

WESTFORD RECOLLECTIONS

by Mrs Charles Kennedy
Westford Academy
1792-1897

All the common schools reaped the benefits of the Academy. In 1792 several Westford gentlemen met together and agreed to found an Academy, each contributing money toward it. The Town also contributed to the original fund. The subjects to be taught were English, Latin and Greek languages, together with writing, arithmetic and the art of public speaking. If desired, instruction in practical geometry, logic, geography and music would be included. Eligibility for attendance was available to students of any nationality, age or sex -- provided that the pupil was able to read from the Bible readily. Tuition was charged, and the attendance was heavy from other towns. Miss Winneck's house, across from the parsonage on Main Street, was a dormitory for the Academy students at one time.

The old Westford Academy building is now the fire station. Across the street, beside Dr Cole's house, was the original site of the Academy. In 1942 a large granite step from the Academy was placed opposite the Common to mark the original site. In 1905 a man nicknamed "Tricky Keyes" moved the Academy building from Dr Cole's place to the present fire station site, for the sum of \$100. Previous to this, there had been a harness and blacksmith shop at that location.

The Second Academy
Building (now the William
C Roudenbush School)

In 1897 what is now known as the Roudenbush School was built, the old Westford Academy building was closed, and the "higher school" or Westford Academy occupied the new building. It originally had only two rooms.

Mr Frank Jarvis, who attended the Academy in this (Roudenbush) building from

1920-24, gave the following description of school life there:

"At that time there were three women teachers and one man who taught. The building was heated by hot air, yet it was still so cold during the winter months that the gym had to be closed. Baseball and basketball competitions were held and scrub soccer was a favorite game."

I kiddingly asked if they had hot lunches and he surprised me by saying, "Yes, twice a week," and further explained that the present Mrs Ruth Johnson graduated from the Academy and came back to teach a domestic science course -- so that whatever the girls cooked "we ate." A notice was posted on the bulletin board and all you had to do was to "sign up." Nothing was wasted."

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Now the William C Roudenbush School, this building once served as the Second Westford Academy Building.
(Westford Studios)