adopt the territorial limits for school districts as they existed in 1844, except the half-district." A committee was chosen "to assign the territory which was formerly the half-district, and fix the limits of the old districts." This committee reported April 6, 1846, and their report was accepted. The town clerk added to the record the following comment: "So ended our great effort to new district the town."⁹

In 1845 the School Committee established a small library for the use of the public school teachers. A subscription paper was circulated and the money thus obtained was used for the purchase of some forty books and pamphlets on educational subjects. These were afterwards presented

(9) The Old Records of the Town of Fitchburg, Volume VII, pp. 49 - 63.

TABLE II

Territorial Limits for School Districts as They Existed in 1844.

District	Name	Established
1.....	Centre.....	1798
2.....	South Fitchburg.....	1798
3.....	Whitcomb's.....	1798
4.....	Turnpike.....	1798
5.....	Downe's.....	1798
6.....	Baldwinville.....	1798
7.....	Williams'.....	1798..United with No. 8 in 1844
8.....	Dean's.....	1798
9.....	Page's.....	1798
10.....	Phelps'.....	1798
11.....	Pearl Hill.....	1798
12.....	Old City.....	1811..Taken from No. 1
12 1/2.....	Half District.....	1836..Taken from 11 & 12
13.....	Crockerville.....	1838..Taken from No. 6

to the Fitchburg Public Library.

The town did not vote to print the school report for the year ending March, 1846, and in April of that year a subscription paper was carried around and \$23.16 raised for which sum the report was printed the following May.

After 1846 the report was annually printed by vote of the town.

People Thoroughly Awaken to Education -- The people were now thoroughly awake on the subject of education. During the year ending March 1, 1850, over two thousand dollars was expended for new school houses in South Fitchburg and Grookerville and the addition to the Academy building, and about eleven hundred dollars for painting and repairing the old houses. The annual appropriation had risen to about four thousand dollars. Considering the time this annual appropriation was a generous one.

During the next ten years much was done towards bringing the schools into good working condition. In the spring of 1855 the town voted to establish three more grammar schools -- one on Day Street, one on West Street and the third in West Fitchburg. These schools were put in operation before the end of April, 1855.

Until 1855 there were only the District Schools functioning in preparation for High School and entrance examinations were required for those wishing to continue their education. The minimum age for high school was 12 years of age.¹⁰ In 1855 the three Grammar Schools mentioned above were established in and near the center of the town to which schools those pupils came who wished to prepare more thoroughly for High School work. These Grammar Schools were considered to represent our 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grades of today.¹¹

In 1853 it was voted in town meeting that the Selectmen be a committee to carry into effect the law of the Commonwealth concerning

(10) School Committee of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1849-1850, pp. 12 + 13.

(11) *Ibid.*, 1855, p. 20.

habitual truants and child not attending school.¹² In 1857 the Selectmen appointed three Trust Officers.¹³

In the school report 1849-1850 we read of "itinerant writing teachers" who had class afternoons and evenings and were far more significantly paid for their services than the regular school teachers.¹⁴

In 1856 seven thousand dollars were raised, to be equally divided between the schools of the town.

It was becoming very evident that increased accommodations would soon be necessary, especially for some of the schools; but it was not till 1858 the South Street house was enlarged at an expense of nearly two thousand dollars.

In 1859 the East Street School-house was built, and also a new house in District No. 11, the two costing about five thousand dollars.

The High Street Grammar School was erected in 1860 at a cost of about twelve thousand dollars. This was a commodious, well-built, brick-house, with accommodations for three hundred and sixty scholars; it was heated by furnaces.

The West Fitchburg Grammar School building was also erected in 1860, at a cost of about three thousand, three hundred dollars, and furnished accommodations for seventy-two scholars. Both these houses reflected great credit on the building committee.

The appropriation for schools in 1860 was seven thousand, four hundred and fifty dollars.

(12) Town Records of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, Book IX, p. 219.

(13) *Ibid*, Book XII, p. 185.

(14) *Ibid*, 1849-1850, p. 7.

Another period of school-house building began in 1867. During that year the Middle Street house was erected at a cost of upwards of thirteen thousand dollars.

In 1858 the town appropriated \$15,000 for the support of schools and expended nearly \$100,000 for new buildings and alterations and repairs of old houses.

Also in 1858 the Day Street School-house was almost entirely rebuilt and considerably enlarged, at an expense of about \$30,000.

Although the matter of the town giving up its districts schools and establish common schools in the new districts was brought up at different town meetings, the District School System was not actually abolished until 1862 when by act of legislature the powers and duties of the Prudential Committee ceased and devolved upon a general School Committee.¹⁵

The number of members of the School Committee chosen at Town Meeting varied. Sometimes there were three; sometimes, five; and at other times seven.¹⁶ Until 1857 the committee was chosen annually. Then in 1858 the system of electing one member for three years was commenced, but this system evidently was not a success for in 1862 the same process was begun and again in 1865.¹⁷

The fact that there was a disagreement on the matter of choice of a school committee is evident in as much as it was voted in 1863 that the

(15) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1869, p. 39.

(16) The Old Records of the Town of Fitchburg, Volume II, pp. 214, 254.

(17) Ibid, Volume XII, p. 103.

selectmen be the committee to take care of the schools.¹⁸ In 1866 the School Committee was to consist of two to serve three years. In 1867 it was to consist of six, two to be elected each year for three years. In 1870 we again find only two members.¹⁹

Much was done after 1870 to improve the facilities for the instruction of youth in Fitchburg. In 1871 money was appropriated to include the teaching of singing and mechanical drawing in the schools.²⁰

On March 8, 1872 the town of Fitchburg became the City of Fitchburg.

Elementary Schools Under City Form of Government -- Early in 1873

Mr. Eli A. Hubbard was secured to fill the newly-established office of superintendent of schools. He began his duties in April, 1873. We find a description of the school system in the school report for 1873 as follows:

"The school system of the city embraces High, Grammar, Intermediate, Secondary, Primary, and Ungraded Schools. The primaries, secondaries, and intermediates include five years of the school course, are kept in the same buildings, and are located in the centers of the circles which fill them with children. The primaries and secondaries must be so located, the schools must be carried to the children, for such children cannot go far to the schools. The grammar schools are located in centers of larger circles embracing several of the smaller ones, and draw their supply of pupils from the intermediate schools while the High School embraces the whole city, and receives the graduates from the grammar

(18) Town Records of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, Book XII, p. 16.

(19) Ibid, Book XII, pp. 128, 171.

(20) Ibid, Book XII, p. 527.

schools."²¹ A recommendation was made at this time that the school system be changed so that only the Primary Schools, Grammar Schools, and the High School make up the system but this recommendation was not carried out until after.

In 1880 there were besides the 8 ungraded schools, 10 primary schools, 2 secondary schools, 7 intermediate schools and 3 grammar schools the word "school" being used as we use the word "class" today.²²

Pupils were admitted to the grammar schools when they passed examinations from the intermediate schools.²³ The schools were divided into grades. There were 4 grades in the High School and nine grades in the elementary schools.

The general condition of the public elementary schools for the first fifteen years under the city form of government can best be shown by data given in Table III.

The appropriations above given do not include the amounts voted for repairs and new school houses, but singly the appropriations for teachers' salaries, fuel, care of school houses and rooms, and minor incidental expenses.

The law passed in 1884, requiring cities and towns in this State to furnish school-books to the pupils, caused an average increase of \$4,500 in the annual school appropriations for the last four years in the figures for 1885-88 in the above table.²⁴

(21) School Committee of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1873, p. 53.

(22) City Documents of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1880.

(23) Ibid., 1873, pp. 16 - 18.

(24) City Documents of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1895, pp. 179, 180.

TABLE III

Annual Appropriations, Number of Teachers Employed and Average Daily Attendance of Pupils From 1873 to 1888.

Year	Appropriation	No. of Teachers	Avrg. Daily Attend.
1873.....	29,000.....	55.....	1686.....
1875.....	35,000.....	54.....	1750.....
1877.....	33,500.....	56.....	1868.....
1879.....	34,140.....	54.....	1834.....
1881.....	33,500.....	57.....	1865.....
1883.....	37,500.....	59.....	2094.....
1885.....	46,470.....	63.....	2305.....
1887.....	51,000.....	68.....	2204.....
1888.....	55,500.....	68.....	2185.....

The latter part of these years were more important perhaps because of the number of new and substantial brick school-houses that had been built. The most important of these were the Rollstone Street House, erected in 1883, one on Maverick Street and another on Highland Avenue, built in 1885, and the Clarendon Street house, built in 1887. The aggregate cost of the four structures was about \$50,000. This does not sound very expensive according to present costs but it was expensive enough to the city at that time.

In 1890 the attendance for the elementary school increased considerably because of the Illiterate Minor Act which obliged minors who could not

read or write the English language to attend evening school.²⁵

"Ungraded classes" were started in the regular school system of elementary grades in order that the schools might be of service to all residents and not only to those who fitted into the established system.²⁶

The first report of the Director of Manual Arts including drawing and manual training is found within the School Report in 1903.²⁷

After the incorporation of the City in 1872 the duty of appointing Truant Officers fell to the School Committee.²⁸ In 1889 there was one Truant Officer, who visited homes and made arrests for truancy. He made his annual report to the School Committee which report was incorporated with the School Report in the "City Documents." Beginning in 1914 the name "Truant Officer" was changed to "Attendance Officer" or "Supervisor of Attendance."²⁹

The State law required Medical Inspection of schools in 1906. The School Board took charge by appointing the School Physician. Later, in 1911, the Board of Health assumed this duty.³⁰

(25) School Committee Report of Fitchburg Massachusetts, 1887, pp. 179, 180.

(26) City Documents of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1892, p. 80; 1894, p. 69; 1895, pp. 111-115.

(27) Ibid, pp.64-66.

(28) Town Records of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, Book XII, p. 64.

(29) City Documents of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1914, p. 83.

(30) Records of the Board of Health of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, Volume III, p. 40.

The Turn of the Century -- By the turn of the century most of the major changes in public school system of Fitchburg had taken place. Shortly after the turn of the century two new elementary schools were built to take care of the natural growth of the city, districts, and pupil enrollment. The following history of the public common or elementary schools operating at the turn of the century, during World War I, and shortly thereafter will present a clear picture of how far the elementary system had progressed before the world shaking and revolutionary even of World War II.

Table IV shows data concerning the history of school buildings classified as grammar or elementary schools in use just before the opening of World War II. The table will also include date of erection, enlargement, with former name if any and also the source from which the facts were taken. This table is a listing of the schools with the number of grades each as found in "Municipal Register of 1938" within pages 41 to 59.

TABLE IV

History of School Buildings Classified as Grammar or Elementary Schools in Use Just Before the Opening of World War II.

School	Date of Erection	Of Enlargement	Source
School Street 1st-4th grades	1841	1902	Old Records City Documents 1902 p. 40
So. Fitchburg 1st-5th grades	1850	1900	School Reports 1849 p. 4. City Documents 1900 p. 73.
Wachusett 1st-5th grades	1850		School Reports 1849-50 p. 4.

TABLE IV
(Continued)

School	Date of Erection	Of Enlargement	Source
Geo. H. Hastings	1860	1874	School Reports 1861 p. 3. City Documents 1874 p. 82
General Vocational and Continuation School for Girls and regular 5th and 6th grades. It was called the "High Street Grammar School" and housed High School in upper half and grades in lower half until 1869.			
Academy Street 1st-4th grades	1869		
It was built and used for a High School from 1869-1894 and was designed to accommodate 250 pupils.			
Ashburnham Street New Ashburnham Street	1860 1891	1906	City Documents 1906 p. 52. City Documents 1891 p. 353.
1st-8th grades in both buildings The Old Ashburnham Street School was once called the "West Fitchburg Grammar School."			
Laurel Street 4th-8th grades	1893		City Documents 1893 p. 61.
M. E. Gallagher 1st-2nd grades	1885		City Documents 1885 p. 53.
Its former name was "Maverick Street School." It is planned to close this building shortly.			
Goodrich Street 3rd-5th grades	1891		City Documents 1891 p. 353. City Documents 1892 p. 53.
Highland Avenue 1st-3rd grades	1885		City Documents 1885 p. 53.
It is planned to close this building shortly.			
Clarendon Street New Clarendon Street	1887 1893		City Documents 1887 p. 73. City Documents 1893 p. 61.
1st-7th grades			
Nolan School 1st-5th grades	1901	1920	City Documents 1901 p. 370. Sch. Rep. 1919-20 p. 30.
The former name of this school was "Salem Street School."			
Lansburg Street 1st-4th grades	1903		City Documents 1902 p. 41
Its former name was "East Street School."			

TABLE IV
(Continued)

School	Date of Erection	Of Enlargement	Source
Rosmar School 1st-8th grades The former name of this school was "South Street School."	1906	1919	City Documents 1906 pp. 52, 53.

Beginning in 1930 Nursery Schools were started for children aged three and four.³¹ In 1934 the W.P.A. organized nursery schools with federal funds. The children attending these schools were under supervision from nine o'clock until about 2:30. Dinners were given and a rest period after dinner.³²

In 1936 a petition was presented to the School Committee signed by 341 persons requesting that the city establish kindergartens. The School Committee acted favorably expressing their intention of establishing a city wide system as soon as necessary funds were available. In 1937 the Committee reported as a major need the establishment of a city wide system of kindergartens.

From 1937 on many major changes took place in the local school system. Changes in administration, buildings, grade system, personnel and others took place but all with a definite trend toward centralization. A full picture of recent trends and changes before and after World War II will be given in the last chapter of this writing.

(31) City Documents of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1930, p. 52.

(32) *Ibid*, 1937, p. 246.

CHAPTER III

VOCATIONAL SCHOOLING

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VOCATIONAL SCHOOLING

The Continuation School -- The first concrete expression of vocational training in the Fitchburg Public Schools manifested itself in the form of a Continuation School which opened its doors for business on September 20, 1920. This was made possible by the Continuation School Law, Chapter 311, General Acts of 1919.

The Continuation School Law required all minors between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years, who regularly were employed for at least six hours a day, to attend the continuation school at the rate of not less than four hours a week; while those temporarily unemployed must attend school at the rate of not less than twenty hours a week. The school must be in session between the hours of 8:00 and 5:00 on working days (except Saturdays) and must be open the same number of weeks as the high school.

During the first week there were enrolled 174 girls and 198 boys, making a total of 372 pupils. It necessitated no small amount of work on the part of the teachers to round up the stragglers for enrollment. During the school year 119 more boys and 66 more girls entered, while 14 boys and 40 girls left; leaving an average enrollment of 470 pupils.¹

The purpose of the Continuation School can be made clearer by the statement of the report of the Special Commission on Education of January 29, 1919.²

"Every year an army of boys and girls of fourteen bid good-bye to the school house which they have been told stands for education, and are going

(1) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1920, pp. 76-79.

(2) Ibid, 1919, p.51.

out into the world equipped for--what? Equipped for nothing? Most of them must take whatever can be found in the way of a job, and we know that for many of them an opportunity to qualify for something better than the first job ceases when they take up the task assigned to them. For without special preparation for doing their work in the world they naturally have little choice in determining what that work shall be, and once in the grind of certain kinds of work there is little chance of their getting out of the rut."

When the Fitchburg Continuation School first opened in the fall of 1920, a majority of the pupils were working in the cotton mills of the city. This condition continued for three or four years, when the mills began to experience trouble in securing business enough to make the running of the mills profitable, so they ran an abbreviated schedule of three or four days a week. As a result they were able to hire boys and girls over sixteen years of age, and gradually the boys and girls between fourteen and sixteen years found it more difficult to secure employment in the mills.

When the cotton mills finally closed or moved out of the city, there were very few boys and girls of Continuation School age employed by them. Many of the mothers of this Continuation School group, when they found that their children were unable to secure employment in the mills, went to work themselves and kept the children at home to do the work there. Therefore when the last cotton mill closed, it was not necessary for this group to make a complete readjustment for they had been doing this gradually over a period of four years.³

The closing of the cotton mills had its effect on the Continuation School in still another way. In June of 1928 the services of two full

(3) Continuation School Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, pp. 27-29.

time teachers and one half time teacher were dispensed with. This necessitated the discontinuing of the cooking classes and the doubling up of the woodworking classes. The sewing classes had been larger this year, but were conducted as in previous years.

The school system had to adjust itself to an economy program, and it was impossible to make any progress; it was harder still to keep it from slipping backward.

In 1930 diplomas were granted to graduates who had completed their full time at the Continuation School.⁴

Any boy or girl who had not made up his time at the school could not receive a diploma until that time was made up. This had helped to make the attendance of the school the best in its history.

Many of the boys and girls, some of whom were over sixteen years of age, had been attending school more than the required time, which was proof that their needs were being satisfied.

Effect of Economic Depression -- The economic depression of the 1930's brought about a decided change in the attitude of the pupils in the Continuation School.⁵

Many of the boys and girls who had been attending school only one day a week began to attend extra days in school while many former pupils who had become sixteen and had left school had asked permission to return so that they could be trained for better positions. The school tried to help this older group.

No group of persons had found itself facing a greater readjustment

(4) Ibid, 1930, pp. 16-17.

(5) Ibid, 1931, pp. 22-23.

because of the 1930's social and economic conditions than the boys and girls in the fourteen to sixteen year old class who in normal times found employment and left school was the statement made in the Continuation School Report of 1933.

This group of boys and girls was not fitted by inclination or outlook for the progressive stages of education in our established schools. Many of these children, their parents, and the teachers of the schools in which they were attending realized that the education which they were receiving was not fitting them for the places in life which they soon must occupy.

Many of the above mentioned children sought admission to the Continuation School and many of the teachers and parents saw the advantages to these pupils of the vocational training received there.

Pupils who presented problems in the established school system often ceased to be problems when they received the vocational training for which they were adapted. These problem children were found in increasing numbers in the sixth, seventh, and eight grades and in the first two years of high school. It was felt that the proper education for them would have solved many of the delinquency problems of the time.

It was felt at this time that this whole fourteen to sixteen year old group might be better fitted for their proper places in life at no added expense to the city by the organization of state aided vocational courses, whereby the city would receive fifty per cent of the maintenance cost from the State Department of Education. These courses might be carried on in conjunction with the Continuation School classes, using the equipment of the Continuation School.

Beginnings of General Vocational School -- In 1935 a fire broke out which destroyed the High School building and along with it a great deal of the Continuation School equipment.⁶ Nearly everything that was in the Continuation School office, the girls' department and the boys' department or classrooms was destroyed. The shops were not damaged by fire but everything in them was thoroughly drenched and before the equipment could be removed from the ruins, a great many of the hand tools disappeared.

In September of 1936 a General Vocational School was started in connection with the Continuation School. This school was for boys and girls fourteen years of age and over who had completed the sixth grade and wished vocational training in the semi-skilled occupations.⁷

During the ten years from 1937 to 1947 the Fitchburg Vocational School was called upon to furnish instruction for many different groups.⁸

In 1938, the West Townsend Camp of the C.C.C. requested the school to furnish evening shop courses. The following year the C.C.C. Camp from Baldwinsville, as well as the West Townsend Camp, was accommodated. In the summer of 1940, the first National Defense Training classes were started. In 1943 and 1944, courses in Retail Selling were conducted for the Mercantile Affairs Committee of the Fitchburg Chamber of Commerce. In October of 1945, On-the-Job-Training for ex-service men was inaugurated in sixteen cities and towns in Central Massachusetts and in the fall of 1946, Apprentices Training was started for ex-service men.

(6) Continuation School Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, pp. 20-21.

(7) *Ibid*, 1936, pp. 45-46.

(8) *Ibid*, 1947, pp. 42-46.

On-The-Job-Training -- The On-the-Job-Training program functioned actively during its existence. New places of employment had to be inspected and applications for training and training outlines had to be prepared. At intervals of four months, each training program had to be inspected to see that the training requirements were being fulfilled; that the trainee was getting the proper training; that satisfactory records of his progress were being kept and that he was getting his increases in pay when they were due.

In the year 1946, the first Apprentice Training course for ex-servicemen was started for Apprentice Machinists. The year 1947 saw a very urgent need for apprentice courses in machine shop, plumbing, steam-fitting, carpentry and electrical work which were operating while courses for auto-mechanics, foundry-man, patternmakers, cabinetmakers, printers, bricklayers, plasterers, and toolmakers were not yet available. Some of these groups were so large that it was necessary to divide them into two, three or more classes. This program was financed by the Veterans' Administration through the State Department of Education to the local School Department. These agencies, plus the Apprentice Division of the State Department of Labor and Industry, in addition to the local Joint Apprentice Committee (consisting of members of both union and employer groups) were interested in the supervision and operation of these courses. It appeared to be the largest and most difficult assignment that had ever been requested of the Vocational School.

Value of Vocational School Recognized -- A higher grade pupil admitted in September, 1947, permitted the teachers to do work which seemed more like real vocational work.⁹ The authorities had stated

(9) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1947, pp. 42-46.

very clearly that "such schools and classes are to be established and maintained for the avowed purpose of giving thorough vocational instruction to healthy, normal individuals--to the end that they be prepared for profitable and efficient employment." This instruction could not be given when low grade pupils were admitted. In the words of one of the teachers, "It would be difficult to over-estimate the valuable contribution our vocational girls' department is making to the better health, better living and better home-making in the city. This contribution increases as the girls become wives and mothers and have the care of homes. Enough of the bread being cast upon the waters is returning to give an encouraging conviction of the great value of the work being done. This fact strengthens our determination to uphold the high standard of our school."

Many people believed that Vocational Education was something new in the field of education, but it is much older than our country.¹⁰ In 1642, a law was passed by the General Court of Massachusetts, providing that all parents should have their children taught how to read, as well as how to ply a trade. Parents who failed to meet this requirement were to be fined and the children of such parents as could not comply with the law were to be apprenticed to masters who would teach them a trade. This measure was based on the English Poor-Law of 1601 which required that all indigent children be taught a trade.

The Massachusetts law went further than its English prototype in that it made home and trade education compulsory to all children, whereas the English law only required the teaching of a trade to poor children.

(10) Ibid, 1949, pp. 36-40.

In September of 1949, the enrollment in all departments of the Vocational School showed a marked increase. The boys' vocational high school group made the greatest gain, in fact, the classes became so large that the facilities they had were insufficient to accommodate all who wished to enroll. In early October of the year 1949 it became necessary to turn away pupils who wished to enter this department.

Vocational High School Department -- The vocational high school department had its humble origin in 1942 when a group of 33 juniors and seniors were enrolled in so-called "pre-induction" classes. For several years, it continued to grow, in spite of the widespread misconception of the general public that such a program was offered for the benefit of "slow" students, an unfortunate misunderstanding which was shared even by some professional educators. The pre-induction training naturally evolved into the present four year program.

The fact that the successful student in this department must combine average academic ability with a high degree of manual dexterity, in order to develop proficiency in his vocation, gradually but steadily permeated the thinking of the high school student and his faculty advisor. This understanding, together with the eminence obtained by vocational students in many extra-curricular activities, as well as in scholastic standing had resulted in such an influx of pupils to this department that the capacity to absorb them had been greatly taxed. In June of 1949 one of the seniors in this group won the coveted academic prize for excellence known as the gold "F" and enrolled the following year as a student at the local State Teachers College.

In spite of the fact that the vocational department was becoming very popular with the pupils and that they could not accommodate all who

would have liked to enter in it, a continual revising of teaching outlines and courses of study took place so that the graduates of this department would be better qualified to take their place in the world when they finished school.

CHAPTER IV

EVENING SCHOOL

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EVENING SCHOOL

Early Conditions of Classes -- The growth of the evening school was a feature of the system that attracted attention. The prejudice against these schools that existed in 1875 had not entirely disappeared by 1900. School officials had been compelled to defend this feature of the system, or even to apologize for it. The cause for such a state of feeling in the public mind was not difficult to trace since many still recollected the disorderly and turbulent evening school of thirty years previous.

Evening schools were established at first as private charities. Later, a city or a town made a small appropriation for such a purpose. A school was organized in a basement, or in some unoccupied part of a building, and opened to any and all who might choose to attend.

The room might have been crowded for a few evenings, and not unfrequently a number of those in attendance were there not for the purpose of studying.

Evening schools were started in Fitchburg under more favorable conditions than existed in many places, although a lack of interest in general was manifest.¹

The report for 1874 said:

"The evening school, for those whose age or occupation keeps them from the day school and who in their younger years were deprived of school advantages, has been largely attended by more people than its most earnest friends had dared to hope for. A small appropriation, \$300, was made by the city council, and the school was opened early in December. A hall in the American House was secured, and the school was kept four evenings

(1) School Committee of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1879, pp. 36-37.

a week for about two months, and was attended by one hundred and forty-five pupils. Of these one hundred were males, forty-five females, and their ages varied from fourteen to twenty-five years. The average attendance was ninety-three. The attainments of the pupils differed widely. Some could not read, while others had been nearly through the grammar schools. Most, however, had studied arithmetic a little, and needed instruction in the 'fundamental rules' and in fractions. They wished also to learn to write but as there were about twice as many as could be seated at once at tables convenient for writing, the school was divided into two sections and two lessons given the same evening, one succeeding the other. The writing was in charge of Mr. Whitney, the teacher of penmanship in the day schools."

More Exacting Conditions -- By 1900 the conditions calling for evening schools were much more exacting than those in 1874. Additional subjects were taught at the schools in 1900.

In the school report of 1902 it was reported that since the opening of the evening schools in October 1, 260 certificates had been issued to minors over fourteen years of age able to read and write in English. The truant officer in his inspection of manufacturing establishments had found upwards of three hundred unable to comply with these conditions. It was safe to assume that a rigid enforcement of the law would compel the school board to provide instruction in evening classes for at least five hundred.

A report from the various evening schools in 1903 showed that the evening school had become an important feature of the school system. It showed that three hundred and ten students between the ages of 16 and 21 had been registered at this time. Two hundred and twenty-five of

this number were classed as "illiterates" - being unable to read and write in English in any manner - while several of the others had a very limited knowledge of the language.²

Minors of this age, unable to read and write in English, could not be employed unless they were regular attendants upon an evening school was the reading of the law at this time. In 1908 one hundred and seventy-four were registered who were over 21. Many of them were unable to read and write in English, but as the law did not apply to them no returns were made regarding their ability or lack of ability in this direction.

High School Program -- For several years the evening schools had stressed elementary education and Americanization classes. By 1925 a well-defined high school program leading to diploma credit had been offered and the response on the part of the young people of the community was reported very satisfactory with the attendance and interest being well maintained.³

A complete four-year Commercial Course in the Evening High School was being offered. In addition to Stenography, Typewriting, Bookkeeping, Arithmetic and English, students were also able to pursue the study of Accounting, Machine Calculation and Economics.

Americanization Movement -- The Americanization movement in the city of Fitchburg had its beginning in October, 1923 when reforms were effected through a keener appreciation of the aims and purposes of the evening schools on the part of the School Committee and a greater readiness was evidenced to assist the evening schools by progressive legislation and increased

(2) School Committee of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1908, p. 16.

(3) Ibid, 1925, p. 14.

appropriations to that end in order that they might make the fullest possible contribution to the welfare of the community.

A survey was made in 1926 which revealed that there were almost fifteen hundred parents of grammar school children who could neither read or speak English and hundreds were gifted with only a meagre knowledge of the English language. Imagine the difficulty of a boy going to school to learn English and then returning to his mother or father finding that he was unable to use the English he learned in school!

In the Evening School classes were held in the following subjects:⁴ Bookkeeping, Stenography, Typewriting, English, Spanish, Mathematics and there was a special course for prospective nurses. For aliens there were five classes in Americanization and one class for illiterate minors.

The Americanization Department during the year 1931 afforded an educational opportunity to 375 foreign-born men and women who sought the common goal of American citizenship. Fifteen nationalities were represented in the twenty classes that were organized by the department.

Several factors had combined to offset the tendency toward a decrease in the enrollment in the Americanization classes in this year of 1931 which might normally have been expected to follow the increased fees and more rigid requirements for naturalization then in effect.⁵ The most important single factor had been the economic urge toward citizenship. The 1931 crisis of unemployment stimulated many citizens to seek such jobs as rough day labor with the result that many alien workers had been discharged. The alien laborers thus thrown out of work had been mainly

(4) Ibid, 1928, p. 29.

(5) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1931, pp. 23-25.

non-English speaking. Many of them were illiterate and thus their steps toward citizenship were fruitless until they had attended Americanization classes and could qualify educationally for citizenship. The case of a Fitchburg resident who was temporarily employed in South-Deerfield, Massachusetts and who returned three evenings every week to attend the evening classes then made an early morning start at 3:30 A.M. the following morning to return to his work at Deerfield was just one example of the almost heroic sacrifices that many adult pupils made. These same men had toiled in the ditches and on roadways doing heavy work during the day. This was more than a preparation for naturalization.

During this same year a course in Problem and Procedures in Adult Alien Education was conducted in the city by Miss Mary L. Guyton who was the State Supervisor of Adult Alien Education. Thirty-three teachers were enrolled. Upon satisfactory completion of the course state certificates were awarded which made them eligible for Americanization teaching.

World War II Work -- The Fitchburg Adult Education Department had 704 adult foreign-born evening students enrolled in classes in English and preparation for citizenship during the school year 1939-1940.⁶ In addition to this number, over 150 students were enrolled in the typewriting and stenography course offered at the High School.

In the program of adult education classes in typewriting, stenography, bookkeeping, sewing and handicraft were offered in addition to classes for foreign-born adults.

With the declaration of war early in December, and the resulting

(6) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1940, pp. 40-42.

restriction placed on "Enemy Aliens" the Department of Adult Education was of service in reminding Italian and German subjects of the restrictions which they must obey and advised them of the procedure necessary to obtain permits for travel.⁷ The term "Enemy Alien" had unfortunately attached a stigma of both a social and political nature on the subjects of countries with which the United States was at war. Most of these people were loyal Americans at heart and had given their sons to the service of America. Because of the application of the term "Enemy Alien" teachers were faced with the problems of keeping up the morale and hopes of these people and make them feel that they still had a place in the community life.

Post War Problems -- The year 1946 presented a rapidly changing picture of the kinds of service and opportunities the Adult Education Department found a need to provide.⁸

The first class of non-English speaking adults to be held over a period of years was organized at the High School Education Center in the year 1946 and included in its enrollment GI brides, repatriates, and other persons who had come to relatives with the idea of establishing their permanent homes here in the United States. All the members of this group had arrived in the United States during the year 1946 and with this new beginning a continuous arrival of immigrants was expected to follow. Each week during this time the Department of Justice supplied a list of names of new arrivals and their destined Fitchburg addresses. These new arrivals were interviewed personally by the Director of Adult Education

(7) Ibid, 1941, pp. 30-32.

(8) Ibid, 1946, pp. 55-57.

and were offered aid in their main problems. The first major problem of these immigrants was learning the English language for functioning citizenship and naturalization and the second was the need in assistance for making the necessary social adjustments.

An increased interest in adult education classes was evidenced during the post-war years and the courses offered to adults in 1949 were certainly a proof of this.⁹ A total of 900 students enrolled for classes in the fall of 1949. The following courses were available to them for study:

English - Preparation for Citizenship - Typewriting - Stenography - Bookkeeping - Conversational French - Conversational Spanish - Leathercraft - Stencilling and Block Printing - Jewelry Making - Knitting - Sewing - The Perfect Hostess - Public Speaking - Personality Improvement - Oil Burners - Civil Service Preparation for Firemen's Examination - Civil Service Preparation for Policemen's Examination - Writing for Publication and Profit - Labor Relations - Home and Family Living - Music Appreciation - Care and Repair of Home Electrical Appliances

Some of these courses, while organized by the Adult Education Department, were provided by the Division of University Extension of the Massachusetts Department of Education and therefore provided an excellent adult learning opportunity without any direct cost to our local budget. The Philosophy and Music Appreciation courses were offered in co-operation with the local public library and the course in Philosophy alone attracted an enrollment of 125 persons.

(9) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1949, pp. 53-56.

Fitchburg's Adult Education Program was one of the 100 mentioned in a booklet entitled "100 Evening Schools" which was published by the United States Federal Security Agency during 1948. This agency conducted a survey of 100 leading city programs throughout the United States and it was a source of satisfaction and pride to have the department in Fitchburg singled out among the 100 leaders in the nation.

CHAPTER V

SECONDARY EDUCATION

IN

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER V

SECONDARY EDUCATION IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The Junior High School -- The Junior High School as an area of education and teaching in the city of Fitchburg had its first expression in the manual arts' school. In 1910 the State of Massachusetts had, at an expense of \$92,500, erected and equipped in Fitchburg a Manual Arts' school for the purpose of giving the boys and girls of the seventh and eighth grades a more practical education and for training teachers so that they may be able to take this more practical education to other schools.¹

The building, convenient and well lighted, consisted of two floors, a basement and an attic. On the basement floor were the domestic apartments, including kitchen, pantry, laundry, and dining room along with the work shop and the stock room. Nearly half of the first floor was occupied by an assembly hall, which was intended for social and cultural purposes such as musicals and pageants or lectures. The rest of this floor is occupied by rooms devoted to the several departments of type-writing, sewing, mechanical drawing and general repairs. Recitation rooms occupied the second floor and the attic is finished and equipped for printing, bookbinding and general work shops.

This was the first school to provide a differentiated course of study for grades below the high school.

The Crown Junior High School with its score of classrooms, its fine gymnasium and auditorium, its suites of rooms for household and manual arts, its drawing rooms, library and spacious rooms, opened for the first

(1) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1910, pp. 35-36.

also in September, 1924.²

The Junior High School began making a sincere and intelligent attempt to reduce the number of misfits in life, by fitting the work to the pupil and not the pupil to the work. It began to hold more boys and girls in school while it provided men as well as women teachers for these boys and girls from twelve to sixteen years of age.

The cost would have been prohibitive if the attempt were made to provide in each grammar school these broader facilities. Such facilities were provided in this central school accessible for upper grade children.

The winter schedule began its session at 8:50 A.M. and closed at 2:30 P.M. while the spring and fall schedule began at 8:20 A.M. and closed at 2:00 P.M. providing about five hours net in length. A relaxation period of twelve minutes was given at 10:25 A.M., a lunch period of twenty-five minutes at 11:20 A.M. or 12 noon, and a five minute recess at 1:45 P.M. just before the close of school for the day.

The difficulty that first presented itself upon the organization of a junior high school which was to be developed out of the existing seventh and eighth grades and the freshmen class of the senior high school was concerned with the character and unity of the teaching staff. The grammar and high school instructors had had quite dissimilar professional training and employed equally varying methods of teaching. The difficulty was met and eventually disposed of along with the problem of an equitable salary schedule.³

(2) Ibid, 1924, pp. 12-14.

(3) Ibid, 1923, p. 11.

Enrollment Trend -- The annual report for 1937 stated that enrollment in the elementary grades of the country had fallen off by 1,000,000 pupils since 1930. For the sixth successive year, as was noted in previous Annual Reports, the enrollment in the 7th and 8th grades of the junior high school had followed the trend throughout the country as a whole and had decreased slightly from the previous year.

Even with the establishment of an ungraded class in the school for the first time since its inception in 1924 the total school enrollment was slightly below that of the previous year.

The trend towards decreased enrollment was particularly interesting at this time since predictions by secondary school administrators in recent years had been that there would be a constantly increasing enrollment in the secondary schools for many years to come and thereby necessitating correspondingly expanding programs of building, purchase of equipment and an increase of personnel.

Table V shows the enrollment figures covering the years 1933 through 1937 inclusive. The figures are those of the annual September registration.

Table VI shows the number of pupils promoted fully and conditionally along with those not promoted from 1933-1937.

Pupils in the seventh and eight grades were not fully promoted unless they were passing in the four major subjects; English, Arithmetic, Geography and History. If failing in one of these major subjects they were promoted conditionally.

Ninth grade pupils were "fully promoted" upon the satisfactory completion of four or more units of work in the ninth grade. They were

TABLE V

Enrollment of Students in the Junior High School for the Years 1933 Through 1937 Inclusive.

Year	Grade			Total	
	Special "A"	7	8		9
1933		126	114	502	772
1934		105	180	428	713
1935		95	139	445	679
1936		112	131	395	638
1936	14	96	123	403	636

"A" - "Ungraded"

"Conditionally" promoted upon the completion of only three and one-half units of work in the ninth grade. Pupils completing less than three units of work were not promoted to the Senior High School.⁴

Guidance in the Junior High School -- The junior high school pupil, at the crossroads of his educational career and physical development is probably more critically in need of proper "guidance" than he has been or will be at any other time in his school life.⁵ It was for this reason

(4) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1937, pp. 29-40.

(5) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1939, pp. 37-43.

TABLE VI

Promotions and Non-Promotions of Pupils in the Junior High School During the Years 1933 Through 1937 Inclusive.

Year	Full Promotion	Conditional Promotion	Not Promoted	Total
7th Grade				
1933	88	10	10	108
1934	94	18	13	125
1935	86	8	12	106
1936	88	5	6	99
1937	91	7	11	109
8th Grade				
1933	130	15	4	149
1934	107	17	8	132
1935	134	27	9	170
1936	114	8	4	126
1937	120	9	2	131
9th Grade				
1933	459	48	21	527
1934	385	52	17	454
1935	322	47	24	393
1936	362	41	16	419
1937	325	28	10	363

that the guidance program had been designed. It aimed to give him the utmost help in solving the baffling problems of choosing and aiming at objectives which were almost certain to influence his entire future.

The guidance plan was intended to help him make the wisest decisions he could -- ethical, educational and vocational -- for his greatest self-realization. To this end they had organized a three-point program reaching every pupil and utilizing every teacher.

For the seventh-grade pupils -- younger, more restless -- orientation periods (one period each week) were conducted by the home room teachers. These pupils had to be helped in their transition from a more sheltered elementary school environment to the larger, more bewildering junior high school. The teachers keyed the orientation activities to reach the interests of their individual groups, and used such devices as story hours, athletic anecdotes, personal experiences, etc.

Through these activities immature pupils were helped to obtain an understanding about their school, the courses of study, their responsibilities toward each other, their manners and conduct in assembly, cafeteria, halls, locker rooms, playground, and the school world in general.

Every eighth grade group met in similar fashion with its home room teacher and in class discussions the pupils were made ready for promotion to the ninth grade. The purposes of exploratory courses were explained and the requirements for the successful carrying on of the work in each of the three ninth grade courses were investigated.

Probably the most important phase of the program was educational guidance. Several "guidance" assemblies for ninth grade pupils were held during a year, at which time members of the faculty would present a very careful exposition of high school courses, vocational and trade

school courses and college entrance requirements.

These group conferences were supplemented by individual counseling by home room teachers at assigned periods. Before and after school hours some of the most effective counseling was accomplished because it was then that the pupils themselves in considerable numbers sought out their teachers.

A number of student club activities were encouraged in the school which helped to develop the guidance aims. The matter of guidance received considerable attention at the bi-monthly faculty meetings during the year.

Guidance material and aids available to teachers in their home rooms and in the school library included the following books and publications: "Our Junior High School," "Our World of Work," "Guidance for Youth," "Planning a Career," "Vocations," "Planning Your Life for School and Society," "Living with Others," "Principles of Guidance," "Occupational Civics," "What Makes the Wheels Go Round," "Men at Work," "Vocational and Moral Guidance," "World We Live In," "Careers Ahead," "Discovering My Job," "Electrical Occupations for Boys," "Youth at the Wheel," "School and Life," "A Girl Grows Up," "Safe Conduct," "Home Room Guidance," "How to Find the Right Vocation," "The Promise of Tomorrow," "Vocational Trends," "Guidance Charts" and Vocational Guidance Pamphlets of the Science Research Associates.

A statement of Junior High School Objectives was made in 1940 by the teachers and the principal as a result of group conferences, faculty meetings and courses in professional advancement. At the end of the year members of the faculty reviewed their efforts to attain the stated objectives and they earnestly felt that their efforts had met with a large measure of success.⁶

They carried out the work of the year in the belief that they should strive at all times for the growth of the pupils ethically, mentally, and physically. Accordingly they had endeavored to help the pupils set their ideals and their standards of social conduct upon their own reasoning rather than upon external control. They worked to provide many opportunities and situations throughout the school in which the pupils might develop habits of cooperation, of initiative and of independence. In guiding the pupils through those situations they tried to aid them to build in themselves attitudes of self-help, of ability to lead and of willingness to follow. They strived to guard the pupil's health while endeavoring to make obedience to good health habits appealing and automatic in them.

In all class room situations the teachers tried to maintain friendly and helpful relations with the pupils to the end that they might aid them in overcoming the self-consciousness of adolescence. Through such means they believed that they could best hope to send out from the schools boys and girls who were well on their way to a realization, an understanding and an appreciation of the finer aspects of democratic living.

This was the main objective of the united efforts of these teachers.

Junior High School Program -- In January of 1943 the ninth grade at the junior high school was transferred to the senior high school and the seventh and eighth grades of the city were centralized in the junior high school beginning with the opening of school in September of the same year.⁷

The teaching staff had been built up to provide for twenty-three

(7) Ibid, 1943, pp. 29-33.

class room teachers. Their teaching schedules were arranged so that each teacher carried the following load:

Home room supervision - - - - -	2 periods
Study group supervision - - - - -	2 periods
Class room teaching - - - - -	32 periods
Free time - - - - -	3 periods
Club supervision - - - - -	1 period
Total Weekly Periods - - - - -	40

As can be seen from the above every teacher carried a very full schedule. The number of pupils in each class averaged thirty-four.

At the opening of school in September of 1946 a new school program was introduced and worked out very successfully.⁸ Although the school day was of the same length as it had been in the past it was divided into six periods of fifty minutes each instead of the former seven periods of forty-three minutes each. Under the new program pupils had a fewer number of free study periods than they had formerly. They studied more purposefully and effectively under the direct supervision of each of their subject teachers.

The first part of the period was devoted to recitation, class discussion and the direction of learning by the teacher. Then the assignment of the following lesson was made and all the pupils spent the latter part of the period in the preparation of the next assignment. In this way they now completed the most difficult parts of their work during school hours under the direction of the teacher who was available for individual help

(8) Ibid, 1946, pp. 41-49.

where it was necessary.

While a certain amount of homework was still necessary the teachers felt that under the new program pupils prepared their next lesson assignments more effectively and with a lesser amount of outside preparation than formerly. For the first time in the history of the junior high school each teacher of English gave instructions in all phases of English literature, grammar, spelling, and composition. Each pupil received all of his instructions in these related fields from but one teacher. Pupils were given two separate marks in English on their report cards -- one in spelling and the other in English. The latter was a comprehensive mark covering literature, grammar, and composition.

Released Time And Audio-Visual Aids -- The impetus for released time for religious instructions began in 1947.⁹ Thirty-five pupils in the school were enrolled under the Released Time for Religious Instruction Classes which were held once a week during school time in the Salvation Army building. In the process of character training the schools were now adding this training and therefore showing their cognizance of the importance of religious motives for correct thoughtful conduct and spiritual values. The recognition of a place for religious instruction in education rested on the sound philosophy that the "whole child" should be educated.

The development of Audio-Visual Aids as an educational factor had become apparent in recent years and the number of schools in which departments of audio-visual education had been set up was rapidly increasing. A greater extension of this type of instruction was expected in the future.

(9) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1947, pp. 36-41.

The faculty committee had studied the possibilities using the present equipment as a basis and they drew up recommendations for improvement of the available equipment on hand. The recommendations also included the training of teachers in the use of the equipment and the best educational methods to be followed while using these various audio-visual aids.

In 1947 the School Committee voted for the adoption of a 6-3-3 plan of school organization. So, in 1948 the B. F. Brown Junior High School had grades 7, 8, and 9. The enrollment was approximately 700 pupils and for the first time it housed all the public school children of these three grades excepting the pupils attending the State Teachers College Junior High School. The junior high school was now recognized without a doubt as a separate and distinct entity in the city public school system.

CHAPTER VI

SECONDARY EDUCATION

III

HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER VI

SECONDARY EDUCATION IN HIGH SCHOOL

Early Beginnings -- The Fitchburg High School dates from the spring of 1849, but as early as 1830 a private school with similar aims had been established in the city. It was maintained by one teacher or another through each of the nineteen intervening years. To afford a permanent home for a school and quite probably to attract suitable teachers to the town, a "High School Association" was formed, by which a building called the Academy was erected in 1830. It was built at an expense of \$1200 upon land donated by Zachariah Sheldon. The site was a part of the present High Grounds but the building stood a little in front of the present edifice. It contained two rooms below and one above. The school held within its walls was termed at first the Fitchburg High School, in 1833 the Fitchburg Academy, in 1837 again the Fitchburg High School, and subsequently until 1849 the Fitchburg Academy. In the years 1835-36 and 7, and again in 1841 schools of the same general character were kept in the "Brick Chapel" on Rollstone street, and in 1842-3 in the school building on the corner of West Main and School street.¹

In these schools the number of students varied greatly. One of the early teachers spoke of a predecessor of his as having only eight and another as having but one student. The average for the first six years was 36. The range of study was quite wide, running from the common English branches through the higher English, Mathematics, French, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Tuition ran from \$3 to \$7 per term of about eleven

(1) Huling, Ray G., The Teachers and Graduates of the Fitchburg High School, 1849-1883, pp. 157-161.

weeks. Of the score of gentlemen who taught these schools, more than half were known to have been college graduates.

As early as 1843 the School Committee of Fitchburg had expressed in their report a regret that so few of the young people from 16 to 21 were connected with the public schools. Again, in 1847, they alluded to the matter thus: "We are not informed that the town has ever afforded an opportunity to young men or young women to obtain an education at the public expense, sufficient to enable them to keep a common school." In 1848 the Committee directly and strongly urged the establishment of a high school. "One great object to be obtained," they averred, "is facility for educating teachers for our common schools." The town subsequently voted to establish such a school as soon as suitable teachers could be obtained. In preparation for this the Academy building was purchased and a room in the second story fitted up. Within another year three more rooms were added. In March of 1849 the first appropriation was made for the support of the High School.

At the outset the school was overwhelmed with applicants for admission which fact occasioned the establishment of a somewhat high standard for entrance; 59 were admitted and by the end of the first year 82 were in attendance. The first set of regulations are of special interest. The "principal Instructor" must be one who had been educated at some respectable college. No scholar could continue in the school more than five years. A thorough knowledge of Spelling, Reading, Writing, English Grammar, Modern Geography and Arithmetic were indispensable for admission. The course of study embraced a review of all these: Latin Grammar, Caesar, Virgil and Cicero; Greek Grammar and Reader; French; Arithmetic,

Algebra and Geometry; English Grammar, Ancient Geography; History, Rhetoric; Natural Philosophy; Chemistry; and Physiology; Declamations and Compositions for male pupils, Compositions for females. There were 44 weeks of school and eight of vacation in the year.

In 1859 the High School was removed to the High Street Grammar School building, where it continued to be held for ten years. In 1869 a commodious and well arranged edifice was erected at an expense of about \$60,000. The old Academy building was removed to make room for it.

At the annual town meeting in March 1850 it was voted to establish a "second department of the High School;" the school thus provided for resembled a high school only in two respects. One was that admission depended somewhat on age and the second that it was under the charge of the School Committee instead of the Prudential Committee of a district. It never did the work of a high school but it was the germ of our present grammar school system. In April 1855 the town voted to abolish it and "to establish three schools of about the same grade denominated Grammar Schools." The attendance in this second department was at first 26, once rose to 71 and it averaged 52 for the first five years.

The Fitchburg High School had a nominal existence prior to 1869. In that year a substantial new building was erected and occupied. A proper course of study was adopted and the real work of a high school inaugurated.

The New High School -- The need for additional rooms for the old original high school became evident several years before. A high school building designed to furnish accommodations for 250 pupils was erected in 1869. The school was kept in this building until the close of the

summer term of June of 1895. The average membership of the school in 1870 was 73. The membership in 1874, the year next succeeding the incorporation of Fitchburg as a city, was 119. The annual increase was constant. The average membership reported in 1890 was 246, the largest number in attendance at one time during the year was 290.²

The subject of additional rooms was considered at various meetings of the school committee during the years 1890 and 1891 but no definite action was taken until 1892. At a meeting held February 12th of that year the board voted to ask the city council to remodel and enlarge the high school building in accordance with plans for the enlargement submitted in detail by the committee on school houses. The City council deemed it inexpedient to grant the request of the school board for the remodeling of the old building and accordingly the school board at a meeting held March 7, 1892 took action upon a report from the committee on school houses with reference to a new building. This committee stated that the action of the city council must be considered as a desire on the part of the council for a new building. The school board thereupon voted to ask the city council to purchase a lot and to erect thereon a high school building.

The recommendations of the joint special committee were adopted and the mayor was authorized to complete the purchase of the land and buildings.

The school committee at a meeting held March 6, 1892 voted to accept the plans presented by the committee on school houses and to request the erection by the city council of a building substantially in accordance with said plans.

(2) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1895, pp. 90-92.

The city council subsequently authorized the committee on city property to develop the plans and to erect a building in accordance therewith. This committee had the entire charge of the work until the completion of the building. Work was begun upon the foundation in December, 1893 and the building was delivered to the school committee September 2, 1895.

Entrance Requirements -- Pupils were admitted to the high school upon the results of one examination. In accordance with the regulations of the school board of the city that examinations occurred in July during the week next succeeding the closing of the summer term.³

In 1876 a change was made, and pupils were admitted to the high school in Fitchburg upon recommendation of the teachers under whose charge the classes had been for at least a year. It was a radical departure from a strongly entrenched custom.

Attendance Trend -- The average daily attendance at the high school in 1875 was 137 while in October of 1899 it was 522. The increase in population was not responsible for the increase in membership at the high school.⁴ The constituency from which the pupilage of the high school was drawn had not increased to a great extent during those 25 years.

Canada together with several countries of continental Europe had contributed materially to the population of the city during this quarter of a century. A very meager representation from this class of the population was found in the high school.

(3) Ibid, 1899, p. 29.

(4) Ibid, 1899, pp. 19-20.

The marked increase in attendance may be explained or traced to several causes. The free text book law passed in 1884 was undoubtedly the most potent factor of all. Also, the change of the curriculum of studies had produced a marked effect. The introduction into the higher grades of stenography, typewriting, manual training, nature study and other subjects had a marked influence upon the attendance at these grades. The opportunity afforded for a more extended course in the sciences had encouraged continued attendance upon the part of many who had no desire to fit for college or to study many of the branches required in the classical course.

The effect of the enactment of stringent attendance laws was noticeable. While these enactments seemed to effect those who might never pass to the higher grades, the influence was felt, more or less directly, upon the classes of older pupils. Another factor was the deeper and more intense interest that many parents evinced in the higher education of their children and the increased determination upon the part of these parents that their children should enjoy the benefits of these schools. Children were formally withdrawn upon the ground that the studies of these grades were not practical, but in many respects there took place a decided change in this respect, a revolution in public opinion, it may well have been called.

Changes At Turn of the Century -- In 1904 four main courses of study were being offered at the high school. They were the College Preparatory, Technology Preparatory, Manual Training and General. The first three courses prepared the careful students for colleges, technical or textile schools. The last course was taken by pupils preparing for the Normal School or a business life, or by those desiring a general culture course.

The most important changes and events from the years 1903 through to 1910 at the Fitchburg High School were the following:

In 1903 school prize speaking began and also the first issue of the school paper the "RED and GRAY" which was a carefully edited and prepared paper. The School Song was adopted in 1904, and also the Constitution was adopted for the Athletic Association. The Debating Club was formed in 1905. In 1906 a teacher of elocution was chosen to give one day a week to Junior class. In 1907 the School Council was formed which was a representative body of one from each room, with Senior and Junior class officers, to assist in managing the school and creating a spirit of responsibility and loyalty to the school. Also, in 1907 the beginning of Interscholastic prize speaking and library instruction was begun by the librarian. The industrial course began in 1908. In 1910 we have special afternoon work for pupils who would not study at home, and a special class formed for pupils delaying their classes. In 1910 a teacher of physical culture was secured for Freshman girls and co-operative work with the banks and business houses for commercial students was begun.

Further Advancements -- The co-operative industrial course begun in 1910 could boast of 76 students during the school year of 1912.⁵ They attended school and worked in shops during alternate weeks. Forty-eight were taking machine work, five saw-making, five office work, four drafting, four textile work, two printing, two iron soldering, one pattern-making, one druggist, one tinmith, one chauffeur, and one grain dealer. These students earned about \$15000 a year.

(5) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1912, p. 39.

First year graduates earned between \$2.00 and \$2.75 a day while one or two averaged \$3.25 per day. In other words these former students started out at salaries of more than twice what their school teachers started out at this time.

In the school report of 1921 we have a tabulation of the population growth of the city versus the student enrollment of the city schools. This is shown below in table VII.

TABLE VII

A Quarter Century's Growth from 1895 to 1920

Year	City Census	City Schools
1895	26,409	3684
1900	31,531	3859
1905	33,026	4073
1910	37,026	4112
1915	39,656	4745
1920	41,029	5310

By 1920 the following departments at the high school were in operation: Agriculture, Academic English, Business English, Classics, Commercial, History, Industrial, Manual Arts, Mathematics, Music, Modern Languages, Physical Training and Science.

Candidates for high school positions had to have a recognized college degree or normal-school diploma, the latter covering at least two years

of training.⁶ Additional consideration was given to three or four year normal school diplomas or postgraduate college work, as well as subsequent successful teaching experience of any applicants for the approved list.

All candidates had to have direct and recorded recommendations from their normal school principal, and from their Superintendent or immediate supervisory official in case of subsequent teaching, and had to file their applications, references and recommendations with the Superintendent of Schools, Fitchburg, on the blank form adopted by the School Board September, 1917.

The number of names could not exceed thirty-five at any one time on the approved list, which could cover a period not exceeding six consecutive years next preceding any current year.

Manual Arts In High School -- Not many years ago it was said that a boy could go to school and learn almost everything except how to do the work he would have to do to earn his living.⁷ In order that he might learn a trade at public expense it was necessary for him to commit a crime and be sentenced to a reformatory or industrial school. Since then they had made some progress, for boys could now learn how to do office work, stenography, typewriting, bookkeeping, etc., while they were attending high school. However, they had not yet made adequate provision for training those boys who were soon to go out to do the productive work of the world. It was hoped by the supervisor of manual arts that some

(6) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1917, pp. 23-37.

(7) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1923, p. 17.

day a trade course would be organized in the city so that it would be possible for the boys, who are compelled by law to remain in school until they are sixteen, to spend their time in learning some useful trade instead of devoting so much time to those studies, many of which were never used after leaving the classroom.

Crowded Conditions -- The present High School building was built in 1893-1895 and school was opened in the building on September, 1895.⁸ Since 1903, there had been crowding in the building. From 1903 to 1911, the Central Grammar School occupied the first floor. The High School, during that period, was confined to the three upper floors.

As the school increased in size, it took constant planning to meet the needs of the larger number, and finally the Central Grammar School was discontinued, and the High School had the whole building.

Crowding continued until 1916, when the school went onto the double session; that is, the three upper classes came in the morning from eight until one and the freshman class in the afternoon from one to five. This continued until B. F. Brown School was completed in 1924. In 1920, the Continuation School was opened in this building.

Since 1924, the three upper classes had been increasing in size, and the High School building had been crowded more than ever. The registration in the fall of 1924 was over one thousand and the school building had been planned for only eight hundred.

The building had excellent janitor service, and consequently was in good condition. For a modern high school it lacked proper lunch

(8) Ibid, 1926, pp. 7-9.

accommodations, adequate assembly hall, gymnasium, laboratory facilities, emergency rooms or for that matter enough rooms. The building was reported to be in such good condition on the outside and inside that by adding to either or both ends of the building on the original lot they could have had a school building which would have been up to date and adequate in every way for years to come.

Should there not be public high school building enough for the child of any citizen of Fitchburg? This was the cry in 1926.

Reorganization of High School -- The high school was reorganized as a result of the fire of December 15, 1934 which leveled the high school building.

The old High School organization was transferred to new quarters and classes started on January 2, 1935 with a loss of only five school days.

The high school day began at 12:40 and ended at 5:20 P.M., with six thirty-five minute periods each day, and a double recess of fifteen minutes. Six minutes was also allowed for passing at the close of each period.

In order to take care of the 1150 pupils in the Senior high school, it had been necessary to use all classes and special rooms in the B. F. Brown J.H.S. and all eight rooms in the Hastings School. This required that pupils go from one building to another but by placing nearly all the English work in the upper building the traffic between the buildings was cut to a minimum. Tables and arm chairs were placed in all classrooms at the B. F. Brown School in order to increase the seating capacity and thereby take care of the larger number of pupils who were using the

building.

The school periods were only thirty-five minutes in length. This was approximately ten minutes shorter than the periods under the old conditions before the fire. This meant a loss on the average of forty minutes per day in class work and instruction on the part of every pupil. Study periods were also reduced proportionately.⁹

Because of lack of space and time it was not possible for teachers to give special help to pupils who may have needed it. Overcrowding made it necessary to use the assembly hall for study classes. The light in the hall was not good and since there were no desks no written work could be done.

In order to provide room for typewriting classes it was necessary to deprive the boys of their lunch room. All the boys had to eat their lunch standing up in a rather narrow corridor in the basement floor. All typewriting was conducted in one large room which was formerly the boys' lunch room. One hundred and ten pupils formed the class which was too large for one teacher to handle satisfactorily. The room was inadequately lighted.

There were no individual lockers for high school pupils in which to keep their coats and other clothing and no desks in which to keep their books. There was a greater loss of books and clothing than formerly. A serious lack of storage space existed. Daily absences had nearly doubled since the fire. Formerly 40 to 50 pupils or about four per cent were absent each day while now there had been 80 to 90 or seven per cent absent each day. This serious condition meant a greater amount of make-up work on the part of teachers and pupils and it very definitely held back school

(9) Ibid, 1934, pp. 12-15.

programs.

Classrooms were very small and very badly overcrowded in mechanical drawing, printing and sewing. A considerable loss of time each day took place in going back and forth between each building. Six full minutes were required to go from one building to another and in addition when weather conditions were bad the health of the pupils was apt to suffer.

There were no science laboratories. It was impossible for students in chemistry physics or biology to do any individual laboratory work as required by colleges for admission. This was a serious handicap to those planning to go on to any institution of higher learning.

New High School Building -- The opening of a modern, up-to-date, well-equipped school building in September of 1936 began a new era in public secondary education in the city of Fitchburg.

In the spring of 1937 elective cards and programs of studies were issued to incoming freshmen, to sophomores and juniors. As a result of their choices of studies the program cards were prepared during the summer so that each pupil entering the new high school building in the fall of 1937 was handed a card outlining his regular work thereby making it possible to start regular classes immediately.¹⁰

World War II Atmosphere -- The war and its many ramifications had a pronounced effect on the high school. One hundred and ten pupils had left school since the opening of school in September of 1943. Eight boys had joined the army, 19 the navy, 3 in the Army Air Corps, 1 in the Marines, 2 in the Merchant Marine Service. Nineteen boys and 14 girls

(10) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1937, p. 23.

had left school to go to work. Seventeen boys and girls had left Fitchburg High School because their parents had moved out of town. Many of these, according to the records, had entered other high schools in these other communities. Eleven pupils had transferred to Fitchburg High School from other cities because their parents had moved there to Fitchburg to take employment in the local industries. Continual readjustment was made necessary by this constant changing of the student enrollment.¹¹

The largest proportion of pupils in the history of the school was working part-time. Approximately four to five hundred were aiding in the war effort by working afternoons outside of school hours in the stores and as part-time employees in the war plants in the city and vicinity. The demand had been so great that there were no girls or boys available for employment. Every one who was willing to accept afternoon and Saturday work was employed and the total wages earned was approximately \$2500 to \$3000 per week.

One-Hundredth Anniversary -- One of the most outstanding phases of the school program during the year 1949 was the commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the Fitchburg High School.¹² The high school had its beginning in 1849. As early as 1830 a private school called the "Academy" had been established by a society called the High School Association of Fitchburg. This school had an attendance of about 30 students and while there is no record of any person graduating from it, the standard of work was on a high level. It was in 1849 that the Town of Fitchburg purchased a building for its first public high school.

(11) Ibid, 1943, pp. 26-27.

(12) Ibid, 1949, pp. 23-24.

There were no graduates until 1866 when one person graduated. In 1867, four persons graduated. In June, 1949, there were 242 in the graduating class, which was considered a small class, because several years previous, when the enrollment was high, there were 400 in the graduating classes.

By the way of commemorating this great event, the High School, through the efforts of students and teachers, originated a pageant depicting the various steps in the hundred years' growth of the High School. This pageant was presented to the entire student body and then to the alumni at their annual meeting on June 20, 1949.

To carry out further the importance of the occasion, a reception was held after the Baccalaureate Service on Sunday, June 19, 1949 for all members (past and present) of the school.

The various steps of progress and growth of the High School connoted the growth and progress of our country. New inventions, new ways of living, and new problems all had their effect in the changes of the curriculum to meet the needs of each student.

Perhaps the most profound thing that affected changes in the entire educational program was the compulsory law, compelling children not interested in academic training and who would ordinarily leave school at the age of fourteen to remain in school until the age of sixteen. Consequently, a new approach and reorganization had to be made to meet the needs and interest of this group.

When the first High School was established the population of Fitchburg was 5,000 whereas the population of the city was over 43,000 in 1949. There were about 800 children in school in 1849 while in 1949 there were about 7200.

The first high school building was purchased by the town for about \$5,000 (exact figure not known) while the present building which was built in 1937 cost over \$1,200,000.

CHAPTER VII
RECENT TRENDS

CHAPTER VII

RECENT TRENDS

Brief History of Nursery School Movement and Purpose -- As the

significance of the period of growth during the pre-school years became apparent, there developed an increasing interest in establishing nursery schools. Psychologists, physicians and educators agreed that the first six years of a child's life were the most important for the entire development of the individual. In these first six years, until recently, children have been in the home entirely. Most parents did not have the time necessary to give to a child of this age, and even if they did there were very few who understood how to handle a child in the best way, because they had no training in parenthood. Nursery schools were as much schools for the parents as for the children. The parental education movement and nursery school movement were so closely interrelated that they could not be called separate movements. Nursery schools gave parents the benefit of scientifically trained teachers; teachers who had training in all the many different phases of child life.¹

The pre-school and parental education movement was not purely modern, but was the outcome of the thought leaders in education during many years. The first nursery school was started in England in 1908 and was influenced by the kindergarten and Montessori's ideas, which were just developing at that time. The English nursery schools, Froebelian kindergartens, Montessori schools and progressive kindergartens interacted in the development of the modern nursery school. In the United States the first nursery schools were started in 1921 in Boston. The

(1) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1930, pp. 12-14.

Women's Educational and Industrial Union of Boston decided to start a nursery school along the lines of the English nursery school, and as there was no one in this country prepared to take charge of a school of this type, they sent Miss Abigail Eliot to England to study the nursery schools there. When she returned she started the Juggles Street Nursery School, which is now called the Nursery Training School of Boston.

At about the same time Teachers College, Columbia University, authorized the opening of a nursery school. About 1922 the first nursery school to be used as a laboratory for the education of young girls in the care and training of children was opened at the Merrill-Palmer School of homemaking in Detroit. Following this, other similar laboratories for child study and care were opened in many home economics departments of land-grant colleges, the first one being at Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanics Arts in 1924. This one was followed the next year by one at Cornell University and at Ohio State. The first nursery school for the use of high school students of homemaking was opened at Highland Park, Michigan, in December, 1924.

Co-operative nursery schools have developed in many cities. The first one was started in Chicago by a group of faculty wives at Chicago University. In these co-operative nursery schools the mothers each had a turn at teaching and a turn at leisure time from their children. There was usually a well-trained worker at the head of a nursery school of this type, and the mothers took turns in assisting her, in this way they gained valuable knowledge in child care.

Nursery schools as developed had many common objectives but still somewhat varied purposes. There were very few nursery schools in the

United States which were philanthropic in purpose, as were the English nursery schools. Practically all aimed to serve as a supplement to the home, rather than as a substitute for the home. The first purpose of nursery schools in general was the scientific care and training of the preschool child in all aspects of development, and the helping of parents to better understand the problem of care and training of young children. Some of the main objectives of modern nursery schools were: To provide opportunities for controlled research, to establish experimental laboratories for the study of educational methods, to furnish facilities for training pre-school teachers, to provide for the cultural and general training of college women, to train teachers of home economics, to demonstrate best methods of child care, to permit parents to participate in group care of little children, and to train junior and senior high school students.

The first nursery school opened in Fitchburg was at the D. M. Dillon School in the fall of 1930. Children of pre-school age, from two to four years, attended this school. Ten pupils registered the first year and were unusually regular in attendance.

Three different rooms, two for class work and one for a dining room, were reserved for this school.

A trained nursery school teacher was engaged as director. A cook was employed from the beginning. One or two local Normal School students assisted.

During its first few months of existence it was visited by many parents from the city and a great many teachers and educators from outside the city.

The establishment of nursery schools has been quite rapid since

this initial venture in nursery schools on the local scene.

Early in February of 1934 the Federal Government made funds available through the State Department of Education for the establishment of more nursery schools.² Fitchburg established four more of them in different parts of the city and employed a staff of ten unemployed teachers. The nursery schools were closed in June for summer vacation. They were reopened in October.

The result of the training given in these schools was very marked. This was shown by the pupils when they entered the first grade. They were found to be much more advanced socially than the children without this training. They seemed to make very definite progress in the atmosphere and life of the school.

Coordination of Various Elements of the School System -- One of the needs found in every city was that of co-ordination in the various parts of the school system. Fitchburg was no exception in this respect.³ The various grades and schools required greater uniformity in the courses of study, textbooks, and time schedules, in and between the schools of the city. With these needs in mind eleven committees of principals and teachers in grades one to six were formed for the purpose of studying and revising the curriculum in these grades.

Another important problem arose in connection with making provision for children who were mentally retarded. Two special classes were already in existence at the Opportunity School located in the Richardson

(2) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1934, pp. 8, 9.

(3) Ibid, 1936, pp. 9-16.

Room building. These classes, according to state regulations, could not enroll more than thirty-six pupils, a number quite insufficient to meet the need. A special class for younger children began operation in the fall of 1935 in the Academy Street building. However, there was still a need for additional classes to take care of those children in the public schools who were unable mentally to profit from group instruction as it was given in the regular school classes. A recent survey showed that Fitchburg had approximately 123 children in the city who were retarded three years or more mentally and only fifty were being cared for in the special classes.

The W. P. A. regulation that children must leave the nursery schools upon reaching their fifth birthday raised the question of entrance age to the first grade. After some discussion of this matter the School Committee decided to admit to the schools where vacancies existed children who were under the required age for entrance provided they were physically and mentally able to profit from first grade work. As a result of this action mental tests were given to fifty-four children, of whom forty demonstrated their readiness for first grade entrance. Reports later indicated that this group of children did first grade work satisfactorily.

The organization of the teaching staff for the study and revision of the elementary school curriculum was a major undertaking during the 1936 school year.⁴ One important purpose of this work was the adaptation of the school program to changes that were constantly taking place both in the child's environment and in the methods and means of instruction.

(4) Ibid, 1936, pp. 21-27.

A second major purpose was that of effecting agreement upon a basic plan of instruction in all schools of the city. This plan was to be submitted to the school authorities for adoption. Such a city-wide plan of instruction was to be beneficial in several ways. It was to provide the necessary common ground on which the teachers of all schools could meet for the purpose of making a continuous study, analysis and improvement of aims, content and methods as well as for the general purpose of sustaining and cultivating the professional interests of teachers. Also, a city-wide basic program was to enable pupils to transfer from one school to another without a serious break in the continuity of their studies.

For the carrying forward of these purposes, the following eleven study committees composed of fifty principals and teachers were formed:

Reading	Grades I-III
Reading and Literature	Grades IV-VI
Arithmetic	Grades I-III
Arithmetic	Grades IV-VI
Language	Grades I-III
Language	Grades IV-VI
Social Studies	Grades I-III
History	Grades IV-VI
Geography	Grades IV-VI
Health Education	Grades I-VI
Science	Grades I-VI

One of the important outgrowths of the curriculum study was the adoption of a basic system of primary reading and its introduction into the primary grades throughout the city. After a very careful consideration of many systems by the Committee on Primary Reading, the Elson-Gray

system was recommended and adopted. This system was recognized as one of unusual merit in two respects: (1) The excellence of its plan for giving children the technical training required. (2) The Curriculum Foundation series of supplementary books that accompanied the basic readers had a similar vocabulary and enabled primary children to gain through their own reading the elementary understandings in health, art, science, arithmetic and the social studies. The contents of each field had been prepared by subject experts and then adapted in vocabulary and concept to the reading ability and mental maturity of children at the different grade levels. The child gained information and enriched his understanding through a carefully planned curriculum at the same time he learned to read. This Curriculum Foundation series seemed to make a genuine contribution to the improvement of primary education.

Since the quality and quantity of textbooks available was recognized as of such importance in providing and carrying out a sound program of studies an analysis of the textbooks used in grades one to six of all schools was also made at this time. The information included the name of the book, author, publisher, date of publication, physical condition and number in use.

The survey indicated that there was a wide variation among the schools in the basal books, that many books had been in use for a long period and that a considerable shortage of textbooks existed in the fields of spelling, history, hygiene citizenship, science and dictionaries.

The variety of texts in use had arisen from the practice of placing upon each school the responsibility of selecting its textbooks. The shortage in recently published textbooks was doubtless due to the fact

that Fitchburg, in common with many other cities, had not made in recent years the annual replacements that it might have made under more prosperous conditions.

Elementary School Hours -- In order to secure uniformity in the time of opening and closing sessions in the elementary schools, a committee of principals discussed the matter and recommended a uniform schedule, which was authorized and put into operation in September of 1937.⁵ The schedule put into operation was as follows:

	Grades 1-6	Grades 7 and 8
Morning Session		
Warning Bell	8:30	8:15
Opening	8:40	8:25
Closing	11:40	11:40
Afternoon Session		
Warning Bell	1:10	1:10
Opening	1:15	1:15
Closing	3:15	3:15
Recess Periods		
Morning	15 minutes	15 minutes
Afternoon	10 minutes	5 minutes

Uniform schools hours were also promulgated at this time for the junior and senior high schools of the city.

Education For The Mentally Handicapped -- On October 19, 1940 the state convention of special class teachers was held in Fitchburg. Many new ideas and suggestions were offered by the well planned program to train these handicapped children. The Kinesthetic Method in reading was

(5) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1937, pp. 12-13.

demonstrated as a help to the slow reader.⁶

Special education for the mentally handicapped was a part of the total educational program in Fitchburg and was required by state law. It was one of the means of adapting the educational program to meet the needs of the individuals who deviate so greatly below the average that their needs cannot be met by the program for average pupils.

It was reported that subnormal pupils fall at the lower end of the distribution of mental ability and range from about 35 I.Q. to about 80 I.Q. In the year 1940 Fitchburg had nearly two hundred such children in its schools of which one hundred and twenty five were in special classes. Experience had shown that many subnormal pupils could become socially and economically profitable citizens if they were given adequate training and guidance. Conditions surrounding their personalities were recognized as quite different from the normal pupils.

1. They had very limited ability in solving abstract problems.
2. They were unable to give close attention for the length of time that was typical of average students.
3. They had less than average ability to exercise what was commonly known as "good judgment."

The program had been carried on with the above thoughts in mind. Since it was known that these pupils, with a few exceptions, could not achieve abstract work beyond the fourth or fifth grade, the work was planned on a level wherein they could succeed in doing something. Reading was their chief difficulty and many hours of drill in short intervals of time were spent in trying to teach these pupils the basic elements of

(6) *Ibid*, 1940, pp. 16-17.

simple reading.

The mentally handicapped were considered a legal part of the city school system and city school population. They felt that all that was possible must be done to aid them in becoming useful citizens. As the mentally handicapped became older and achieved somewhere near their peak in tool subjects, more emphasis was placed upon projects of practical value such as housekeeping or homemaking for the girls and a varied program of shop work for the boys. Many of these boys and girls found work in jobs such as the following after they had left schools; simple factory work, messenger service, household work of all kinds, farm labor, selling papers, truck driving, truck driver's helpers, delivering milk and assisting in lunch rooms.

The Education of Gifted and Talented Children⁷-- Parents and teachers always knew that one child differed from another in many ways. Wise teachers always took these differences, insofar as they could observe them, into account. It was also realized that with scientific opportunities and equipment for testing they could tell with a greater degree of accuracy the extent of these differences. It was further realized that children of 110 I.Q. or higher could do more work than the ordinary courses of study provided. It was not believed that these children should skip a grade entirely or do double work in order to skip a grade. Rather, it was believed that the more natural method of procedure was to find more opportunities for them to do extra work and remain with their regular group by developing an enriched program for them, such as the following:

(7) Ibid, pp. 18-20.

1. More leadership opportunities.
2. More music and art work.
3. Apply problem solving techniques to new experiences and theories.
4. More detailed work reports in English or more detailed descriptions of characters.
5. Making charts, models and diagrams to clarify certain subjects.
6. Participation in dramatics, debating, etc.
7. More research activity by use of encyclopedias, maps, graphs, etc.
8. Making excursions to places for information--factories, Public library, Art Center, stores, etc.
9. Leaders in group discussions.

Other ways other than the above could be found by teachers as a means of furnishing an enriched program.

Furthermore it was recognized that the mind of the superior child seemed to be endowed with certain special qualities easily recognized, among which the most outstanding was great intellectual curiosity. In his untiring quest for knowledge and understanding, he not only asked vocally for information but also used every available source in acquiring the facts he needed. This type of child was rarely satisfied with a meager, superficial answer; he wanted all the facts he was capable of understanding and he was willing and eager to do his own research. It was the teachers' duty to guide and lead him into the proper channels.

The superior student in high school showed deeper interest in his work; he absorbed knowledge readily; his responses were keener and more vivid and he was able to concentrate for comparatively long periods of time. He employed excellent methods of work under a minimum amount of

direction and guidance. Generally speaking, he was not mechanically minded and was sometimes careless in mechanics of spelling, writing, punctuation and computation, because of his speed to get things done. This weakness should have been given careful attention by the teacher.

In 1945 an official Guidance Department came into being.⁸ Through the Guidance Department they were able to administer aptitude tests and help boys and girls to decide upon their future career. Not always was the right choice made, but it certainly was an improvement over the old hit-or-miss plan. Boys and girls made their own choices under the leadership and counseling service of the guidance directors who followed them through school and assisted in placing them after graduation. They continued to follow them until they were definitely and happily placed in their life's work.

Remedial Reading -- A remedial reading program was begun in the city schools for the first time in its history in 1945. This program started in the primary grades under the direction of a trained and well equipped teacher. It was hoped that this new venture would help solve many problems in reading difficulties in the primary grades. Reading was felt to be the most important subject in school. A complete analysis of problems leading to reading difficulty were hoped to be made in this new program.

Urgent Present Day Issues -- Two of the most important issues facing the school system of the city were the building requirements and the need of a greater supply of well-qualified teachers.⁹

(8) Ibid, 1945, pp. 20-21.

(9) School Committee Report of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1949, pp. 6-12.

They realized that good school buildings did not guarantee good education, but they helped a great deal. They wanted schools to be wholesome places for learning and growth. The surroundings were to be safe, comfortable, clean and attractive at all times. Fitchburg to date had been fortunate enough to have space enough to accommodate their children. However, the school buildings were old and required great care to run them and maintain them. In contrast to many new school buildings in other communities using oil burning equipment for heating, coal was used in most of the Fitchburg schools. Much of the custodians' time was used in taking care of the furnace. Time saved here, by having oil burning equipment, could have been used by the custodian in cleaning and performing other duties more efficiently.

The following is a brief summary of the Fitchburg school buildings and their present needs:

1. The Academy street school has outlived its usefulness in meeting modern needs. It is one of the oldest schools in the city and should be replaced at the first opportunity. There are thirteen classrooms in this building, four on the top floor which cannot be used for classroom work. It was suggested that a new building be built in this area or an addition to the B. F. Brown School be made. The most economical plan would be to built an addition to the B. F. Brown School to house the grades of Academy Street School and the sixth grades in the Hastings School and also to allow for expansion of the B. F. Brown. This would require an addition of eighteen to twenty rooms. This plan offers many advantages: the children would have access to the Love Playground, whereas now the present situation is very unsafe as the Academy Street School is bounded on all sides by streets, heavily used by automobiles and trucks;

also this addition would provide a much needed recreation room, lunch room and health suite to care for the many children who remain at school during the noon hour. We should also plan space for the state clinic, principal's office, remedial reading room, and office for drawing supervisor.

The enrollment in this school is increasing yearly and the building is now used to capacity with the exception of the top floor. Since this building is deteriorating rapidly and is located in a danger zone with many traffic hazards, it is hoped that serious thought will be given to this project at once. A building commission should be appointed to investigate the possibility of obtaining state aid in carrying out this project.

Another great advantage in building an addition or annex to the B. F. Brown School is the possibility of establishing the 6-3-3 plan. A section of the building - the top floor - could be used to house the ninth grade and it would be entirely separate from the elementary grades. So, that with the exception of Teachers' College Junior High School all of the seventh, eight and ninth grades would be housed at the B. F. Brown School.

2. The Ashburnham Street School, while not in the best of locations to meet the growth in this area, is in fairly good condition.

3. The B. F. Brown School was built in 1924. It is a semi-fireproof building and in fairly good condition. During the past year a new inter-communicating and sound system along with a new clock system had been installed.

4. The Clarendon Street School upper building was reopened in 1949. Two class rooms were being used and three of the rooms in the lower building were being used leaving three vacant rooms in this district. New lights had been installed and the grounds were put in good condition during the past summer. With a few minor repairs it was reported that the

building could be put in excellent condition.

5. The D. M. Dillon School, located on Day Street, contains ten class rooms and most of them were in use. It is one of the oldest buildings and needs much repair. The Coolidge Dental Clinic is located in this school and as a result many parents visit it. It is now being almost entirely used by Teachers College as a practice school and in view of its importance to this area, it would be advantageous to all concerned to have this building completely renovated.

6. The Goodrich Street School has been painted quite recently but there still is much to do. A new clock system is needed, new lighting, stair trends repaired and the school yard needs a binding material to make it suitable as a playground. The building has two vacant rooms.

7. The George H. Hastings School is one of the oldest buildings. It is basically in fair condition but needs some repair at once. It should be painted inside and out. New window shades are needed, new lighting system, replacement of a door and toilet seats and a sink and running water in the shop. Located in this school are two sixth grades, four special classes, and the General Vocational School for girls.

8. The new High School should function very well with very little expense, but the building is very much in need of painting inside and out. The bleachers in the gymnasium need repairing and refinishing. The ramps in the cafeteria need rubber mats or some other material to prevent slipping. A special fire alarm bell is needed in the woodworking shop. Stage rigging needs inspection and renewal. Also, the stage curtains and window draperies need repairing and the mechanism checked. Last year this school was given a new inter-communication and sound system, additional fire alarm bells and a new roof over the gymnasium.

9. The George F. Hoffman School located on School Street is meeting all the requirements in this district for grades one to four. It can accommodate a few more children but should it become overcrowded some transfers can be made into the Academy Street School district. This building needs painting inside and out. A new fence is very much needed around the front yard and the hedge should be replaced. The iron fence needs repair and paint. Many desks need refinishing.

10. The Houser School has four empty class rooms, which will provide space enough for years to come. The building is in fairly good condition but needs painting inside and out. New lights have been installed and it is hoped that the building will be painted this year. New toilets are needed for both boys and girls. The grounds of the building need attention badly.

11. The Laurel Street School was completely renovated this year as far as painting inside and out are concerned. This was a great expense to the city owing to the dilapidated condition of the building. However, teachers, children and parents look upon this building with greater pride than ever before now that the work has been completed. The only needs at this school now are some new furnishings, window cords restored, new towel and soap containers, and toilet facilities checked.

12. The Lunenburg Street School is not in the best location to meet the needs of expansion towards Marshall Road. However, it is in fairly good condition and all four rooms are in use. The building needs painting inside and out, a new lighting system, several electric outlets in the class rooms and the playground needs resurfacing.

13. The Nolan School has five empty class rooms. It can care for

any increase in that locality for many years. The building is in fairly good condition and serves as a community center. The gymnasium is used nearly every night by young people and several classrooms are used in evenings for adult education. The building needs painting inside and out. Some of the brick walls need repointing. The girls' playground needs resurfacing and the water main entrance needs to be changed from low pressure to high pressure.

14. The Richardson Road School, which is now closed, is a two room building. It is not considered to be in the best location to care for the increasing population in that district but it could be used, at least temporarily, and can be reopened at very little expense. The children in this area are now attending the Academy Street School.

15. The South Fitchburg School has eight rooms and only four are in use. It is expected that there will be considerable increase in the school enrollment next year due to the completion of the new housing project. There is ample room in this school to accommodate the anticipated increase. The building needs painting inside and out, also a new lighting system, new front doors, window shades and a new hall floor. An electric outlet is very much needed for audio-visual aids work.

16. The Wachusett School is in fairly good condition. New lights have been installed but the building still needs painting inside and out. This school yard needs attention as well as minor repairs on the inside of the building. This is a five room building with only two classrooms in use.

This resume of our schools in Fitchburg shows that most of them are badly in need of repair. This is partly due to the lack of labor and materials during the war. It is suggested that definite plans be made

by the Building Department for a five year program to put all of our schools in good condition by concentrating on three or four of them each year.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY

Origin and Development of the Public School -- The Town of Fitchburg and the public school system of the town came into being during the same year of 1764. For the remainder of the century the foundations for the infant town were laid and along with it the foundations for its school system.

During this period of foundation building the town was districted into several parts and schools were built for each of the districts.

The duties and powers of the School Committee were clearly defined shortly after the turn of the century and there hasn't been much change in them since. One major difference in this respect is the fact that clergymen were chosen as members of the School Committee whereas there is no instance of this today.

Around the middle of the nineteenth century Fitchburg began to grow rapidly with the attendant need of more housing and more teachers. The people became quite conscious of their educational needs and what was just as important they were willing to appropriate the money needed for this growth.

Also, at this time, printed school reports had their inception. They dealt chiefly with the defects of the school system of the years around 1850.

An attempt was made to redistrict the town for schools in 1846 but little change was made in this respect to the original districting of the town.

Many new and substantial school buildings were built shortly after 1850 along with alteration and repair of old ones. A good percentage

of these buildings are still serving their purpose.

From Town System to City System -- In 1872 Fitchburg became the City of Fitchburg. The school system embraced High, Grammar, Intermediate, Secondary, Primary and Ungraded Schools. The Grammar schools received the children from the smaller schools made up of the Ungraded, Primary, Secondary and Intermediate schools. The High School received the children graduating from the Grammar schools which were strategically located throughout the city.

By the turn of the twentieth century most of the major changes in the public school system of Fitchburg had taken place. The buildings, organization and traditions had been set. The essence of these are still with the system today along with the few modern buildings and innovations after the turn of the century.

Nursery schools and kindergartens came into being after 1900. The vocational school which had started as a continuation school found its roots after the turn of the twentieth century. The economic depression of 1930 was another reawakening of the people to the value of education.

The value of vocational school training is no longer doubted by thinking parents. This was especially evidenced right after World War II when very many of the ex-servicemen sought admission in the Apprenticeship Training courses offered.

The various steps of progress and growth of the High School followed the growth and progress of our country. New inventions, new ways of living, and new problems all had their effect in the changes of the curriculum to meet the needs of each student.

The most profound thing that affected changes in the entire

educational program was the compulsory school law which forced children to remain in school until the age of sixteen. A new approach and re-organization was made to meet the needs and interest of this group.

Present Situation and Challenge -- Fitchburg has too many public school buildings based on the evidence that many of the buildings have one to three extra rooms that are not being used. Based on the opinion of the best authorities in education elementary schools can be most efficiently administered with an enrollment of three hundred to five hundred students. Fitchburg's geographical area does not lend itself well for centralization to this extent but it might be well, however, for the board to make a complete survey of the school buildings from an economical view point.

Larger schools would furnish a better opportunity for the organization of classes in a more uniform manner and provide for a better health and safety program. Also, it would provide an excellent opportunity for providing and serving hot lunches. None of the small schools are equipped for a modern educational program. There are no recreational rooms, no audio-visual aid rooms, no proper rest rooms for sick children, no music rooms or art rooms and no proper meeting places for parents.

The challenge which faces the Education Department of the City of Fitchburg is the task of helping all its citizens to equip themselves with the skills and knowledge to keep abreast of the constantly changing public scene, to participate in a democracy, to fulfill the responsibilities of family life and to find the means of constantly enriching their own lives and lives of others. The Education Department has been constantly attempting to meet the needs and interests of its

citizens and to expand the opportunities for learning and study.

An Area Vocational School might well be located in Fitchburg as many of the pupils come from surrounding towns. It should be possible to procure state and federal aid for such a school. A progressive Area Vocational School would be of service to the community in that it could supply skilled help to local industry and it would also serve as a factor in bringing new industries to the Fitchburg area.

APPENDICES

EXAMINATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSION IN 1875

FITCHBURG HIGH SCHOOL COURSES OF STUDY OFFERED IN 1849 AND 1949

APPENDIX I

EXAMINATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSION IN 1875

The following questions were submitted to the graduates from the grammar schools in Fitchburg who applied for admission to the high school in 1875. The questions were printed upon slips, and a copy of it was placed in the hands of each candidate and read as follows:

For Admission to the Fitchburg High School, July, 1875.

General Geography -- I and II. (a.) How many continents, and the largest? (b.) The difference between an island and a continent; between a strait and an isthmus; between a cape and a promontory; between a degree of latitude and a degree of longitude? (c.) In our latitude, would you prefer to walk over a degree of latitude or degree of longitude? and why?

III and IV. (a.) Does North America or Africa extend further south, and by how many degrees? (b.) Does North America or South America lie further east, and by how many degrees? (c.) What are the largest river basins in the new world - by what large rivers are they drained, and what are the principal tributaries of those rivers? (d.) What are the principal mountain ranges in the new world, their general direction, their extent, and how do they compare with those of the old world?

V. Name ten cities of the United States lying north of latitude 40, and five lying south.

VI. State what you can of France - its people and their occupations; its minerals, its productions and its cities.

VII. What do you know of Edinburgh? of London? of Madrid? of Rome? of Sardinia? of Berne? of Vienna? of Athens? of Constantinople? of St. Petersburg?

VIII. Asia, in what zones? Its highest mountains - what and where? Its principle rivers - their names and their course. State what you can of China.

IX and X. (a.) If you wished to secure a cargo of oranges, bananas, cacao, pimento and indigo, to what cities of North America would you go? (b.) If a cargo of sugar, molasses, coffee and tobacco, to what cities? (c.) A ship comes into Boston harbor whose cargo consists in part of diamonds, lumber, dye stuffs, medicines and india rubber. From what port in South America did she probably sail? through what waters probably pass, and by what railroads could the cargo be distributed? (d.) Do the exports and imports of a country help you to judge of the products and industries of that country? If so, how? (e.) If on account of the failure of the crops in Europe, you wished to send there a cargo of wheat or flour, where would you buy it, by what

means bring it to tide water, and to what port would you send it?

Arithmetic -- (Give enough of the work to show the mode of reasoning, and not simply results.)

I and II. (a.) When are numbers prime to each other? (b.) Name two composite numbers which are prime to each other. (c.) What is the least common multiple of any three prime numbers? (d.) What factors must the least common multiple of several numbers contain? (e.) If in any given example in division, the divisor be multiplied by three and the dividend be divided by five, precisely what will be the effect upon the quotient? Explain the last.

III and IV. (a.) If A can do a piece of work in three days, and B in four days, after they have worked together one day, how long will it take C to finish the work, if he could have done the whole work in three and a half days? Explain. (b.) A fox is 60 rods in advance of a dog. If the dog runs six rods while the fox runs four, how far must the dog run to overtake the fox? Explain. (c.) I bought lemons at the rate of 4 for 3 cents, and sold them at the rate of 3 for 4 cents, and gained 7 cents; how many lemons did I buy? Explain.

V and VI. (a.) If $\frac{2}{3}$ of a pound cost $\frac{4}{5}$ of a dollar, what will $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound cost? (b.) What will $\frac{3}{4}$ of a dollar buy? Analyze.

VII. A man began trade with a capital of \$4000. The first year he gained 12 per cent, and added it to his capital. The next year he gained 8 per cent, and added as before. The next lost 10 per cent, and gave up his business. What per cent did he gain in the three years?

VIII. What is the interest of \$1734.72 for two years, 1 mo. 15 ds., at 8 per cent rate.

IX. I owe a man \$700, due in 4 months, without interest. Being in want of money, he says that if I will pay him \$300 today, I may keep the remainder till the interest upon it, at 6 per cent rate, would be \$20. How long may I keep it?

X. A merchant wishes to mark his goods so that when he falls off 10 per cent from his marked price and 10 percent more from sales that will be bad debts he may still make 15 per cent. At what per cent advance on the cost must he mark them?

History -- I and II. English Settlements on the Atlantic Coast.-- (a.) In what year? (b.) Under what sovereign? (c.) By what persons? (d.) With what results? (e.) What places took their names from this sovereign? (f.) What was the extent, in degrees, of the English claim? (g.) Into how many divisions was the tract made, and to what companies given by the sovereign succeeding the one above referred to? (h.) To what did this sovereign's name become attached.

III and IV. Colonial History.-- (a.) What colony first settled?

(b.) When? (c.) By what company, and with what results? (d.) What colony next in order of time? its date? (e.) By what company, and with what success? (f.) Passing over the third in the order of time, name the fourth. (g.) State its complications with the Dutch, and its difficulties with the natives; and (h.) give anything of importance to either of these colonies.

V and VI. Centennial Years.- (a.) Why is this year called a centennial? (b.) State the incidents and occurrences which give character to this centennial? (c.) State your idea of the bearing of those incidents upon the country the next few years. (d.) At the battle which occurred the 17th of June, one hundred years ago, who were accounted the victors? who were the real victors? (e.) If you think the next year should more properly be called the centennial, give your reasons, and enough of the history of that earlier year to justify your opinion.

VII and VIII. (a.) Name the first president of the United States, and state why the attention of the country was turned to him. (b.) Name any other presidents who were distinguished soldiers, and name the wars, and a few of the battles in which they distinguished themselves. (c.) Name any of the presidents especially distinguished as statesmen, and what two signed the declaration of independence. (d.) Name the governor and lieutenant governor of Massachusetts, the president and vice president of the United States and the chief justice of the supreme court.

IX. (a.) When and where was Washington inaugurated? (b.) How many executive departments did congress then establish, and what were they? (c.) Who appointed the heads of the departments? who were the appointees, and what do such officers constitute?

X. What privileges were secured by the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the constitution?

Language -- I and II. In the analysis of a sentence, what do you first seek to determine? Why? Analyse the following:

"But robin red-breast builds his nest,
Singing a song of the joy to come,
And the oriole tries his golden vest,
Glad to be back in his last year's home."

Parse the words italicised. What kind of a work is red-breast? What does BUT connect? Give the principal parts of the verb in first line.

III and IV. Write a sentence having a subject modified by two adjective elements and a compound predicate, one of which, at least, shall have an objective modifier, and the other two adverbial modifiers. Compare the adjectives, if comparable; name the connectives of the predicates, and parse one of the adverbs.

V and VI. Change the following, so much as should be changed, into direct quotation: The boy returned, and said that his father would call at noon.

Change the following from the active to the passive, or the passive to the active voice: His father sent John to school in the early morning. The carriage was upset by the driver, just as he turned the corner. Put the verb turned, also, into another form. Compare courageous; decline who; give the synopsis of the irregular verb to lie; and tell all you know of Ah.

APPENDIX II

FITCHBURG HIGH SCHOOL COURSES OF STUDY OFFERED IN 1849 AND 1949

The following lists show subjects offered by the High School during the year 1849 and 1949, a one-hundred year span.

1849

Algebra
Arithmetic
Astronomy
Chemistry
Composition
Declaration
English Grammar
French
Geography
Geometry
Greek
History
Latin
Philosophy
Physiology
Rhetoric

1949

Algebra
Arithmetic
Arts and Crafts
Biology
Bookkeeping
Botany
Character Ed.
Chemistry
Civics
Commercial Law
Consumer Ed.
Debating
Mechan. Drawing
Economics
Elements of Machinery
and Electricity
Problems of Democracy
Salesmanship
Sociology
Spanish
Stenography
Trigonometry

Health
History
Ancient
Canadian
So. Amer.
U. S.
World
Household Sc.
Italian
Latin
Music
Phy. Ed.
Physics
English
French
General Sc.
Geometry
German
Typewriting
Woodworking
Guidance

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Torrey, Rufus C., History of the Town of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, Fitchburg: Centennial Committee, 1865, pp. I-II.

Huling, Ray C., The Teachers and Graduates of the Fitchburg High School, 1849-1883, Fitchburg: Sentinel, 1884, pp. 157-161.

City Documents

City Documents of Fitchburg, Massachusetts:

1873	1914
1880	1930
1895	1937
1892	

Records of the Board of Health of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, Volume III

School Records

Record of School Board Meetings 1891-1908.

Records of Sub-Committees of School Board 1880-1928.

School Register 1909

Old School Register District No. 4 1846-1850.

Enrollment Records 1896-1949.

Enumeration of Students 1899-1929.

Requisitions for Schools 1904-1935.

School Journal 1888-1940.

Americanization Report 1919-1949.

Continuation School Report 1920-1949.

Employment and Educational Certificates 1930-1949.

Record of Candidates for Teaching Positions 1883-1903.

Inventory of Text Books 1892-1904.

Books of Admissions and Discharges for High School 1865-1949.

High School Record Books 1860-1909.

High School Record Cards 1910-1949.

Folders of Records of Each Student in High School 1934-1949.

College Students 1867-1923.

Examination Records 1872-1883.

School Committee Reports of Fitchburg, Massachusetts:

1845	1899	1926	1936	1943
1846	1908	1928	1937	1945
1849	1912	1930	1939	1946
1863	1917	1931	1940	1947
1867	1923	1934	1941	1949
1895	1925			

Town Records

The Old Records of the Town of Fitchburg, 1764-1789. Volume II
Through III.

Town Records of Fitchburg, Massachusetts: Book IX and XII
1849-1850

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May 19 - 1956

