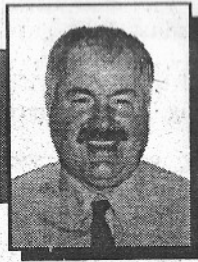


History

Principals lay down academic groundwork for WHS



Tom
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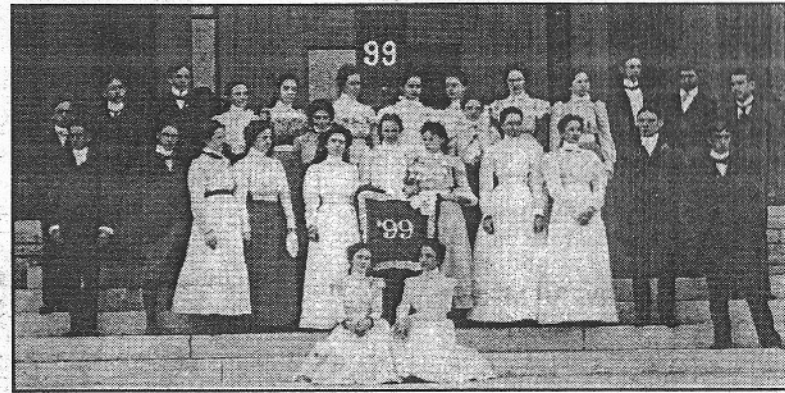
Part Three of Five

Windham's new high school opened in April 1897. Its fine Italian Renaissance style attracted favorable comment from all visitors to the city. The new principal, S. Hale Baker (1895-1900), established a school newspaper and started an ivy-planting day to adorn the new school's walls. He also established a tree-planting program, and formed the Windham Athletic Association in the school. The first group of students numbered 200, and Hale graduated the school's first five classes.

The new school's next principal, Arthur Everett Petersen (1900-04) was an academic who laid down strict academic standards. He had an excellent record in getting students into colleges

and universities across the nation. He was a history and civics teacher, who believed in education beyond textbooks. Petersen formed the school improvement society, Die Besserung, to promote culture among the students, and to encourage them to decorate their schoolrooms and corridors with pictures, statues and busts of famous men. Members of Die Besserung also entered into debating contests with the high schools of Putnam, Rockville, Stafford Springs and Danielson. Petersen had formed a similar society, the Philomusa, when principal at Manchester.

Petersen also established scholastic sports in the school. Previous to 1900, "ringers" strengthened the school's basketball, baseball and football teams. From 1900, only attending scholars could play in school teams, and those students had to reach certain academic standards before they could play. Petersen also forbid graduates of the school to play, and proudly declared that Windham High School practiced "clean athlet-



Members of Windham High School's Class of 1899 stand outside the school's main entrance.

ics."

Edmund J. Bugbee, a native of Vermont, was the principal of the new high school from 1904 until 1907. Bugbee was an 1891 graduate of Dartmouth College, and had been the principal of the high school at Weymouth, Mass. The high school witnessed rapid growth during Bugbee's tenure, with the enrollment increasing from 160 to 240 in three years. He introduced commercial courses for female students to prepare them for office and shop work. Bugbee also demanded higher

skills from his teaching staff. He retired in 1907 to take over the running of the family farm in Tunbridge, Vt.

John J. Maddox replaced Bugbee in 1907. He was born in Newport, Ky., and had graduated from normal school at Lebanon, Ohio, and went on to study at Yale. Maddox contacted local businessmen for support in organizing a school orchestra. George Stiles, H.C. Murray and J.F. Church helped pay for instruments and tuitions. In 1908, the town answered Mad-

dox's request for more space, and purchased the lot on the corner of High and Prospect streets, to build a \$61,000 annex. Work commenced in 1910, and it was occupied by the fall 1911 school session.

Maddox left the high school in 1910 to take charge of the expansive Henry T. Blow School at St. Louis, Mo. He was sadly missed. Maddox had become involved in the civic life of Willimantic and was secretary of the Willimantic Board of Trade, secretary of the board of directors of the YMCA and the president of the Baptist Church brotherhood.

Egbert A. Case took over the reins from Maddox, and oversaw the completion of the school's new annex building, which had 16 classrooms, a commercial department for stenography and typewriter instruction and new laboratories for physics, chemistry and biology. It stood for barely two years.

Next Week: The tragic fire that destroyed one of the city's finest buildings.

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