

# Schooling in Early Vermont

A History Kit  
for Students & their Teachers

Teacher's Guide



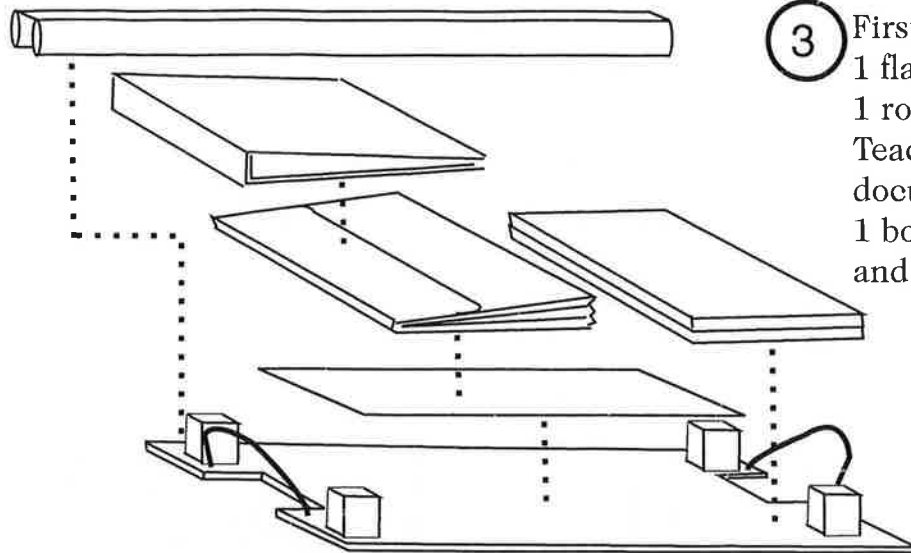
Published by the Vermont Historical Society, 1999

with funding provided by the A.D. Henderson Foundation

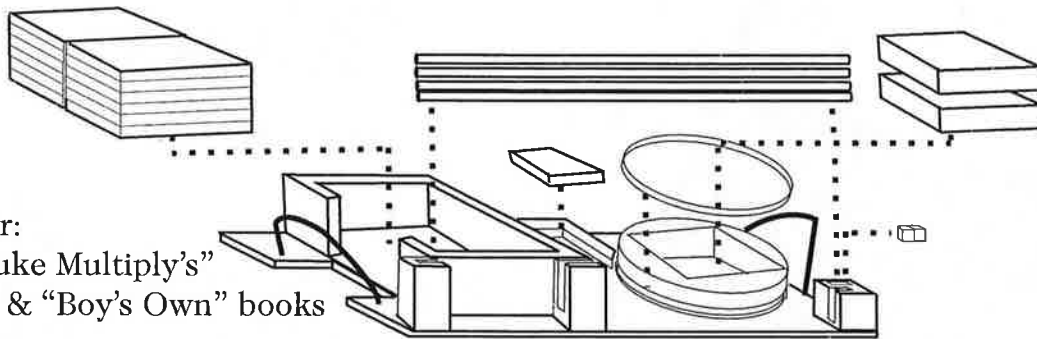


HISTORICAL  
• SOCIETY •

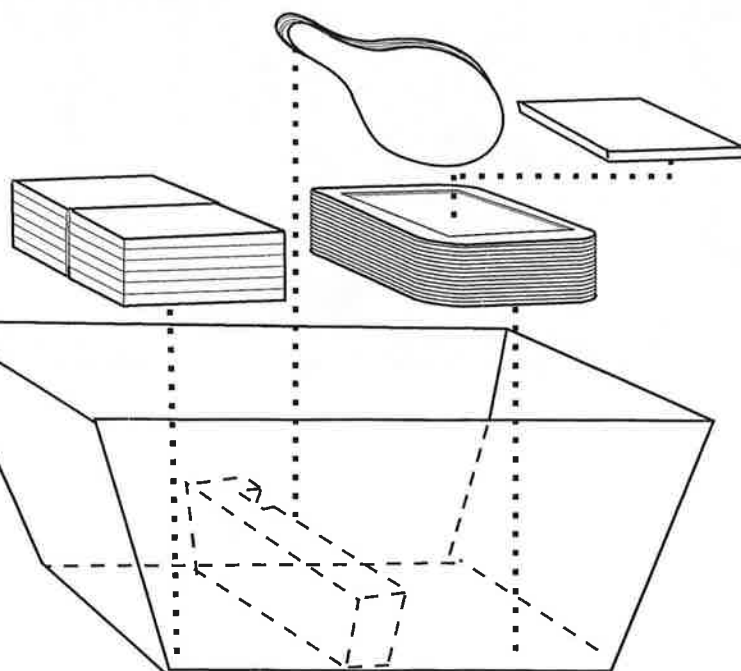
# Repacking order 1-3



- 3 First Layer:  
1 flat Vermont map,  
1 rolled map of the U.S.,  
Teacher's guide,  
document case  
1 box of quill pens  
and slate pencils



- 2 Second Layer:  
15 "Marmaduke Multiply's"  
"Girl's Own" & "Boy's Own" books  
1 pair of dice  
"The Graces" wands(4) & hoops(2)  
1 deck of cards





- 1 Container and bottom layer:  
4 hornbooks,  
15 McGuffey's Readers  
15 Slates  
1 "Local Schools" book

Don't forget to fill out your Teacher's Survey.



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## Using the History Kit

This kit may be used independently or in tandem with a visit to the 1999 Vermont Historical Society exhibit, *Generation of Change: Vermont, 1820–1850*. The overall objective of this kit is for students to identify Vermont’s era of Agricultural Expansion (*Standard 6.4*). Students also use primary resources to build historical interpretations about going to school in the past (*Standard 6.6*). The book, *Local Schools: Exploring Their History*, provides suggestions for using oral history to understand the ways in which people assign meaning to their own historical experiences (*Standard 6.6*).

There are enough materials provided to recreate an early nineteenth-century school lesson. Recreational materials are also provided. The primary documents in the kit allow students to reach conclusions about teacher training, the size of classrooms, the number of students in a classroom, the length of a school term, and methods of learning. The illustrations and photographs should provide students with a visual image of going to school in the early nineteenth century. The “Going to School in Early Vermont” worksheet could be used with any of the primary documents, the reminiscence, photographs, illustrations, and maps.

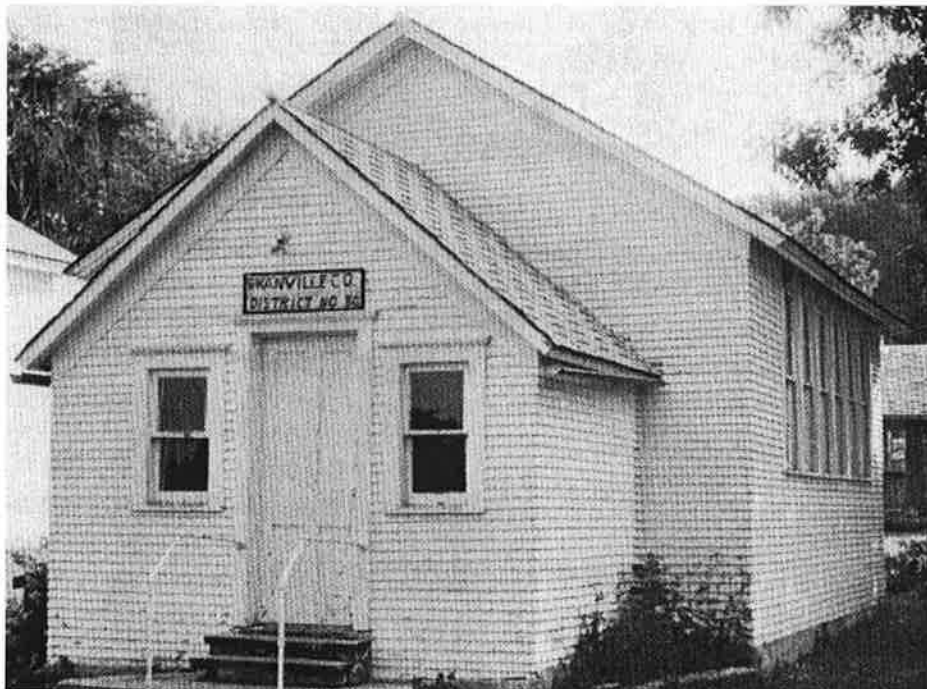
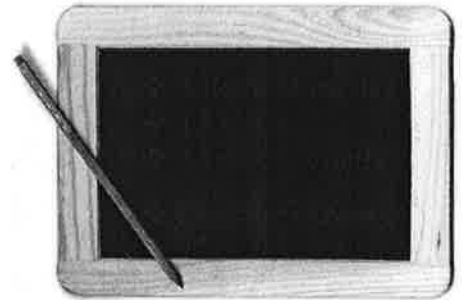
You might begin an exploration of early schooling with the illustrations and photographs and by reading the reminiscence. Students might examine the illustrations and make a list of materials found in the pictures. Students could then compare this list with the materials found in their own classroom. Consider having them put post-it notes on everything that would have been unavailable or that hadn’t been invented yet. An alternative would be to spread out all the artifacts and books and say that these were the supplies available to students in early Vermont, and that most of these supplies would have been brought by the students. Compare this pile to the contents of their classroom. Ask students to think about what they would miss the most.

The book *Local Schools: Exploring Their History* is a good resource for those who wish to explore the history of schools in their own communities.

In the end, we hope this kit provides students with a historical counterpoint to their daily experiences in school today.

## Kit Contents

- Artifacts
- ❖ 4 hornbooks
  - ❖ The graces, consisting of 2 hoops and 4 sticks
  - ❖ 14 ball-point quill pens
  - ❖ 2 wooden dice
  - ❖ 1 deck of cards
  - ❖ 15 slates
  - ❖ 15 slate pencils
- Books
- ❖ *The Boy's Own Book* (1 copy)
  - ❖ *The Girl's Own Book* (1 copy)
  - ❖ *Marmaduke Multiply's* (15 copies)
  - ❖ *McGuffey's Second Eclectic Reader* (15 copies)
  - ❖ *Local Schools: Exploring Their History*
- Illustrations
- ❖ The Graces
  - ❖ "Twice 6 are 12" (boy locating a point on a map)
  - ❖ "9 times 12 are 108" (boy using a slate)
  - ❖ "Ten times 11 are 110" (girl using quill pen)
  - ❖ "Rollo at School"
  - ❖ "Going to school on a windy November day"
- Maps
- ❖ Map of Vermont, 1820, by James Whitelaw
  - ❖ Map of the United States, circa 1820
- Photographs
- ❖ Schoolhouse, Somerset, Vermont, 1924
  - ❖ Schoolhouse, Johnson, Vermont, about 1860
  - ❖ Interior of Schoolhouse, Waitsfield, Vermont



Schoolhouse, Granville, Vermont



*Going to school on a windy November day.  
Merry's Museum. Vol. VIII. No. 5 (November 1844)*

## Education in Early Nineteenth-Century Vermont

In 1777, Vermont's Constitution mandated that a school or schools would be established in each town, by the legislature for "the convenient instruction of youth... One grammar school in each county, and one university in the State ought to be established by the General Assembly." Each town was responsible for paying teachers' salaries. This established the basis for the ongoing debate over the relative power of state and local officials to determine educational policy.

Towns throughout Vermont further magnified local autonomy by creating small school districts. On average, Vermont towns boasted anywhere between five and twenty-five discrete school districts, each functioning as "a little scholastic republic." District school committees controlled the hiring of teachers, the length of the school term, and the arrangements for providing the schoolhouse with wood and teachers with board. Costs of fuel and board fell on families in proportion to the number of children they had attending the school. The quality of the schools within these districts varied greatly. When New Hampshire historian Jeremy Belknap traveled throughout Vermont at the end of the eighteenth century, he observed that there was "still in many places a great and criminal neglect of education."

The 1820s brought to Vermont a population explosion, the expansion of transportation, and a flurry of social reform and religious revival. Among the many reforms was school reform. In 1827, Vermont established a state board of commissioners of common schools. This board compiled and distributed a standardized list of textbooks from which parents could select in an effort to counteract the reality that teachers were often forced to instruct from several sets of books at once. Vermonters were not in favor of such state-wide regulations and the board of commissioners was soon disbanded.

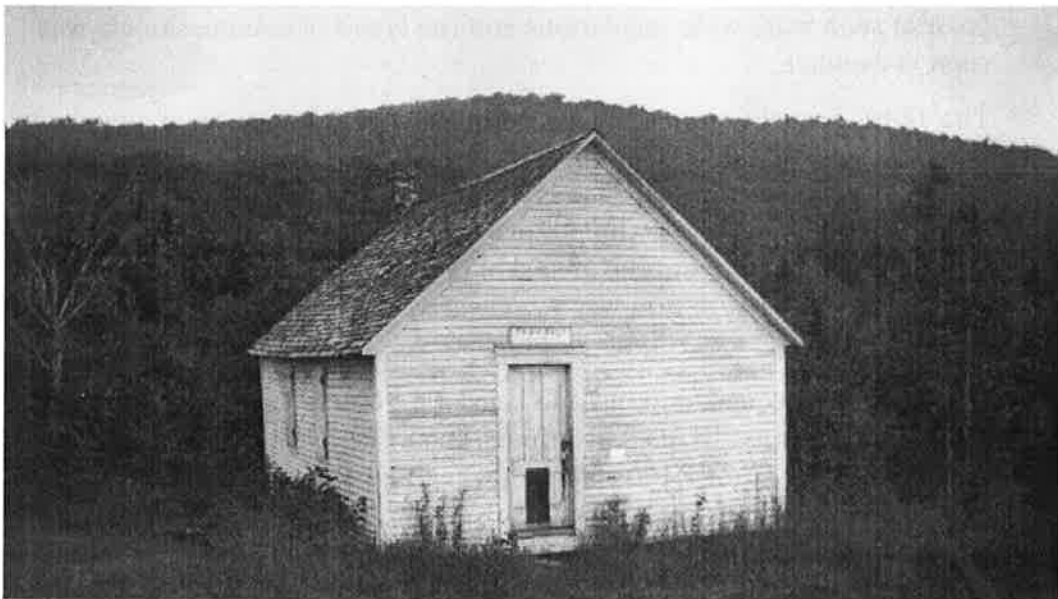
The 1840s brought more reform with the successful creation of a uniform common school system in 1850. Vermont changed dramatically during the 1840s. The sheep craze brought about farm consolidations and the decline of small farmers, many of whom moved west in search of new opportunities. Commerce, industry, and the arrival of the railroad brought new urban growth. Educational reform was seen as a way to stabilize a changing society.

Reforms were needed, and in 1845 legislation created school officers with statewide authority. In his first Annual Report in 1846, the State Superintendent stated that of 1,190 schools throughout Vermont, fewer than half had blackboards, only ninety had maps or charts, and only twenty-eight were furnished with globes. It was also found that each Vermont district

enrolled an average of thirty-seven pupils. This meant that a single teacher was responsible for teaching two or three pupils at ten different levels. To enlarge the labor pool, towns substituted young, unmarried females for traditional male teachers. Towns paid female schoolteachers, on average, about half the salary awarded to males. In 1846 the average age of the teachers was 22 years old. They were paid \$4.65 a month for terms of three months. The average teacher taught 4.7 terms before leaving to marry.

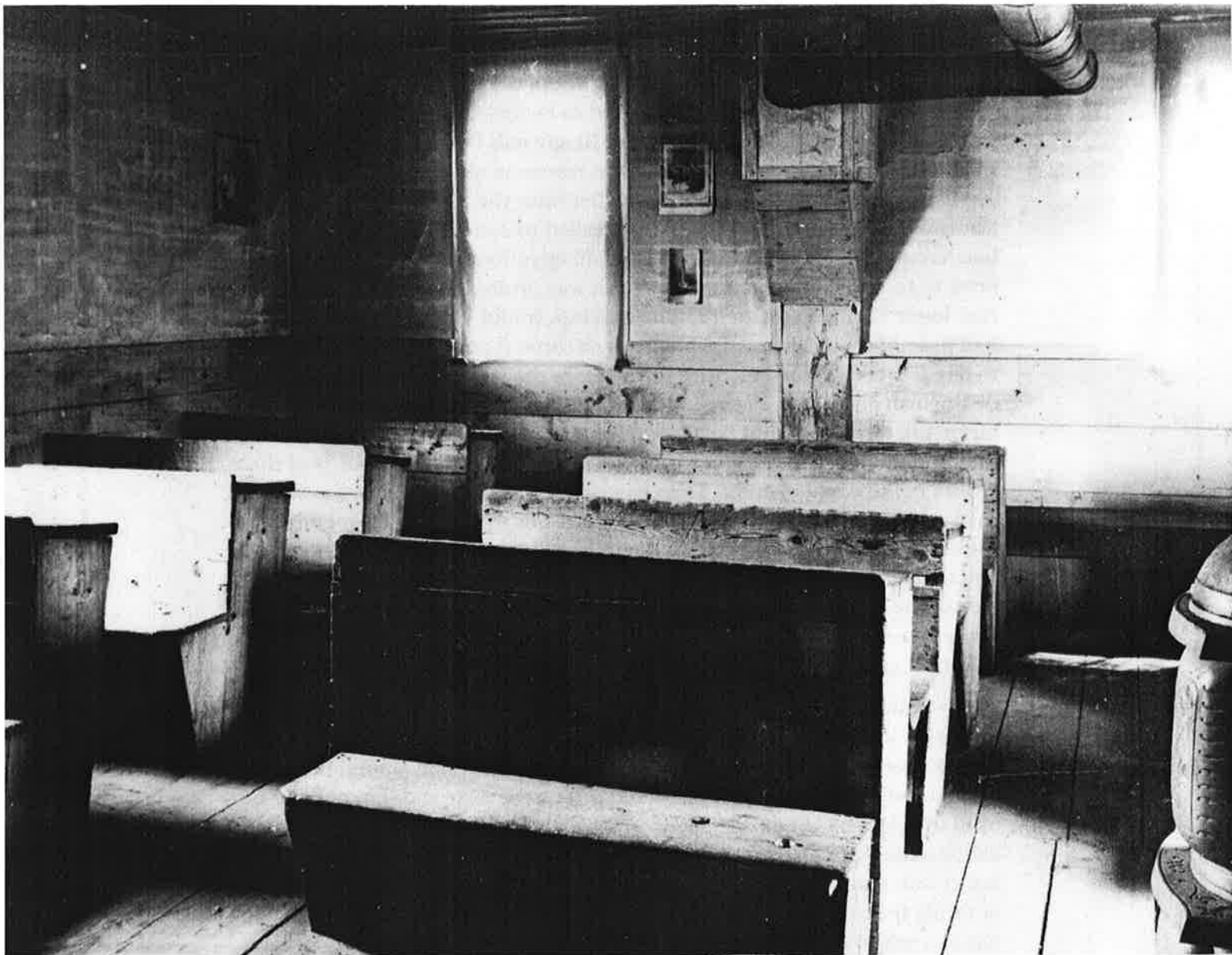
Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the State continued to broaden its influence over education by working toward mandatory attendance laws, the standardization of books, and the certification of teachers. Historians argue about the effectiveness of these reforms. The Burlington school superintendent's 1855 report included a portion of an editorial published in the *Rutland Herald*, which commented that "If each school house in Vermont is twenty-foot square then they would all cover twenty acres. What a heap of rubbish. One half of them are black, rickety, ugly boy-killing affairs where comfort never comes and where coughs, consumption, fevers, and crooked backs are manufactured wholesale. These words pretty well describe the condition of things among us in Burlington." During this time in Chittenden county, thirty percent of the teachers were uncertified and "many of the teachers of the district schools do not know enough of reading, spelling, geography, and arithmetic to teach these studies passably and have little desire to improve."

For more information, see Jeffrey Potash, "State Government and Education: 'For the Due Encouragement of Learning and the Better Regulating and Ordering of Schools'" in *Vermont History* 65: 45 – 64 and Margaret Nelson, "Vermont Female Schoolteachers in the Nineteenth Century" in *Vermont History* 45: 5 – 13.



*Schoolhouse, Somerset, Vermont, ca. 1924*





*Interior of schoolhouse, Waitsfield, Vermont*

## Reminiscences of a District School, Waterford, VT

from: "An Old Home Week Address, August 1902"

by Jonathan Ross in *Vermont History* 40: 126-127

**H**ow well I remember the old red school house at the corner of the roads, in the edge of the woods where the thirty or forty school children of the district gathered to be instructed, the rambles in the woods, the joyous and active games of Hi spy and Pull away: the school room with the desks and seats raised in rows one above the other. The older pupils took the back seats and we smaller ones the low seats in front of the last row of desks. The little ones were called to come to the knee of the teacher and learn the alphabet. He would open Noah Webster's Spelling book to the page on which the alphabet was printed and pointing to this and that letter ask "What is that?" The children would know and reply until he had gone over the entire alphabet two or three times. This went on from day to day frequently for the entire term before the youthful eye and mind could distinguish and name all the letters of the alphabet. Sometimes for several terms the task would not be accomplished. When the letters were learned, the child then began with words of two letters, then went to words of three letters in the same manner. Then came columns of words of two syllables, then would be followed by some simple lessons in reading. I remember these: "Little boys like to have a new jacket." "Hail stones fall on the house and make a great racket." So the child progressed slowly, until the latter part of the book he came to the story of the boy who was caught in the apple tree stealing apples, and refused to come down when the farmer threw pellets of grass, but yielded quickly when he threw stones...

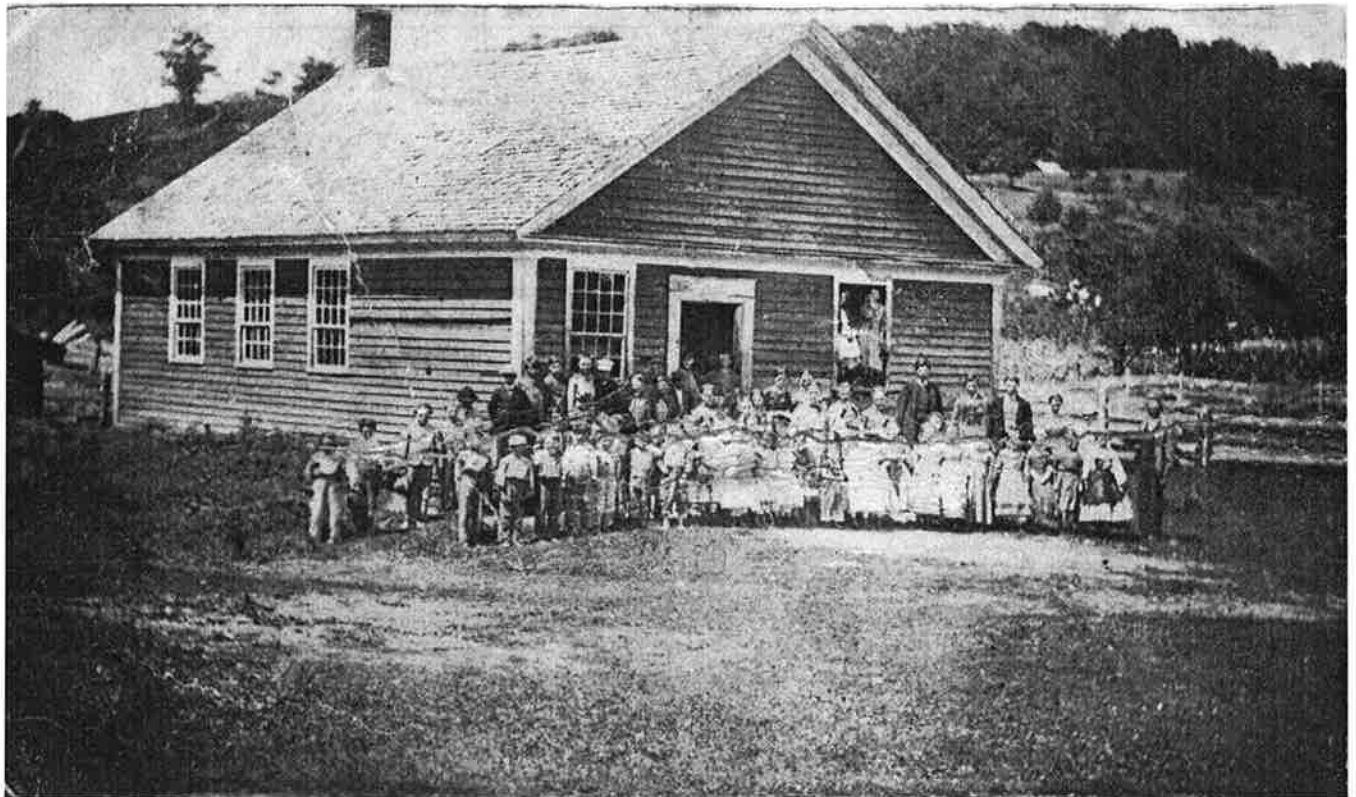
As the child progressed those of nearly the same attainments were arranged in classes to spell. The teacher would call "Second class may take their places on the floor and spell." They would come out on the floor, sometimes the one at the head taking his or her place and calling the next and that one the next until the class had been all called... When all were lined up the teacher would call Attention! Every eye was expected then to be on the teacher who would stand with extended hand, book or ferule. Then as he lowered his hand, book or ferule the boys would all make a bow and the girls a courtesie. Each pupil had the opportunity to try twice to spell the word pronounced, or put out to him. If he failed it was given the next. If the next spelled and pronounced the word correctly he stepped forward of the one who had missed, and took his place, the missing one stepping down in the class.

In my earliest remembrance there were no blackboards in the schoolroom and but little explanation of rules as pretty much all the teaching was addressed to the individual pupil, even to showing him in the language of the day "to do the sums." Yet there were at times a good deal of revelry,

especially in the spelling schools, when different schools united—some times from the entire vicinity—and chose sides and spelled down. It was a high honor to be the champion speller.

In my earliest remembrance after Noah Webster's spelling book the pupil next read from the New Testament. Books were few and scarce. Frequently two or three from the same family had to use the same book.

...In those days the boys were expected to build the fire in the morning by turns and the girls to sweep the school house. Thus the schools differed considerable depending on the tact and devotion of the teacher...The teacher usually boarded round, became acquainted with the parents and scholars. I taught seven consecutive winters in the district schools and boarded round four of them.



*Schoolhouse, Johnson, Vermont, circa 1860*



## Going to School in Early Vermont Worksheet

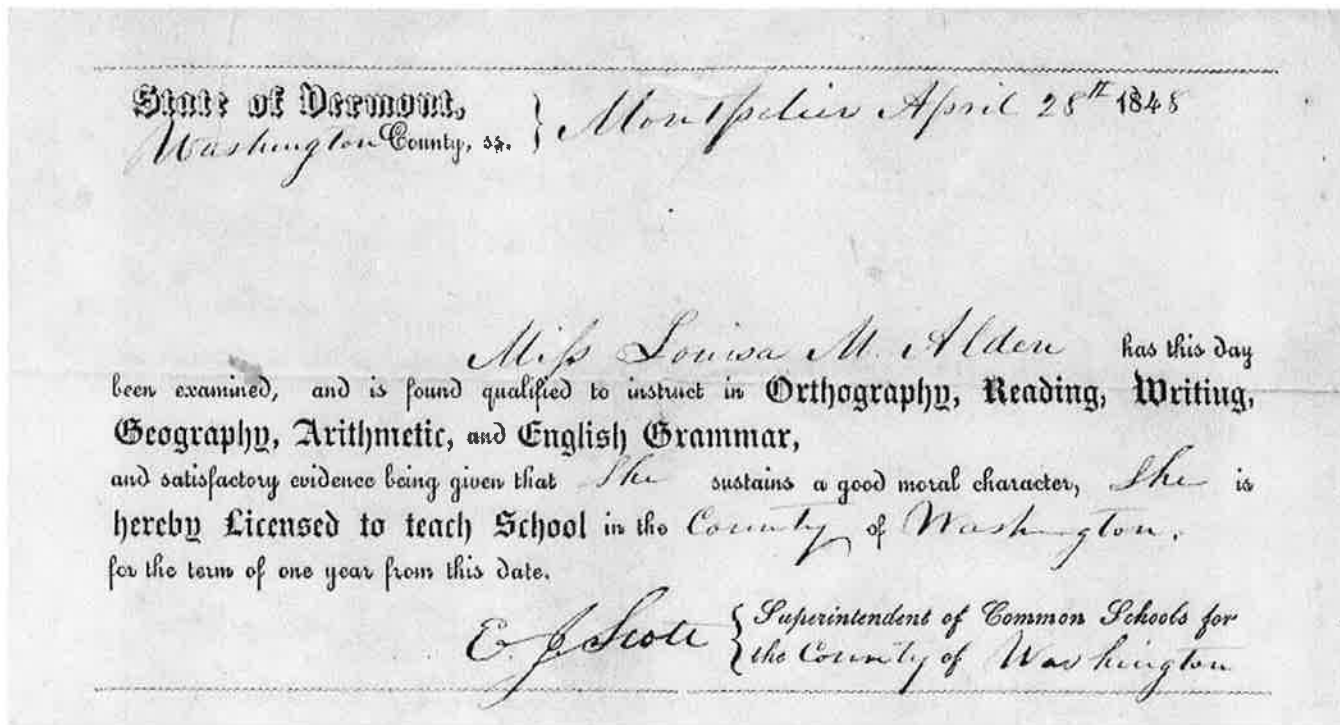
Use the primary sources, illustrations, reminiscences, artifacts and photographs to fill in the following chart:

subjects taught:
size of classroom:
number of students:
length of school term:
methods of learning:
forms of punishment:
classroom equipment:
classroom chores:

What can you conclude about going to school in early Vermont?



Teaching Certificate, 1848

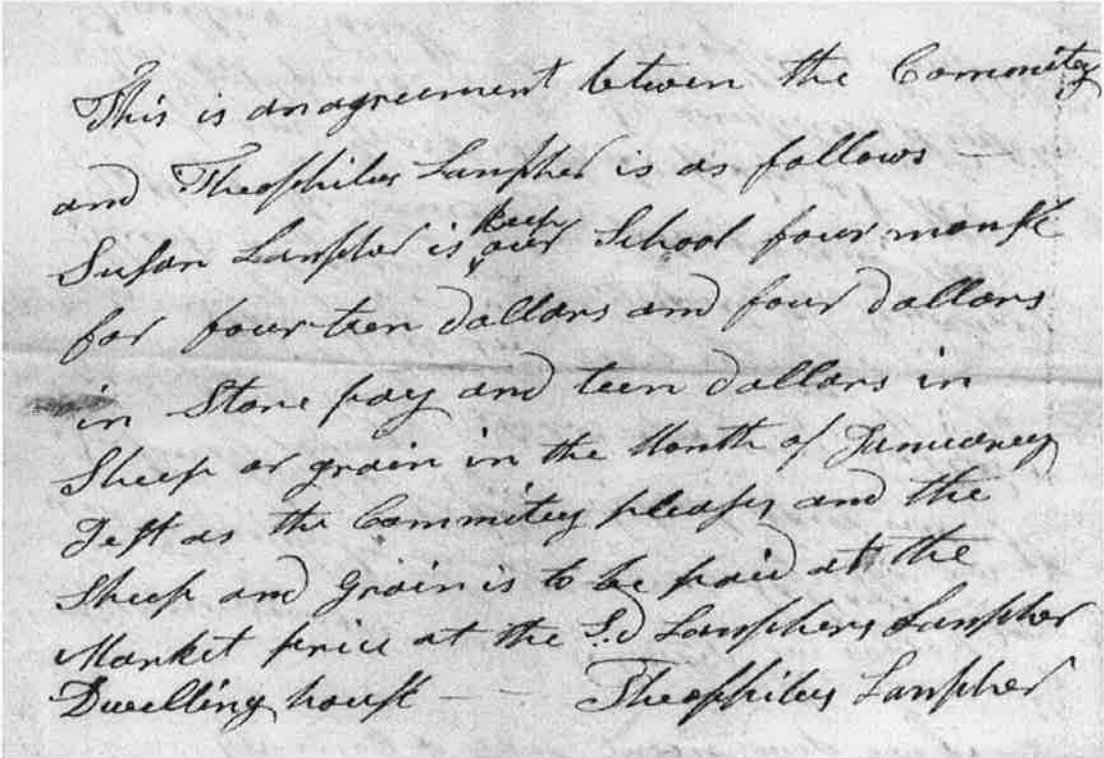


Collection of the Vermont Historical Society

In what subjects did a teacher need to be certified?

How might the committee decide that she was of "good moral character?"

## Teaching Contract



This is an agreement between the Community  
and Theophiles Lampher is as follows —  
Susan Lampher is <sup>keep</sup> ~~get~~ School four months  
for fourteen dollars and four dollars  
in store pay and ten dollars in  
Sheep or grain in the month of January  
Left as the Committee please and the  
Sheep and grain is to be paid at the  
Market price at the Sd Lampher's Lampher  
Dwelling house — Theophiles Lampher

This is an agreement between the Committee and Theophiles Lampher is as follows—Susan Lampher is keep our School four months for fourteen dollars and four dollars in store pay and ten dollars in sheep or grain in the month of January. Left as the committee please and the sheep and grain is to be paid at the market price at the Sd Lampher Dwelling House.

Theophiles Lampher

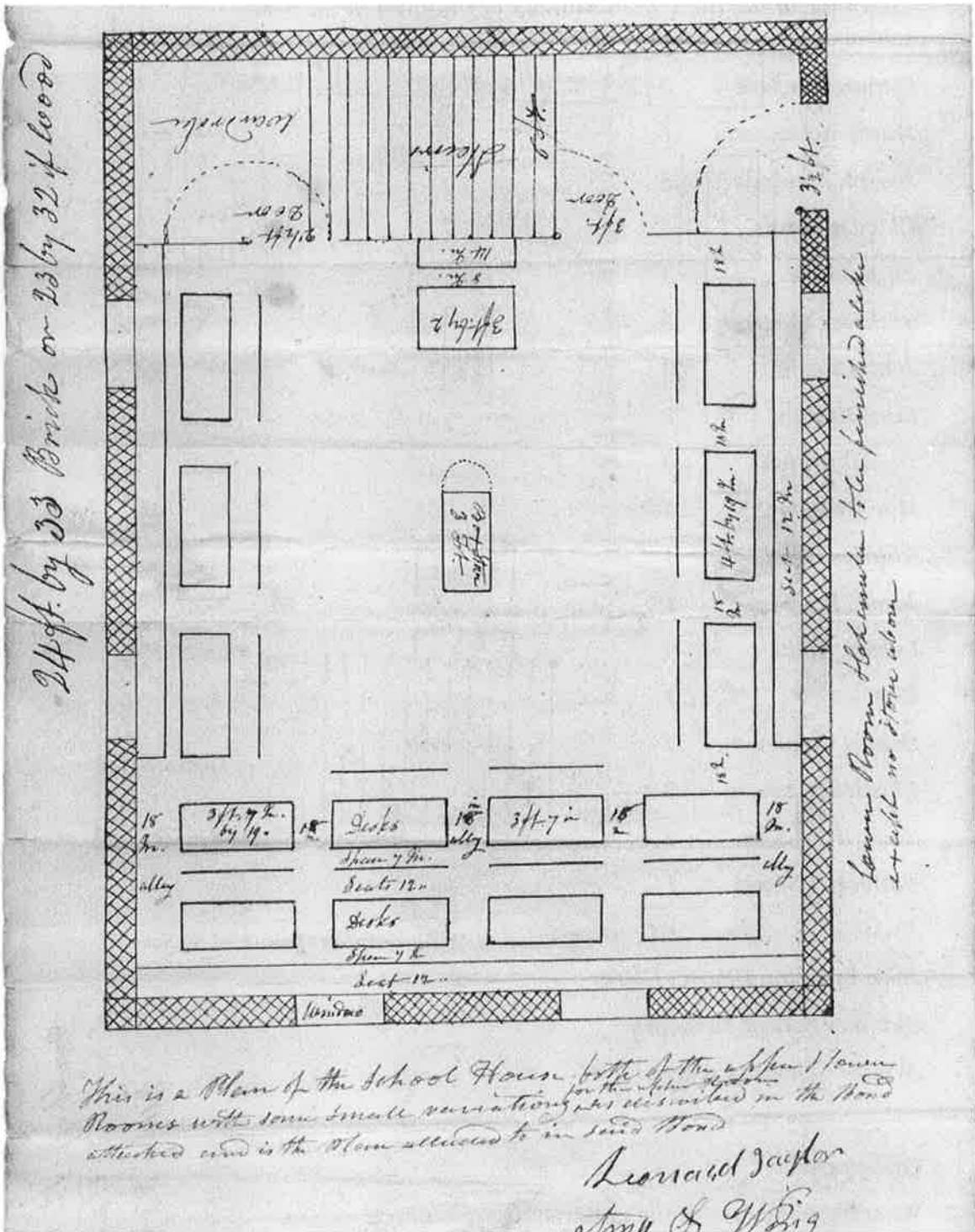
### Questions:

How was Susan Lampher to be paid?

Do you think Susan or her father, Theophiles, received her salary?

How many months was she to teach?

Plans for a Schoolhouse in Rochester, Vermont



This is a Plan of the School House for the upper 11 years Rooms with some small variations as described in the Board attached and is the Plan allowed to in said Board

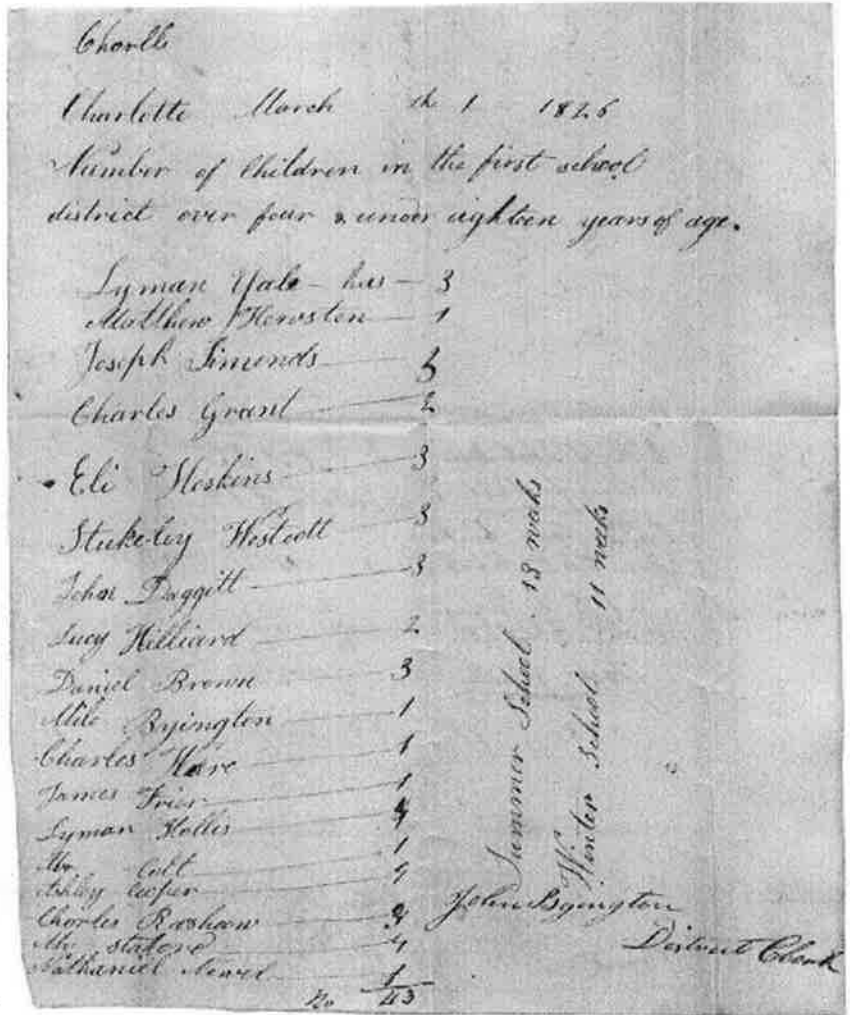
Leonard Taylor  
Stonewall & Co. 1839

- Questions:
- What were the ages of the children who attended?
- How many students attended?
- When was school "kept"?

## List of Students, 1826, Charlotte, Vermont

Charlotte March the 1 1826 Number of Children in the first school district over four & under eighteen years of age.

Lyman Yale has	3
Matthew Hewsten	1
Joseph Simonds	3
Charles Grant	2
Eli Hoskins	3
Stukeley Westcott	3
John Daggitt	3
Lucy Hilliard	2
Daniel Brown	3
Mile Byington	1
Charles Ware	1
James Frier	1
Lyman Hollis	4
Colt	1
Hokley Cooper	4
Charles Reeshaw	3
Staford	4
Nathaniel Newel	1
No	43



Collection of the Vermont Historical Society

John Byington District Clerk

Summer School 13 weeks

Winter School 11 weeks

Questions:

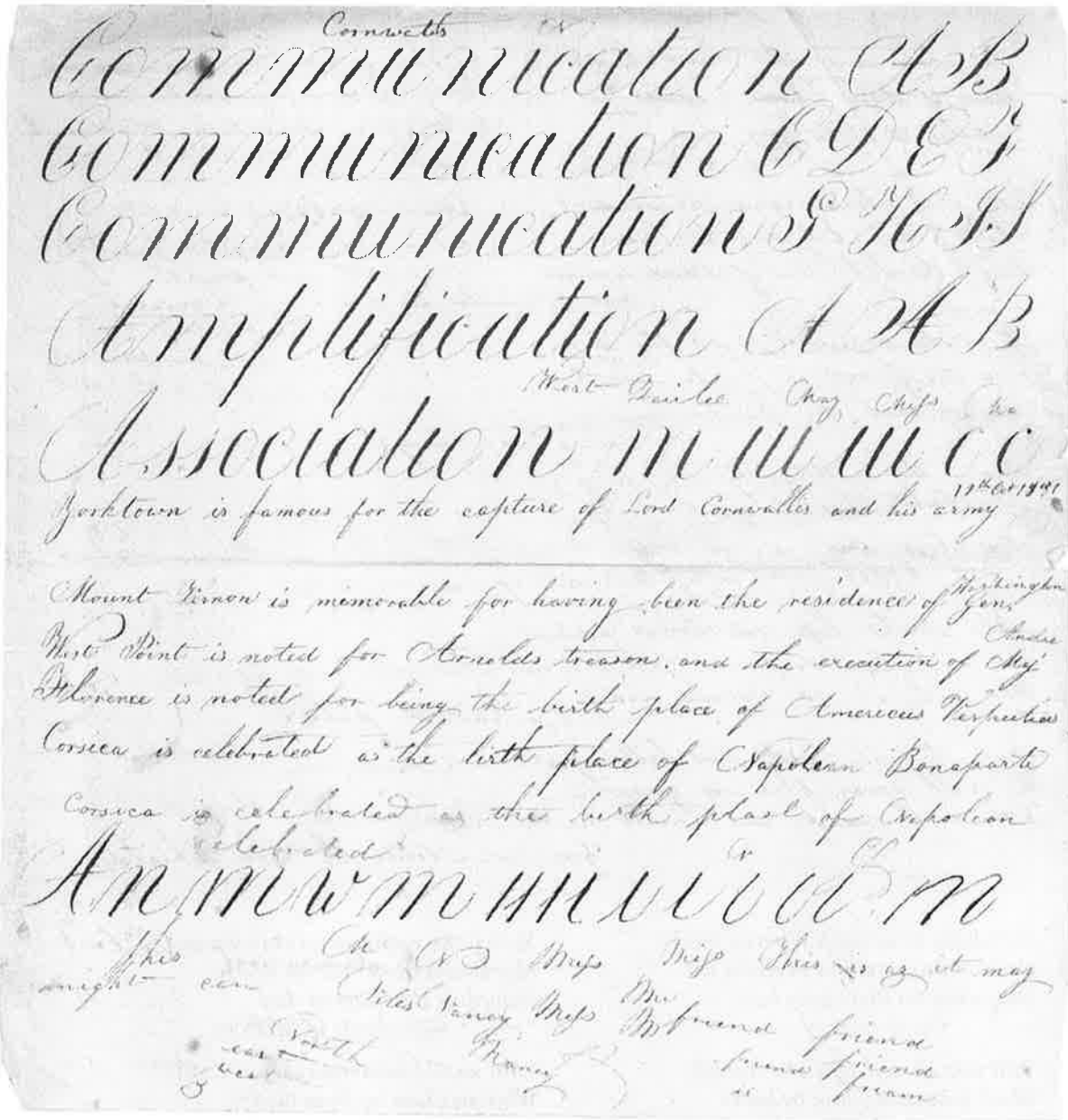
What were the ages of the children who attended?

How many students attended?

When was school "kept?"



Front page:



Collection of the Vermont Historical Society.

Yorktown is famous for the capture of Lord Cornwallis and his army 19th Oct 1781

Mount Vermont is memorable for having been the residence of Gen. Washington

West Point is noted for Arnolds treason and the execution of Maj Andre

Florence is noted for being the birth place of Americus Vesputies

Corsica is celebrated as the birth plase of Napoleon Bonaparte

What two subjects was Edward studying on the front page?

Back page:

Ye whose sires with Warren bled,  
 Sons of those whom Freedom led  
 Dauntless to their gory bed,  
 On to victory

Will you slaves again be made?  
 Shall your glory low be laid?  
 Sworn through seas of blood to made  
 But ye would be free?

Now's the day, and now's the hour,  
 See the front of battle lower,  
 See approach the Demons power  
 Chains and slavery

Spurn the ruthless tyrants sway;  
 Marshal'd thus, in form array,  
 Signalize this august day  
 With deeds of bravery.

Who would kiss oppression's rod?  
 Who an alien be from God?  
 Who submit at Satans nod?  
 Let him quit the field:

But though earth and hell assail,  
 We will never flee nor quail;  
 God will make our cause prevail:  
 God our Strength and Shield.

Edmund Nicol  
 E. Edward  
 E. C. Edward

12 Tho. 178  
 1783  
 MSS 23. 109

Ye whose sires with Warren bled  
 Sons of those whom Freedom led  
 Dauntless to their gory bed  
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 God our Strength and Shield

Edward probably had to memorize this. Could you memorize a verse or the entire passage?

What was Edward studying when he wrote:

The infinitive mood may be governed by verbs nouns participles adjectives & adverbs  
 Nouns signifying duration; extension length breadth; height and depth;  
 A passive verb is formed by adding a perfect participle to the verb to be

Reward of Merit, February 20th, 1825



Collection of the Vermont Historical Society

## Re-Creating a School Lesson with the Artifacts

- 1) Arrange the room so there are two rows of desks with a desk in the front. Have students form two lines with girls in one and boys in another. As the children “enter” the school, have them make their manners to the teacher. Boys should bow, girls should curtsy.
- 2) Create a lesson plan based on the books in the kit. You might begin by having the students memorize a passage from McGuffey’s reader. Call students up to recite their passages. Students might also practice penmanship on their slates or on paper with their quill pens. You might consider making students share the materials—not every child would have had their own book. In fact, it was rare for any school or class to be using the same book!
- 3) Assign mathematical problems for them to work on their slates. Or, you could have them try to do some math problems in their heads. *The Boy’s Own Book* contains mathematical exercises students might try.
- 4) You might use the United States and Vermont maps to explore geography.
- 5) End the experience with a spelling bee using words from the reader.



## Map of the United States, circa 1820



*Reproduced from an engraving in the collection of Historic Urban Plans, Inc.*

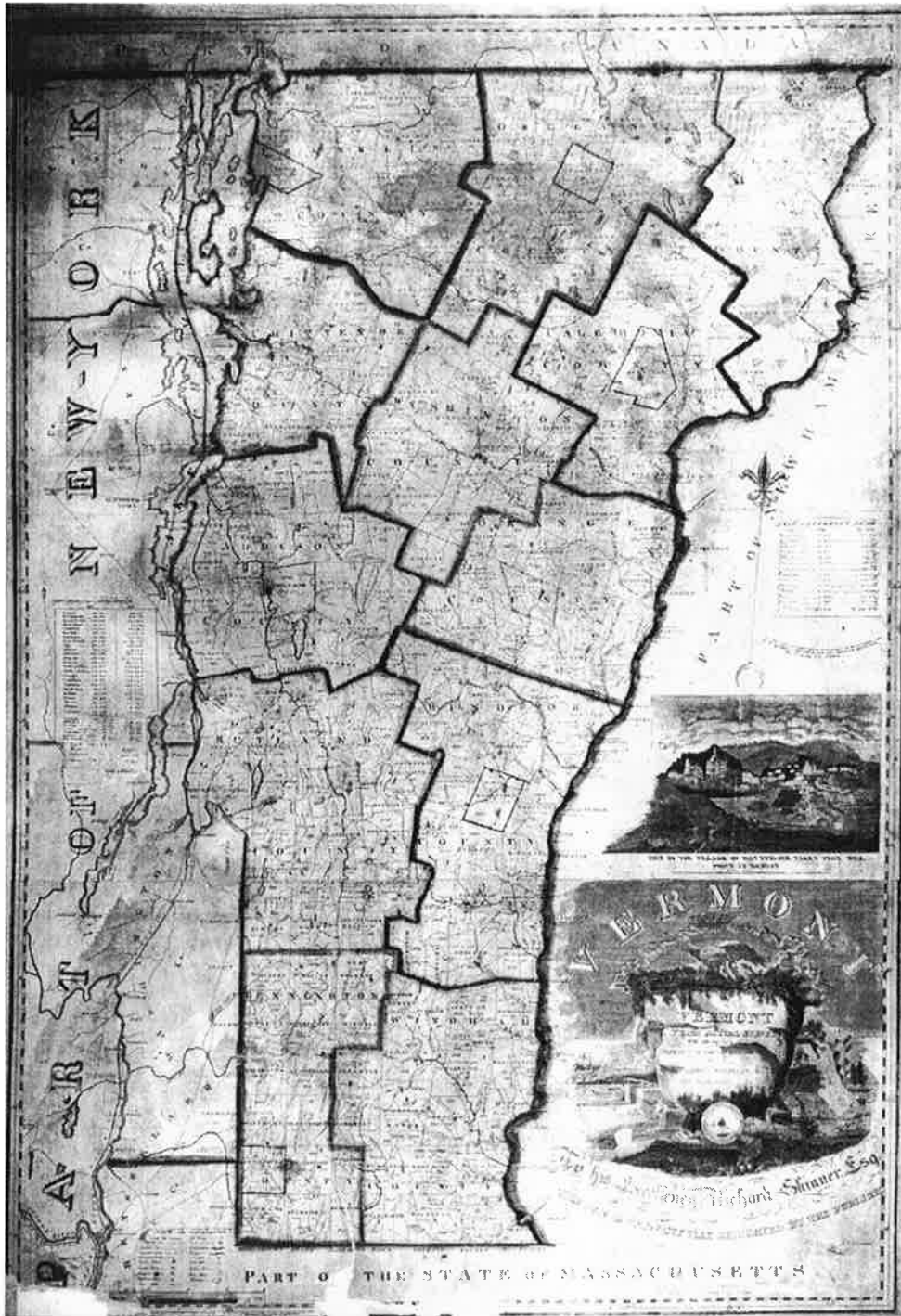
Questions:

How many states were there in 1820? Read carefully!

How many territories were there in 1820? Read carefully!

What country controls the southwestern United States?

Map of Vermont, 1820, by James Whitelaw



*Collection of Vermont Historical Society*

- What county is missing?
- Which town was the largest?
- Which state had the largest population?
- What are some important landmarks on this map?
- Where are the major roads?

## Using the Artifacts for Recreation

### The Graces

This game was named “The Graces” because it is to be played gracefully. It is played with two small hoops and four sticks. The hoops are often decorated with ribbons.

Each player takes a pair of sticks and a hoop and then stands a little distance away from the other. The sticks are held straight, three or four inches apart, when trying to catch the hoop; when the hoop is thrown, the sticks are crossed like a pair of scissors and sharply drawn to drive the hoop toward the other player who then tries to catch it.



### Deck of Cards

This deck of cards was reproduced from one made during the years 1835–1840. *The Boy's Own Book* includes a chapter of card tricks.

#### *American presidents as kings*

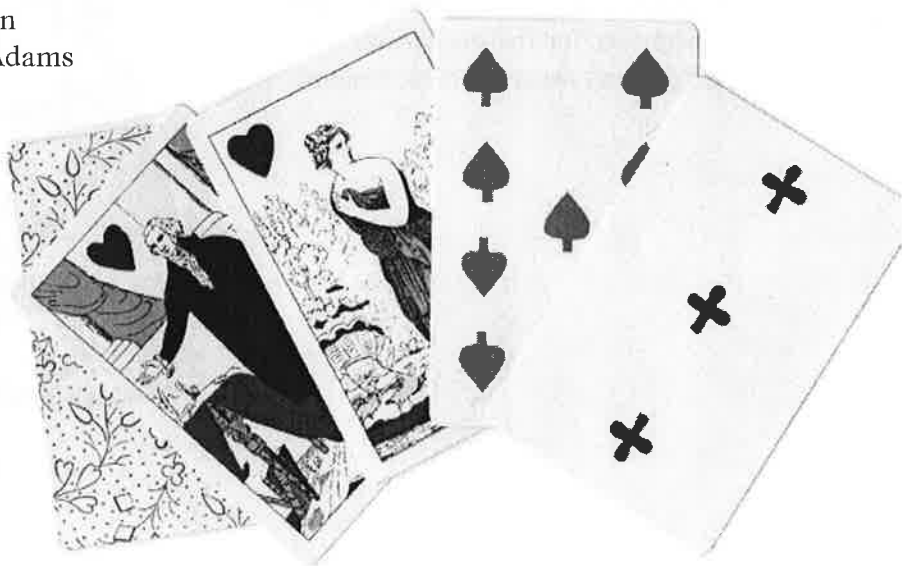
Hearts: George Washington  
Diamonds: John Quincy Adams  
Clubs: Thomas Jefferson  
Spades: Andrew Jackson

#### *Queens*

Hearts: Venus  
Diamonds: Justice  
Clubs: Ceres  
Spades: Athena

#### *Jacks*

Hearts: Red Jacket  
Diamonds: Gy-ant-wachia  
Clubs: Joseph Brant  
Spades: Unidentified



## *The Boy's Own Book and The Girl's Own Book*



Compare the Tables of Contents for each book. Make a list of appropriate activities for boys and girls.

*The Girl's Own Book* contains games appropriate for the classroom and instructions for using The Graces.

