

Special town meeting of 1924 nixed new Forge school

By Gordon B. Seavey
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There were no flag burning questions back in 1924 when the townspeople voted 172-72 that the town hall be let to citizens of the town, in accordance with established custom and rates, and that the Selectmen be instructed to place no restrictions of the subjects to be discussed therein, or the political, religious, social or fraternal character of the meetings to be held, as long as they conformed with state and national laws.

If 1924 was your birth year, your age is 66.

This was not a sleepy year.

The voters approved \$36,000 to add four rooms to the Sargent School and \$85,000 was asked to erect a new school at Forge Village, and this won by balloting, 204 yes, 123 no.

But something happened along the line, for at a special meeting six weeks later, the idea was sacked by a vote of 163-136.

This was the year that Oscar Spalding turned over some of his land for the town dump on Cold Spring Road. This convenient spot became the meeting place for untold numbers over the decades to follow, until the dump and its

obnoxious smells were ended. The pine-studded triangle nearby is a town forest.

A motion to lay on the table a proposition to erect a memorial to the veterans of World War I, lost, so the townspeople accepted its committee report and instructed it to pursue the erection of a war memorial "representative of all wars entered into by the United States."

The memorial was ready in the fall at a cost of \$5,860.

The committee chosen to plan and erect this monument, headed

by Mrs. Arthur G. Hildreth, sought the advice of the Massachusetts Art Commission and chose from a number of designs. An approval of the design was made by Ralph Adams Cram, noted Boston architect and a graduate of Westford Academy in 1879. He stated, "I have no hesitation in saying that I think it excellent in every particular. It is simple, dignified, impressive . . . and fitting in every way."

Its base is of Westford granite, supplied by L.P. Palmer & Sons,

and the hexagonal body is of West-erly, R.I., granite, ideal for statuary work. The ornamental eagle at the peak is 41 feet high as it looks down Main Street from the Common past the town hall.

Gordon Seavey recalls that the present location of the World War I memorial is approximately where the town's platform weighing scales stood for many years. It cost 15 cents to weigh any load, usually hay, and the weigh master received the fee for his time.