

## NORTH SCHOOL

### Recollections of Miles Talcott Merwin

In the year 1825, September 10, on a very pleasant summer afternoon, there was a very sad gathering at the residence of Miles Merwin, Jr. It was the funeral of my mother. I remember it as distinctly as if it had been yesterday. In my fourth year, I was sent to school in the care of Miss Margaret White, who led me to school and saw me safely home. The red schoolhouse, located where the barber-shop now stands, was the place to study the ABC's and there the children of the North School district to the number of 70 and over went to school. At that time, there were 40 families in the district and in 25 homes were children of suitable age to go to school.

Of the teachers, I remember only Miss Maria Chedsey, Alexander Elliot, and Gaylord Newton, all of Durham. Mr. Newton kept school many winters. He was a very pleasant schoolmaster if the scholars did not take too many liberties with him, but best not get his dander up and the boys had to look out or their ears would get rubbed or the dust would be removed from the seat of their pants and sometimes he would tickle the palms of the hand with his cherry ruler. On the whole, his scholars feared and respected him. Peace to his memory. Of the 40 families then living in the North District, there are 19 with no living representative. Of the 40 houses at that date, 16 have gone to ruin and 5 or 3 have been rebuilt with 8 new houses on new foundations. Those early days were days of toil. No time was lost. As soon as a boy could carry an 8-foot whip staff with a four-foot lash, he was taught to drive the ox team and it was no boys' play to guide an ox team of 3 or 4 yoke around the field ten hours a day and have the off ox of each pair keep in the furrow, especially when two pair were wild steers. We had some hours for play but none to lounge around. The tavern and the ballgame at that time were scenes of wild excitement with no broken limbs or split noses. Those early days were days of great economy. We were taught to save our money, clothes and time. Save, save was the watchword. When I went to school, I was not allowed to write until I was 14 because it would waste the paper. Could have but one pair of shoes a year. When I went to meeting, I started with my Sunday shoes in my hand so as to save them and put them on before going in to the meetinghouse. Most of the parents went to meeting and took their children with them and at the North Schoolhouse, there were often 50 or 60 at the Thursday evening prayer meeting. Goodbye to the good old days. Let us hope that the new will be easier and happier than the old.

Recollections of the North schoolhouse in the 30's and 40's. Commencing at the schoolhouse:

Going north from the schoolhouse

Elias Miller	2	James Parmelee	4
Jabiz Baily	4	Phineas	3
Quartus Smith	4	Jess Smith	3
John Talhel	2	Nelson Fowler	3
Daniel Johnson	2		

Going east from the schoolhouse

Daniel Southmayd	2	P. Robert	2
Miles Merwin, Jr.	2	Gef Galpin	4
Charles White	4	Marcus Parsons	4
Bartholomew Baily	3	Joseph Chedsey	3
Samuel Newton	2	Parsons Coe	3
Elisha Newton	2	Roger Newton	
Si Foot	2	Abner Newton	
That Camp	2	Oliver Coe	7
John Camp	4	Burwell Newton	1
Isaac Baldwin	2	Mr. Butler	6
Seymore White		Henry Lyman	
Miles Merwin		Abel Lyman	5
		Sam Parsons	
		Mr. Rossiter	4

## Recollection of Talcott Merwin

About 1826, a small boy was sent to the old red schoolhouse situated on the ground now occupied by Henry Burchills as a site for a barbershop and dwelling, the old red schoolhouse having been moved from Crooked Lane to the corner of a new road leading to Middlefield Depot. The child was of tender years and his parents asked Miss Margaret White, daughter of Charles White, who lived in an old one-story located on the ground where Truman Southmayd now lives. He remembers but little of the schoolmasters of his early days. Three are remembered who were natives of Durham. They are Mr. Elliott, Gaylord Newton and Miss Maria Chedsey and he has an impression that Miss Chedsey was his first school-mistress. At this time, there are 22 families in the North School District, from 2 to 10 children in each family about school age. There were not more than 5 families without children of school age. Of these 22 families, there were 2 doctors, 2 surveyors, 9 shoemakers, 2 manufacturers, 1 blacksmith, 1 painter, 1 tinker, 1 silversmith (James Parmelee) and 1 wheelwright, C. B. Coe. The others were farmers. The 9 that made shoes worked on the farm more or less in the summer and made shoes in the winter.

### The Durham North School District 1830-1840:

Elias Miller	Jubes Bailey
Daniel Johnson	Butler
Curtis Smith	John Swathel
George Golpin	Marcus Parsons
Joseph Chedsey	Henry Lyman
Samuel Parsons	Parsons Coe
Abel Lyman	
Jesse Smith	Allen Clark
James Parmelee	Ruben Baldwin
Sereno Scranton	Phineas Parmelee
Job Widow Merwin	Bishop
John and Seymore White	
Southmayd	Miles Merwin
Miles Merwin, Jr.	Charles White
Oliver & Wm Coe	Bartholomew Bailey
Elisha & Roger Newton	Deacon Abner Newton
Deacon Samuel Newton	Burwell Newton
Dr. Foot	Thomas Camp
James Foot	George Lamb