

**THE NORMAL REGISTER: A
HISTORY OF THE FIRST VERMONT
STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, ITS
INSTRUCTORS AND ALUMNI**

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The Normal Register: A History of the First Vermont State Normal School, Its Instructors and Alumni by Various

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VARIOUS

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NORMAL SCHOOL.

ITS INSTRUCTORS AND ALUMNI.

MONTPELIER, VT.:
ARGUS AND PATRIOT STEAM JOB PRINT.
1885.

TO THE RANDOLPH ALUMNI :

At the meeting of the R. S. N. S. Alumni, held in June, 1883, it was voted that class reports, giving, as far as possible, the number of terms of school taught, and the present occupation and address of each graduate since the establishment of the school, should be prepared, and read at the next annual meeting. To that end class secretaries were appointed, and intrusted with the work of looking up the records of their classmates. With two or three exceptions, these reports were prepared. Many, especially among the earlier classes, were quite incomplete. At the meeting of June, 1884, it was voted that a report of Alumni and Instructors be made, supplemented by such other matter as would be of interest to all in any way connected with the school. It has been my task, with the aid of the reports before mentioned, to prepare this record. For the sketches of the life-work of the principals, you are indebted to a prominent graduate and former instructor, who has stamped her work so plainly with her own individuality as to render it unnecessary to give her name. It is a matter of regret to me that the intervention of other duties, and the difficulty of obtaining reports from many a dilatory one, has so delayed the work as to make our little history the record of a year ago, rather than the record of to-day. Where it has been possible for me to do so, I have given the latest information of each graduate, but have no doubt many changes of name, residence and occupation have never reached my knowledge. It is still more to be regretted that, though every effort has been made and ample time allowed, several are still missing from our list, and can only receive the fatal "No information."

Trusting that this little book, unworthy though it must be, may still not be without its value to you, I submit it without further comment.

CAROLINE B. WEYMOUTH,

Cor. Secretary of the Alumni.

RANDOLPH, March, 1885.

THE ORANGE COUNTY
GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

The Randolph Academy, or Orange County Grammar School, was established in 1806 in the building now occupied as a dwelling house by Franklin Doten. It was at first located on the site of the present Normal School. Of this school we can judge only by its Alumni. Its value is attested by such sons as Hon. Jacob Collamer, Rev. Azariah Hyde, Rev. Constantine Blodgett, for fifty years pastor of the First Congregational Church of Pawtucket, R. I., Amos Dean, Esq., a celebrated attorney, and principal of the Albany Law School. Gov. Converse and Judge Barrett, Hon. Justin S. Morrill, and a score of lesser lights, whose names will occur to our older readers. The early principals of the school as given by the Vermont Gazetteer are as follows:

William Nutting, 1807-13; D. Breck, 1813-14; Rufus Nutting, 1814-18; George Bush, 1818-19; Samuel Worcester, 1819-20; Joseph Sawyer, 1820-21; Rufus Nutting, 1821-28; Clement Long, 1828-31; John Fairchild, 1831-32; T. G. Brainerd, 1832-36; Samuel A. Benton, 1836-38; Azariah Hyde, 1838-41; Edward Cleveland, 1841.

Complete records of the later principals we have not obtained. In the last decade came R. M. Manley, Andrew Freeman, George Dutton, Mr. Willard, and doubtless others. Next preceding Mr. Conant was Mr. Fisher. Lack of time and space compels us to abridge the record of the old academy, held in such kindly regard by our elders that we of the Normal School can but revere its memory and honor its work.

HOW THE ORANGE CO. GRAMMAR SCHOOL

GAVE PLACE TO THE FIRST VERMONT

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL.

Edward Conant has been fitly styled "The father of Vermont Normal Schools." The propriety of this title will be recognized by all witnesses of the discussions which marked the last years of the Orange County Grammar School, and ended in the establishment of a training school for teachers. The Normal School, already an institution in many states, was viewed distrustfully by trustees and people. The citizens of Randolph had a just pride in their Grammar School, an institution of wide influence and reputation, which had been for many years a powerful factor in the educational work of the state. The Normal School had but one advocate among them, but that advocate was a man having the courage of his convictions, slow to change his opinions, but unyielding when his opinions were once formed. The academy, in Mr. Conant's view, was not the need of the hour. The interests of the state demanded better training for its teachers. All the arguments which much thought and study of the matter could evolve, were brought to bear upon the trustees, and with their consent the change was made in 1866. The results are before us. For years the most bitter opponents of the change have been, if not ardent admirers of the new system, at least acquiescent. Long life to the Normal School, dear to its Alumni and cherished in their hearts forever.

EDWARD CONANT, A. M.

1861-1874.

The subject of this sketch is a native of Pomfret, Vt. His youth and early manhood make but a repetition of the well-worn story of New England life. His preparatory course at Thetford was followed by college work at Dartmouth, interspersed with district school teaching. Several years of academy teaching preceded his work as last principal of the Orange County Grammar School, which position he occupied from 1861 to 1867, and as first principal of the First Vermont State Normal School. His supervision of the school was like that of all teachers who remain individuals, peculiar to himself. During these years he formed, not so many theories of his own way of doing things, as facts concerning the defects and excellencies in the teaching of the times, and traced them back to defects and excellencies in the methods of thought. His mind learned to move in straight, clear-cut lines, and though his pupils' minds might take their own route, yet that route must be straight and clear-cut. That seems to be the essence of his mental teaching—a reverence for exact truth exactly stated, and few who have seen it will ever forget his persistence as he insisted upon accurate answers. Few minds that touched his did not take upon themselves habits of looking sharply at every somewhat, and weighing well every word. This was our most valuable acquisition from the class-room,—a method of doing, rather than an overtaxed memory. There was a kindly charity for wrong tendencies and acts, that never came to be felt as a weak compromise with wrong; the rather it seemed humiliating to be thought so weak and untrained, and an aspiration to be wiser and stronger, a pride that fostered growth, came from the judgment. A half-pitiful contempt for the pettiness, the deceit, the would-be cunning of the mischief-makers, either came from a certain twisted smile of his, or else was evoked by that smile from the better natures that were caught off guard. To be made to feel small, or worse, to have an attempt at smartness quite ignored, is usually a fatal punishment. This however was the negative and minor part of the discipline. For the positive, aggressive influence, Mr. Conant generated in his study and

in his rambles across the fields and up the rugged hill-sides, a spiritual and mental power that gave an impetus to the heaviest mind, a motion of accuracy to the most vague, a determination to the most vacillating, an ideal so noble and so pure that it made itself seen and felt by the blindest and grossest in the circle of its influence. How many who read these words will feel that they but half express what the man was to them, as he lived before them "each day as if it contained all the days that had been and all that were to be." Of the strength of his presence in the community, as well as in the school, much might be written; the record is kept in the hearts of the people. For six years he served the state as Superintendent of Education, acquiring in the time an accurate knowledge of its schools and its people, working heartily to forward the interests of education by advocating whatever measures seemed to him not only good, *per se*, but adapted to the field, and by encouraging and abetting whatever good he found being done. After that term of service he put into practice the theories formed in his study of the educational system of Vermont, and of other states, in his new work as principal of the Johnson Normal School. He established a new course of study there, putting the school on a strong foundation of scholarship and method. On the resignation of Mr. Edson, the instant and universal choice of trustees and people was that he should again assume the care of the school, and he has again entered upon his new duties in his old field.

ASSISTANT TEACHERS.

CHARLOTTE S. TARBELL.

Assistant the greater part of Mr. Conant's administration. She has taught every year since leaving the Normal School. The time has been spent in West Randolph, Bellows Falls and Gaysville.

ABBIE M. DOTEN.

Now Mrs. J. R. P. Chamberlain, Pomfret.

CARRIE M. HARRINGTON.

Now Mrs. T. J. Deavitt, Montpelier.

ELVIRA M. CLARK.

Now Mrs. Dr. Lee, Merced, Merced County, California. Has suffered much from poor health.