

# Academy's Baseball Nine Pictured 75 Years Ago

By GORDON B. SEAVEY

WESTFORD — Memories of early Westford Academy baseball teams were revived, of all times during a recent Northeast snow storm, when Principal Joseph F. Lisi was handed a faded photograph probably taken about 1900.

Hard put to identify any of the people involved, Allister F. MacDougall came up with a few names and a few pertinent facts. He recalls that the team played on the Common, with home plate at the lower end near the World War I Memorial. Second base was approximately where the new flagpole now reigns, but what used to be the bandstand.

Outfield was beyond the fancy bandstand, but probably not too many home runs were made as the baseball in those days, according to MacDougall, didn't have the "life" of the present article.

The coach was George W. "Billy" Goode, an ardent sportsman who had the reputation of being a great "lady's man" and whose greatest achievement other than the sporting field seemed to be writing paper novels, once a month, selling for a dime. One title, for example, was "Little Wild Sis, the Romance of a Pretty Face." His publishing office was at 83 Middle Street, Lowell.

Goode is pictured at the right on the steps of the J. V. Fletcher Library, which had been recently dedicated. He wears a derby and a

crew-neck sweater, a must for a dandy of those days.

Alfred Prinn, with mustache and cap, was the assistant coach and sits directly behind Goode. J. Herbert Fletcher, afterwards a long-time postmaster and grocer, wearing a cap and plain shirt, is on Prinn's right, back row. Herb was one of the very few Democrats in town at that period. Below this trio is Harry Hartford, with ball in hand. He was a better baseball player than a farmer and later often umpired games. Hartford Road, alongside the new Westford Academy complex on Patten Road, is named for his forebears.

Two others were identified by MacDougall. In the back row is probably Fred DeFoe, on the extreme left. Alongside him is Charles D. Colburn, wearing a bow-tie on a white shirt, who probably was a coach as he had graduated in 1895.

It was difficult to field a full team in those days as there were possibly no more than a couple of dozen boys in the school. Their uniforms were homemade, their knickers and footwear of assorted description, and equipment meagre. Nevertheless, even though they were not known as the "Grey Ghosts" in their maroon and grey colors, it is said they had the fighting spirit that has been handed down to later Academy teams.

Academy officials would like to learn the identities of all those in the picture for their records.