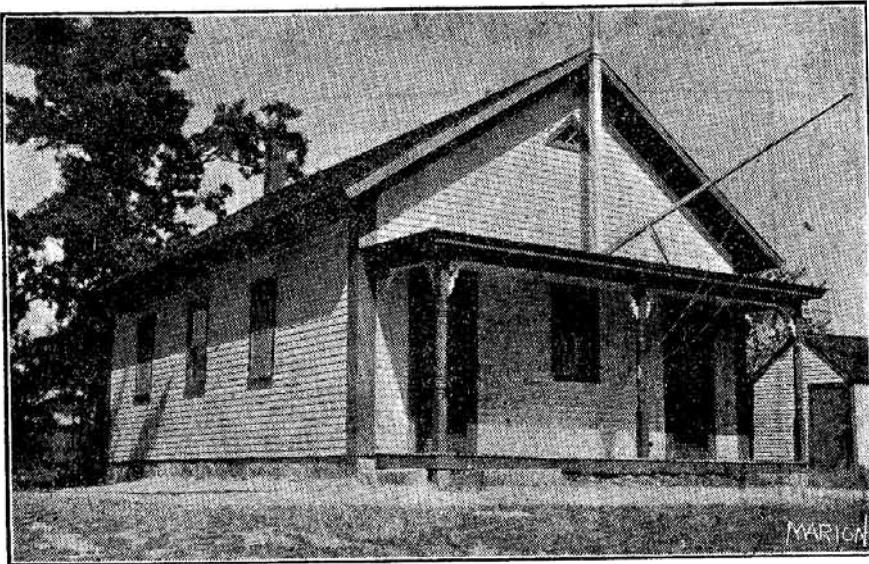


# Gumpus District School Reunion in Pelham Attracts Scores of Former Teachers and Pupils



GUMPUS DISTRICT SCHOOL IN PELHAM, N. H.

Pelham, N. H., Sept. 13

The reunion of teachers and pupils of the Gumpus district school, held this afternoon at the school house there, proved an occasion of genuine pleasure to all participating. The affair was ushered in with ideal weather and the little old school house, glistening in the sunshine and pleasantly cloistered in its surroundings of shady trees and rugged grounds, was a charming spot. A mammoth white pine, a century in age still stands as yard sentinel, familiar to all home comers. A mammoth sign of "welcome" decorated in evergreen hung suspended on the piazza front.

This old district school, to many present, constructed their only institution of learning and to them in particular it is still and quite naturally regarded with deep affection and sentiment. Not only for the foundation of education that it afforded but also for associations formed there never to be forgotten. So word was passed around informing all as far as possible of the reunion of teachers and pupils. The response to this call was highly pleasing and the number present clearly showed a latent yearning by old school mates to meet on this occasion and renew once again the comradeships and good fellowships that existed in those former school days in old Gumpus.

Old schoolmates—per chance classmates—greeted each other with true regard and dwelt affectionately on occasions of those happy yesterday and many experiences, reminiscent of those times were recalled and related in kindred mind and kindly spirit.

After a cordial reception "dinner hour" was observed and dinner pails and lunch boxes rattled again as of yore as former schoolmates grouped about and eagerly inspected their midday lunches.

Group pictures were then in order. Mrs. Catherine Donovan called "school" to order after ringing the old school bell and a score of her former pupils and others marched to their seats.

The singing of "America" with Arthur W. Greeley as organist opened the program and was followed by the call Reminiscences of Gumpus school days by Mrs. Julia Cut-

ter Richardson and read by Mrs. Clara Cutter Jack, were as follows:

I began attending the Gumpus school in the spring of 1856 and continued constantly till 1867. There were only two terms a year, spring and winter; for the winter term a man was the teacher. Two pupils sat on each board seat, the back of which formed the front of the desk behind, all painted green.

The first winter for me, the big boys in the back seats were Charles Seavey, Henry Jones, Orton Moore, all of whom were respected citizens of this district the rest of their lives. The oldest girls were Susan Butler, Jane Greeley Moore, Maria Cutter Auten, Annette Butler-Burton, and Philena Whitehouse Scruton, the last three now living are well on to 90 years.

For recitations, the older pupils sat on a long stationary seat across the back of the room. The little ones stood with toes on a line in the floor near the teacher.

The janitor work was done by the pupils, the boys taking turns at building the fires and the girls in sweeping the floor.

Methods of teaching have changed. One that has served me well was reciting in concert, points of importance as they were pointed out on maps on the wall by the teachers were shouted lustily by the whole school. I could name them all before I could read them. Also the multiplication tables and other tables were recited forward and back. For writing, I have not seen any method that gave better results than the copy books that were passed around to be inspected by parents and friends on examination day.

In 1860 we all took great interest in the presidential election. Some of us wore pins with Lincoln and Hamlin pictures on them. We kept well informed about all the big battles of the Civil war as they were fought and the generals who led them. Many war songs were sung with much feeling, as the "Battle Cry of Freedom," John Brown's Body," "Tenting Tonight, Johnny Comes Marching Home," etc.

I spent the summer of 1873 and the following winter term as teacher in this school. One little bright-eyed girl, the youngest in the school, whose toes were always on the line and mind alert, was Katie Lee, now Mrs. Donovan, the much-loved and efficient teacher as the present time.

I would like to speak of each teacher I have had here and pay tribute to their worth and of my classmates. They were a fun-loving lot, studious if they had to be, and would average well with pupils of the present time, I believe.

(Mrs. Richardson says that a milk man that passed the school used to bring news of the battles in the Civil war. She says that Frank Butler,

Otis Goodspeed and Orton Moore volunteered from the school and went to war).

Other numbers included: class in arithmetic; recitation by Frank E. Marsh; class in geography; song, "The Shinghi Rooster," Professor Roy E. Jones; State Agricultural college; song, "Little Maggie May," Mrs. Alice Greeley Hillman of St. Petersburg, Fla.; Recitation, "Gumpus" by six old Gumpus pupils; song, "Beautiful Katie," in parody affectionately and appropriately dedicated to Mrs. Donovan; spelling match; health song by present pupils; poem, composed and read by Miss Helen Zolkos, in second year of high school at Pelham Centre as a tribute to her attendance at Gumpus; poem "A Tribute to Our Teacher," written by Miss Mary Gage of this town for her teacher Sidney Howe—read by M. Ernest Jones.

Short history of the present schoolhouse was outlined by Ernest G. Sherburne, who stated that it was built in 1851, by the Gumpus district at a cost of \$675 assessed plus small amounts obtained otherwise. Miss Fannie F. Clement gave an interesting talk on school affairs in general and others spoke also. The program closed all joining in singing "Aulde Lang Syne." Some of the older pupils present were Adolph S. Batchelder, Waltham, Mass., winter class of 1862-4; Mrs. Julia Cutter Richardson, Dracut, attending 1856-67; Charles W. Spear, Pelham, graduated 1867; Frank Murray, Lowell, attending 1863-70; George W. Kelley, Hollis, N. H., attending about 1872; Miss Lillian Winn, Nashua, attending until 1882; Mrs. Ida Seavey Gowing, Hudson, attending in the 60's. Letters of regret were read from George E. Pearson of Manchester and from Mrs. Annette E. Burton of Lowell, 90 years of age, who remembers well the erection of this school house, stating that her father, David Butler, had charge of its construction.

The familiar names of Cutter Jones, Butler, Greeley Hillman, Marsh, Spaulding, Spear, Sherburne, Seavey, Coburn and Cloyd recently so prominent in affairs in this town, no longer grace the roll of attendance at this district school. However, about 125 names were registered today and nearly all of these old families were well represented, eagerly taking part in the program of the day. Souvenirs of the day—a small snap shot of the schoolhouse mounted and tied with ribbon—were donated by Miss Fannie F. Clement.

The affair was sponsored by the Gumpus P.-T. A., who selected Mrs. Catherine Donovan, chairman of a committee of arrangements, which included Otis W. Butler, and Albert L. Jones of Lowell, Mrs. Emma (Coburn) Wiggan of Dracut, Miss Mary A. Cutter and Miss Bessie F. Jones of this town.