

Historical Records of the Town of Westborough: Schools

Finding Aid

Last Revised: January 8, 2020

Collection Summary

- Collection number:** OD.004 (Accession number: 2015.02)
Collection title: Historical Records of the Town of Westborough: Schools, 1730-1932
Dates: 1730-1932
Size: 3 linear feet (1 banker's box + one oversize box)
Creator/Collector: The Town of Westborough
Acquisitions info.: Transferred to the Westborough Public Library from the Town Clerk's Office, which retains official custody of the collection.
Custodial history: This artificial collection was among a group of historical records that were transferred from the Town Clerk's Office vault to the Westborough Public Library during the renovation of Town Hall starting in 2013. The documents in the collection were housed in a wooden box labeled, "Schools" and had been minimally organized by Charles H. Reed. There is no record of ownership or stewardship of the documents before or after this time.
Language(s): English
Repository: The Westborough Public Library
Processed by: Anthony T. Vaver, 2016

Rights and Access

Access restrictions: Collection is open for research.

Physical access restrictions: None, although researchers are encouraged to use any available digital images of the collection.

Publication rights: All town records in the collection are in the public domain. The newspaper clippings and other commercial publications may still fall under copyright.

Organizational History

The first School Committee of Westborough was formed in 1726. Joshua Townsend was hired as the town's first schoolmaster, and he taught classes in private homes for 12 years. After 1744, classes were held in small outbuildings or sheds, but in 1753 the General Court of Massachusetts fined Westborough for not providing a proper grammar school. In 1765, the town was divided into six school districts, which were then increased to eight in 1789. The schools in each district were small, one-story brick or wooden structures, and students from 5 to 15 years of age were educated under the same roof. The residents in each district were responsible for funding and running their own school, until the separate school districts were dissolved in the early 1900s to create a unified school system.

In 1840, the Westborough School Association was formed to give students educational opportunities beyond what the district schools could offer. The group opened two seminaries, one for girls and one for boys, and the two schools accepted students from surrounding areas beyond Westborough.

The first high school was established in 1854, but since the school was ungraded and irregularly attended, it did not see its first formal graduating class (of three students) until 1872. The Forbes High School was built in 1926 and served as a combined High School and Junior High until 1956.

Scope and Content Note

Most of the records in this collection were created in the nineteenth century. They document planning for the repair and building of schools, splitting the town into separate districts, the hiring and firing of teachers, and the administering of schools within each district. Documents relating to disciplining students include the “Report on Events Leading to Expelling Emey Colburn by the Westborough School Association, 1840” (OS.02), “Adopted By-Laws Concerning Truant Children, 1871” (1.015), and entries from March 14-28, 1887 in *School Committee Records, 1862-1892* (1.002).

Charles H. Reed, who collected these school records together, was involved in the building of the Forbes High School. Due to his involvement, records documenting the opening ceremonies for the school—which include four photographs, one of which shows Reed reading an Address to the crowd, and a note that the cornerstone of the building holds documents relating to these ceremonies—form a significant part of the collection.

Note that School Tax Lists also appear in collection 2014.04, *Historical Records of the Town of Westborough: Census and Tax Lists, 1756-1879*.

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Administrative

Box 1: Folder

- 1.001 School Committee Records, 1839-1861
- 1.002 School Committee Records, 1862-1892
- 1.003 Regulations for the Government of the Public Schools, 1897
- 1.004 Meeting Minutes of the Westborough School Association, 1840
- 1.005 School Committee Report, 1839
- 1.006 School Committee Report, 1840
- 1.007 School Committee Report, 1841
- 1.008 School Committee Report, 1842
- 1.009 School Committee Report, 1843
- 1.010 School Committee Report, 1844
- 1.011 School Committee Report, 1845
- 1.012 School Committee Report, 1846

- 1.013 School Committee Report, 1869
- 1.014 Report of the School Committee, 1915
- 1.015 Adopted By-Laws Concerning Truant Children, 1871
- 1.016 Lease of the Town House Basement for a School, 1843
- 1.017 Town Meeting Notes on Building a New School, 1916-1917
- 1.018 Petition to Build a New School, n.d.
- 1.019 Petitions to Repair Schoolhouses, 1827-1857
- 1.020 Court Assessment of Schoolhouse Fire, 1874
- 1.021 Proposal to Sell Coal for Heating School Houses, 1890
- 1.022 Invitation and Program for the Dedication of the Westborough High School, 1926
- 1.023 Teacher Certification, 1835
- 1.024 Hiring of Hannah Brigham to Run the Westborough Seminary for Young Girls by the Westborough School Association, 1841
- 1.025 Letter of Recommendation to Teach for A. W. Thayer, 1887
- 1.026 Application of Anna Ford, ca. 1890
- 1.027 Recommendation for the Re-election of Teachers, with Salaries, n.d.
- 1.028 Letter of Intent to Serve As Janitor Again, n.d.
- 1.029 Grammar School Graduation Program, 1886
- 1.030 Invitation and Program for the First Graduating Class of the New H.S. (Forbes), 1926
- 1.031 Request by the State for School Records, 1890

Oversize Box: Folder

- OS.01 Incorporation of the Westborough School Association, 1840
- OS.02 Report on Events Leading to Expelling Emey Colburn by the Westborough School Association, 1840
- OS.03 Hiring of P. S. Eaton to Run a Seminary for Boys by the Westborough School Association, 1840
- OS.04 Termination of P. S. Eaton by the Westborough School Association, 1840-1841

Series 2: School Districts

Box 1: Folder

- 1.032 School District 1: School Tax Certifications, 1833-1861
- 1.033 School District 1: Meeting Minutes, 1847
- 1.034 School District 2: Meeting Minutes, 1832
- 1.035 School District 2: School Tax Certifications, 1847
- 1.036 School District 3: School Tax Certifications, 1828
- 1.037 School District 3: Meeting Minutes, 1841
- 1.038 School District 4: School Tax Certifications, 1807-1861
- 1.039 School District 4: List of Pupils, 1844
- 1.040 School District 5: School Tax Certifications, 1841
- 1.041 School District 6: School Tax Certifications, 1833, 1844
- 1.042 School District 6: Meeting Warrant, 1853
- 1.043 School District 6: Meeting Minutes, 1861

- 1.044 School District 7: Meeting Minutes, 1816, 1834
- 1.045 School District 7: School Tax Certifications, 1835-1844
- 1.046 School District 8: School Tax Certifications, 1831-1848
- 1.047 School District 8: Meeting Minutes and Committee Reports, 1848-1867
- 1.048 School District 8: Meeting Warrants, 1866-1867

Oversize Box: Folder

- OS.05 School District 7: Pupil Register, 1838
- OS.06 School District 7: Meeting Warrants, 1838-1844

Series 3: Committees

Box 1: Folder

- 1.049 Report of the Building Committee, 1805-1806
- 1.050 Report to Redraw the Line between Districts 4 and 5, 1838
- 1.051 Report of the Committee on Schools, 1850
- 1.052 Report of the Committee on the High School, 1853
- 1.053 Report of the Committee on Repairing School Houses, 1870
- 1.054 Committee to Select a Location for a New School, 1872
- 1.055 Report of the Committee on Building a New Schoolhouse, 1872
- 1.056 Reports of the Committee on Providing Better School Accommodations, 1872-1873
- 1.057 Report of the Committee on Rebuilding the High Street School House, 1873
- 1.058 Committee to Repair the Grove Street Schoolhouse, 1873
- 1.059 Report of the Committee on Additional School Accommodations, 1876
- 1.060 Report of the Committee to Build a New School House, 1877
- 1.061 Report of the Committee to Build a New School House, 1883-1884
- 1.062 Report of the Special Committee on High School Building, 1916

Oversize Box: Folder

- OS.07 Reports on Dividing School Money, 1829-1866
- OS.08 Report to Divide Town into School Districts, 1836
- OS.09 Committee to Assess School Property, 1867
- OS.10 Report of the Committee on a Site for a High School, n.d.

Series 4: Finance

Box 1: Folder

- 1.063 Warrants to Collect School Tax, 1847
- 1.064 School Tax Assignment for Nonresidents, 1833-1861, n.d.
- 1.065 Orders Drawn for Schools, 1790
- 1.066 Orders and Receipts, 1730-1748
- 1.067 Orders and Receipts, 1752-1756
- 1.068 Orders and Receipts, 1762-1769
- 1.069 Orders and Receipts, 1770-1779
- 1.070 Orders and Receipts, 1780-1783
- 1.071 Orders and Receipts, 1793-1794

- 1.072 Orders and Receipts, 1795
- 1.073 Orders and Receipts, 1796
- 1.074 Orders and Receipts, 1797
- 1.075 Orders and Receipts, 1798
- 1.076 Orders and Receipts, 1799
- 1.077 Orders and Receipts, 1800
- 1.078 Orders and Receipts, 1801
- 1.079 Orders and Receipts, 1802
- 1.080 Orders and Receipts, 1803
- 1.081 Orders and Receipts, 1804
- 1.082 Orders and Receipts, 1805
- 1.083 Orders and Receipts, 1806
- 1.084 Orders and Receipts, 1807
- 1.085 Orders and Receipts, 1808
- 1.086 Orders and Receipts, 1814-1815
- 1.087 Orders and Receipts, 1820-1828
- 1.088 Orders and Receipts, 1830-1831
- 1.089 Orders and Receipts, 1853-1866
- 1.089A School Expenditures and Proposed Budget, 1927

Series 5: Photographs

Box 1: Folder

- 1.090 Four Photographs Taken at the Corner Stone of the High School, 4/4/1925

Series 6: Published Materials

Box 1: Folder

- 1.091 Published Regulations and Curriculum Guidelines for Schools, 1878
- 1.092 Annual Report of the Auditor of Westborough [with List of Graduates, 1872-1910], 1910
- 1.093 Newspaper Clipping, "To Keep Boys and Girls in Home Town," 1914
- 1.094 Articles from *The Chronotype* on the New High School, 1924-1925
- 1.095 Newspaper Clipping of Honor Roll during World War, n.d.
- 1.096 "History of the Site of the New High School" from *The Chronotype*, by Lillian Luukko, n.d. [after 1924]
- 1.097 Newspaper Clipping on the History of Textbooks in New England, n.d.

Oversize Box: Folder

- OS.11 Abstract of Massachusetts School Returns for 1836, 1837
- OS.12 Newspaper Clippings on School Athletics, 1914
- OS.13 *Chronotype* Newspaper Clippings on the Dedication of the High School, 1926
- OS.14 Massachusetts Public Schools Statistics, 1930
- OS.15 "How Massachusetts' School System Was Evolved," *Worcester Sunday Telegram*, 1932

Series 7: History and Research on Schools

Box 1: Folder

- 1.098 Drawing of the First Schoolhouse, [1766?]
- 1.099 History of the Site of the Junior-Senior High School (Forbes) by Fannie Hooker Forbes, 1925
- 1.100 Research Notes on School History by Charles H. Reed, 1929
- 1.101 Historical Notes [Charles H. Reed, ca. 1929?]
- 1.102 Statistical Comparison of Westborough Schools in 1880 and 1930, 1930

Series 8: Original Collection Labels

Box 1: Folder

- 1.103 Description of Collection Contents from the Original Box
- 1.104 Original Enclosures for the Collection