



Dublin Historical Society

DUBLIN, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03444 • FOUNDED 1920

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Notice of Meeting

The Society's regular quarterly meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 13, at 7:30 p.m., in the Gowing Room of the Library.

Alan Rumrill, Director of the Historical Society of Cheshire County, will present a slide program entitled "The Little Red Schoolhouse: The History of Schools and Education in Cheshire County." Some of the material in this program is drawn from Dublin school records.

"A Reminiscence of Schools and School Houses &c. As I Remember them Sixty or Seventy or More Years Ago"

[by Warren L. Fiske (1826-1918)]

This Ms., unsigned and undated, was found in a scrapbook containing records of the Fiske family. Internal evidence makes clear that the author was Warren L. Fiske and that it was written some time in the first decade of this century, probably as a paper to be read at a Grange meeting.

Warren L. Fiske was the son of Daniel Fiske (1798-1878). In 1835, Daniel Fiske bought the house that had been Chamberlain's Tavern and is now the parsonage. The house was moved eastwards in 1852 to make way for the present church. Daniel, his son Warren and Warren's son, Wilfred M. Fiske occupied the house successively over a period of about 120 years.

Warren Fiske was Town Clerk every year but three from 1860 to 1901, and Treasurer during most of the same period. He was Dublin's Representative to the General Court in

1880, and was later a member of the committee for the 1920 Town History.

The Ms. is interesting not only as an account of school days in the 1830's, but also as the only known description of the interior of the old brick Town Hall, which stood on the old common on the site of the present Frothingham/ Pillsbury/Britton house.

My first appearance as a scholar in Dublin, was in the year 1832 when I became six years of age. The state law counts as scholars from six to twenty-one years of age.

I first attended in the little red school house in district number ten, which is now in East Harrisville, or Eastview. This school house stood just a short distance west of where the brick

school house now stands, and was built in 1816. In the winter of 1856 I had the honor and pleasure of teaching school in this my first school district. My father's family lived in this district when my name first appeared as a scholar on the school register.

The scholars of my end of the district had to travel nearly two miles to reach the school house, but we did not think that much of a hardship in the summer season and we ususally stopped on our way at the half way spring for a good drink of water, where we kept a birch bark dipper. Children, you know, are always very dry.

In the winter season when the snow was deep, as it generally was, we rode to school on ox sleds, and the boys, and girls too, had some fun, as once in a while a sled stake would carry out, accidentally or otherwise, and some of us would be nearly out of sight in the snow.

I only attended this school two years, when my father moved to district No. One, and into the house that then stood on the very spot where we now are. The house was moved a little to the east, where it now stands, to make room for this church building, the vestry of which we are now occupying (this was in 1852). Then I became a scholar of district number one, and attended school in the old brick town house on the hill.

This hill, where we boys and girls used to enjoy sliding down on sleds and old sleighs, &c., was sometimes called school house hill and sometimes meeting house hill and sometimes Potash hill. This town hall or school house was built 1823 and was a brick building about 40 feet square with a four cornered roof.

The door was on the east side and opened into a long entry, where in one end the wood was kept, and where we scholars hung up our caps, &c., or

threw them on the floor, just as the inclination prompted us. In the other end was the stairway which led to the town hall. The school room was in the lower part of the town hall, and the seats on the north side running east and west [were] raised one tier above another. . . .

. . . [T]he girls occupied the west side of the room and the boys the east side, but perhaps I should say young ladies and gentlemen instead of boys and girls, as they attended school in those days until 20 years of age.

The seats and desks were made of two inch plank long enough to accommodate two scholars each. If you had visited this school room after school had been kept here one or two winters, you would have known that every boy had one or more jackknives by the hieroglyphics cut in all the desks, and some cut on the girls' side also, for we used slates instead of paper for doing our cyphering and for passing love notes along to the girls, and the girls had to have knives to sharpen their slate pencils. It was quite a game with the boys to swap knives, and swap without seeing the knives.

On the south side of the school room was a large brick fire place where they could burn four foot wood. This manner of warming the school house was used the first winter, and it was said that it took a cord of wood a week, and then they could not keep any where near comfortable in any cold day, so they took one seat out in the center of the room and put in a large iron stove with the funnel running the whole length of the room, and then it was "Please may I go to the fire?" in any cold day.

Sometimes it was very icy and hard to get up to the school house door, and the boys would take hold of hands and form a line and pull the girls or young ladies up, which you will see must have been fun for all hands. . . .