

# Original Roudenbush building had \$14,000 price tag

By Gordon B. Seavey

A faded clipping, probably from the Lowell Courier-Citizen, tells of the construction start of which is now the building occupied by the Roudenbush Community Center, at that time to be a new home, the second, for Westford Academy. The year was 1896.

The contract for the new academy building has been awarded to William C. Edwards (of West Chelmsford), the lowest bidder. Seven contractors presented bids ranging from

\$14,000 to \$17,600. The building will be located on Main St., on the Proctor lot, now owned by Allan Cameron, who makes a gift to the Academy of about two acres of land. The ground was staked off and batters set for the building last Monday and work will begin at once. The building is to be ready for use July 1, 1897.

Dr. Proctor, who lived on the site of the present Center fire station, had sold land to Allan Cameron to build a home for himself and his bride, hence the

name "Proctor lot." Oscar Spalding also gave some of his land in back of the building for this purpose. Mrs. Hiram Whitney in 1910 donated the playground adjacent to the building - and the Academy trustees furnished the funds, taking out a \$10,000 loan - at 4 1/4 percent!

Old timers revere the name of Roudenbush, principal of the Academy for 25 years until his retirement in 1937. When the Academy moved to its third

building (now Abbot Middle School), the sturdy old building became the William C. Roudenbush School. It is good that his name continues on such a fine project as the Community Center.

He would have been proud