

The old Village School and Town Hall

Of all the persons returning for the Shelburne High School Reunion this summer a mere thirty, ^{of those still residing} ~~who still resided in~~ Shelburne, will bring with them memories of their school days, friends and teachers in this Village School building.

In the fall of 1925 it was destroyed by fire along with the adjacent Town Hall (built in 1866). While the Volunteer Fire Department with its Model T truck battled in vain, dozens of families and town officials looked on from the Parade with dismay and concern about where to continue the education of some one hundred pupils. For nearly two years the churches opened their parish halls to meet the problem.

The school had been built to house both elementary and high school classes and originally consisted of only the central portion, presenting an appearance similar to that of the Town Hall at the right. During subsequent alterations around the turn of the century the north and south wings were added/and for the remainder of its existence it consisted of two home rooms and one class room on each floor.

It stood on the site of the present Village School where previously the "White Church" had stood until it burned in 1865. The site was town property, deeded in 1807 by Capt. Benjamin Harrington for the establishment of a church which was open to all denominations and to town meetings.

The Town of Shelburne did not support a high school until "long after the Civil War," but it did maintain as many as fourteen one-room district schools at one time. The village district was No. 13 and in 1830 it was voted to build a brick school 20' X 26' which was open for classes in 1831.

To provide further education an "academy or private high school" (called by some residents the "select school") was established in the village, but apparently it did not flourish, for contemporary records make little mention of it. The Beers Atlas of Chittenden County (1869) p.28 indicates a school immediately north of the present site of the Excelsior Press. It was presumably the academy.

Our present Village School was open for classes in 1927 and in addition to the elementary grades it provided at first a two-year and later a four-year high school curriculum until the opening of the Champlain Valley Union High School in 1964.