1855

1855 Bridgewater Annual Town Report

The Town of Bridgewater

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REPORT.

In accordance with the vote of the Town, passed April 4, 1853, the Selectmen and Overseers of the Poor present their Annual Financial Report of Receipts and Expenditures of the Town of Bridgewater, for the year ending February 29, 1856.

At a meeting, held March 12, 1855, the Town passed the following Votes, viz.:

Voted, To raise the sum of five hundred dollars for the support of the poor for the year ensuing.

Voted, To raise the sum of eight hundred dollars for incidental expenses for the year ensuing.

Voted, To raise the sum of twenty-five hundred dollars for the support of schools for the year ensuing.

At an adjourned meeting, held March 19, the Town passed the following Votes, viz.:

Voted, To raise the two thousand dollars for the repairs of highways; fifteen hundred dollars in labor, and five hundred in money.

Voted, To raise one thousand dollars for building Conant street.

Voted, To raise one hundred dollars for Snell’s Mill road, and railing on Oak street.

Voted, To raise one hundred and twenty-five dollars for building Paper Mill bridge.

RECAPITULATION.

Support of Schools, $2500 00
For building Conant street, 1000 00
Incidental Expenses, 800 00
Support of Poor, 500 00
Highways, two thousand dollars, (one-fourth in money,) 500 00
Snell’s Mill and Railing on Oak street, 100 00
Paper Mill Bridge, 125 00
Total amount raised in money, $5525 00

Highways, two thousand dollars, (three-fourths in labor,) $1500 00
One-fourth in money, 500 00
Total amount of labor tax, $2000 00
SCHOOLS, 1855-56.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town grant for 1855–56,</th>
<th>$2500.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received from State fund,</td>
<td>132.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount for Schools,</td>
<td>$2632.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided, one-half on Districts, and one-half on scholars.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Districts, 13; number of scholars, 573.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of scholars, 145.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their proportion for 1855–56,</td>
<td>$434.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expended,</td>
<td>434.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due March 1st, 1856,</td>
<td>$000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dist. No. 2.</th>
<th>LEWIS BRYANT, Prud. Com.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of scholars, 40.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their proportion,</td>
<td>$193.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance from last year's account,</td>
<td>10.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expended,</td>
<td>14.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due March 1st, 1856,</td>
<td>$189.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dist. No. 3.</th>
<th>HEZEKIAH H. KEITH, Prud. Com.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of scholars, 76.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their proportion,</td>
<td>$275.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance from last year's account,</td>
<td>6.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expended,</td>
<td>22.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due March 1st, 1856,</td>
<td>$260.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dist. No. 4.</th>
<th>JOSEPH C. HOOPER, Prud. Com.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of scholars, 29.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their proportion,</td>
<td>$167.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance from last year's account,</td>
<td>4.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expended,</td>
<td>100.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due March 1st, 1856,</td>
<td>$71.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dist. No. 5.</th>
<th>CARY M. LEONARD, Prud. Com.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of scholars, 15.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their proportion,</td>
<td>$135.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expended,</td>
<td>8.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due March 1st, 1856,</td>
<td>$126.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District No.</td>
<td>Prud. Com.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Thomas Holmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Samuel W. Bates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ariston M. Hayard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Job Standish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Anthony S. Pratt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dist. No. 11. ANDREW J. FOBES, Prud. Com.
No. of scholars, 25.
Their proportion, $158 68
Balance from last year’s account, 16 18
Expended, $174 86
Due March 1st, 1856, 89 13

No. of scholars, 14.
Their proportion, $133 41
Balance from last year’s account, 22 67
Expended, $156 08
Due March 1st, 1856, 00 00

No. of scholars, 45.
Their proportion, $204 62
Balance from last year’s account, 7 09
Expended, $211 71
Due March 1st, 1856, 10 75

Total amount due School Districts, March 1st, 1856, $1,610 14

HIGHWAYS.

Town grant in labor, $1,500 00
Overlay on the same, 29 14
Town grant in money, 500 00
--- $2,039 14

Dist. No. 1, East. ELI WASHBURN, Surveyor.
Amount of labor done, $334 54
Amount of bills, $325 24
Abated, 70
--- $324 54

Overworked, $10 00
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District No.</th>
<th>Surveyor</th>
<th>Amount of Labor Done</th>
<th>Amount of Bills</th>
<th>Abated</th>
<th>Overworked</th>
<th>Money Appropriation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Asa P. Keith</td>
<td>$191.14</td>
<td>$182.03</td>
<td>$181.33</td>
<td>$9.81</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jabez Harden</td>
<td>$146.10</td>
<td>$66.84</td>
<td>$136.84</td>
<td>$9.26</td>
<td>$70.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Joseph C. Norton</td>
<td>$71.30</td>
<td>$35.82</td>
<td>$70.82</td>
<td>$0.48</td>
<td>$35.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leonard Mitchell</td>
<td>$69.28</td>
<td>$35.41</td>
<td>$65.41</td>
<td>$3.87</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Martin Wood</td>
<td>$99.25</td>
<td>$49.05</td>
<td>$99.05</td>
<td>$0.20</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Van R. Swift</td>
<td>$138.38</td>
<td>$76.51</td>
<td>$136.51</td>
<td>$1.87</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District No.</td>
<td>Surveyor</td>
<td>Amount of Bills</td>
<td>Money Appropriation</td>
<td>Amount of Labor Done</td>
<td>Unexpended</td>
<td>Overworked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>William Dunbar</td>
<td>$43.24</td>
<td>$78.24</td>
<td>$75.77</td>
<td>$2.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Josiah L. Bassett</td>
<td>$75.24</td>
<td>$115.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Henry Perkins</td>
<td>$399.28</td>
<td></td>
<td>$369.95</td>
<td>$25.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Daniel L. Hayward</td>
<td>$40.78</td>
<td>$70.78</td>
<td>$71.76</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Holden W. Keith</td>
<td>$87.77</td>
<td>$117.77</td>
<td>$110.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- Amount of bills and money appropriation are in dollars.
- Amount of labor done and overworked are in dollars.
- Unexpended is in dollars.
Dist. No. 12, Darius Dunbar, Surveyor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of bills</th>
<th>$32.05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money appropriation</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abated</td>
<td>$92.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of labor done</td>
<td>$90.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overworked</td>
<td>$96.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dist. No. 13, George King, Surveyor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of bills</th>
<th>$91.90</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money appropriation</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of labor done</td>
<td>$155.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overworked</td>
<td>$3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount appropriated for highways</td>
<td>$2,039.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abated</td>
<td>$2,030.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount worked out</td>
<td>$2,049.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount worked above the appropriation</td>
<td>$19.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BRIDGES.**

Paper Mill Bridge, Plymouth st., Town Grant, $125.00

- Paid Spencer Leonard, Jr., for lumber, $71.37
- Paid Jabez Harden, labor, 2.83
- Paid Van R. Swift, labor, 3.50

Total expended on bridges, $120.60

Received for refuse plank sold from Paper Mill Bridge, 5.00

Total, $115.60
STREETS.

Conant st. Town Grant, $1,000 00
Paid Galen Conant, building Sect. No. 5, $150 00
  6, 100 00
  12, 60 00
  Enoch Weston, 7-8, 119 00
  13, 89 00
  Abr'm Perkins, 10, 52 00
  15, 59 50
  Stillman Tucker, 11, 91 00
  A. P. Benson, 2 culverts, 4 00
  for 1 day's work, by order of Committee, 1 25
  Sears F. Alden, land and fencing, 25 00
  under contract not completed, 50 00
  amount expended on said street, 1854, 923 56

Total amount expended, $1,734 31
Pearl st., E. H. Leonard, 2 culverts, (by order of Committee,) $26 75
Laurel st., Ebenezer Pratt, (by order of Com.) 6 00
East st., Calvin Holmes, 2 75
Spring Hill Avenue, Thos. Hooper, for land and fencing, 225 00
Spring Hill Avenue, Abram Washburn, for do. 150 00
  "  " Lloyd Keith, for do. 10 00

FENCE AROUND TOWN HOUSE.

Samuel Leonard, for stone posts, $39 00
Carver Washburn, for lumber, 22 76
Southworth Harlow, iron work, 4 42
Ambrose Keith, labor and lumber, 18 42
Van R. Swift, 11 66
Edward S. Loring, white-washing fence, 3 00

Two stone posts sold to Dr. Washburn, 3 25

Snell's Mill Dam and railing on Oak st. Town Grant, $100 00
Railing on Oak st.—
Paid Van R. Swift, labor, $4 88
  M. Swift, 4 88
  H. H. Keith, 1 50
  round iron, for standards, and lumber, 26 71

No expenditure at Snell's Mill.
IMPROVEMENTS AT ALMS-HOUSE, 1855.

H. H. Keith, 14 days' labor on fence, $21 00
M. Swift, 4 3-4 " " drilling, 7 13
C. Washburn, sawing lumber for fence, 7 41
Southworth Harlow, iron work, for fence, 3 70
Nails, hardware, and brimstone, " 7 52
Round iron, for standards, " 16 15

--- $52 91

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES.

Town grant, including Town officers, $800 00
Paid Printing Town Reports for 1854, 47 36
" Postage, Expressage, and Stationery, 2 73
" Tax Receipts and Blank Books, 10 05
" Eli Washburn, stones for culverts, 96 65
" Eli Washburn, grating and rebuilding culverts, 13 17
" Eli Washburn, repairing Hearse and Pall, 30 34
" Bridgewater Cemetery, use of Hearse House, 6 00
" Darius Dunbar, for culvert on Titicut st., 59 30
" Josiah L. Bassett, culvert on Pleasant st., 30 00
" Ara P. Keith, stones for culverts on South st., 20 25
" Philander Leach, railing on Pleasant st., 2 00
" Joseph C. Norton, stones for culverts on High st., 10 00
" Henry Perkins, stones for culverts on Main st., 9 00
" Leonard Mitchell, rebuilding culvert on East st., 8 00
" Isa Conant, stones for culvert on Pleasant st., 7 20
" Ira Conant, 6 guide posts, 6 00
" George S. Wilbar, moving wall on Spruce st., 8 00
" Calvin H. Wilbar, horse hire, 8 50
" Hiram Durphe, distributing envelopes, 50
" Marshall Thompson, washing hearse, 68
" Iron for railing, near Scotland School-house, 9 00

--- $884 68
TOWN OFFICERS.

Paid  Van R. Swift, as one of the selectmen and assessors, $86 25
     " Horse hire, 4 25
     " Spencer Leonard, as one of the selectmen and assessors, 51 75
     " Horse hire, 6 00
     " Elbridge Keith, as one of the selectmen and assessors, 24 75
     " Philander Leach, as one of the selectmen, from March 1 to 13th, 8 75
     " Van R. Swift, as one of the overseers, 9 00
     " Spencer Leonard, Jr., as one of the overseers, 10 50
     " Horse and carriage, 6 10
     " Elbridge Keith, as one of the overseers, 5 00
     " J. E. Crane, Town Clerk, recording births, 18 40
     " J. E. Crane, Town Clerk, recording deaths, 7 35
     " J. E. Crane, Town Clerk, recording marriages, 1 20
     " J. E. Crane, Town Clerk, recording militia roll, 2 50
     " J. E. Crane, Town Clerk, recording Road Locations, 1 50
     " J. E. Crane, Town Clerk, distributing Laws and Resolves, 2 50
     " Eli Washburn, Treasurer, 25 00
     " " expenses, 4 55
     " Lewis Leonard, School Committee, 38 50
     " Leonard Pratt, 23 50
     " James E. Alden, 17 75
     " Lewis G. Lowe, from March 1 to 13th, 3 75
     " Philander Leach, School Committee, from March 1 to 13th, 1 00
     " Calvin H. Wilbar, Constable, 17 00
     " Thomas Keith, 4 00
     " F. D. King, 6 00
     " Horace Ames, Collector, 80 41
     " P. D. Kingman, (Balance of tax, 1854), 9 15
     " Williams Latham, Auditor, 6 25
     " Bela Mitchell, 5 00
     " Eli Washburn, 5 00

$492 66
### SNOW BILLS, 1855.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dist. No.</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asa P. Keith</td>
<td>1, West</td>
<td>$29 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli Washburn</td>
<td>1, East</td>
<td>26 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jabez Harden</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph C. Norton</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonard Mitchell</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>51 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Wood</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van R. Swift</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Dunbar</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah L. Bassett</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Perkins</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel L. Hayward</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holden W. Keith</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darins Dunbar</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George King</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30 37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: $385 51

### TOWN COMMITTEES,

FOR SERVICES RENDERED THE TOWN.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Van R. Swift, Committee on Road, and settling with D. Mitchell</td>
<td>$10 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillander Leach, road, and settling with D. Mitchell</td>
<td>12 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli Washburn</td>
<td>8 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Breck, before County Commissions</td>
<td>7 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artemas Hale</td>
<td>2 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Leonard, on D. Mitchell’s case</td>
<td>4 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Leonard, settling with D. Mitchell</td>
<td>4 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horace Ames, on road</td>
<td>6 33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: $50 12

### BILL OF 1854, AND PREVIOUS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William Dunbar, highway work, 1854</td>
<td>$4 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbridge Keith, error in bill 1854</td>
<td>1 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas G. Jewett, work on Pleasant st., 1852-3</td>
<td>4 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stillman Tucker, rebuilding culvert Titicut st.,</td>
<td>1 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. P. Benson, shovelling snow, 1854</td>
<td>1 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel F. Sanger</td>
<td>5 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aretas Fobes, opening grade for J. Church</td>
<td>1 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli Washburn, for J. Cameron</td>
<td>1 00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: $14 10
ALMS-HOUSE ACCOUNT.

**Dr.**  
Inventory, March 1, 1855, $619 10  
L. Holmes, for supplies, 218 05  
Elbridge Keith, 27 38  
Eustace Field, 2 robes and coffins, 15 00  
Interest on farm, 150 00  
" Stock and Furniture, 40 00  
Superintendent's salary, 150 00  
Physician's do., 23 00  
Yoke oxen, in part, 45 00  
Cash on hand, March 1, 1854, 8 07  
Due from different individuals, March 1, 1854, 34 33  
Overseer's expenses, 32 85  
—— $1362 78

**Cr.**  
Inventory, March 1, 1856, $820 30  
Due from individuals, 52 78  
Cash on hand, March 1, 1856, 17 50  
Labor done off the farm, 34 28  
Due from State, for transportation of paupers, 3 50  
—— 928 36  
—— $434 42

Average number of paupers, 5 3-10.  
Cost per week for support at the house, $1.57.

PAUPER EXPENSE OUT OF THE HOUSE.

| Paid | For support of Theodore Hooker, (Lunatic Hospital) | $132 12 |
|—— |—— |—— |
| " Town of Norton, for J. S. Washburn | 18 50 |
| " " W. Bridgewater, burial G. Ashport | 3 50 |
| " Leander Fobes, two cords of wood | 12 00 |
| " Mrs. Tabitha Fuller, (wood and money) | 20 00 |
| " Benj. Washburn, wood and medical aid | 8 25 |
| " Dr. Samuel Alden, medical aid, T. Fuller | 5 90 |
| " I. A. Prouty, keeping travelling paupers | 5 25 |

—— $200 52
RECAPITULATION OF EXPENDITURES.

Expended for Schools from March 1, 1855, to March 1, 1856, $2261 06

Expenses for Highways, above labor tax,
" " Bridges, 115 60
" " Streets, by order of Committee, 785 25
" " Fence at Town House, by Selectmen, 96 01
" " Railing on Oak st., " " 37 97
" " Improvements at Alms-House by Overseers, 52 91
" " Miscellaneous expenses, 384 68
" " Town Officers, 492 66
" " Support of the poor, 634 94
" " Clearing streets of snow, 385 51
" " Town Committees, 50 12

Paid bills of 1854, and previous, 14 10
" for land and fencing on Spring Hill avenue, 385 00

$6,199 88

SALE OF LIQUORS BY TOWN AGENT.

Dr.
To Am't of Liquor on hand June 16th, '55, $63 22
" Fixtures " " 10 31
" Cash, " " 60 00
" Bought since June 16th, 258 29
" Agent's salary 8 1-2 months, 88 54

$480 86

Cr.
By Am't of sales from June 16, to March 1, $292 55
" Cash on hand, 108 00
" Liquor on hand, 62 00
" Fixtures " 13 99

$476 54

Balance against the Town, $3 82
REPORT OF TOWN HOUSE COMMITTEE,
For the Year ending March 1, 1856.

Cash receipts for use of Hall, $157 25
" due from Nat. Hist. Society, 30 00
" due from sundry persons, 49 00

Paid W. W. Fobes, 45 02
" L. Holmes, for oil, 40 99
" Perkins & Hobart, 7 70
" For wood sawing, &c., 31 25
" For washing, &c., 12 75
" Mr. Braman's bill, &c., 5 82
" J. E. Crane's bill, 24 07
" F. D. Homer, for stove, pipe, &c., 36 65
" E. Field, for table, 5 00
" E. S. Loring's bill, 6 00
" Wm. P. Cutter's bill, 3 16
" Ambrose Keith, 3 00

--- $236 25

Balance in favor of Town, $221 41

J. E. Crane, Town House Committee.
F. D. Homer, Town House Committee.

The Selectmen further report, that they have examined the Treasurer’s account, which stands as follows:

Dr.
To cash on hand March 20th, 1855, $20 00
Rec’d of Town House Committee, 50 00
" John Edson, note and interest, 13 70
" P. D. Kingman, balance of tax, 1854, 92 34
" J. E Crane, Liquor Agent, 1854, 51 77
" From State School Fund, 132 54
" Selectmen, for plank sold, 5 00
" Note against estate of A. Washburn, 266 26
" Nahum Washburn, for 2 stone posts, 3 25
" Horace Ames, Collector, 1855, 6360 54
" Eli Washburn, note, 468 48

--- $7163 88
Cr.

By paid Miscellaneous orders, $2465.33
  " School 2261.06
  " Highway and snow orders, 889.58
  " Alms House 696.70
  " Two outstanding " 1854, 118.07
  " State tax, 967.50
  " School Dist. No. 6, 3.89
  " Interest on money hired, 61.25
  " Expressage, 50

We also find that the Treasurer owes the following sums: —

To Deborah L. Hale, note, $1060.00
  " Lucy Hale, " 387.08
  " Eli Washburn, " 468.48
  " School Districts, 1610.14
  Unsettled accounts estimated, 200.00

$3675.70

Available means of the Treasurer for paying above amount:—

Due from D. Mitchell, Collector, 1854, $1969.99
  " Horace Ames, " 1855, 37.59
  " Carver Washburn, for timber from
    Town Farm, 102.86
  " State, for transportation of paupers, 3.50

$2113.94

Balance against the town March 1, '56, $1561.76

Discount on taxes before Oct. 1st, $363.55
  " " Dec. 1st, 16.51
Abatement on taxes of 1855, 48.40

$428.46

All of which is respectfully submitted.

VAN R. SWIFT,
SPENCER LEONARD, JR.,
ELBRIDGE KEITH,

Selectmen of Bridgewater.
ASSESSOR’S DEPARTMENT.

Amount of Real Estate assessed May 1, 1855, $1,151,716

“ “ Personal “ “ 670,710

Total $1,822,426

Per cent. on true value, three mills and eight-tenths of a mill on the dollar, for State, Town and County taxes.

No. of Polls, 750. Poll Tax, $1.50.

Town Grant, (combined) $5525 00

County Tax, 1215 07

State “ 967 50

Overlayings, 334 09

Total amount assessed and committed, $8,041 66

Town Grant for Highways, (labor and money), $2,000 00

Overlaying, 39 14

$2,039 14

Per cent. on Highway grant, seven tenths of a mill on true value. Poll Tax, $0.35.

Number of Insurance, Bank, Railroad and Incorporated Shares returned May 1, 1855, to wit:

Insurance and Bank shares, $1,391 00

Railroad “ 948 00

Other Incorporated “ 518 00

VAN R. SWIFT,
SPENCER LEONARD, JR. ELBRIDGE KEITH,

Assessors of
Bridgewater

MARCH 1, 1856.
DEATHS IN BRIDGEWATER.

From Jan. 1, 1855, to Jan. 1, 1856.

1855.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Disease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 7</td>
<td>Simeon Leonard</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Old age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 29</td>
<td>Timothy Ha- low</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 5</td>
<td>William E. Alger</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Choked with Peanut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 11</td>
<td>Elizabeth Walker</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Fever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 11</td>
<td>John H. Mitchell</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Stoppage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 17</td>
<td>Mary S. Harlow</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 25</td>
<td>Mary Welsh</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1</td>
<td>Elizabeth C. Pope</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 5</td>
<td>Phebe C. Copeland</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 10</td>
<td>Timothy Fobes</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Disease of Heart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 11</td>
<td>Rhoda H. Wilbur</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Erysipelas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>William Alden</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 27</td>
<td>Elizabeth Bates</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 29</td>
<td>Margaret Lynch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 28</td>
<td>Catherine Frawley</td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2</td>
<td>Hope S. Washburn</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 23</td>
<td>William Frawley</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Brain Disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 22</td>
<td>Isaac Fobes, Esq</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 13</td>
<td>Mary M. Barrows</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 13</td>
<td>Elizabeth Ames</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Paralysis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 26</td>
<td>Herbert E. Edson</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dysentery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 29</td>
<td>Ida Perkins</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 5</td>
<td>Frank Harlow</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 11</td>
<td>Abigail D. Alden</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Dysentery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 13</td>
<td>Mary Kenedy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 18</td>
<td>Flora Wilbur</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 10</td>
<td>Vaniah F. Prouty</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 18</td>
<td>Elmer H. Shedd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 23</td>
<td>Kesiah Wood</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 26</td>
<td>Alvan A. Carr</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Dysentery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 28</td>
<td>Edward Sweeney</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dysentery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 6</td>
<td>Betsey Bolton</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 7</td>
<td>James Bouldry</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Stoppage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 23</td>
<td>Chloe Mitchell</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Old Age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 2</td>
<td>Harriet W. Hayward</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 6</td>
<td>Marcia P. Washburn</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 29</td>
<td>Mary Ann Coogan</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Sudden, cause unknown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>Martha S. Price</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Stoppage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 13</td>
<td>Hannah Washburn</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Old Age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 19</td>
<td>Oliver Allen</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Stoppage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MARRIAGES IN BRIDGEWATER,

From Jan. 1, 1855, to Jan. 1, 1856.

January 16, Arby P. Macomber and Elanor L. Hews, both of Taunton.

March 30, George Wilson and Abby F. Robbins, both of Bridgewater.

April 21, Jonah Benson, Jr., of Bridgewater, and Paulina R. Bennett, of Middleboro'.

April 24, Albion K. Washburn and Alice Harden, both of Bridgewater.

June 27, Israel Richmond, of Middleboro', and Tersa W Keith, of Bridgewater.

July 4, Jeffery Vosmus and Safrona C. Mory, both of W. Bridgewater.

July 18, Dyre Freeman, Jr., and Jane Wentworth, both of Bridgewater.

Aug. 2, Zecheus Lambert and Patience Keith, both of Bridgewater.

Nov. 29, Linus Darling, of Middleboro', and Caroline Alden, of Bridgewater.

Nov. 29, Albert M. Everett and Nancy P. Wyatt, both of Attleboro'.

Nov. 29, Joseph E. Carver and Mary B. Pratt, both of Bridgewater.

Dec. 4, John Briggs, of Bridgewater, and Elizabeth L. Hall, of Middleboro'.
REPORT OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF BRIDGEWATER,
FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 1st, 1856.

GENERAL REPORT.

Fellow Citizens: — Being composed entirely of new members, unacquainted with the details belonging to the duties of their office, and feeling somewhat diffident of their own ability to perform those duties properly, your Committee have had great and unusual difficulties to encounter.

But however much we may have erred in judgment or fallen short in ability, we have endeavored to do our duty impartially, in the right spirit, and with a sincere desire for the public good.

The subject of Common School Education is, or ought to be, near and dear to the hearts, not only of parents and those directly interested in the care of children, but of all who feel any interest whatever in the future improvement and well-being of society. And it is one in which our country, and especially our native State, has ever felt an active interest, and taken a prominent part.

Our system of Common Schools is the sure basis upon which rest the future greatness and prosperity of the country. And just in proportion to their efficiency, and the hold which they have upon the hearts of the people, will the intelligence, enterprise, and moral character of the community be elevated, strengthened, and arrayed with living power upon the side of truth and justice.

But, while we justly feel proud of the position, in regard to education, which our State assumes, we are sorry to say that our own town, although apparently highly favored in some respects, is, in regard to the system and management of school matters, far behind some of her less fortunate, but more enterprising neighbors.

This result has arisen, simply because we are behind the times. This is an age of improvement, and, if we would escape the appellation of “Old Fogies,” we must be up and doing; we must “prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.”

Although our schools are greatly improved now from what they were twenty or thirty years ago, though we have more convenient houses, more enlightened teachers, and better disciplined schools, yet we have by no means arrived at perfection; we have not reached the goal beyond which there is no improvement. Much
yet remains to be done before we shall even stand side by side, in the march of educational improvement, with some of the neighboring towns around us.

While we would not advise to rush blindly or hastily into every new project or theory which may be advanced, yet, when a thing has been fairly tried in other towns, and found to be a decided improvement, then, it seems to us, we should hesitate no longer; but adopt it at once, and not obstinately adhere to old customs, because they are old.

Acting upon these views, and with a sincere desire to promote the interest and welfare of our schools, we would respectfully offer for your candid consideration the following suggestions:

In the first place, we would say a few words in regard to the selection and choice of the School Committee. Perhaps it may be allowed that we speak from experience, when we say, that we think the School Committee of a town ought not, in any one year, to undergo a thorough and radical change, unless it is clearly and manifestly for the interest and advantage of the schools.

Neither should they be selected, wholly, with regard to any political views, or sectional feelings and prejudices, which they may happen to entertain.

It seems to us, that the questions to be asked, in the selection of men to be entrusted with the control and management of our schools, — to take charge of the educational interests of our children, should be: Are they qualified for the office? Are they candid, impartial, true-hearted men, with liberal and enlightened views upon the subject of education? And will they exert themselves to improve the condition of, and excite a deeper interest in, our public schools? If so, let us ask no more.

We would recommend, that the town relinquish the custom of authorizing the Prudential Committees to select and contract with teachers.

It must be evident to every candid mind, that the School Committee, when properly organized, must have a more extensive acquaintance with teachers, and possess much greater facilities for selecting those properly qualified, and peculiarly adapted to the wants of particular schools, than could reasonably be expected of Prudential Committees. They would also, in most cases, be free to act impartially for the best good of the school, without any reference to the personal feelings, or sectional prejudices, that so often distract districts, and render the situation of the teacher, one of almost constant annoyance and perplexity.

Again, Prudential Committees will sometimes be so negligent of duty, or so much engaged in other business, as to defer procuring a teacher until the last moment, and will then be obliged to take such as they can get; and the Examining Committee,
knowing the difficulty of procuring a good teacher at so late a
day, will feel obliged to grant a certificate, which, under other
circumstances, they would feel it to be their duty to withhold.

It also frequently happens, that a district having been fortunate
in their selection of a teacher one year, would be glad to secure
his services longer; but perhaps the next Prudential Com-
mittee will employ some other person, who, though inferior as a
teacher, may be a favorite or relation of his, and thus the district
be, unnecessarily, deprived of the services of a good teacher.
Or perhaps the teacher, before any one is chosen, in view of this,
as well as other uncertainties, has made an engagement some-
where else; probably with the Committee of some other town,
whose inhabitants pursue a more liberal and enlightened policy.

This is a subject which, we are well aware, has been frequently
brought before you, and which, we fear, has been viewed either in
a sectional light, or with feelings of jealousy in regard to placing
so much power in the hands of the General Committee. But
we earnestly hope that our fellow-citizens will, upon candid re-
flexion, be induced to give it a fair trial, and if they do, we feel
confident that they will never have a desire to return to the old
method.

If the town should adopt the foregoing recommendation, we
would suggest that a better and more equitable way of dividing
the school money would be, to have the schools in the several dis-
tricts kept for an equal length of time each year, and the expenses
paid from the common fund; and thus each scholar in the town
would have an opportunity to receive an equal amount of school-
ing, which would seem to be as nearly just and equal to all as pos-
sible. This plan has been in operation in some towns for several
years, and has given general satisfaction. We will close this
part of our report by an extract from a report of the School Com-
mittee of a neighboring town. "Some of the advantages which
in our opinion would result from the change proposed, are these.
Better teachers would be procured; good teachers would be
likely to be longer retained in the same school; teachers would
be appointed to those schools for which they might be peculiarly
qualified; it would lessen the occasions for the exercise of party
spirit, which is frequently manifested in the choice of Pruden-
tial Committees, and contribute generally to the harmony and
usefulness of the schools. The operation of the division of the
school money is unequal. Should not every scholar, whether he
chance to belong to a large or a small district, have an equal
chance with every other scholar to be benefited by the town's
money? The plan which we would propose is, to have the appro-
priations remain undivided in the Treasury, and drawn as they are
required by the General Committee; and each school to keep an
equal length of time."
REPORT OF THE SEVERAL SCHOOLS.

DISTRICT No. 1.—The summer term commenced with two departments, but after a few weeks’ trial, it was thought advisable to have three, and this arrangement was continued through the year. The Grammar Department during the summer was taught by Miss Mary M. Dana, under whose care the school, especially during the latter half of the term, was marked by a good degree of improvement, both in deportment, and the interest manifested in the studies and recitations. The classes in Reading and Geography, particularly, did well. This school is somewhat injured by the existence of private schools in the vicinity, which take its advanced scholars; and also, by the addition, during the vacation of these schools, of many whose temporary presence tends to break up classes and retard that progress which otherwise would be made. Such was the case during this term particularly, which caused the teacher much trouble.

The winter term of this department was taught by Miss Augusta J. Locke. Owing to the extreme length of the summer term, and consequent want of funds, the winter term in this district was but five weeks long; which is much regretted, as the schools, especially the one under Miss Locke’s care, were doing remarkably well. The discipline was excellent; and her method of instruction, particularly in Arithmetic, was accurate and thorough. Miss Locke seemed entirely devoted to her work.

The Intermediate Department has, through the year, been under the care of Miss Elvira Wood, who has been connected with the Primary Department of this school for several years. Miss Wood has here fully sustained her former reputation as a good and successful teacher.

The Primary Department was taught by Miss Elizabeth S. Washburn, who, by her pleasant and genial manner, succeeded in acquiring the love and respect of her little pupils.

DISTRICT No. 2.—This school has during the year been under the care of Miss Mary K. Alden, who has taught here for several years. The degree of advancement in this school, and the interest manifested by the pupils in their studies and recitations, exhibit, in a striking manner, the advantages of retaining a good teacher for a number of terms. We wish the practice was more common. A new and commodious house has lately been erected in this district, which reflects great credit upon the taste and liberality of its inhabitants.
DISTRICT No. 3.—The summer term was taught by Miss SARAH CRANE. Miss Crane is an experienced and very successful teacher. She gains the affection and respect of her pupils, while she secures almost perfect obedience and good order. The scholars exhibited a lively interest in all the exercises; and, judging from former reports, the character of the school has very much improved within the last few years. The parents also appear to feel much interested, and are in the habit of frequently calling to cheer and encourage both the teacher and pupils. We are sorry that Miss Crane could not have been employed in some of our schools this winter, as she expressed her willingness to remain, if desired; but your Committee having no power in the premises, her valuable services were lost to the town.

The winter term is now under the charge of Mr. THOMPSON B. CALDWELL, an experienced teacher, and under whose instruction the school is making good progress.

DISTRICT No. 4.—Miss MARY STURTEVANT had charge of the summer term in this district. Miss Sturtevant appeared to possess the respect and affection of her pupils, and her government was excellent; but there was a lack of interest and animation in the school, which she could not entirely overcome. The winter term was taught by Mr. E. WALLACE HOLMES. Much improvement was apparent, especially in some classes. The scholars here are docile and well-disposed; but, from some cause, are backward and lack energy. A larger and better house is very much needed in this district, and, we think, would have a good effect upon the school.

DISTRICT No. 5.—This school has, during the year, been under the care of Mrs. LYDIA W. BENSON.

She succeeded in exciting a lively interest in the studies and recitations, and great improvement was apparent, both summer and winter.

DISTRICT No. 6. — The summer term was taught by Miss SARAH LEACH, an experienced and efficient teacher, under whose management the school, as might be expected, did well.

The winter term was under the care of Mr. JAMES E. ALDEN, a member of the Committee.

The children in this district exhibit much interest in the school and in their studies, and, we think, deserve better accommodations. The house is far too small for the convenience and health of the school, and much out of repair.
DISTRICT NO. 7.—The summer term was taught by Miss Abba A. Keith, a resident of the district. The school, under Miss Keith's care, made much improvement, and exhibited a lively interest in the recitations and exercises. The examination was well attended by parents and friends.

The winter term is now* under the care of Miss Sarah Leach, a well-known and excellent teacher. This school was somewhat enlarged, last spring, by the addition of a few families from No. 11.

DISTRICT NO. 8.—The summer term was taught by Miss Susan T. Farnsworth, who succeeded, by mild and gentle means, in winning the love and respect of her pupils, and considerable improvement was apparent; but we think, if she had required a little more labor and self-dependence, on the part of the pupils, it would have been better. The parents here take much interest in, and make frequent visits to, the school.

The winter term is under the care of Mr. E. H. Lincoln, a teacher of considerable experience and ability. We remarked in the early part of the term, that the pupils were diffident about explaining and depending upon themselves, in their recitations; a defect which Mr. Lincoln has labored to overcome, and the Committee thought, at their last visit, with much apparent success.

DISTRICT NO. 9.—Miss Amelia S. Simpson had charge of this school during the summer. Miss Simpson labored hard and faithfully; but, owing to circumstances entirely beyond her control, the school did not exhibit as much improvement as was desirable. In the first place, there are too many scholars for one teacher to manage, especially in a house so small for the size of the school, badly constructed, and inconvenient as this is;—then there seems to be but little interest felt, in regard to the welfare of the school, by the people in the district. It appears from the register, that no parent visited the school, either summer or winter, except at the close, and then only for a short time. We think the remark made by an old lady of the district, "that the men were engaged in getting money,—the women in spending it, while the children did just as they pleased," contained more truth than poetry.

The winter term was taught by Mr. Thompson B. Caldwell, under whose care the school made considerable progress; and, all things considered, did well. A larger and more convenient house is very much needed here, and we wonder the district does not move in the matter.

* This report was made up to March 1st.
DISTRICT No. 10.—The summer term was taught by Miss SARAH W. KING; and the winter term by Miss ABBA A. KEITH. This school, though small, is quite forward, and has made good improvement, both summer and winter. A better and more convenient house, in a more pleasant location, would be a great improvement here, and is much needed.

DISTRICT No. 11.—Miss ABBIE W. WOODS had charge of the summer term in this district. Miss Woods appeared to possess the love and respect of her pupils in a remarkable degree, and the school made good progress. We think the district have acted wisely in retaining her services so many summers; and they would have been fortunate, could they have secured them winters also.

The winter term was taught by Mr. J. B. CURRIER.

DISTRICT No. 12.—The summer term was under the care of Miss D. ANN PARTRIDGE. The teacher and school were not well adapted to each other, both lacking animation. If Miss Partridge were surrounded by lively, spirited pupils, we presume she would exhibit more energy herself; while this school, being small and rather backward, needs the enlivening influence of an active, energetic teacher. The parents appear to take but little interest in the affairs of the school, and we think do not pursue a very public-spirited policy in its management.

Mr. DARIUS DUNBAR is now teaching the winter term. The school is reported by the visiting member of the Committee, as doing well and making good progress.

DISTRICT No. 13.—The summer term was taught by Miss RUTH A. THAXTER. As this was her first attempt at teaching, she would have been more successful had she received encouragement from parents and friends. We notice by the register, the neglect of parents to visit the school during the term; and only two were present at the close.

The winter term has but just commenced under the care of Mr. F. E. ELLIS. The Committee cannot judge of the success of the school, but should think it promised well. The house here is much too small for the number of scholars, which is rapidly increasing.
The winter has been uncommonly severe, which has interfered with the regularity of attendance, in many schools, very much; and the progress of the classes has been retarded accordingly. There have been employed in our schools the past year, 16 different female, and 7 male teachers. We find that the custom of employing females in winter is gaining ground, and becoming more popular every year; not only here, but in other towns throughout the State. From the last Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education we learn, that while the number of male teachers employed in the schools of the Commonwealth, has within the two years next preceding that Report, decreased 249, the number of females employed, has increased 495. We think that, in a majority of our winter schools, females can be employed with greater advantage than males. In four of the schools, the same teacher has been employed through the year. We hope this practice will become more general, wherever it is practicable; as much valuable time must be spent by a new teacher, in learning the habits and character of the school, and the individual advancement of its members, and thus several weeks, in the early part of the term, be occupied at arriving at the point at which the former teacher would have commenced.

We would remind parents and others, that it is not only their duty to visit the school-room occasionally, but a privilege, for which the greatest return they can make, is to improve it to the fullest extent. We know of no better criterion by which to judge of the character and standing of a school, than the interest felt by parents and others in the district, as manifested, not only by their presence at the close, but by their frequent calls to cheer and encourage both the teacher and pupils.

We would mention in this connection, that in only one district has there been any complaint made to the Committee, of the ability or acquirements of the teacher; and, upon inquiry, we ascertained that no parent, or other person of the district, had ever visited the school-room, or cast one ray of light and encouragement upon the efforts of the teacher by their presence and sympathy, from the commencement of the school to the closing visit of the Committee. We think that our schools, the past year, though not so good in all cases as we could wish, have been as successful as could be expected under the present arrangement.

The subject of school books has caused the Committee much trouble and perplexity. They found a great variety, especially of Reading Books, not only in the different schools, but frequently in the same school. Some of them had been in use a long time, and the teacher and scholars were anxious for a change; others, in the opinion of the Committee, were far inferior to more modern
and later published works. But not wishing to assume the responsibility of making a thorough change, they introduced only as seemed absolutely needed, or where a change could be readily made in accordance with the wishes of teacher and pupils. A thorough revision of the books now in use is much needed, so as to secure, not only better works, but more uniformity in the different schools.

We would call attention to an act passed by our last Legislature, authorizing each town to furnish the school books and stationery used in all its public schools, under the supervision of the School Committee, at the expense of the town. This, if adopted, would secure a general uniformity in all the schools, and prevent a great deal of trouble to both the teacher and parents; to the parents, because they would not be called upon, every term, to purchase new books for their children—to the teacher, because the books would be uniform, and they would not have to wait the motions of dilatory parents. The expense to the town, also, would be much less than it now is to individuals; because the Committee, purchasing in large quantities, would obtain them at a great discount.

Before closing this report, we wish to say a few words with regard to the compensation now allowed by the town for the services of the School Committee; and we wish to speak of this, not as members of the Committee, but as citizens of the town.

An act of the Legislature, passed in 1838, requires that the members of the School Committees shall be paid, by their respective towns, one dollar each per day, together with such additional compensation as the town may allow. This, we presume, was considered at that time a fair compensation for the smaller towns to pay; but, at the same time, it gave the privilege to larger and more wealthy towns to pay more, if they chose. Now we know that the price of labor of all kinds has risen greatly within the last eighteen years. Yet, while the wages of mechanics have risen in that time from one dollar and a quarter to one dollar and three quarters or two dollars per day; while the compensation allowed our Selectmen has been increased from one dollar to one dollar and a half per day, and the pay of nearly all the other officers and committees of the town has been raised in proportion; the School Committee of the town—those employed to watch over the interest and welfare of our schools—to whom we intrust in a great measure the intellectual and moral advancement of our children, and in whom we ought to require the best, purest, and really the most valuable talent we possess—they are compelled to receive the original sum allowed them eighteen years ago, of one dollar per day; and with even this, they frequently receive a larger share of cuffs than coppers.
Let us look at the subject in another light. We all know the impolicy of employing workmen who are not satisfied with the pay they receive: we know with how much more cheerfulness and energy a man will do a piece of work — with how much more faithfulness he will labor in its performance, when he feels that he is receiving a fair price for his labor, than when he is dissatisfied, and thinks that his employer does not pay him as much as he earns. Does not the same principle apply with equal force to the labor performed by the School Committee? Is it not of importance that they should feel that the town appreciates their services, and allows for them a just and fair consideration? Let us, then, if we would be just to ourselves, as well as the Committee, raise the amount of compensation allowed them, until it shall be a fair and adequate remuneration for their services.

LEWIS LEONARD,
LEONARD PRATT, \{ School Committee.
JAMES E. ALDEN, \}

BRIDGEWATER, MARCH 1st, 1856.
REPORT

OF THE

School Committee of Bridgewater,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH, 1855.
The intelligence and enterprise for which the sons and daughters of New England are everywhere famous, are due, mainly, to her "peculiar institution."

Her populous cities, her numerous, thriving villages, and her numberless scattered farm-houses,—all furnish unmistakable evidence of a universality of mental and physical activity, not found in other parts of our own, and seldom in other countries.

This general intelligence, shared alike by the merchant, the mechanic and the farmer, and which has characterized Massachusetts, ever since the early settlers landed on her bleak and barren shores, is attributable to the wisdom of our forefathers, who made early provision for the education of their children, and founded the noble Institution of Free Schools, which has been carefully preserved by each succeeding generation, down to the present time.

We sincerely hope that the privileges enjoyed by us, may ere long be extended to all the sister States of our Union, for we regard the Free Schools as the safeguards of our country—the watch-towers of our Republic. Should they become universally established, and properly cherished, our country will be secure against devastation from foreign foes, and destruction from internal dissensions. But should this system of popular education be neglected, or should any apparent policy, or expediency, cause its entire rejection, the fate of this must be like that of previous republics.

While Massachusetts claims to be the pioneer in this noble cause, we trust she will continue to lead the van, until her followers shall extend from the St. Croix to the Rio Grande—from
the Atlantic to the golden shores of the Pacific; till there shall not be found, in our whole country, a nook or corner so retired, that the privileges of free instruction cannot be afforded to every child whom fortune may have placed in our favored land.

Upon us who dwell so near the very spot where the importance of universal education was first practically established, there rests an especial duty. We should not only acknowledge the principles laid down by our ancestors, but should assiduously strive to improve and increase the privileges which were furnished by them, often at great personal sacrifice. Even within the memory of many of our citizens, these free schools in our own town, have been maintained at an expense which, at the time, far exceeded the slight sacrifice we are called upon to make at the present day, for the maintenance of the system.

Let us all consider it rather a privilege than a duty, to contribute our mite, for the common good of those who are preparing to take their places with us, or to follow us, in the active duties of life. And after having cheerfully contributed our yearly portion, towards the support of this cherished institution, let us not leave the entire charge and superintendence to the teachers and the Committee. Let us ever manifest both to the pupils and the instructor a lively interest in all that pertains to the schools supported by us, for our children’s good.

We feel that parents are too apt to think that, inasmuch as the school has been provided with a suitable teacher, and a Committee has been appointed for its particular supervision, it is not necessary, in fact of very little use, to visit the school, or to trouble the teacher with inquiries or advice. In some Districts, the teacher is encouraged, almost daily, not only by the presence, but by the direct co-operation of parents, while in other schools, the duties are discharged from day to day, without a single cheering visit from any of the parents during the whole term. We are confident that all who have ever been teachers, will unite with us in saying, that the advancement of the school depends in a great degree upon the interest felt by the parents — upon the frequency of their visits, and the solicitude manifested for their children’s progress.

Parents should be careful to deeply impress upon their children, the importance of respecting and obeying their instructors. They
should never, in the presence of the pupils, speak disparagingly of the school or the teacher, nor pass unqualified judgment on one or both, without having visited the school. We know of many instances where parents have formed unfavorable impressions with reference to a school, which have been entirely changed by a short stay with the teacher and pupils. It would be well for us to consult the Register occasionally, and to be careful that the marks for tardinesses and absences, opposite the name of a son or daughter, be "few and far between."

Irregularity of attendance is an evil which should be avoided as much as possible. It not only retards the advancement of the absentee, but materially affects the progress of the whole school.

We feel it our duty to remind our citizens of the importance of furnishing agreeable and convenient accommodations for the scholars. In some of the Districts, houses have been erected recently, which reflect great credit upon those who have voluntarily provided cheerful and commodious apartments for those who are so fortunate as to enjoy them. Some of these houses are models for imitation, but if the present District system is to be continued, improvement in several of the buildings is very desirable. Some of them are too old or too much out of repair, others are altogether too small for the number of scholars attending the school.

We wish to call the particular attention of parents to the conduct of children, while in the streets. Information occasionally reaches the teachers and the Committee of improper behavior of scholars, while going to, and returning from, the school-house. It should be borne in mind by parents, that the charge which the teachers have over the pupils, does not extend beyond the school-house and its yard. It is their duty to give suitable advice to those whose conduct in the streets has been represented as objectionable. They are not authorized to go beyond this. Parents must regard themselves as mainly accountable for the deportment of their children, on their way to and from school.

The much mooted "Bible question" has been agitated in the town, during the past year, and in one District in particular it has been the subject of much disputation. But the ready compliance of all the pupils with the request of the teacher, that such as are
qualified should read in the Scriptures, has, we believe, allayed the
discussion. The particular views of the Committee, now about
to retire from office, on this subject, we presume would be of little
interest to the citizens.

We think the District Agents have been exceedingly fortunate
in most instances, in their selection of teachers. In only a single
case have the Committee felt obliged to withhold a certificate
from the candidates presented for examination. The teachers
have, for the most part, regarded their occupation, not simply as a
means of livelihood, but as a use which they have been called upon
to perform; and they have generally discharged their duties with
credit to themselves, and advantage to the scholars.

The schools of the town, during the past year, have been, as a
whole, so far as the Committee are capable of judging, above the
average of the schools for several years,—our earnest wish is, that
this upward progression may continue from year to year.

In concluding their general report, the Committee trust that
they shall be pardoned, as they are now about to resign their place
to others, for suggesting that the compensation which may be
allowed their successors be somewhat increased above the amount
which has hitherto been granted the School Committee for their
services.

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REPORT OF THE SEVERAL SCHOOLS.

District No. 1.—The Grammar Department was taught, during
the Summer, by Miss Abbie Winch, who had the charge of the
school during the two previous terms. Good order and studious-
ness were the characteristics of this school, while under the charge
of Miss Winch. A marked improvement was made in all the
studies, and the character of the school was much elevated while
under her care.

The Summer term of the Intermediate Department was under the
care of Miss Susan H. Christian. This school made good progress.
There was a decided improvement in the order and general deport-
ment of the pupils, during the term. Miss C. appeared to enjoy the confidence and affection of all the scholars.

The Primary Department was taught, in Summer, by Miss Elvira Wood, who has had charge of this school for several years. The Committee feel confident that they express the minds of the District, in saying that they consider the school fortunate in having enjoyed the services of Miss W. for so long a period. The visits to this school always have been pleasant, and highly satisfactory to the Committee.

There were but two Departments in the school of this District, during the Winter. The upper was taught by Miss Susan H. Christian, with good success. The lower by Miss Elvira Wood, who met the hearty approbation of the Committee and of the parents.

**District No. 2.**—This school, during the past year, has been under the charge of Miss Mary R. Alden. The school has ranked among the first in town, since Miss Alden's connection with it. The scholars have exhibited a lively interest in all the exercises of the school. They have made great advancement in their studies. The order has been excellent.

**District No. 3.**—The Summer school was taught by Miss Amelia Simpson, who labored faithfully in the discharge of her duties. A majority of the scholars made good improvement; but tardiness and irregularity of attendance, prevented the others from reaping the full benefits of the school.

The Winter term is in charge of Mr. Seth Littlefield, an experienced teacher, under whose care the school is making excellent progress.

**District No. 4.**—Miss Lucy A. Cobb, taught in this District during the Summer. The school appeared quiet and orderly, but there was a lack of animation and of a lively interest in the exercises of the school, which was not overcome by the teacher.

The Winter term was taught by Mr. E. Wallace Holmes. Some improvement was noticed in this school during the Winter, although there is still a want of life, and a disinclination to active exertion, which must be removed before great progress can be made in the studies.

**District No. 5.**—The Summer school was under the charge of
Miss Lucia M. Drake. The school made some improvement, not so much however as was desirable.

The Winter school was under the tuition of Mr. Junius L. Freeman. Mr. F. gained the approbation of the parents, and the good will of the pupils. He exerted a good influence over the school. The discipline and instruction was good, and a commendable improvement was witnessed.

District No. 6.—This school during the Summer, was in charge of Miss Sarah Leach. The order and improvement was very satisfactory. The character of the school was much elevated.

The Winter term was taught by Mr. John F. Alden. The scholars made improvement under his instruction. Good order was maintained in the school.

District No. 7.—There was no Summer school in this District. The Winter term was taught by Miss Sarah Leach, who had charge of the school in No. 6, during the Summer. This school (No. 7.) was a very pleasant and profitable one. Miss Leach has a very happy way of conducting the various exercises, and of infusing into her pupils a love of study. Great progress was made in the studies during the winter.

District No. 8.—The Summer school was in charge of Miss Susan T. Farnsworth. The school maintained its previous reputation for good order, application to study and improvement.

The Winter term was taught by Mr. Thomas R. Freeman. Mr. F. gave universal satisfaction. This was one of the most quiet and orderly schools that the Committee ever visited. The parents in this District manifest more sympathy with the teacher, and more interest in the school, than is shown in any of the other Districts. To this cause we attribute in a great measure, the high stand which this school has long taken.

District No. 9.—The Summer school was in charge of Catharine M. Howe. Although a portion of the scholars made some improvement, the school as a whole proved little less than a failure. This unhappy result is owing, as we are confident, to no want of ability—no lack of interest or of appropriate effort on the part of the teacher. She exerted herself to the utmost both in and out of school, but, as is too often the case, failed to enlist the sympathy and co-operation of the parents. They did not visit
the school,—sent their children very inconstantly, and allowed them to be tardy when they did attend. Some of the parents, as it appeared to the Committee, were disposed to complain of the discipline of the school, in the presence of their children, if not to justify them in their disobedience. Under such circumstances, better success could not have been expected.

The Winter school is now in charge of Mr. Thompson Caldwell. Mr. C. seems admirably adapted to this school. He secures good order and studiousness which results, as a matter of necessity, in the improvement of the pupils. This school is too large for one teacher.

District No. 10.—The Summer school was taught by Mrs. Marietta King. Mrs. K. was entirely devoted to her school, the scholars were very studious and well behaved, and made excellent progress in their studies.

The Winter school was under the instruction of Miss Elizabeth G. Leach. Under her instruction the school continued to advance. The same good order and studiousness, as in the Summer, was noticed, and the scholars made an unusual advancement in their studies.

District No. 11.—The Summer school, taught by Miss Abbie W. Woods, made good progress. Thoroughness of teaching, and a corresponding increase of interest among the pupils, in Geography and Arithmetic, were particularly noticed; also a marked improvement in reading, as regards distinctness of enunciation, naturalness of intonation and emphasis, was observable.

The Winter school was taught by Mr. J. B. Reed. There was some lack of quiet and good order, and, as a consequence, the progress in the studies was not so great, as it otherwise would have been.

The number of scholars in this District is greater than the house can well accommodate. Some of the families sending children to this school, reside nearer the house in No. 7, and have expressed a desire to be allowed to send their children to the latter school, which is now too small for the interest of those who attend. The house will well accommodate double the number who now attend.

District No. 12.—The Summer school was in charge of Miss
Almira S. Lewis. The teacher seemed somewhat deficient in energy, and in tact in communicating instruction. The school was very small, the average attendance being only nine. The pupils were quiet, but appeared to take little interest in their studies.

The Winter term was under the instruction of Miss Ellen Thompson. The school made progress, more especially in Geography and Physiology. During the first part of the term the order was very good. Some of the parents felt that the teacher was too severe in her discipline; if so, this must be charged to us. The school closed prematurely, in accordance with the mutual desire of the teacher and parents. It is a great misfortune to the residents in this District, that the number of scholars, here, is so small. It is impossible to awaken a lively interest in the exercises of the school, where there are so few scholars.

District No. 13.—Under the charge of Miss Hazadiah Chipman, who has taught here for several consecutive terms. The school has kept on in the ever tenor of its way. Those scholars who have been punctual and uniform in their attendance have made commendable improvement, more than could have been reasonably expected, considering their uncomfortable accommodations,—while the dilatory and inconstant have lost the advantages they might otherwise have secured.

The Winter term is now in charge of Miss Susan T. Farnsworth. The school has been characterized by irregularity of attendance and tardiness. The whole school has suffered from this delinquency of a part. Neither the order nor the improvement has been such as we should desire, but perhaps as good as could be expected, considering the unsteadiness of attendance, and the too stinted accommodations.

DAVID BRIGHAM, 
PHILANDER LEACH, 
LEWIS G. LOWE, 

Superintending 
School Committee.

APPENDIX.

In the Selectmen's Report will be found the number of legal scholars in each school District, and the amount of money drawn by each District.

Bridgewater, March 3, 1855.